Wellbeing When Writing

Writing for a Reader

Year 2

Delivered by:

[Facilitator Name], [Facilitator Title}

Learning outcomes:

- Consider your reader when writing thesis chapters
- Evaluate the uses of 'incluing' for guiding your reader through your chapters at APR2

Dear Reader: considering audience

- Write a synopsis of your research aimed at an expert in your field (max 150 words)

- Now write a synopsis aimed at a person outside your subject area (max 100 words).

- Next, write a one-sentence synopsis of your work aimed at primary school children.

- Share with a partner from another subject area.

- Ask them what they understand about your work, if there was any terminology they didn't understand, if they have any unanswered questions? (This is known as workshoping)

'Incluing'

'SF Reading Protocols' by Jo Walton, Tor

https://www.tor.com/2010/01/18/sf-reading-protocols/

Having a world unfold in one's head is the fundamental SF experience. It's a lot of what I read for. Delany has a long passage about how your brain expands while reading the sentence "The red sun is high, the blue low"—how it fills in doubled purple shadows on the planet of a binary star. I think it goes beyond that, beyond the physical into the delight of reading about people who come from other societies and have different expectations.

'Incluing'

Because SF can't take the world for granted, it's had to develop techniques for doing it. There's the simple infodump, which Neal Stephenson has raised to an artform in its own right. There are lots of forms of what I call incluing, scattering pieces of information seamlessly through the text to add up to a big picture. The reader has to remember them and connect them together. This is one of the things some people complain about as "too much hard work" and which I think is a high form of fun.

'Incluing'

SF is like a mystery where the world and the history of the world is what's mysterious, and putting that all together in your mind is as interesting as the characters and the plot, if not more interesting. We talk about worldbuilding as something the writer does, but it's also something the reader does, building the world from the clues. When you read that the clocks were striking thirteen, you think at first that something is terribly wrong before you work out that this is a world with twenty-four hour time—and something terribly wrong. Orwell economically sends a double signal with that.

'Incluing'

Because there's a lot of information to get across and you don't want to stop the story more than you can help, we have techniques for doing it. We have signals for what you can take for granted, we have signals for what's important.

'Incluing' - discussion

- Do you think this technique could be useful when considering the audience for your thesis? Think of it as your world, and how you can help your reader understand and navigate this world you have built.

Further information (online)

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- https://thesiswhisperer.com
- https://www.vitae.ac.uk