Short Paper 1.2: Close Reading of Lippi-Green
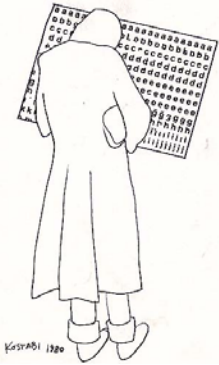
Close reading is a necessary skill that will be very useful to you no matter your discipline or your eventual profession. Your classes, your work, your government, and even your pastimes will require you to read or evaluate something difficult, to find hand- and footholds in the material, and make sense of it. Basically, "close reading" simply means analyzing a text — be it a photograph, a scholarly essay, an operation manual, a tax form — very carefully, crystallizing main ideas, and then drawing conclusions or making decisions based on your analysis. In this class, close reading and the skill to read for the sake of writing will be employed primarily for written texts. The following are key ways to help you close read:

1) Read a difficult passage several times. Read out loud, slowly, deliberately. Difficult parts will be easier the second or third time through.

2) Annotate the text. This is sometimes called "active reading." Annotating involves underlining important words, writing notes or questions in the margins, highlighting, bracketing important passages, taking reading notes, and so on.

3) Look up difficult terms or concepts or names and keep a running list. Also try to discover the meaning of key words and concepts from the reading. Some terms have specialized definitions that you will learn only from context. Two good places to look online are: <www.dictionary.com> and <www.wikipedia.com>.

4) Consider the historical and cultural context of the text. For whom was it written? By whom? Why? Has it been well received?

5) Decide how a difficult passage fits into the larger text. What theme(s) does the passage develop?

6) Remember the big picture. Why is the text or passage or statement important? What are its overall claims?

7) Finally, as mentioned above, actively take specific notes on the reading. Write down key ideas, pages to return to, terms, and quotes that may be helpful in your own understanding and argument.

For this assignment, you will do a close reading of Rosina Lippi-Green's essay "Teaching Children How to Discriminate: What We Learn from the Big Bad Wolf" in *Reading Contexts*, pages 405-428. Read actively. Annotate and underline rather than just highlight. Make notes of key ideas and questions you may have about the text. Read through the text more than once. While you are reading, pay special attention to the following concepts:

—language and sociolinguistics
—systematic construction of dominance and subordinance
—social variation and language variation and stereotyping
—MUSE versus AAVE versus accented English
—entertainment versus education versus indoctrination

Then, write a 2-page distillation of the text's main ideas. Your short paper should not be a simple summary. Read carefully, read conscientiously, and read closely. Keep in mind our work on thesis, argument, claim, and evidence. Then identify three main claims or arguments made by Lippi-Green and support each with one or two direct quotes from the text itself. Your claim in this response paper then is what you believe to be the essay's most important ideas. Be prepared to discuss your findings in class as well.

Targeted outcomes: 2, 3

Turn in: 2 pages, typed, no title page, double-spaced, stapled

Due: Tuesday, January 10