

Topic	References
<p>Wolfgang Iser: Background Information</p>	<p>Iser's contribution to literary theory began with his inaugural lecture at Constance in 1970. His theory of "aesthetic response" was later detailed in the following works: <i>The Implied Reader</i> (1972) and <i>The Act of Reading</i> (1978). These works provided a rigorous grounding for the paradigm shift of the late 1960's in Germany that redirected the attention of literary theorists from the author/text to the reader. http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/iser/</p> <p>Of paramount concern for this theory was the impact a piece of literature has on its readers and the responses it elicits. Instead of asking what the text means, I asked what it does to its potential readers. (<i>Do I Write for an Audience?</i> Iser 2000) http://www.jstor.org/stable/463451</p> <p>Additional Biographic Information: http://sun3.lib.uci.edu/~scctr/Wellek/iser/index.html</p>
<p>Key Concept 1: Reader Response is a Component of the Literary Work in Addition to the Text Itself</p>	<p>Basic to Iser's theory is his notion that meaning is not a given in the literary text. It cannot be detected, excavated, or uncovered, but instead has to be produced in the interaction between text and reader. The structure of the reading process is inter-subjective, whereas the realization is different from reader to reader. There is not one correct production of meaning, but necessarily a spectrum of actualizations owing to the active involvement of the reader in the processing of the text (Rudolf E. Kuenzli) http://www.jstor.org/stable/465092</p> <p>Starting out with reflecting on how literature functions as a medium of interaction between the context from which it emerges, and a reader who makes the literature concrete, Iser contributed to the development of literary theory by turning literature itself into a mode of reflection. (The Literary Encyclopedia Thom Van Imschoot, University of Gent) http://www.jstor.org/stable/465092</p>
<p>Key Concept 2: The Author Uses Gaps and Blanks to Invoke the Reader's Communication with the Text</p>	<p>Communication in literature is a process set in motion and regulated by a mutually restrictive and magnifying interaction between the explicit and the implicit, between revelation and concealment. The gaps function as a kind of pivot on which the whole text-reader relationship revolves. The structured blanks of the text stimulate the process of ideation to be performed by the reader on the terms set by the text.</p> <p>Since all texts contain gaps that the reader must fill from his or her own imagination and experience, meaning is made as the reader responds aesthetically to what is not there. If communication between the text and reader is to be successful, the reader's activity must be controlled in some way by the text. (Iser - From summary of article.)</p>
<p>Key Concept 3: As the Reader Communicates with the Text (Fills in the Blanks) He Engages in Perspective Taking and the Creation of a New Work</p>	<p>A literary work is not a documentary record of something that exists or has existed; it brings into the world something that hitherto did not exist and that at best can be qualified as a virtual reality. Consequently, my theory of aesthetic response found itself confronted with the problem of how such emerging virtual realities, which have no equivalent in our empirical world, can be processed and, indeed, understood. (<i>Do I Write for an Audience?</i> Iser 2000) http://www.jstor.org/stable/463451</p>
<p>Questions/Issues</p>	<p>Given a chance to ask Wolfgang Iser three questions, I feel like a hero in a fairy tale who has been granted three wishes: my first should be for many more. But three questions have I been granted and three it shall be. - Norman N. Holland. (<i>Interview Wolfgang Iser</i> 1980) http://www.jstor.org/stable/465093</p> <p>1.) How can you evaluate reader response and the quality of that response without empirical studies of reader/text interaction? Should texts be evaluated in multiple ways? 2.) Is it possible for a reader to misinterpret a given text? 3.) In what specific ways do you/will you consider audience response in your own writing/creation of text?</p>