

Wolfgang Iser The Act Of Reading

An intensive examination of the theoretical writings of cultural and literary critic Stanley Fish.

This long-awaited translation of *Das literarische Kunstwerk* makes available for the first time in English Roman Ingarden's influential study. Though it is inter-disciplinary in scope, situated as it is on the borderlines of ontology and logic, philosophy of literature and theory of language, Ingarden's work has a deliberately narrow focus: the literary work, its structure and mode of existence. *The Literary Word of Art* establishes the groundwork for a philosophy of literature, i.e., an ontology in terms of which the basic general structure of all literary works can be determined. This "essential anatomy" makes basic tools and concepts available for rigorous and subtle aesthetic analysis.

Jerome Bruner argues that the cognitive revolution, with its current fixation on mind as "information processor," has led psychology away from the deeper objective of understanding mind as a creator of meanings. Only by breaking out of the limitations imposed by a computational model of mind can we grasp the special interaction through which mind both constitutes and is constituted by culture.

Aotearoa New Zealand, "a tiny Pacific country," is of great interest to those engaged in postcolonial and literary studies throughout the world. In all former colonies, myths of national identity are vested with various interests. Shifts in collective Pakeha (or New Zealand-European) identity have been marked by the phenomenal popularity of three novels, each at a time of massive social change. Late-colonialism, anti-imperialism, and the collapse of the idea of a singular 'nation' can be traced through the reception of John Mulgan's *Man Alone* (1939), Keri Hulme's *The Bone People* (1983), and Alan Duff's *Once Were Warriors* (1990). Yet close analysis of these three novels also reveals marginalization and silencing in claims to singular Pakeha identity and a linear development of settler acculturation. Such a dynamic resonates with that of other 'settler' cultures – the similarities and differences telling in comparison. Specifically, *Reading Pakeha? Fiction and Identity in Aotearoa New Zealand* explores how concepts of race and ethnicity intersect with those of gender, sex, and sexuality. This book also asks whether 'Pakeha' is still a meaningful term.

The *Routledge Handbook of Stylistics* provides a comprehensive introduction and reference point to key areas in the field of stylistics. The four sections of the volume encompass a wide range of approaches from classical rhetoric to cognitive neuroscience and cover core issues that include: historical perspectives centring on rhetoric, formalism and functionalism the elements of stylistic analysis that include the linguistic levels of foregrounding, relevance theory, conversation analysis, narrative, metaphor, speech acts, speech and thought presentation and point of view current areas of 'hot topic' research, such as cognitive poetics, corpus stylistics and feminist/critical stylistics emerging and future trends including the stylistics of multimodality, creative writing, hypertext fiction and neuroscience Each of the thirty-two chapters provides: an introduction to the subject; an overview of the history of the topic; an analysis of the main current and critical issues; a section with recommendations for practice, and a discussion of possible future trajectory of the subject. This handbook includes chapters written by some of the leading stylistics scholars in the world today, including Jean Boase-Beier, Joe Bray, Michael Burke, Beatrix Busse, Ronald Carter, Billy Clark, Barbara Dancygier, Catherine Emmott, Charles Forceville, Margaret Freeman, Christiana Gregoriou, Geoff Hall, Patrick Colm Hogan, Lesley Jeffries, Marina Lambrou, Michaela Mahlberg, Rocio Montoro, Nina Nørgaard, Dan Shen, Michael Toolan and Sonia Zyngier. *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics* is essential reading for researchers, postgraduates and undergraduate students working in this area.

"The author formulates an anatomy of interpretation through which we can understand the many different forms that the act of interpretation takes. For Iser, there are several different genres of interpretation, all of which are acts of translation designed to transpose something into something else. Obvious examples involve canonical texts, and here Iser explores, for example, the Rabbinical exegesis of the Torah and Dr. Johnson's reading of Shakespeare. But what happens when the matter that one seeks to interpret consists not of a text but of a welter of fragments, as in the story of history, or is something hidden, as in the practice of psychoanalysis, or is as complex as a culture or a system? He concludes that if interpretation is a form of translation, then it is performative and will always depend on what it seeks to translate rather than on some absolute concept of truth." (Midwest).

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Although Wolfgang Iser is one of the most influential literary theorists of the twentieth century, there is no authoritative study about his oeuvre. The present work remedies that problem by analysing Iser's German and English writings in detail. Apart from being the first comprehensive account of his work, this study also modifies the established view of Iser's theory. In contrast to the idea that his only contribution to literary studies is the reception theory of the 1970s, this account demonstrates the importance of Iser's work on history and anthropology from the 1950s and 1990s. Instead of exclusively focusing on familiar terms such as 'indeterminacy', this analysis also discusses Iser's view of modernity, fiction and culture. As this discussion shows, his writings develop a consistent theory of the novel and the way in which it allows its readers to articulate new views of reality. To situate this theory, Iser's institutional and intellectual background is described as well, paying special attention to the *Poetik und Hermeneutik*-circle and thinkers like Blumenberg and Kermode. The continued relevance of his theory is demonstrated via comparisons with recent research on the novel and memory as well as examples from contemporary novelists like Juli Zeh and Hilary Mantel.

Research Paper (postgraduate) from the year 1999 in the subject English - Literature, Works, course: Third-Cycle Education / Tercer Ciclo, language: English, abstract: This study analyses the act of reading *The Picture of Dorian Gray* from the perspective of Reception Theory. In his critical writings, Oscar Wilde asserts that the receiver of a work of art must play a dynamic role in the construction of its meaning, and the analysis of his only novel shows that Wilde encourages the reader to participate actively in its production in order to be able to find out the lesson which is inherent in it. As a result, the research shows that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is representative of Wilde's aesthetic principles not only because it promotes the individuality of the reader but also because the moral in it is subordinated to its artistic effects.

This comprehensive exploration of the interpretive process, now available in paperback, has served as a successful textbook. It focuses on the three "worlds" of biblical interpretation--the world of the author, the world of the text, and the world of the reader--to help students develop an integrated hermeneutical strategy. The book offers clear explanations of interpretive approaches, which are supported by helpful biblical examples, and succinct synopses of various interpretive methods. Pedagogical aids include end-of-chapter review and study sections with key terms, study questions, and suggestions for further

reading.

Seeking to build upon recent scholarship based on Biblical women, Joseph McDonald uses a character-centered literary approach to read the story of Sarah as it was told and retold in the Second Temple period. McDonald offers an alternative to the usual approaches to "rewritten Bible" narratives, which often emphasize near-context, synoptic comparison of retold stories and their scriptural precursors, arguing that examination of retold narratives as narratives reveals important aspects of their internal literary effects, that may otherwise go unnoticed. Taken together, McDonald suggests that such readings reveal one of Sarah's trans-narrative or "deep traits," as a curious, multi-faceted resemblance to the character of Abraham. The richness of her images, however, shows that this resemblance is not the ultimate distillation of Sarah, but a symptom of the kind of restriction that she consistently faces in this literature. McDonald concludes that creative readings of the narratives featuring Sarah in the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, the Genesis Apocryphon, and the Jewish Antiquities of Josephus illuminate Sarah as a complex and sometimes contradictory figure, whose individuality and agency often struggle to escape limitations placed upon her – both by other characters, such as Abraham and God, and by the narrators of her tales.

Winner of the 1921 Pulitzer Prize, *The Age of Innocence* is an elegant, masterful portrait of desire and betrayal in old New York—now with a new introduction from acclaimed author Colm Tóibín for the novel's centennial. With vivid power, Wharton evokes a time of gaslit streets, formal dances held in the ballrooms of stately brownstones, and society people "who dreaded scandal more than disease." This is Newland Archer's world as he prepares to marry the docile May Welland. Then, suddenly, the mysterious, intensely nonconformist Countess Ellen Olenska returns to New York after a long absence, turning Archer's world upside down. This classic Wharton tale of thwarted love is an exuberantly comic and profoundly moving look at the passions of the human heart, as well as a literary achievement of the highest order.

The Act of Reading A Theory of Aesthetic Response

Seminar paper from the year 2014 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 2,7, University of Freiburg (Anglistik/Amerikanistik), language: English, abstract: John Fowles is a postmodern writer who was born March 31, 1926 in Leigh-on-Sea and who died in Lyme Regis, England in 2005. He was greatly inspired by the works of the French existentialists Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, which is often mirrored in his narrations. Fowles is one of the most well-known authors of Postwar British Fiction and has published his famous book (a pastiche of the Victorian novel) *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, which has won several awards, in 1969. Due to its popularity the book has been made into a movie starring Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons in 1981. The novel takes place in Lyme Regis, England during the Victorian era in 1867 and is about the young gentleman Charles Smithson who, already engaged to a successful haberdasher's daughter, falls in love with Sarah Woodruff, who is disdained by the society of Lyme Regis for her alleged affair with a French lieutenant. John Fowles uses a postmodern narrator to tell a story that visibly has a very conventional Victorian framework. This narrator presents the love story of Charles and Sarah through a mixture of plot and personal comments by playing with the features of postmodern literature in order to deceive the reader and to challenge him into finding his own reality in the narration. The way the story is told shows a great interplay between the information the narrator gives to the reader and the information that is left out in order to mislead him. This technique therefore raises the question of how the reader is to understand the wholeness of John Fowles's novel when he is deceived throughout its plot. In this paper I am going to answer the question of how the reader is to understand the meaning of the book first, by giving a brief overview on Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory and its importance in the reading experience of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and second, by analyzing the different appearances of the narrator by using postmodern features like the creation of suspense, deception and illusion that Fowles used to manipulate the reader.

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The last half of the twentieth century has seen the emergence of literary theory as a new discipline. As with any body of scholarship, various schools of thought exist, and sometimes conflict, within it. I.R. Makaryk has compiled a welcome guide to the field. Accessible and jargon-free, the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory* provides lucid, concise explanations of myriad approaches to literature that have arisen over the past forty years. Some 170 scholars from around the world have contributed their expertise to this volume. Their work is organized into three parts. In Part I, forty evaluative essays examine the historical and cultural context out of which new schools of and approaches to literature arose. The essays also discuss the uses and limitations of the various schools, and the key issues they address. Part II focuses on individual theorists. It provides a more detailed picture of the network of scholars not always easily pigeonholed into the categories of Part I. This second section analyses the individual achievements, as well as the influence, of specific scholars, and places them in a larger critical context. Part III deals with the vocabulary of literary theory. It identifies significant, complex terms, places them in context, and explains their origins and use. Accessibility is a key feature of the work. By avoiding jargon, providing mini-bibliographies, and cross-referencing throughout, Makaryk has provided an indispensable tool for literary theorists and historians and for all scholars and students of contemporary criticism and culture.

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In a series of readings, the author examines Shakespeare's five major history plays and accounts for their continued popularity, both in film and on stage. He examines the historical context out of which the plays emerged, and describes how the period gave birth to a modern form of politics.

Exciting approaches to biblical interpretation are introduced in this volume by contributors who are distinguished as leaders in the field of New Testament studies. Each chapter introduces a particular approach to interpretation and demonstrates, with biblical texts, how that approach can be used by students and pastors.

Within this text, first published in German in 1960, the influential German literary scholar Wolfgang Iser writes engagingly of Pater's aesthetic.

This book proposes that there is no better, no more complex way to access a community, a society, an era and its cultures than through literature. For millennia, literature from a wide variety of geocultural areas has gathered knowledge about life, about survival, and about living together, without either falling into discursive or disciplinary specializations or functioning as a regulatory mechanism for cultural knowledge. Literature is able to offer its readers knowledge through direct participation in the form of step-by-step intellectual and affective experiences.

Through this ability, it can reach and affect audiences across great spatial and temporal distances. Literature – what different times and cultures have been able to understand as such in a broad sense – has always been characterized by its transareal and transcultural origins and effects. It is the product of many logics, and it teaches us to think polylogically rather than monologically. Literature is an experiment in living, and living in a state of experimentation. About the author Ottmar Ette has been Chair of Romance Literature at the University of Potsdam, Germany, since 1995. He is Honorary Member of the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) (elected in 2014), member of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (elected in 2013), and regular member of the Academia Europaea (since 2010).

These essays—which consider a wide variety of cultures from ancient Egypt to contemporary Japan— describe the conditions under which cultures that do not dominate each other may yet achieve a limited translatability of cultures.

This book addresses itself to the concept of the implied author, which has been the cause of controversy in cultural studies for some fifty years. The opening chapters examine the introduction of the concept in Wayne C. Booth's "Rhetoric of Fiction" and the discussion of the concept in narratology and in the theory and practice of interpretation. The final chapter develops proposals for clarifying or replacing the concept.

Much literary criticism focuses on literary producers and their products, but an important part of such work considers the end-user, the reader. It asks such questions as: how far can the author condition the response of the reader, and how much does the reader create the meaning of a text? Dr Bennett's collection includes important essays from such writers and critics as Wolfgang Iser, Mary Jacobus, Roger Chartier, Michel de Certeau, Shoshana Felman, Maurice Blanchot, Paul de Man and Yves Bonnefoy. It looks in turn at deconstructionist, feminist, new historicist and psychoanalytical response to the school. The book then considers the act of reading itself, discussing such issues as the uniqueness of any reading and the difficulties involved in its analysis.

Stanley Fish is one of America's most stimulating literary theorists. In this book, he undertakes a profound reexamination of some of criticism's most basic assumptions. He penetrates to the core of the modern debate about interpretation, explodes numerous misleading formulations, and offers a stunning proposal for a new way of thinking about the way we read. Fish begins by examining the relation between a reader and a text, arguing against the formalist belief that the text alone is the basic, knowable, neutral, and unchanging component of literary experience. But in arguing for the right of the reader to interpret and in effect create the literary work, he skillfully avoids the old trap of subjectivity. To claim that each reader essentially participates in the making of a poem or novel is not, he shows, an invitation to unchecked subjectivity and to the endless proliferation of competing interpretations. For each reader approaches a literary work not as an isolated individual but as part of a community of readers.

"Indeed," he writes, "it is interpretive communities, rather than either the text or reader, that produce meanings." The book is developmental, not static. Fish at all times reveals the evolutionary aspect of his work—the manner in which he has assumed new positions, altered them, and then moved on. Previously published essays are introduced by headnotes which relate them to the central notion of interpretive communities as it emerges in the final chapters. In the course of refining his theory, Fish includes rather than excludes the thinking of other critics and shows how often they agree with him, even when he and they may appear to be most dramatically at odds. Engaging, lucid, provocative, this book will immediately find its place among the seminal works of modern literary criticism.

Describes the historical background of Sterne's novel, discusses its themes, and considers its philosophical aspects

"An important transitional book, usefully summarizing the past and thoughtfully mapping out the future of a significant critic's theoretical project."- Modern Philology. "There is a much greater emphasis on the reader's function as 'performer' of the text in *Prospecting* than in Iser's other books. The two brilliant chapters on Beckett's fiction and drama are crucial here... Literature becomes 'play' and 'game,' and the reader becomes a performer of himself. This idea of performance becomes central to Iser's new theory. Art does not present life; it performs it."- Yearbook of English Studies.

The Reader and the Detective Story is unique—it treats the detective story as a special case of reading, governed by special rules and shaped by a highly specialized formula. The method of interpretation is the application of the principles of response theory (especially those developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer, Wolfgang Iser, and Hans Robert Jauss) to the reading of a tale of detection. George Dove demonstrates how the English soft-boiled mystery and the American private-eye story, although they have different settings and develop different plots, belong in the same subgenre and follow the same formula, inherited directly from Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue."

In *Interpretive Conventions*, Steven Mailloux provides a general introduction to reader-response criticism while developing his own specific reader-oriented approach to literature. He examines five influential theories of the reading process—those of Stanley Fish, Jonathan Culler, Wolfgang Iser, Norman Holland, and David Bleich. He goes on to argue the need for a more comprehensive reader-response criticism based on a consistent social model of reading. He develops such a reading model and also discusses American textual editing and literary history.

Bringing his perennially popular course to the page, Yale University Professor Paul H. Fry offers in this welcome book a guided tour of the main trends in twentieth-century literary theory. At the core of the book's discussion is a series of underlying questions: What is literature, how is it produced, how can it be understood, and what is its purpose? Fry engages with the major themes and strands in twentieth-century literary theory, among them the hermeneutic circle, New Criticism, structuralism, linguistics and literature, Freud and fiction, Jacques Lacan's theories, the postmodern psyche, the political unconscious, New Historicism, the classical feminist tradition, African American criticism, queer theory, and gender performativity. By incorporating philosophical and social perspectives to connect these many trends, the author offers readers a coherent overall context for a deeper and richer reading of literature.

Drawing on insights from literary theory and analytical philosophy, this book analyzes the intersection of law and literature from the distinct and unique perspective of fictional discourse. Pursuing an empirical approach, and using examples that range from Victorian literature to the current judicial treatment of rap music, the volume challenges the prevailing fact-fiction dichotomy in legal theory and practice by providing a better understanding of the peculiarities of legal fictionality, while also contributing further material to fictional theory's endeavor to find a transdisciplinary valid criterion for a definition of fictional discourse. Following the basic presumptions of the early law-as-literature movement, past approaches have mainly focused on textuality and narrativity as the common denominators of law and literature, and have largely ignored the topic of fictionality. This volume provides a much needed analysis of this gap. The book will be of interest to scholars of legal theory, jurisprudence and legal writing, along with literature scholars and students of literature and the humanities.

Beholding considers the spatially situated encounter between artwork and spectator. It argues that artworks created for specific places or conditions structure a reciprocal encounter, which is completed by the presence of a beholder. These are works which demand the 'beholder's share', but not, as Ernst Gombrich famously claimed, to sustain an illusion. Rather, *Beholding* reconfigures Gombrich's notion of the beholder's share as a set of 'licensed' imaginative and cognitive projections. Each chapter frames a particular work of art from the remit of a complementary theoretical text. The book establishes a

transhistorical notion of the spatially situated encounter, and considers the role of the architectural host in bringing the beholder's orientation into play. The book engages a diverse range of practices: from Renaissance painting and group portraiture to intermedia practices of installation and performance art. Written within the broad remit of reception aesthetics, the book proposes a phenomenological theory of beholding, argued through an in-depth examination of artworks and their spatial contexts, selected for their explanatory potential. These various encounters allocate different constitutive roles to the beholder, bringing not only spatial and temporal orientation into play, but also a repertoire of anticipated ideas and beliefs.

The pioneer of "literary anthropology," Wolfgang Iser presents a wide-ranging and comprehensive exploration of this new field in an attempt to explain the human need for the "particular form of make-believe" known as literature. Ranging from the Renaissance pastoral to Coleridge to Sartre and Beckett, *The Fictive and the Imaginary* is a distinguished work of scholarship from one of Europe's most respected and influential critics.

In this fascinating book, Sarah Worth addresses from a philosophical perspective the many ways in which reading benefits us morally, socially and cognitively.

Publisher Description

Unsurpassed as a text for upper-division and beginning graduate students, Raman Selden's classic text is the liveliest, most readable and most reliable guide to contemporary literary theory. Includes applications of theory, cross-referenced to Selden's companion volume, *Practicing Theory and Reading Literature*.

Iser examines what happens during the reading process, and how it is basic to the development of a theory of aesthetic response, setting in motion a chain of events that depends both on the text and the exercise of certain human faculties.

Tribal biblical interpretation is a developing area of study that is concerned with reading the Bible through the eyes of tribal people. While many studies of reading the Bible from the reader's social, cultural and historical location have been made in various parts of the world, no thorough study that offers a coherent and substantive methodology for tribal biblical interpretation has been made. This book is the first comprehensive work that offers a description of tribal biblical interpretation and shows its application by making a lucid reading of Matthew's infancy narrative from a tribal reader's perspective. Using reader-response criticism as his primary method, Zhodi Angami brings his tribal context of North East India into conversation with Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus. Since tribal people of North East India see themselves as living under colonial rule, a tribal reader sees Matthew's text as a narrative that actively resists and subverts imperial rule. Likewise, the tribal experience of living at the margins inspires a tribal reader to look at the narrative from the underside, from the perspective of those who are sidelined, ignored, belittled or forgotten. Tribal biblical interpretation presented here follows a process of conversation between tribal worldview and Matthew's narrative. Such a method animates the text for the tribal reader and makes the biblical narrative not only more intelligible to the tribal reader but allows the text to speak directly to the tribal context.

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