

**THE NATURE OF AESTHETIC PERCEPTION IN LITERATURE.
THE INTERACTION BETWEEN TEXT AND READER IN THE
PROCESS OF PERCEIVING LITERARY TEXTS**

by

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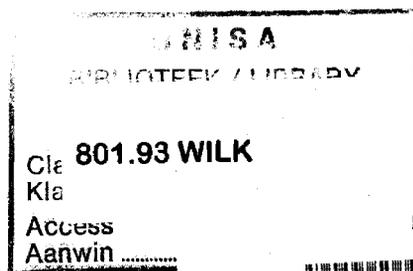
This thesis is especially dedicated to the memory of my dearly beloved parents Georg and Louise Himmelsbach.

Author

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SUMMARY

In this dissertation it is argued that literary theories have traditionally extended abundant attention on authors and texts, neglecting, with very few exceptions, the important role of the READER. To address this imbalance, particular attention will be paid to the view of Wolfgang Iser, that a literary text can only elicit a response when it is read, and that it is virtually impossible to describe this response without also analysing the READING PROCESS. I share this view as it makes logical sense: a literary text remains meaningless, a mere 'paper and ink' production without the involvement of the reader. It is also the reader's own competence, his sense of aesthetic perception which enables him to make sense of the, in the literary text embedded message, hence the title: "The Nature of Aesthetic Perception in Literature. The Interaction between Text and Reader in the Process of Perceiving Literary Texts."



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A METHODOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES REGARDING THE AESTHETIC PERCEPTION OF THE LITERARY TEXT

1 INTRODUCTION

In this study it is argued that the question of aesthetic perception is intimately linked to the reading process. Since reading is a cognitive process, it would appear that aesthetic perception is dependent upon PERCEPTIVE READING, which means that understanding is a PREREQUISITE for appreciation.

In emphasizing the reading process, this study also concerns itself with the shifts from author to text to reader which may be discerned in contemporary theoretical discourses in the study of literature.

In this regard the stance taken by the German receptionists Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser will be especially emphasized. It is their views on the productive and therefore unique role of the reader which form the framework for the ensuing scrutiny of the nature of aesthetic perception in literature, which becomes evident through the involvement with the text during the process of reading.

I have chosen reception-aesthetics as one of my main supportive entities because its primary feature of literary investigation concerns a preoccupation with the behaviour of the READER involved in the literary text.

It is, and shall be argued that a literary text can, logically, only cause a response when it is read. Accordingly, it is virtually impossible to analyse a literary text without investigating the role of the READER during the READING PROCESS. It shall thus be argued that a preoccupation with the literary text per se would neglect, in fact exclude, THE most important subject, namely the READER who makes sense of the literary text, i.e. turns the 'cold paper and ink script' into an aesthetic object after having been involved with the text.

Reception aesthetics's investigation into the phenomenon of HOW one and the same literary text is perceived and subsequently analysed differently by different readers shall be another important and hopefully interesting point for discussion.

In order to assess the various stages of reading and the reader's RESPONSE to the literary text, Wolfgang Iser has 'created' different types of READERS for studying purposes. These will be introduced, paying particular attention to the problematic concept of the 'implied reader' and its relation to a real reader. Throughout the thesis investigations into such aspects as the awakening of the reader's imagination through his INVOLVEMENT in the text, his response and subsequent CONCRETIZATION shall be studied.

As reception aesthetics have made it their task to study and analyse the reader INVOLVED in the literary text, it shall be argued that this theory is not only reader- but

indeed READER/TEXT oriented. A READER AND TEXT ANALYSIS is also my supportive argumentation. As very little research has been carried out in this field of inquiry, a practical investigation into this subject has become a challenge. The importance of the reader together with the literary text shall be stressed throughout the thesis, as one cannot do without the other. No valid critical conclusion can be attained without an investigation into reader activity. And it takes an, at least to a certain extent, knowledgeable reader to 'grasp' the message signalled in the literary text by the sender i.e. by the author/narrator.

The reader's ability to grasp the message signalled in the text is however dependent on his knowledgeability and literary competence. This can also be called 'a storehouse of knowledge', as he draws on this 'storehouse of knowledge' during the reading process. However, as not every reader has the same 'knowledgeability' nor sense of imagination, it stands to reason that every reader perceives a text differently due to his different individual faculties and sense of imagination. In order to investigate this phenomenon more effectively, aspects of the READING PROCESS will feature prominently throughout the thesis.

A brief summary of the organization of the study should help to explain the importance of the READING PROCESS, in trying to capture something of the nature of AESTHETIC PERCEPTION in literature.

1.1 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

In chapter two (2) such literary theories as Russian Formalism, New Criticism, structural linguistics, the semiotics of literature, the Peircian Model, Umberto Eco's emphasis of 'sign function', the semiotics of Lotman, the new semiotics of Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva's Desire in Language, psychoanalysis, with examples of both Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) theory and Jacques Lacan's (1901-1981) refinement of Freud's theory of the unconscious, and Materialism will be introduced.

In the course of the discussion, reference will be made to such literary texts as T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land, J. M. Coetzee's In the Heart of the Country, Shakespeare's Macbeth, D.H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers a.o. Different contributions towards other contemporary literary theories will also be touched upon. So, for instance, an introduction to Feminism, posing the most important question as to whether there is a specially FEMININE WAY of WRITING, and if this is so, where and how this is revealed, will be provided with examples of such characteristic writings as Nadine Gordimer's The Umbilical Cord, and Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse. A brief look at what would supposedly be expected from a reader schooled in feminist literary theory and engaged in feminist critical practice concludes the investigation into this theory.

In the following chapter I shall attempt to provide a

scrutiny of the PRINCIPLES underlying reception aesthetics i.e. this chapter particularly focuses on an investigation into the AESTHETIC PERCEPTION being intimately linked with the READING PROCESS. It shall a.o. be argued that a meaningful interaction between TEXT and READER can only be assessed by investigating READER ACTIVITY.

In chapter three (3) Aspects of Reception Theory, a brief outline of phenomenology and hermeneutics, with special attention to such prominent precursors as Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer, will first be provided, before turning to a more detailed discussion of the contribution of Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser to reception theory.

Husserl's (1935) The Crisis of the European Sciences and Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1965) Truth and Method reveal these precursors' philosophical trend and their subsequent influence on the main representatives of reception aesthetics.

Hans Robert Jauss outlines the history of literary method and simultaneously claims a beginning of a 'revolution' in contemporary literary studies. He 'borrows' the concepts of 'paradigm' and 'scientific revolution' from the work of Thomas S. Kuhn, who introduces literary investigation as an analogous engagement to strategies in the natural sciences. Kuhn's notion that a paradigm which once guided literary investigation should be discarded if it no longer satisfies the requirements posed by literary studies is supported by Jauss.

The way Jauss notes the emergence of a 'classical-humanist' paradigm shall be considered. It is his belief that such a new paradigm, which is long overdue, shall not only endeavour to reconstruct pre-historical standards of medieval texts, but will actually DEMAND it.

In section 3.1.3 Jauss's ideas on paradigms and their social historical functions are introduced. Despite alternatives like the archetypal criticism of Northrop Frye or Structuralism, these are not, according to Jauss, acknowledged as indications of an exact composition pointing towards a new scholarly model. He subsequently argues that because Structuralism and some varieties of Post Structuralism, oppose the older philosophical-historical school of thought and because of the diversity of critical directions they have taken, these are indeed excluded from being candidates for a NEW MODEL. In this regard Jauss undertakes to postulate a NEW PARADIGM in literary studies. His contribution towards this NEW PARADIGM is furthermore considered in section 3.2.

In section 3.2.1 A 'NEW PARADIGM' FOR LITERARY HISTORY, the beginning and continuation of reception theory, and the concern that literary history has fallen into 'disfavour' are discussed as Jauss's main topics. He consequently looks at possible remedies for this situation, as it is his aim to help restore history to its rightful place, namely the centre of literary study, which necessitates a reconstituting of literary history. He wants to bring back the seemingly 'autonomous' literary work into the historical coherence

of literature, as it should once again be productively conceived as evidence of the social process. According to Jauss, Marxist and Formalist premises have to be reformed in order to present world literature as a process in which literature's social or perceptually formative function will be elucidated. In this respect he was influenced by Kosik's insight, that the historical essence of the work of art lies not only in its representational or expressive function but also in its influence play an important role. It is argued that it is this very aspect which provides Jauss with the motivation for incorporating the READER into his conception of literary history.

Jauss's belief that history and aesthetics must be united, explains his interest in the reception of a work by the reader, which includes a test of its aesthetic value in comparison with works which have already been read. This, then, is obviously where the HISTORICAL IMPLICATION comes into the picture. The readers who INCLUDE historical literary background ENRICH themselves from generation to generation and thus the historical significance of a work will be decided according to their acquired knowledge, AND according to the aesthetic value made evident. It will be argued that, seen in this light, literature indeed becomes meaningful, because it becomes a LINK and a source of meditation between PAST and PRESENT.

A RECONCILIATION between past and present is thus justified as literature mirrors an AESTHETIC CHARACTER and a SOCIAL

FUNCTION, both of which are indeed evident in past and present literary texts. To explain and at the same time support this idea, examples of the GAP between literature and history are discussed with reference to Flaubert's Madame Bovary. This then leads to another important topic, namely to the 'aesthetics of negativity' and the reintroduction of 'pleasure' in literature in section 3.2.2. In this section Jauss's widespread term 'horizon of expectations' will also be introduced. This expression released several problems, as it could not readily be understood. In this respect Holub (1984) refers to the notion of 'objectification'. The meaning of 'objectification' within this context should however possibly be explained in greater detail. What I believe is really meant with 'horizon of expectations', is that each reader is inextricably tied up with his own specific historical reality. Accordingly, the literary work concerned will elicit a particular horizon of expectations in his mind, i.e. the horizon will be made up of expectations RELATING to the PERIOD in which the relevant work of literature was WRITTEN by its author.

Jauss regards the reconstruction of the horizon of expectations of readers, as one of the most essential concerns of reception history, as it offers a means of attaining a more adequate understanding of the deviant and ever renewing character of literary texts.

Throughout the dissertation examples of this notion and its relevance will be provided together with examples from respective literary texts.

Another concern of Jauss is discussed, namely his concept of

aesthetic value. Although highly accomplished people may still argue on this debatable subject, Jauss sets out to throw some light on it. In this respect Flaubert's Madame Bovary serves as an example. Jauss, a.o. uses the illustration of the historical aesthetic DISTANCE between the NEGATIVE model and the VALUE of the work, which can, in terms of Jauss's 'horizon of expectations' be reconstructed according to each contemporary reader. With such texts, where the reader's viewpoint is influenced and shaped by the pertaining viewpoints of a particular historical public, this viewpoint can be brought back to life by a historical RECONSTRUCTION of the inherent values because the aesthetic value changes from generation to generation.

Although the reader's viewpoint is, to a certain extent, manipulated by the text the different viewpoints on one and the same text may be due to each reader's different horizon of expectations. This, however, need not be viewed in a negative light: it is argued that the value of the literary work is not lost because of this, but it can, in terms of Jauss's 'horizon of expectations' be MEANINGFULLY RECONSTRUCTED according to each contemporary reader. It thus draws our attention to the 'OPENNESS' of the literary text which is indeed a UNIQUE FEATURE of literature.

Attention is also drawn to Theodor Adorno's Aesthetic Theory (1970), in which Jauss displays a special interest and which, according to Jauss, reflects an inability to account for the artistic value of art, since its being caught up in

perpetual negativity. Light shall be thrown on Jauss's later work, in which he notices such on-sidedness of both the formalist idea of defamiliarized perception and their continuous pre-occupation with the literary text per se, as well as HIS OWN shortcomings on aesthetic distance and 'breaking of horizons of expectations'.

Turning to 'primary aesthetic experience' and the principle of 'pleasure' as constitutive of an interest in art throughout the ages, it is his ambition to restore primary aesthetic experience to its 'rightful domain'.

As an inquiry into this problem, the celebrated writer Roland Barthes's The Pleasure of the Text as well as Julia Kristeva's Desire in Language shall be investigated.

As far as the 'pleasure deriving from the text is concerned', Jauss criticizes Barthes's 'negative aesthetics' which supports only the pleasure of the scholars in 'writerly' texts, whilst not taking into account the pleasure of the general or common reader in 'readerly' texts. An explanation of Barthes's terms such as 'readerly' and 'writerly' texts will be provided in later chapters. As far as an aesthetic attitude is concerned, Jauss, after having been highly critical of his former work, now realizes the necessity of including a DISTANCING of the OBSERVER from the observed i.e. the OBJECT. It shall be argued that the aesthetic distancing is rightfully seen as a CREATIVE ACT of CONSCIOUSNESS.

It is rather interesting to note that Kant views this "a mo-

ment between subject and object in which MAN acquires an INTEREST in his DISINTERESTEDNESS" (Groeben on Kant, 1977: 32). In section 3.2.3 DIFFERENT ACCENTS in reception theory shall be shown to result from the fact that Jauss's 'aesthetics of experience', as part of his critique against 'aesthetics of negativity' failed to elicit the same kind of 'revolutionary response' as did his two 'manifesto papers'. This may (partly) be attributed to the fact that students no longer concerned themselves to be participating in 'theoretical revolution'.

Under the heading 3.3, section 3.3 1, I shall attempt to illustrate Iser's explanation of the reader's role as 'textual structure' into that of 'structured act'. It will also be pointed out that although Iser stated that the IMPLIED READER is a construct which should not be identified in any way with a 'real reader', he is not thereby ignoring 'real recipients' of literary texts. As this seems to be an apparent contradiction, of 'abstract' versus 'real' in his concept of the 'implied reader', it will be necessary to quote Iser extensively on the manner in which the dual characterization of the 'implied reader' as both 'textual structure' and 'structured act' informs the role intended for 'real' recipients of literary texts.

In section 3.3.2, the act of reading will be highlighted, with an explanation of Wolfgang Iser's phenomenological approach to the reading process. He observes that in considering a literary work one should take into account not only

the actual TEXT but also the ACTIONS involved in RESPONDING to the TEXT. These ACTIONS will be discussed in terms of READER ACTIVITY. This leads to the process of concretization which is brought about by TRANSFER of the text to the reader. This transfer is initiated by the reader's literary competence i.e. by the 'implied reader'. It is, however, the actual or real reader who 'takes over' to concretize the physical text as an aesthetic object.

Although the PROCESS of concretization by the reader of the physical artefact into an aesthetic object is one of the main tenets of this thesis, a substantial part of the discussions will be devoted to other contemporary theories, despite the fact that their methods may have fallen into disuse. The Russian formalists, for example, have made a substantial contribution NOT ONLY to Russian literary study. Their focus on basic problems relating to the study of literature, the definition of the literary object in differential terms, their basis for a systematic approach to literature and the formulation of theoretical principles for literary historiography have a continuing influence on contemporary theories. Many of the Russian formalist hypotheses on these theoretical aspects have been 'taken over' by recent literary movements. Russian Formalism and New Criticism especially (and other literary approaches), significantly influenced German literary movements in the period following the Second World War. The methodological principles of Structuralism were absorbed and transformed into other literary movements such as semiotics, reception

aesthetics, deconstruction, neo Marxism and 'neo'-psycho-analysis. As far as the new critics are concerned Wolfgang Iser who was a scholar of English literature, was influenced by the new critic's technique of 'close reading', and their notion of the uniquely structured nature of the autonomous literary work, which is regarded as a dynamic interaction of unresolved and resolved tensions and incongruities. The autonomy of the literary work which requires a separation from both its origins, (poet/author) and its consequent effect (reader) draws attention to the important quality of structural cohesion in a literary text. It is this structural cohesion which is regarded as "a unity, coherence, a whole" (Wellek 1982: 102). Literature, consequently, does not (only) have a pragmatic function but it should deliver a 'deeper insight into reality'.

In a survey Wellek (1982) maintains that the new critics still confirmed various basic insights with regard to literature and literary study. It is argued in this thesis that the art of close reading draws emphatic attention to the fact that the study of literature should concern itself not ONLY with the literary TEXT, but also, and this in EQUAL measure, with the READER of the literary text, i.e. the reader in the act of RESPONDING to the text, thus affording a 'deeper insight into reality'. Taking this into consideration, it will furthermore be deduced that the literary work has both an ARTISTIC POLE, and an AESTHETIC POLE. The artistic pole being the author's text setting into motion the 'realization' by the reader, which implies an INTERACTION

between the two poles.

In this respect, both Kant and Iser will be quoted to support discussions on the DYNAMIC INTERACTION between TEXT and READER, or reader and text, as one entity seems as important as the other.

It is felt that critical judgements are individual and therefore SUBJECTIVE in nature. It will thus be argued that it is not only the individuality or the individual horizon of expectations (my 'storehouse of knowledge') of the reader which lends itself to different judgements of one and the same text, but it is the TEXT itself which also 'invites' the reader to different judgements, as the "relative indeterminacy of a text allows a spectrum of actualizations" (Iser, 1978: 24 underlined M.W.).

Although different judgements on one and the same text may lead to confusion, this fact nevertheless, once again, points to the most characteristic feature of literature, namely the OPENNESS of the text, which, it is argued, confirms that a 'gliding signifier' cannot be arrested, unless the text is factual i.e. historical or in the form of a report. These texts have, of course, nothing in common with an ARTISTIC TEXT.

Iser's argument that an IDEAL reader (Eco) would have to have an IDENTICAL code to that of the author, and that this would be a 'structural impossibility' can only be supported as being logical. However, Iser's MODEL reader seems to be

something of a PROJECTION of the IDEAL reader.

According to Iser the IMPLIED reader embodies all predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect: predispositions laid down, not only by an empirical outside reality, but by the TEXT ITSELF. "Consequently, the implied reader as a concept "has his roots firmly planted in the literary text" (Iser, 1978: 34). This shall be discussed in greater detail in chapter 3 section 3.3.2.

Although Iser regards 'open' texts as truly significant, it seems rather contradictory that he simultaneously maintains that a 'singularity' of a text could be termed as 'aesthetics of identity'. This subject shall lead to a discussion on Barthes's differentiation between 'readerly' and 'writerly' texts, which will then proceed with a more detailed investigation into the different readers for the PURPOSE of INVESTIGATION into the nature of reception aesthetics and their preoccupation with the reading process. Once again the characteristics and role of the IMPLIED reader who, because of his knowledgeability, and literary competence is THE most important reader, shall be discussed, as well as the PRESENTED OBJECT, namely the physical artistic text i.e. certain perspective ways of representation.

As already indicated above, chapter 4 shall concern itself with THE READER'S PERCEPTION OF THE LITERARY TEXT, how the meaning is produced and what effect literature can have on the reader during the PROCESS of READING.

Section 4 starts by providing a brief introduction to an ENCOUNTER WITH A MODERN TEXT, with supporting examples taken from a novel reflecting cultural crisis, namely J.M. Coetzee's In the Heart of the Country.

As time brings about rapid and radical social change which will eventually affect the nature of disciplines that reflect society, NEW ACCENTS (paradigms) are needed to accommodate modern thinking. However, as already mentioned previously, I shall try to show, with various examples from literary texts, that the 'traditional' or 'inherited theories' can be successfully incorporated with 'modern' literary inquiries.

In section 4.2.3 I therefore attempt to provide analyses in TERMS OF DIFFERENT LITERARY THEORIES. In terms of reception aesthetics, I shall attempt to show how a reader who is familiar with, and has studied literary theories is able to 'decode', and therefore make sense of, the signals set by the narrator, even in such a difficult, sensational plot as J.M. Coetzee's In the Heart of the Country. Then, to use Jauss's term, the actual reader turns the otherwise cold, paper and ink text into an aesthetic object through interaction with the text. It is understood, however, that this actual reader is an informed reader in the sense of his having reacted to textual signals during a structured act of reading as outlined by Iser. To put it another way: the function of Iser's 'implied reader', as a (textual) instruction to a real reader, has been complied with.

In chapter five (5) it will be argued that a materialist theoretician like Terry Eagleton, in his re-reading of Sons and Lovers, attempts to illustrate how the conduct of a character like Mr Morel could be better understood if a PSYCHOANALYTICAL reading was to be complemented with a MATERIALIST analysis. Other texts such as Henry James's ambiguous story The Turn of the Screw also come under the 'spotlight'.

Section 5.2 concerns itself with POETIC LANGUAGE, taking as a point of departure Jakobson's notion that the poetic function entails language used in its AESTHETIC FUNCTION.

Views on certain aspects of poetic language are examined in this section, such as the recognition and function of METAPHOR. Various theorists in the antique teaching e.g. Quintilianus (c.A.C.35-c.100 Marcus Fabius) as well as the contemporary theories of the philosophers Max Black (1962) and I.A. Richards (1936) are discussed with reference to examples of poetic texts. Examples of the COMPLEXITIES brought about by SYMBOLICAL implications evident in the poem Schwarze Milch ... , in comparison with a few lines taken from Lament For a Dead Cow should adequately show up such complexities.

Furthermore different referents and associations may suggest themselves and by indeterminacy contribute DEPTH and COMPLEXITY SIMULTANEOUSLY. In this light several lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet 73, That time of year..., which have been subjected to a 'close reading' by William Empson (1965)

in his Seven Types of Ambiguity will be critically analysed in terms of a comparison between this Sonnet and Keat's Ode to Autumn. In this respect I shall also argue that 'image building' (the projection of forms awakened by the signals in the literary text) release the quality of imagination in the perceptive reader.

From the foregoing analysis it should be clear that the READER'S RESPONSES are triggered by particular TEXTUAL STRATEGIES, notably the employment of language in its aesthetic function (Jakobson), which are found in the use of metaphors, symbols and/or sound effects. By quoting and critically analysing these poems it will furthermore be argued that, if the artistic devices are comprehended and perceived by the reader for what they are, the reader can actually be drawn into the poetic text emotionally.

Throughout the thesis it will be shown in different examples that the poetic text WITHOUT the reader's PARTICIPATION would serve no purpose, as it will then remain an inert object only, to use Louise Rosenblatt's (1978) expression 'a cold paper and ink script'. It is only through the reader's recognition of poetic devices set as signals by the poet that the text can be perceived and understood correctly.

Because of the importance of the narrative TRANSACTION, section 5.3 is devoted to an investigation of the INTERACTION between TEXT and reader, referring back to examples and observations regarding J.M. Coetzee's In the Heart of the.

Country (discussed in section 4.2). These will be complemented with references to textual strategies which have a bearing on the NARRATIVE TRANSACTION. Without trying to provide a detailed account of various aspects of narrative structure, a closer look will be taken at Alan Paton's Close to the Sun, 1979, bearing in mind, Iser's observation that part of the reader's role requires a 'travelling' through the text in exploring 'various textual perspectives' represented by, for example, the narrator or various characters.

TEXTUAL STRATEGIES and typical poetic and narrative texts explained thus, will lead to an explanation of DRAMATIC COMMUNICATION in the following section.

In section 5.4 an account of aspects concerning the NATURE and CATEGORY OF DRAMATIC COMMUNICATION will be provided with an illustration from Shakespeare's dramatic text Macbeth in Peter Alexander's (1974) Complete Works of Shakespeare.

There will be a conclusion (section 6) in which the premise of this thesis, namely the investigation into the NATURE OF AESTHETIC PERCEPTION and an investigation into BOTH the LITERARY text AND THE READER will be summarized.

Although an investigation into old and new literary disciplines obviously involves omissions and perhaps even oversimplifications, I shall try to show the importance of an investigation into the nature of the reader TOGETHER with the text.

It is an acknowledged fact that NEW EMPHASES in literary investigation are essential, to accommodate 'modern thinking'. Inquiries into the literary phenomenon can and should however, include critical discussions of relevant old theories. I shall attempt to provide a COMBINED investigation, and simultaneously introduce the READER together with the TEXT. However, the reader's aesthetic perception, which is intimately linked to the READING PROCESS, is one of my main tenets of inquiry.

With this study the validity of such a transaction as is evident between READER and TEXT will hopefully be provided.

2 TEXT AND SUBJECT ORIENTED THEORIES

2.1 RUSSIAN FORMALISM

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Russian Formalism originated in 1915-1916. It reached its peak in the early twenties and was suppressed about 1930 for political reasons. The duration of its existence was short, but whilst its emergence defiantly challenged the critical tenets of its immediate predecessors, its: "...decline represented a hasty retreat before the onslaught of victorious successors" (Erlich, 1965: 19).

The Russian formalists were strongly influenced by their reaction against Positivism and Symbolism. It was the conflict with Marxism which put an end to the movement.

Since the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian literary criticism was characterized by marked ANTIAESTHETIC PREJUDICE, as literature was regarded as being primarily a political propaganda medium. The mainly sociologically oriented critics were only interested in formal characteristics, to the extent to which these had to show up the convincing power of political messages in the work. However, the Russian formalists did not attribute a great importance to the social context of a political message, as they strongly emphasized the importance of the LITERARY WORK as being the FOCUS of literary study. It would appear, then, that only the 'textual' part of the 'pact' between text and

reader was taken into account by the formalists. However, a scrutiny of their concepts soon reveals that such an understanding would not do justice to their project.

Russian Formalism as a school was officially launched by the founding of two discussion groups:

1. A group of students formed the MOSCOW LINGUISTIC CIRCLE in 1915
2. Several Petersburg linguists and literary historians founded the SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF POETIC LANGUAGE, soon to be known as OPOJAZ in 1916

As these groups could not exchange views easily as there was no central meeting-place or umbrella organisation, diversity of opinion amongst the representatives of this 'formal method' was fostered from the very beginning. In spite of the two groups' friendly relations, their views on literature differed on certain important aspects. It is precisely in this diversity that one is able to glimpse an awareness of the reader's perceptive faculties.

The then almost twenty-year old linguist Roman Jakobson, chairman of the Moscow group argued that poetry was fully definable in linguistic terms as a manifestation of language in its aesthetic function. Representatives of OPOJAZ, like Viktor Sklovskij and Boris Ejxenbaum, held that poetry does not entirely represent an artistic reprocessing of linguistic material. Hence the concept of defamiliarization was not

entirely restricted to literariness, in the sense of 'language made strange', but it also presumed 'heightened perception' on the part of the reader. As far as the autonomy of art forms was concerned the groups also differed. Whereas the Moscow group believed that the historical development of artistic forms has a sociological basis, the Petersburg group maintained that the artistic forms are totally autonomous. Again, seemingly a fluctuation between texts as autonomous objects on the one hand, and texts linked to (sociologically definable) readers on the other hand.

In order to focus upon their explicit theorizing of the literary text, with traces of an awareness of reader perception at least implied, it is necessary to discuss some of their salient concepts. Accordingly, concepts such as literariness and defamiliarization: and *sjuzet* and *fabula* will be briefly outlined below.

2.1.2 SOME FORMALIST CONCEPTS

The Russian formalists made a great contribution towards the definition of genres. They studied the general characteristics of literary texts rather than individual works of literature. They mainly preoccupied themselves with LITERARINESS which means with the TYPICAL and GENERAL characteristics of literary texts. This preoccupation with literariness led to a particular awareness of GENRE, namely to that of poetry and narrative prose. They believed that a distinction can be made between poetic and prose-texts on the basis of

their respective genre-markers and that poetry is transformed into foregrounded language. The task of the literary student is hence to study the interaction and coherence between the foregrounded and automatized devices.

It follows that for the formalists, the meaning or message of a literary text is to be found not without - but WITHIN the text. As will be argued below, it would appear that it is incumbent upon the poetry reader to focus upon defamiliarized language. The distinction between fabula and sjuzet in narrative also highlights the artistic organization of literary texts. SJUZET in formalist theory is a concept which has both a formal and a semantic aspect, whereas FABULA is the product of a higher level of abstraction: SJUZET is the TRANSFORMED story element or the created form derived from the FABULA. The Russian formalists draw the readers' attention to the INTERNAL relations of the literary texts and demand a CLOSE study of the text medium. The writer/author becomes unimportant, and the existence of literature is regarded as the REALITY of the literary text. The traditional superiority of the relation between the text and reality in the sense of literature being merely a reflection of reality, is also minimized because the Russian formalist view acknowledges only the existence of literature, ignoring the literary FIGURES.

The AUTONOMY of the text was stressed, which means that literature governs itself, it has in fact, its personal freedom. The formalists' differentiation of literariness rests

ultimately in the poet's distinctive USE of language. This meant that as far as literary analysis was concerned their interest was, for instance, not so much in the presence of images, but in the USE to which images were put. Images and other literary devices such as phonetic patterns, rhyme, rhythm, metre and the use of sound were not there to represent sense, but these were taken as meaningful elements in their own right. Shklovsky assigned them to ONE central use namely that of 'making strange': OSTRANENIE. According to Shklovsky the essential function of poetic art is to counteract the process of habituation encouraged by routine everyday modes of perception; in other words, we cease to 'see' the world we live in and become anaesthetized to its distinctive features. It therefore becomes the task of poetry (literature) to REVERSE the process from familiarization to DEFAMILIARIZATION. That with which we are familiar is to be CREATIVELY deformed.

Clearly, it is here then, that the traces of an awareness of READER INVOLVEMENT may be seen. The norm, that which is normal or usual, is to be made unusual, abnormal. The poet thus aims to disrupt familiar responses and to heighten awareness considerably, creating therewith a NEW reality. This new reality replaces the old one which we have inherited and which has become familiar to us. From this we now recognize that Russian Formalism predates the Brechtian concept of 'alienation' (Verfremdung), whereby the object of art is shown to be revolutionary. The audience is made aware that the social institutions and norms inherited may not at

all be eternal and 'natural' but historical and therefore MAN-MADE. Because they are man-made, they are historical, and therefore CHANGEABLE BY MAN, through human action. 'Making Strange' (Ostranenie) was therefore not only a central preoccupation, and a main characteristic of Formalism, but it remained a central concept long after the demise of Russian Formalism as a movement. The formalist preoccupation with defamiliarizing techniques is shown in the fact that much of formalist analysis consists of accounts of various means whereby Ostranenie takes place. These also constitute an account of the structural means by which literariness can be recognized and distinguished from other ways of linguistic communication. In comparison with 'ordinary' language, according to the formalists, literary language not only MAKES strange, but IS strange. Techniques which act as agencies of literariness are called PRIEM. These techniques (priem) which act as the agencies of literariness constitute the basis of literary art, the aim towards which all elements of literature are organized, and the standard by which they are to be judged. It follows that these devices or agencies of literariness would be the reader's point of entry into the literary text.

It is important that for the formalists, poetic language is perceived as being deliberately SELF-CONSCIOUS, SELF-AWARE: poetic language is THE medium which contains the message. It characteristically draws attention to ITSELF and systematically intensifies its own linguistic qualities. These aforementioned features of literature dis-

tinguished by Formalism, which are to a certain extent also shared by New Criticism, highlight the belief that POETIC WORDS are not just the vehicles for thoughts, but that they are indeed objects in their own right, AUTONOMOUS CONCRETE ENTITIES, which 'speak' for themselves and result in a preoccupation with the text per se. How the literary qualities of the text should be defined, was their DOMINANT issue.

Roman Jakobson defines this principle thus:

The distinctive feature of poetry lies in the fact that a word is perceived as a word and not merely a proxy for the denoted object or an outburst of an emotion, that words and their arrangement, their meaning, their outward and inward form acquire weight and value of their own.

(Erlich on Jakobson, 1965: 183; underlined M.W.)

However, the meaning of A is not simply A1 or A2 or A3, for A is to be evaluated from the particular CONTEXT wherein it is found. Poetry, for example does not separate a word from its meaning, or the range of meanings available to it. Poetic use of a word makes ambiguity a notable feature, and it is this fact that alters its structural role, in the case of the formalists, to heighten its defamiliarized and thus poetic qualities.

In the words of Terry Eagleton:

To think of literature as the formalists do is

really to think of all literature as poetry.

(Eagleton, 1983: 6)

2.1.3 CONCLUSION

For our purposes it is important to note the formalist contribution to both a definition of the distinctive features of literature; and, by implication, the means whereby reader involvement is triggered by ingenious defamiliarization techniques. An INTERACTION between TEXT and READER, with the main emphasis on textual features, is indicated.

2.2 NEW CRITICISM

2.2.1 INTRODUCTION

The new critics, who started their activities in the thirties and lasted to the late fifties, were first of all determined to do away with 'dead lumber and its weeds', namely with old theories. However, that which they have in common with the Russian formalists in particular is the insistence on the AUTONOMOUS nature of poetic language, and hence of the 'close reading' of poetic texts. The meaning of the poetic text is to be found in the TEXT itself and not outside. Thus both movements advocated an INSTRINSIC rather than an EXSTRINSIC approach to literature. The new critics differ from the Russian formalists in that their APPROACH is more sociologically-humanistically and empirically oriented. This means that the new critics believe that literature

should occupy itself with human existence. They are primarily concerned with the MEANING of a literary work, as well as with the attitude, tone, emotions and even the world view implied by the literary text.

Although the Russian formalists' ideas generally had an influence on all literary theories of the 20th century, showing some similarity in this regard to the new critics, the change of course in literary scholarship should perhaps be mainly attributed to the formalists' emphasis on literariness and the aesthetic poetic function of literature. A more scientific approach was thereby forced upon students of literature. The contribution towards such an approach which was more scientific, was due to the terminology of narrative and poetic theory and due to the concept of literary devices with their defamiliarizing effects. It is this emphasis of language as the text medium, together with the accompanying departure from a norm, which constitute problems which are still of central significance to the LATEST theories. It can therefore be said that Russian Formalism affects some of the PRINCIPAL TENETS in twentieth century theory. However, in the Anglo-American world New Criticism, with its comparable insistence on the AUTONOMY of the literary work, equally dominated literary studies for decades. So strong was their influence that, in fact, Wolfgang Iser's indebtedness to CLOSE READING i.e. 'gapfilling' in his terminology is often pointed out by his detractors.

2.2.2 NEW CRITICISM AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO LITERARY THEORY

The greatest contribution to literary theory, especially to poetic criticism of the English-speaking world, can undoubtedly be attributed to the Anglo-American new critics. They did not originate from Russian Formalism and Structuralism although they shared some important characteristics with them.

Precursors included I. Babbitt, T.E. Hulme and J.E. Spingarn. T.S. Eliot who is another precursor and theorist of New Criticism, propagated his ideas by distancing himself from the subjectivistic older socialistic critique. He demanded to free literary criticism from its chains of psychologism and subjectivism:

The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together. ... Those who demand of the poet a definite code of morals or manners, the ready-made standards of any society, however great, that is bounded by space or time ... seem to me to show their incompetence as critics.

(Eliot 1953: 302; underlined M.W.)

T.S. Eliot thus views art as an 'object which is no longer purely personal', and by doing so, he rejects the demands of

psychologic and biographic interpretations. His view that those who demand of the poet a DEFINITE code of morals, show their incompetence as critics, can only be strongly supported. It is clear that, not unlike the formalists, the new critics stress the fact that NOT the poet, nor the poet's psychology and view of life is of importance, but the LITERARY WORK ITSELF. Accordingly, the viewpoint of the critic is NOT to be focused on the condition of the creation but on its poetic RESULT. His critical ability lies in the ability to analyse closely and elucidate the texts:

... the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular MEDIUM, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and expressions and experiences combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality.

(Eliot, 1953: 9)

Eliot therefore calls the creative role of the poet the 'impersonal theory of poetry'. For Terry Eagleton (1983: 47), such emphasis on the uniqueness of poetry, especially as regards the American new critics of an economically backward South, amounted to:

the ideology of an uprooted, defensive intelligentsia who reinvented in literature what they

could not locate in reality. Poetry was the new religion, a nostalgic haven from the alienations of industrial capitalism. The poem itself was as opaque to rational enquiry as the Almighty himself: it existed as a self-enclosed object, mysteriously intact in its own unique being. The poem was that which could not be paraphrased, expressed in a language other than itself: each of its parts was folded in on the others in a complete organic unity which it would be a kind of blasphemy to violate.

(Eagleton, 1983: 47)

Despite the emphasis on the INTERNAL COHERENCE of poetry, the new critics were, unlike the Russian formalists and structuralists, HUMANISTICALLY and EMPIRICALLY oriented. This means that literature should express human existence more fully than technology and science, constituting a form of knowledge gained from experience. Human characteristics are to be found in poetic wisdom, in the uniqueness of literature and NOT in isolation. By implication a close reading of poetry should reveal such unique penetration of humanistic values as these are uniquely expressed in coherently structured poems.

BOTH Formalism and New Criticism emphasize the central importance of the STRUCTURE, its internal significance, and the internal interdependence of literary elements. Neither of these movements contributed any dependence on the author, nor on a historical context, but treated literary texts as

truly AUTONOMOUS entities. Whereas the new critics believed that poetry could reveal human existence and the deeper meaning of reality, the schools of Formalism and Structuralism minimized the relationship between text and reality, because they believed that literature originated from other works of literature and not from non-literary sources, hence the rejection and lack of any social dimension in their conception of literature, and hence the negative marxist criticism of these movements.

2.2.3 CONCLUSION

Despite objections that would later be raised by marxist, structuralist and post-structuralist theorists, a positive influence of the new critics on literary theory cannot be denied, as they rendered a lasting contribution to the development of literary theory by producing highly ingenious analyses and interpretations of literary texts. Thus they inadvertently demonstrated the significance of ingenious readings and (by implication) they also realized the necessity of competent readers. This emphasis on detailed CLOSE READINGS of individual works is in direct contrast with the formalist-structuralist theories that were mainly centred on the general characteristics of literary texts. New Criticism has had a great influence on twentieth-century philosophy of literature. The literary theories, discussed up to now, have of course, been superseded by more recent approaches in literary theories whose emphasis has shifted from object to subject. But even in these text-oriented theories there were

already indications of an awareness of the ROLE OF THE READING subject i.e. the READER. Later, Barthes's definition of reading enjoyment would add a particular flavour to the intricate 'pleasure' of reading.

The implied dialectic between text-oriented and so-called 'subject'-related views shows that the origination of any new theory is at least partly influenced by earlier theories, and at the same time it points to future theories of literature.

2.3 STRUCTURALIST LINGUISTICS AND SEMIOTICS OF LITERATURE

2.3.1 INTRODUCTION:

THE SWISS LINGUIST FERDINAND DE SAUSSURE AND THE LINGUISTIC PARADIGM IN LITERARY STUDIES

Semiotics refers to the study of signs, as the science investigating signs, sign systems and semantic processes. The word SEMIOTICS derives from the Greek SEMEION which means SIGN. For contemporary literary theory, the work of two eminent semioticians is important, namely that of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce.

Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist in Europe, began a study quite independently from Charles Sanders Peirce in America.

Such terms as semiology and semiotics both refer to the SCIENCE OF SIGNS. Semiology was coined by Saussure, whilst semiotics is associated with Peirce. The more general term

of these is semiotics, which includes Saussure's semiology. There are two main trends in semiotics:

1. the work of Peirce, which was developed independently of linguistics,
and
2. the work of Saussure, which incorporates the linguistic model into semiotic studies.

It is the task of semiotics to study the potential communicative function, namely the relation between:

sender → sign → recipient

the relation of this communicative function being of focal importance to the interaction between text and reader, which forms the basis of the discussion of aesthetic perception in this study.

A sign is of vital importance as it emits with precise intention its own meaning. The receiver, who has a mutual knowledge of conventions, decodes the message derived from the sign. This mutual knowledge shared by sender and recipient can, for example, be based on language or traffic signs. Decodification takes place in a specific way, for example if the traffic light is red, it means 'stop', if it is green, it means 'go'. A certain agreed upon association and convention must exist if the objects or events are to serve as signs. Only if associations are agreed upon, can these signs function communicatively. This also holds for the

interpretability of language and its particular sign system.

Although Saussure 'inherited' the TRADITIONAL VIEW, with its emphasis on a diachronic or historic dimension of language study in which the separate meanings of words could supposedly be adequately defined, his contribution to the study of language is found to be in the REJECTION of the substantive view of the subject in favour of the relational one. From a series of lectures which he delivered, it is recorded in the COURS DE LINGUISTIQUE GENERALE, at the University of Geneva between *1906 and 1911 that:

... language should be studied, not only in terms of its individual parts, and not only diachronically, but also in terms of the relationship between those parts, and synchronically: that is in terms of its current adequacy.

(DeSaussure, *1978 reprint : 20)

He thus regarded language as a system of signs which should be approached SYNCHRONICALLY, meaning in synchronical order as a complete system in a chain of linguistic concurrences or events at a specific stage in its development.

Literary Structuralism is essentially informed by Saussure's notions. Disregarding the diachronical approach of chronological, historical order of time, the historic-determined phase of language, a linguistic structuralistic approach to the study of literary texts was adopted, looking at literary works as SYSTEMS of SIGNS at a given point in time and

capable of independent scrutiny.

2.3.2 A VIEW OF LANGUAGE CONCEPTION AS A SYSTEM OF SIGNS

A Saussurean adopted approach to literary study involves a systematic approach to literature based on a number of Saussurean concepts. In this regard, one should keep in mind that one of Saussure's most important or primary concepts concerned the notion that language should be studied as a SYSTEM OF SIGNS. One pair of concepts from structuralist linguistics which is relevant to literary semiotics, is the division of the linguistic sign into signifier and signified. The intricate relationship between signifiers and signifieds can only be revealed by application of a structural analysis of the linguistic system. For Saussure, a number of concepts are relevant in this regard:

1. the differentiation between 'la langue', 'la parole', and 'le langage'
2. the distinct differentiation between diachronical and synchronical language study
3. the definition of linguistic meaning
4. the differentiation between associative and syntagmatic relationships in language
5. the distinct limits between content and linguistic signification and value

AND

6. the description of concrete and abstract units
of language.

In view of this language conception as a system of signs, the speaker of a language does NOT independently convey meaning to his utterance, because the speaker's utterance is determined by the linguistic system, and NOT by the direct utterance of the speaker. To understand this, one has to keep in mind Saussure's distinction between abstract system(s) and concrete manifestations of such systems: langage is linguistic potential, langue is a language-system and parole is individual utterance (Scholes, 1976: 14). In order to study the language system rather than the individual utterances in isolation, Saussure defined the linguistic sign in terms of the conventionally agreed upon relations that hold between signifier (sound-image) and the signified (its meaning or concept). It is, then, especially Saussure's distinction between signifiant (signifier) and signifié (signified) that proved to be seminal to literary studies. The signifier and the signified make communication possible. This is what Saussure calls the LINGUISTIC SIGN. The relation between these two elements is arbitrary, and as such spontaneous, moved by natural feeling, willkuerlich, unumschraenkt, as 'arbitre' translated from French means FREE, related (in meaning) not by resemblance but by VIRTUE.

A relation between the utterance and the message is however unestablishable without the combination of the signifier and the signified. The interpretation thereof is, as already

mentioned arbitrary, and as such one is 'seemingly' left to one's own choice or understanding. This being the reason for different languages using different signs (signifiers) to explain the signified which eventually, by combination conveys the meaning. In this connection one can refer to the examples of different words for the same concept: the English word DAFFODIL and its Dutch and Afrikaans counterparts NARCIS and NARSING'.

As Susan van Zyl correctly points out:

It is the almost invariably arbitrary nature of the connection between signifier and signified (in the case of the linguistic sign) that is so important for linguistics because it reveals both the necessity and the necessary complexity of the conventions which can meaningfully connect signifiers and signifieds only in the context of the total set of distinctions making up that system.

(Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982: 68)

However, for poetics it is often the nature of 'natural' or motivated relationships between signifier and signified, or the ways in which this relationship can appear to be natural, that is important.

Icons, for instance, are quite different from signs. An icon, according to literal interpretation is an image, a statue, a painting, a mosaic and so on of a sacred (or not) personage, depending on the KIND of icon and in which sur-

roundings it appears. Depending on its surroundings it may be considered as sacred. In Saussurean terms the example of the icon would imply that a portrait must not only reflect the person of whom it is a portrait, but its RESEMBLANCE must be infinitely alike. The literary task is thus only successfully fulfilled, if in the sign proper, according to Saussure, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is conventional not by NATURAL LAW, but by RESEMBLANCE. Even then the meaning conveyed may be arbitrary. Saussure's broader distinction between 'langue' and 'parole' enables the literary semiotician to relate the specific realization of an individual sign in a semiotic domain, for example, a sonnet, to the underlying system i.e. the rules governing the sonnet form. The individual sonnet's MEANING is derived only from its CONNECTION with the underlying system. It can therefore only be critically analysed once the relationship between individual sign and system has been examined. The distinction between syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations and their joint function, namely that the meaning of any word in a sentence is determined both syntagmatically and paradigmatically, is important for this study, as language should be studied, not only in terms of its individual parts, and not only diachronically, but more so in terms of the relationship BETWEEN these parts, SYNCHRONICALLY. This means language should be studied in terms of its CURRENT adequacy: language should be studied as eine GESTALTEINHEIT, a unified 'field', a SELF-SUFFICIENT SYSTEM.

Culler summarizes the semiotic activity of the Saussurean

model accordingly:

The semiotician is attempting to make explicit the system (langue) which underlies and makes possible meaningful events (parole). He is concerned with the system as a functioning totality (synchronic analysis), not with the historical provenance of its various elements (diachronic analysis), and he must describe two kinds of relations: contrasts or oppositions between signs (paradigmatic relations) and possibilities of combination through which signs create larger units (syntagmatic relations).

(Culler, 1981: 22-23)

2.3.3 THE PEIRCIAN MODEL

In his definition of the concept SIGN, the American philosopher Charles S Peirce (1839-1914) emphasizes that a sign must be PERCEPTIBLE before it can FUNCTION as a sign, although the NATURE of perception, be it visual, or auditory, is not of importance.

On the basis of the relation between signifier and signified (Saussurean terms), Peirce's differentiation of THREE types of signs may be studied:

1. ICONS
2. INDEXES
- and
3. SYMBOLS

According to Peirce, there is a correspondence between an ICONIC SIGN and its object. This means that when the relation between sign and referent is characterized by a RESEM-

BLANCE, it is termed as an ICONIC RELATION, the sign is referred to as an ICON, hence the term ICONICITY, which establishes a key concept in literary theory. Iconic signs include objects such as maps, photographs and paintings, as they are all iconic signs which characterize that which derives from a CORRESPONDENCE between sign and denotatum. In literature the text of a poem may be printed out typographically in the shape of e.g. a pyramid, a tree, or a vase. (See the example provided in the Appendix at the end of the thesis).

An INDEXICAL relationship is usually of a causal kind. Thus the pointing finger is a signifier whose relationship to its signified is INDEXICAL in mode; and smoke is an INDEX of fire. Peirce's third category, the SYMBOLIC sign, closely resembles Saussure's understanding of the linguistic sign. Hawkes (1977: 129) states that in the Peircian SYMBOL the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary, in that "there is no inherent, necessary 'tree-like' quality in the signifier 'tree' (or 'arbre', or 'Baum') for the concept of tree".

2.3.4 UMBERTO ECO'S EMPHASIS OF 'SIGN FUNCTION'

According to Fokkema and Kunne-Ibsch (1977: 169) the Italian semiotician Umberto Eco represented a "branch of semiotics which has been influential in the field of literary studies". For the purpose of studying the nature of aesthetic perception, it is especially the following aspects of Eco's

semiotic enterprise which are relevant:

1. The active roles of sender and recipient as members of a certain community are strongly emphasized.
2. The literary text per se, as not being isolated from other texts, but included amongst cultural objects can be subjected to semiotic study.

In replacing the concept of sign with that of sign-function, Eco (1976) stresses the dynamic characteristic of signs, thereby contrasting his exploration of semiotics with both Saussure's static conception of the sign and Peirce's taxonomical approach to semiotics. He does not conceive of the sign as a fixed semiotic entity (agreed upon by convention as in Saussure's notion), but sees it rather as the meeting ground for independent elements where both fixed denotative meanings and 'weaker' connotations are functional. It follows that the sign function is the result of the interaction of various codes. This 'sign function', as Eco calls it, namely the dynamic character of the sign, makes it possible to examine the flexibility and creativity of language. Hence it is literature in particular which requires a flexible response because of its dynamic character, its unique nature being:

...made out of arbitrary and conventional signs, literature ... in employing specific organizing principles has presumed the role of representing complex, not yet objectifiable phenomena which

warrant a flexible response.

(Fokkema & Kunne-Ibsch, 1977: 168; underlined M.W.)

According to Ryan and Van Zyl (1982), Eco's emphasis of the unique nature of the AESTHETIC FUNCTION and the attendant condition of meaning in literature is a continuation of a semiostructuralist tradition in literature. As this tradition highlights the study of a literary SYSTEM, the question of the literariness of literary texts and the phenomena that could characterize the nature of the literary system, receive attention. Here, the Russian formalist concept of literariness is dealt with from a linguistic angle as the distinctive nature of literary language is examined:

As the distinctiveness of a mode of meaning was believed to be located in the nature of its particular sign system, emphasis fell upon what constituted the literary use of language, i.e. the kind of language, used, which is commonly called "literary".

(Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982 :69)

As far as this is concerned, the formalist distinction between poetic and standard language is of importance for semiotic studies:

1. The defamiliarization effect is achieved when poetic language purposefully and systematically deviates from standard language (Sklovskij).
2. The peculiar nature of the poetic function is

explained in terms of a communication model
(Jakobson).

In semiotic terms, Jakobson's definition of the poetic function means that the AESTHETIC SIGN inclines to be ICONIC, subsequently drawing attention to the sign itself:

...it draws attention to, or 'foregrounds' itself,
emphasizing its own shapes and beauties as code.

Instead of being primarily a vehicle for information, the aesthetic object may be seen as having a meaning in and for itself: its deviant encoding procedures emerging as both intentional and systematic.

(Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982: 70; underlined, M.W.)

The Jakobsonian recognition and emphasis on an organized and deliberate foregrounding of the code itself became a key concept in semiotics. Umberto Eco (1976) built on such traditional semiotic notions of aesthetic encoding by characterizing the literary text as not only self-focusing but also ambiguous. Hence the importance of AMBIGUITY in literary texts signals, for the reader, the aesthetic experience since it alerts him to the flexibility of the language used. One should keep in mind here Iser's concept of indeterminacy, which involves the reader's attempted decoding of ambiguity in literary texts - 'gaps' that could be interpreted in different ways by different readers. Eco maintains that as a result of the foregrounding of the code, an unusual, rather complex kind of perception is activated in the

reader. This rather complex perception, then forces the reader to re-evaluate the literary content, and hence experience the world in a way which was hitherto unknown.

In A Theory of Semiotics (1976) Eco argues that a general theory of semiotics should include a theory of signification AND a theory of communication. The former entails a theory of codes, whilst the latter requires a theory of sign production. In The Role of the Reader (1979) he investigates the reader from a semiotic perspective.

Eco regards the reader of literature as a 'model reader'. In his view the author regards the reader as being capable of discovering the meaning of the artistic text. This type of reader functions as a logical rather than a psychological category. This means that he (the reader) is a projection of an 'ideal' reader rather than a reference to an actual reader.

A differentiation is made between two types of texts, namely:

1. 'open' texts
- and
2. 'closed' texts

An 'open' literary text with its essentially ambiguous nature, is usually 'open', because the reader is expected to participate in the author's multi-level project. The ideal open-text-reader is described or defined in terms of the lexical and syntactic organisation of the text. This implies

that he must have the necessary qualifications to decode the text according to the rules 'laid down by the text itself'.

A closed text is a text which aims at evoking a predictable response from an average reader. This 'closed' text is however, simultaneously, paradoxically 'open', as the author supposes that it can reach anybody.

Although reception aesthetics also concerns itself with this phenomenon, (see later discussions on this subject), it may be regarded a classic semiotic approach, since Eco's version of aesthetic coding is based on textual characteristics.

2.3.5 THE SEMIOTICS OF LOTMAN

Despite the exciting possibilities for READER PARTICIPATION inherent in Eco's semiotic project, the social or historical contexts of the literary text were not adequately accounted for, since his account of aesthetic coding, based as it is on textual features, is still a classically semiotic one, informed by Saussurean and Jakobsonian views of the literary text. The distinctive nature of literary language is described in terms of inherent linguistic or structural characteristics. However, in Eastern Europe both the formalists and members of the Prague School avoided the extremes of an abstract synchronic approach. As early as the 1920s Russian semioticians like Mikhail Bakhtin and Volosinov questioned the non-evaluative (if not totally ahistorical) position represented by Jakobson. It was Volosinov who assured a dialectic position, studying the INTERACTION

between LANGUE and PAROLE instead of the LANGUE only, and the interaction between the sign system and the social situation, instead of the inherent logic of the system as such. This is also a typical approach of the Moscow-Tartu group, which was established in 1960. The group of literary semioticians were influenced by the work of linguists in the study of the control system in electronic computers (cybernetics), and by various formalists, whose work had become available through discussion and reissues after the Party had been sharply criticized as being a 'vulgar sociology'. The representatives of the Moscow-Tartu School were interested not only in the structure of sign systems, but also in their origin and in their relation to external reality. This interest in the sign and its origin and relation to external reality points to a central issue in literary semiotics, namely whether it is at all possible to investigate, and pay attention:

...to both the intrinsic, relational meanings governing a sign-system and to its place in a socio-historical environment.

(Lucid, 1977; quoted by Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982: 74)

The most appropriate answer to this question is represented in the work of the Russian literary semiotician Juriij M. Lotman, since he focuses on questions central to literary theory: "the nature of poetic language, the nature and structure of the artistic text and the relationship between text and context" (Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982: 75).

One of the most notable features of Lotman's concept of the literary sign is to be found in his definition of ICONICITY. In his view, "the signs in art are not based on arbitrary convention, but have an iconic, representing character" (quoted by Fokkema & Kunne-Ibsch, 1977: 41). He thus uses the concept of iconicity to ascribe the difference between standard language and literary language to the function of ICONICITY in literature, which finds its manifestation in the REFLECTION of the text in its FORMAL elements.

Lotman argues that information which would be impossible to convey in a non-literary text with an artistically neutral structure, can be made apparent through a COMPLEX structure of the literary text. Various codes such as language codes, metric codes, and syntactic codes can collectively be responsible for the complex structure of the literary text. Lotman concentrates on two types of relations peculiar to the literary text, which are the INTRATEXTUAL and the EXTRATEXTUAL relations. The intratextual analysis is predominantly equivalent to a formalist-structuralist analysis of the internal relations of the text, whereas the extratextual analysis refers to relations which can be divided into a literary and nonliterary component. The intertextual analysis of relations can be examined by comparison of a literary text with other of the same genre, whereas an analysis of the extratextual relations can be carried out by determining how the text relates to the author, the reality it originates from, and the reader.

However, despite Lotman's emphasis on formal elements, his concept of devices clearly differs from that of the formalists, as he regards devices as elements with a precise function in structure. These elements regulate and at the same time attribute meaning at various structural levels. He also disagrees with those generative linguists who are of the opinion that meaning is only found in the underlying deep structure and studies the surface structure of the poetic text.

Distinctive levels between text and extra-text include such aspects as literary tradition or historical and ideological frameworks. Even though art can be regarded as being in opposition to that which it represents, it nevertheless also embodies the views and the values of a community. This realization of the importance of relations between the artistic text and the community from which it comes forth marks a DEVIATION from the extreme synchronic view where specific qualities of the text AS A SIGN are emphasized, not taking into account the nature of its relation with the cultural and sociological extra-text relations.

In The Structure of the artistic Text (1977), Lotman concerns himself with the concept of literature as a secondary modelling system. This modelling system comprises both a structure of elements and rules for combining these elements, the literary system being regarded as supralingual. Not unlike the recipient of a linguistic message, the reader (recipient) must have a knowledge, not only of the language

in which the text is written, but the reader of the literary text should also have a knowledge of the literary code in order to be able to decode the text. The realization that literature is part of a secondary modelling system has SEMANTIC implications. The interaction of linguistic and literary systems in one and the same text increases the informative value of the text to a great extent. As a result thereof it becomes obvious that the elements belong to at least TWO codes and may therefore have more than one meaning. The concept of functional ambiguity in the literary text was thus formulated in semiotic terms. It was, however, also studied in RECEPTION AESTHETICS, which, as already mentioned, argues that ambiguity leads to indeterminacy, gaps in the literary text having to be filled by the reader.

It is easy to distinguish an artistic text from an everyday communication text, as its characteristic textual value stems from the fact that it has a multilevel structure. This specific characteristic of formal structure peculiar of the literary text has, as pointed out, SEMANTIC implications:

The artistic text is a unity of intersecting sign-systems where the use of strange affinities and unusual sequences of structural dominance, especially in combinations forbidden in everyday communication and experience, increases the information load significantly. In fact the most significant characteristic of the artistic text is exactly this: its unusually high information load.

(Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982: 76)

The literary text's high 'information load' can be understood by taking into account the relations between text and extra text. There is an inseparable oppositional quality between the artistic and the nonartistic texts in the CULTURAL CODE, this being an indispensable criterion when distinguishing between a literary and a nonliterary text.

By acknowledging and drawing attention to the structural relation between the internal structure of the literary text and the sociocultural context, Lotman contributed greatly to literary study. For Lotman as well as for Mukarovsky the literary text has both an autonomous AND a communicative character and therefore function.

For Lotman the reader-author relationship is of central importance: the artistic text as it is created by the author is experienced as such by the READER. Thus the READER is no longer irrelevant or passive, but as he experiences the artistic text, he completes that which the author has initiated. During this process he does not only project the structures of HIS artistic experience but he also projects the structures of his (own) LIFE EXPERIENCE. In this respect Lotman differentiates between two types of texts as far as 'aesthetics of identity' and 'aesthetics of opposition' are concerned, namely in that the structures of the first group of texts are known BEFOREHAND, and it is furthermore presupposed that SENDER and READER have (near) identical codes. They (the codes) are codified in such a manner as to conform to rules, so that they fulfil the reader's expectations as far as the particular genre is concerned. The texts based on

the aesthetics of identity have something in common with Eco's closed and Barthes's 'readerly' text, in that they share the same characteristics. Texts which are based on the aesthetics of opposition, in contrast, deviate deliberately from the expectation of the reader as far as genre is concerned, and as codes of sender and recipient differ. Lotman's concern in the role of the reader and therefore receiver signifies his conviction that the meaning of a literary text cannot be perceived OUTSIDE its cultural and/or historical context. Jauss, of the Constance School, shares this opinion.

Since a literary text is viewed as an example of the 'aesthetics of opposition' because of its novelty, it may be evaluated as a classic, and thus as an example of the 'aesthetics of identity' some generations later. Whereas an exclusive preoccupation with the nature of the literary text and the literary system existed, the focus in Lotman's work shifted to an awareness of the interdependence of systems and texts, and their function in a CULTURAL context. Despite his still emphasizing the components of the literary text (intratextual relations), one could say that Lotman restored the balance between the autonomous and the dynamic approach.

2.3.6 THE 'NEW SEMIOTICS' AND Roland Barthes

Before discussing Julia Kristeva's contribution as representative of the 'new semiotics', the distinctive contribution of Roland Barthes to semiotics should also be taken into account.

Roland Barthes whose work is classifiable as either structuralist or semiotic, was the most prominent member of the NOUVELLE CRITIQUE, and is therefore, and because of his early work, classified with the French structuralists. He was mostly preoccupied with semiotic concepts analysing various communication media, from a photograph on the cover of a magazine to a narrative. The various sign systems were not his only preoccupation, he was also interested in the way signifying practices function. As far as this latter interest is concerned his work may be regarded as complementary to Lotman's attempts at bridging the gap between intratextual and extratextual relations. Thus placing the literary text in a sociohistorical context. It was Barthes's aim to demonstrate that signifying practices are not only constitutive but also cohesive:

in making meaning, society does not only sustain
itself, but also authenticates itself'

(Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982: 79)

In order to show 'how signs communicate ideology through connotative systems' (Holub, 1984: 114) he tries to isolate the hidden ideologies in society which he calls 'mythologies' in his Mythologies (1957). The mythical method which he develops works like a second order semiotic system which is dependent on a prior semiotic chain of existing signs, and is not unlike Lotman's secondary modelling system. The difference however is to be found in that Barthes's primary system, the first semiotic chain of existing signs, is not

restricted to language only, but may enclose other signs as well. These may be a 'bouquet of roses' or the photograph of a young Negro in French uniform saluting the tricolour! Analysing this photograph, which appears on the cover of a magazine, Barthes highlights the difference between the 'superficial' meaning of the photograph, namely a young Negro in French uniform saluting the French flag, and the real 'mythical' meaning projected onto it by a second order semiotic system, namely that France is regarded as being a great empire in which French young men, irrespective of colour, vigorously and proudly serve the French flag. The analyses of concrete examples are important, as they explain Barthes's objection to what he regards as semantic naiveties which have become securely established and even institutionalized through prolonged usage.

It should be clear from the foregoing analyses that Barthes sets about theorizing the READER and the ACT OF READING. He distinguishes between two kinds of texts:

that which gives the reader a role, a function, a contribution to make, and that which renders the reader idle or redundant.

(Holub, 1984: 113-114; underlined M.W.)

Literature of the second kind is termed 'readerly' (lisible) and little challenge is offered to the reader, since "the passage from the signifier to signified is clear, well-worn, established and compulsory" (Holub, 1984: 114). It follows that Barthes's 'readerly' text is an example of that which

reflects and strengthens the solidarity of society. These texts are usually the classic realist works of the literary establishment and as such they usually represent a standard, institutionalized view of reality, which must be exposed as the:

accomplices of ideology because they attempt to hide the facts of their own production in a sea of "truths".

(Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982: 80)

On the other hand, 'writerly' texts focus on the reader/author relationship, wherein the reader is expected to actively participate in the production of meaning. The specific type of language used is foregrounded, as the text draws attention to itself as a product of the literary activity of writing. In contradistinction to readerly texts, where the unproblematic passage from signifier to signified seems to reinforce prior conceptions of reality and the APPARENT 'stability' of the 'real world', 'writerly' (scrip- tible) texts:

presume nothing, admit no easy passage from signifier to signified, [and] are open to the 'play' of the codes that we use to determine them.

(Holub, 1984: 114)

In a method which is both structuralist and semiotic, Barthes analysed Balzac's Sarrasine as an example of the type of READER ACTIVITY required by a 'writerly' text. The

division of the text into 561 lexias is typically structuralist, whereas the analysis of the lexias in terms of the five codes determining their meaning is of distinct semiotic procedure. Barthes's remarkable display of productive reader activity in his simultaneous exploitation of connotative meanings to be discovered through various codes in the different lexias, notably the hermeneutic, semic, symbolic and cultural codes, is aptly characterized by what Jonathan Culler sees as the ROLE OF THE READER in literary semiotics:

The reader becomes the name of the place where the various codes can be located: a virtual site. Semiotics attempts to make explicit the implicit knowledge which enables signs to have meaning, so it needs the READER NOT AS A PERSON but as A FUNCTION: the repository of the codes which account for the intelligibility of the text.

(Culler, 1981: 38; emphasis M.W.)

However, Barthes's unique exploitation of variable meanings in Sarrasine is also of great relevance for poststructuralist approaches to literature, as it shows a completely NEW WAY of handling the text. A critical discourse now includes something totally different. It includes the creation of a new kind of text:

Barthes' approach to Balzac's short story is not that of traditional French literary criticism. His structural method is radically opposed to the traditional historical and biographical approaches,

and also differs markedly from the psychocriticism which succeeded them. Barthes' intention is completely different. From the introductory to the closing statements, he seeks to create "a theory LIBERATING THE SIGNIFIER," or better, to provide for a "PLURALIZATION OF CRITICISM".

(Harari, 1978: 57; emphasis M.W.)

As far as a short summary of Sarrasine by Balzac is concerned, the reader is constantly 'summoned' to decipher or decode the encoded signs within the text:

Sarrasine is an author who falls in love with Zambinella, a prima donna who looks like Pygmalion's statue (perfect). However, Sarrasine's love is doomed as he finds out that Zambinella is a 'castrato'. In the second instance however, Sarrasine's problem is precisely reversed:

given an identity ... he must unmask her body, and discover the nullity of the castrato. Yet throughout the unraveling of the narrative there is nothing to indicate the UNFEMININITY of Zambinella. If she is at last discovered to be a castrato, it is not as a result of Sarrasine's progressive deciphering, but of Zambinella's own avowal. Barthes is then correct in saying that Zambinella is a castrato by NAME ONLY: the material reality yields to the reality of DISCOURSE. It is the meaning only (the idea of a castrated body), and not the reality of the thing, which horrifies and ter-

rorizes *Sarrasine*.

(Harari, 1978: 69 emphasis M.W.)

Taking the above into consideration it can be deduced that the text solicits the collaboration of the reader, as the text has one or several meanings and is subject to interpretation. The text being 'expansive' i.e. it can be 'drawn out' by the reader according to his own sense of imagination. I think that the above example provides us with the key to Barthes's theory: the PLURALITY of the text offers, in fact INVITES the reader to the production of an unlimited system of meaning.

The liberation of the CONSTANT SIGNIFIER into a GLIDING SIGNIFIER thus provides for a PLURALIZATION of criticism. The variable component is, then, embodied in the REACTION or RESPONSE of the READER, who brings his history, his language, in fact his FREEDOM to the work.

It is clear that this move away from the structural interest, the traditional semiostructuralist approach, moves from the OBJECT to the SUBJECT, namely to the READER. The object is as such a sign in a communication situation which is OPEN to infinite reactions, due to the liberated gliding signifier, which, as we will see, is comparable to Iser's wandering viewpoint, causing fluctuating interpretations. In conclusion it can be deduced that Balzac's Sarrasine is as such a typical example of a 'writerly' text where the reader has to take active part in the production of meaning.

In The Pleasure of the Text (1973), Barthes distinguishes between types of reader REACTIONS associated with the reading of 'readerly' and 'writerly' texts. Whereas in the first case the reader experiences a feeling of PLAISIR (pleasure), in the second place JOUISSANCE, another type of bliss or ecstasy with sexual connotations is experienced. Barthes thus surpasses the author's 'traditional hold' on the text by stressing the experience of the reader in his REACTION to the text: Once the author is removed, the text can no longer be disciplined, solved, used as if it was a product:

Instead of a lawful contract we have a 'full intermingling of desires'.

(Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982: 84)

It is now clear that Barthes's 'reader' does not represent a "unified center from which meaning and interpretation originate, but rather a construct characterized by dispersion and plurality" (Holub, 1984: 154). Thus Barthes's work already directs us to the infinite play of elusive SIGNIFIERS prevalent in post-structuralist readings.

2.3.7 The 'new semiotics' and Julia Kristeva

The title of Julia Kristeva's Desire in Language (1977) mirrors the idea of the subject. It also reflects a NEW APPROACH towards literature and literary representation developed in Poststructuralism. For Kristeva, Semiostructuralism as it developed from Saussure and Peirce to Prague

Structuralism is outdated. She objects against Saussure's work in so far as it limits communication to the level of language only. The relation between signifier and signified being single and linear so that plurality or discontinuity of meaning is excluded. Accordingly, Kristeva argues that meaning cannot be attached to a sign which is dissociated from history, the body or the subconscious. Traditional semiotics doesn't account for the transformations and variations of language and other important practices, since changes and variations in language presuppose placing it in a specific sociohistorical context. As a consequence, Kristeva developed the method of SEMANALYSIS. Therein texts are contemplated as productive dialectic types of discourse that are characteristically linked to history. The signifying practice in semanalysis should be considered as consisting of two processes:

1. the release and subsequent articulation of the drives constrained by the social code, yet not reduceable to the language system as coming from the geno-text, and
2. the signifying system as it presents itself to the phenomenological intuition as a phenotext, 'something' describable in terms of structure or of competence/performance or according to other models.

(Quoted by Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982: 87)

The pheno-text being the communicative utterance, contains a

geno-text of meanings which evoke other meanings. It is not only Kristeva who regards geno-texts as important, but the whole TEL QUEL also maintain that no literary text is solely created by the author, but originates from other texts and is written from the position that inspires to create. For Kristeva this semiotic disposition of a geno-text within a pheno-text is intimately related to the subject's i.e. the reader's competence, namely his capacity for bliss, ecstasy and pleasure.

Kristeva's distinction between geno-text and pheno-text created her famous concept of INTERTEXTUALITY, by which she understands and refers to the text IN the text, the overlapping and combinations, as well as their functional relationships and their everchanging structures. The OPENNESS of texts is of great consequence as the semantic components of a text always refer to other texts beyond its spheres or boundaries. Other texts establish a kind of historical memory of the text, placing it in the social and historical structural continuum. The term INTERTEXTUALITY refers to this connective system or network of quotations and consequently a transformation of other texts. INTERTEXTUALITY is thus a method of operation whereby semantic components establish a set of connections, namely a network between texts which constitutes its historical memory. Intertextuality, therefore, requires from the reader that prior texts be considered as "contributions to a code which makes possible the various effects of signification" (Culler, 1981: 103).

It is clear that in contrast to Saussure's singularity of texts, Kristeva arrives at a DUALITY of texts from the concept of INTERTEXTUALITY. The text being of dual orientation traces back to the system from whence it originated and at the same time points forward to the social processes in which it participates as discourse. As such it becomes a foundation which liberates a:

rigidly established set of a lawful contract
into a full intermingling of desires.

(Ryan & Van Zyl, 1982: 84)

2.3.8 CONCLUSION

It is clear from the above discussion that semiotic approaches shattered the view of the so-called autonomy of the literary text. The communicative function of the literary text as a sign is freed from its artificial isolation imposed on it by extreme formalist and structuralist approaches. Consequently, a more relative and at the same time more significant place has been attributed to literature, namely by specifically forming and organizing the SEMANTIC universe. Such literature can once again be recognized as part of a comprehensive cognitive process, the study of literature thus extending to include such disciplines as linguistics, sociology, psychology, philosophy and communication studies.

Semiotics being of extreme relevance to the study of contemporary theories of literature has shifted from the isolated

text to problems relating to text AND context, with a more pronounced concern for the totality of the communication situation in literature.

Because of its important contribution towards literary theory, and because of the growing interest in the subjects of both author and reader, as reflected in the psychoanalytical approaches of Lacan and of the reception approaches of the Konstanzer Schule (University) respectively, more space has been attributed to an explanation of the 'new semiotics of the subject' in the following sections.

2.4 PSYCHOANALYSIS & MATERIALISM

2.4.1 INTRODUCTION:

PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY -

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

In order to understand the impact Freud's field of knowledge known as psychoanalysis may have on the literary critique and on a perception of literature as such, it is essential to briefly summarize his doctrine.

Sigmund Freud is universally recognized as the ORIGINATOR of PSYCHOANALYSIS. He created the main model of the psychodynamic or depth psychology school. With the emphasis on the biological aspect of humans he, together with Jung and McDougall, continues the MEDICAL TRADITION.

Freud stressed the importance of INDIVIDUAL TOTALITY, also called the holistic tendency, later somewhat reflected in

the GESTALT THEORY (for instance in the work of the German psychologists Kurt Koffka, and Wolfgang Koehler who emphasized that the organization of the ENTIRE FIELD OF STIMULUS is more important than its parts). Although Freud's psychoanalysis is not to be regarded as synonymous with psychology, it is nevertheless this theory which explains the total individual role of unconscious motivation and emotional processes in the formation and development of personality. Human behaviour and problems are explained in terms of the complex organization and integration of conflict between various inner structures. The theory is furthermore so comprehensive that it provides explanations for everything from the most trivial behavioural disorder to the severest individual and cultural phenomena, for example group behaviour.

According to Freud man is an energy system where the same energy is used for different purposes. In his supposition that man is motivated by unconscious forces, as a reaction of life or reality, his drives or so-called INSTINCTS, Freud is both DETERMINISTIC and IRRATIONALISTIC. His emphases are mainly on SEXUAL NEEDS (originating from the life drive or Eros) and AGGRESSIVE DRIVES (underlying the death drive or Thanatos). Man wants to fulfil his drives, but in doing so is in constant CONFLICT with society. He is aspiring to HOMEOSTASIS for the sake of pleasure and avoidance of pain, which is called the HEDONISTIC PRINCIPLE. According to Freud, neuroses, as well as positive aspirations such as achievement, all originate from activating energy by the instincts. Freud describes the PSYCHE in terms of the CONSCIOUS, that

of which one is consciously aware, and the PRECONSCIOUS, that need which must be brought to consciousness through attention, and the UNCONSCIOUS, which means the contents beyond consciousness which are repressed, but which in certain circumstances become conscious. Unconscious motivation is of great importance, as it has a determinative effect on human behaviour which expresses itself by such things as the slip of the tongue, dreams, somnambulance, hypnosis and neuroses. Freud's personality structure is explained in terms of THREE FUNCTIONAL CONCEPTS:

1. the ID which forms the biological basis of behaviour, directing psychological energy, and which is based on the PLEASURE PRINCIPLE, consequently demanding instant gratification of either sexual or aggressive drives (TRIEBE).
2. the SUPEREGO which represents man's moral functions, namely his conscience.
This moral function depends on the CONTROL PRINCIPLE in conformity with social norms.
3. the EGO which functions according to the REALITY PRINCIPLE, controlling acquisition of norms and behaviour which are socially accepted.

As such man tries to channel ID-impulses into acceptable behaviour, thereby satisfying the SUPEREGO. The EGO is a 'weak mechanism' which is constantly at the mercy of the urges of the ID and the restrictions of the SUPEREGO. When,

for example, the EGO and SUPEREGO are overruled by the drives of the ID, conflict and anxiety arise as a result. Man handles this conflict by means of PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFENCE MECHANISMS, such as projection, repression, reaction formation etc. The DYNAMICS OF BEHAVIOUR, or motivational factors are due to ENERGY released under pressure from the instincts or from UNCONSCIOUS MOTIVES. These are mainly sexual and aggressive needs. The psychological energy of the life instinct, and the sex drive especially, is what Freud calls LIBIDO. CONSTITUTIONAL DETERMINANTS are therefore stressed, as man is regarded as a proactive being reacting to his subjective experience. The emphasis is thus on psychological energy, instincts, id and psychosexual development, which are considered to be inherent or biological. Man responds to these and as he does so man's behaviour pattern is determined accordingly. As Freud believes that external events and objects stimulate libido, he acknowledges that people behave REACTIVELY to ENVIRONMENTAL STIMULI, i.e. to objective experience.

That which is experienced from EARLY childhood and environmental determinants have an impact on the behaviour of man in LATER years. Such behaviour which may be regarded as unconsciously motivated is due to the REPRESSION of ID impulses by the EGO and SUPEREGO.

THOUGHT PROCESS develop from a primary to a secondary stage. Whereas the PRIMARY THOUGHT PROCESSES remain principally in the unconscious where reality and fantasy are indisting-

uishly mingled, the SECONDARY THOUGHT PROCESSES indicate that man differentiates himself from his environment. He outgrows his early self-love i.e. NARCISSISM and acquires motor skills and language proficiency, he anticipates events and is able to control needs. The EGO is developing at the same time, while the SUPEREGO leads to integrated values, a better acceptance of the ego with its restrictions and its aspirations.

Freud attaches significance to the development of instincts which centre on certain erotic zones of the body. These are the mouth, anus and genitals, which (zones/areas) shift with age. The various stages of psychosexual development are closely linked with this process. These are the oral, anal and phallic (infantile or pregenital stage), mainly the first five years, when sexual satisfaction is auto-erotically obtained i.e. when it is obtained from his own body. Then the consolidation state (appr. 6 years to puberty) and the genital stage (puberty) arrive. (Morgan, 1971: 520-523). Freud's genetic approach to development draws attention to early childhood, in particular to the first FIVE years. He stresses that the outcome of events during these years is manifested in later life and adult behaviour. Parental influence is very strong during the phallic phase. During this period the measure of a healthy sex role and sexual identification will decide whether an OEDIPUS COMPLEX, i.e. identification with the parent of the opposite sex, is resolved to ensure that sex role behaviour in later years will conform to accepted norms. Freud's term FIXATION means that

healthy development was arrested during one of these stages. Such behaviour as aggression, sexual deviations, nail-biting, bed-wetting, smoking habits etc is explained in terms of unresolved childhood conflicts.

As far as MENTAL HEALTH is concerned, this is closely related to the concepts of structure, dynamics and development. The roots of PSYCHOPATHOLOGY are found in the PAST. Conflicts arose from fixations because instincts remained unsatisfied. However, it belongs to the present because instincts still demand satisfaction, although they are repressed by the ego and superego. Such repressed needs, conflicts and frustrations may become manifest in subsequent behaviour like aggression, anxiety and/or neurosis. The cause of anxiety is particularly important to Freud. He maintains that it is the ego's defence against threatening situations. In his view infants have their first experience of anxiety as a result of TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES of the environment which are set into action by the birth trauma. Later separations, such as being left alone in the dark, or maternal deprivation will be the cause for even greater anxiety, Freud's 'Fort Da' Game - for example a toy (or anything) which is given to a child, causing joy, but then it is taken away, causing anxiety.

Freud defines REALISTIC ANXIETY, which takes place when the ego is threatened by the external environment, NEUROTIC ANXIETY, when the ego-control is threatened by the id impulses, and MORAL ANXIETY when the ego is threatened with

punishment by the superego which expresses itself in guilt feelings. Individuals turn to various EGO defences or psychological defence mechanisms in order to cope with anxiety and other conflicts. The Freudian psychotherapy or psychoanalysis aims to afford the patient an insight into his own unconscious motivation by means of transference effects between patient and therapist.

The Freudian theory greatly influenced other disciplines, theories of personality and methods. It stimulated general research so that Freudian concepts and methods like clinical observation, case studies, dream analysis and psychoanalysis are part of contemporary psychology to this day. Critics highlight his deterministic view of man as an irrational creature ruled by instincts, his vague and speculative concepts and his attempts to explain everything in terms of a single frame of reference i.e. as defence mechanisms. (Morgan, 1971: 527)

2.4.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PSYCHOANALYTICAL LITERARY CRITICISM

As a result of developments in both psychoanalytic theory and literary criticism, the critical focus in psychoanalytical literary criticism has shifted from:

1. the psychology of the author - or his stand-in the character - to that of
2. the reader, and further to

3. the relations between author, reader, text and language.

(Jefferson & Robey, 1982: 113)

Most traditional psychoanalytical criticism has focused on the AUTHOR and the contents of the literary work. These are the most limited and problematical kinds, as to psychoanalyze an author is at least speculative.

It is also problematic as far as the relevance of authorial INTENTION is concerned. When commenting on the unconscious motivations of characters, or on the psychoanalytical significance of objects or events in the text, the psychoanalysis of 'content' may be of limited value as well, since 'hunting for phallic symbols', may classify qualities to ONE denominator only, thereby reducing the meaning of the literary work. Freud's venture into the field of literature was limited to these two, above mentioned modes. In these Freudian analyses literary texts are explicated in terms of psychoanalytic procedures in order to expose (literary) psychic deviations and their motivation. The essays he wrote on Michelangelo's statue 'Moses' and on a short novel by Wilhelm Jensen entitled Gradiiva analyse the author as he reveals himself in the novel, and examine unconscious symptoms manifest in art, as they are manifest in life. In this respect Eagleton argues that: "the 'materiality' of the artefact itself, its specific formal constitution, tends to be overlooked" (Eagleton, 1983: 179).

Freud's opinion of art was that the artist, like the neuro-

tic, is oppressed by unusually powerful instinctual needs. As these cannot be fulfilled they are channelled from reality to fantasy. Freud calls that which is created by the author the 'softening power of artistic form'. He calls that which effects a pleasure in the reader, a 'fore-pleasure' (Vorfreude).

As for jokes and their relation to the unconscious, Freud maintains that jokes express a normally censored, aggressive or libidinal impulse. This is however made socially acceptable by the joke's FORM, its WIT and WORD-PLAY. The statement made by Eagleton that 'questions of form do not enter into Freud's reflections on art' is therefore not entirely fair. Furthermore, if Freud really only viewed the artist as being 'neurotic', why does Freud in his masterpiece The Interpretation of Dreams (1967) suggest that the essence of a dream is not the raw material or latent content, but the dream-work itself; it is the 'practice' which is the OBJECT of his analysis. It is in fact one stage of the dream-work, the 'secondary revision', which consists in the reorganization of the dream so that it can be presented in the form of a relatively consistent and comprehensible NARRATIVE. The dream is systematized by a secondary revision, gaps are filled in and smoothed and FORMED into a 'more coherent fable'. The fact that Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams is regarded as a masterpiece of psychoanalytical theory, and his conviction that nothing should be evaluated in 'isolation' at least highlight Freud's standpoint on the importance of analytical findings:

We must be careful, however, not to pursue these hypotheses too far beyond their first logical links, or their value will be lost in uncertainties. Even if we make no false inferences and take all the logical possibilities into account, the probable incompleteness of our premises threatens to bring our calculation to a complete miscarriage. No conclusions upon the construction and working methods of the mental instrument can be arrived at or at least fully proved from even the most painstaking investigation of dreams or of any other mental function taken IN ISOLATION.

(Freud, 1967 in The Interpretation of Dreams
167: 511; emphasis M.W.)

In order to achieve a valid result, he furthermore maintains, it is necessary to correlate all the established implications derived from a comparative study of a whole series of such functions. Consequently, the psychological hypotheses to which man is led by an analysis of the processes of dreaming must be LEFT IN SUSPENSE, UNTIL they can be RELATED to the findings of other enquiries which seek to approach the, what he calls, 'kernel' of the same problem but from another angle.

It is therefore argued that psychoanalysis is not of limited value, because its investigation:

1. does not ONLY 'hunt for phallic symbols'

2. it does not only investigate into two modes of author and content, but it takes all kinds of implications into account.

Freud's venture into the field of literature is therefore based on an investigation in which he at least tries to correlate all established implications derived from a comparative study of a WHOLE SERIES OF FUNCTIONS. Even for the Freudian analyst literature should thus not only be a reflection of (psychic) reality, but a FORM OF PRODUCTION.

As for Psychologism of aesthetic interpretation, Iser of the School of Constance, is of the opinion that in order to describe the relief which takes place in the reader during the reading process the 'tools' of psychoanalysis should be 'used' in order to 'open' up the reader to the world of fiction: the literary work should appeal to the superego, the ego AND the id. In other words all these components should be activated i.e. set into motion, thereby recalling Freud's 'softening power of artistic form'.

HOWEVER, these engagements depend upon an important condition: different appeals within the literary work must be in 'some kind of cipher' i.e. must be codified to some extent, for the more open or direct they are, the less effect they will have on the reader/recipient. The effect is indeed enhanced if they assume the degree of complexity which is evident in life itself, between superego, ego and id. The literary work seems to attain its desired effect by demanding of them (the readers) such activities that will

make it possible for the firm hierarchy of the constituent parts of the psyche to be opened up. This will activate a movement which affects a liberation, as during the time of reading the reader frees himself from the censorship which is operative within the established hierarchy of the psyche (see further section 2.4.4 Psychoanalysis in Terms of Language).

2.4.3 SOME PSYCHOANALYTICAL READINGS OF LITERARY TEXTS

As an extreme example of how a FORM of a 'secondary revision' of a literary text is 'smoothened' to be more easily perceived and enjoyed, Eagleton (1983: 181) refers to the kind of account of T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land which reads the poem as the story of a little girl who went on a sledge-ride with her uncle, the Archduke. She changed sex a few times in London, was caught up in the hunt for the Holy Grail and ended up fishing on the edge of an arid plain. The varied materials of Eliot's poem are 'tamed' to a coherent narrative. The somewhat shattered human beings of the work are unified into one single EGO. However, as has been argued in the previous section, the Freudian analysis of dreams shows that there is more to the work of literature than subjecting it to a 'secondary revision', whereby the reorganization of the dream (or Eliot's intricate poem) results in a presentation "in the form of a relatively consistent and comprehensible narrative" (Eagleton, 1983: 180).

Taking the aforementioned discussion into consideration, psy-

choanalysis enables the reader to see the work of literature not merely as a REFLECTION of REALITY, enacting human experience, embodying an author's intention, or reproducing structures of the human mind. An inquiry into psychoanalysis can assist in UNDERSTANDING and subsequently EVALUATING such profoundly Oedipal novels as D.H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers and many other novels exhibiting psychological problems. A Literary work can be analysed, just like a dream-text. Both can be deciphered, and decomposed in ways which exhibit processes whereby they are produced. Psychoanalysis, however, is more than only an analysis. In the words of one of its interpreters it is a 'hermeneutic of suspicion'. The word 'hermeneutic' meaning interpretation, especially of Scripture. (Gk hermeneutikos). A psychoanalytical reading of literature therefore aims at interpretation not only of the written text, but of the EMBEDDED TEXT or the TEXT OF THE UNCONSCIOUS.

In literary texts such as Sons and Lovers, which is subjected to a psychoanalytic-materialist reading by Eagleton (1983) and in dream texts, attention is drawn to 'symptomatic' places such as distortions, ambiguities, absences and elisions, i.e. gaps caused by indeterminacies. These PROVIDE AN ACCESS to the latent content, the UNCONSCIOUS DRIVES. If recognized for what they are, and interpreted correctly, they supply the answer to UNRESOLVED PROBLEMS. Literary criticism, as discussed in the case of Lawrence's novel, can highlight something very similar. By attributing special value to such modes as evasions, ambivalences and points of

intensity in the narrative, words left unspoken, (in terms of aesthetics of reception 'gaps'), words which are spoken with unusual repetition etc. can lead to the exposure of a SUBTEXT, an embedded text. Subsequently, like an unconscious wish, this so-called sub-text can both conceal and reveal: "It can attend, in other words, not only to what the text says, but to HOW it WORKS" (Eagleton, 1983: 182; emphasis M.W.).

In The Dynamics of Literary Response (1968), the American Norman N. Holland, a Freudian literary critic, views works of literature as setting into motion in the reader an interplay of unconscious fantasies and conscious defences against them. Not unlike Kristeva's Desire in Language, where it is argued that a geno-text within a pheno-text intimately relates to the subject's competence, namely his capacity for bliss, ecstasy and pleasure, he, like Freud, is of the opinion that the literary work is enjoyable because it transforms our deepest anxieties and desires into socially acceptable meanings. This relates to Kristeva's theory in so far as it refers to the reader's capacity for enjoyment. It is also reminiscent of Barthes's concept of 'jouissance' or ecstasy released through productive reader participation in 'writerly' texts. Desires are 'softened' by the form and language they 'take on', allowing the reader a 'defence' against them, making them 'socially acceptable'. After all the EGO has to adapt to social life!

The American critic Harold Bloom who used the work of Freud

as a foundation for his own so called 'most daringly original literary theory' is interesting. He actually rewrites literary history in terms of the Oedipus complex: poets live in the shadow of strong poets who came before them, not unlike sons who are oppressed by their fathers; (as will be shown in the discussion on Sons and Lovers below); and any particular poem can be read as an attempt to escape this 'anxiety of influence' by its systematic remoulding of a previous poem.

2.4.4 PSYCHOANALYSIS IN TERMS OF LANGUAGE

The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-81) has initiated the return of psychoanalysis according to Freud's theory of the unconscious and has at the same time radically reformulated that theory. For Lacan the unconscious is more than the source of primal instincts that are randomly connected to ideas and images; it is both structured like language and, at the same time, the product of language. I shall focus here, mainly, on the 'linguistic' aspect of Lacan's distinction between the 'imaginative' and 'symbolic' stages in the subject's development from infancy to puberty and adulthood.

Lacan maintains that the unconscious is not only structured like language, but it only comes into existence at the moment when the subject gains access to language. With the subject's entry into the symbolic order it is reduced to a signifier in the field of the 'Other'. This relation between

the subject as the signifier and the unconscious as the discourse of the 'Other' can be explained in terms of Lacan's definition of the subject according to which the subject conceives the desire to be reunited with the 'Other' as a result of the lack it experiences. In the signifying network of the unconscious every word indicates the absence of what it stands for. The expression of a desire in language is at the same time an admission of deficiency or lack because the absence of one can only be replaced by another that again signifies absence. The notion that the unconscious is structured like language and comprises a network of signifiers represents a reformulation of Freud's theory of unconscious language utterances. For Lacan every single linguistic expression, whether written or spoken, is influenced by the unconscious, which implies that the unconscious is present in all language utterances, and not merely in dreams, word-play or figurative language as one might think Freud would have it.

This reformulation of Freud has had a profound impact on literary studies in that the redefinition of key concepts of Freudian psychoanalysis resulted in a reappraisal of text and reader oriented theories of literature. Instead of the classical Freudian probing of the neurotic psyche of either the writer or the character (Hamlet's Oedipus complex, for example) the emphasis of literary criticism has now shifted to the OPERATION OF THE TEXT, and more particularly to the EFFECT OF THE TEXT ON THE READER, who now acts the part of an analyst but is nevertheless influenced by the text at the

same time.

Psychoanalytic approaches are, generally speaking, centred on interpretation. However, while Freudian readings interpret literary texts to reveal Oedipus complexes, Lacanian analyses are preoccupied with signifying chains. As examples of Lacanian readings in which the play of elusive signifiers is traced, one could cite Lacan's own illuminating readings of Edgar Allan Poe's The Purloined Letter or Shakespeare's Hamlet; one could also refer to Shoshana Felman's brilliant (re)reading of Henry James's ambiguous short story The Turn of the Screw. However, I should like to turn to a slightly different 'reading' of Lacan in which psychoanalysis and Materialism are seen to be reconcilable, with the result that the emphasis shifts from the individual to the social subject. Terry Eagleton has argued that, by reinterpreting Freudianism in terms of language, Lacan made it possible to investigate the relations between the unconscious and human society:

One way of describing his work is to say that he makes us recognize that the unconscious is not some kind of seething, tumultuous, private region 'inside' us, but an effect of our relations with one another. The unconscious is, so to speak, 'outside' rather than 'within' us - or rather it exists 'between' us, as our relationships do.

(Eagleton, 1983: 173)

For Lacan the unconscious is a particular effect of lan-

guage, as it is language which expresses that which lies deeply embedded within our souls, namely DESIRE. However Eagleton subsequently argues that for Lacan, as well as for the structuralists, language is not always within our individual control, nor even within our reach. Language can actually divide, it can disturb, it can and does manipulate. Language is 'already there', waiting as it were, rather like our parents or our educators. Man will never be able to escape it, rather language shall guide him, even influence him not unlike the fact that man will never be able to shake off the dominant role of parents and educators in the society wherein he lives.

Pursuing his 'materialistic' reading of Lacan, Eagleton subsequently maintains that, although not exactly synonymous, concepts such as language, the unconscious, the parents, the symbolic order are nevertheless allied in Lacanian thought. These, which brought us into being as subjects also 'escape' us and outrun our grasp. For Lacan 'these' are sometimes spoken of as the 'Other'. Our unconscious desire is directed towards this 'Other', and although we may never reach our ultimate desire, some of it is always received from the 'Other', e.g. we desire what our parents unconsciously desire for us. There are a whole lot of social facts which generate our desires.

It is clear that Eagleton is interested in the SOCIAL relations implied in the desire for the 'OTHER'. Lacan himself does, however, not pursue the social relevance of this the-

ory. Consequently, he does not attempt to solve the problem of the relation between society and the unconscious. To Eagleton, a psychoanalytic reading of such literature as D.H. Lawrence's' novel Sons and Lovers, should open up an opportunity to delve deeper into the problems reflected in the narrative, and that with a much better insight and understanding.

Eagleton offers the following account of the protagonist's (Paul Morel's) relations to the 'Others' in the novel, notably his ambiguous relationship to his mother and his mistress, as 'evidence' that Lawrence's masterpiece is 'a profoundly Oedipal' novel:

The young Morel who sleeps in the same bed as his mother, treats her with the tenderness of a lover and feels animosity towards his father ...unable to sustain fulfilling relationship with a woman, and in the end achieving possible release from his condition by killing his mother in an ambiguous act of love, revenge and self-liberation. Mrs Morel, for her part, is jealous of Paul's relationship with Miriam, behaving like a rival mistress. Paul rejects Miriam for his mother; but in rejecting Miriam he is also unconsciously rejecting his mother IN her, in what he feels to be Miriam's stifling spiritual possessiveness.

(Eagleton, 1983: 175)

Furthermore, in psychoanalytical terms, Paul's Oedipal re-

lationship towards his father is foregrounded by his love and simultaneous, unconscious hatred of him as a rival.

It is clear that the relations between the main characters in the novel could be easily explained, as Eagleton does, in psychoanalytical terms. However, this is only a small part of an analysis, to show how psychoanalytical concepts may be used as tools, in this case for a systematization, based on Freud's psychoanalytical theory.

Using psychoanalytical terminology can be of great help in critically analysing certain kinds of literature, but it can also lead to reductive readings if it resorts to the kind of 'secondary revision' (already shown in the 'narrative' of the Eliot poem), where in a pursuit of 'harmony', 'coherence', 'deep structure' or 'essential meaning', "such theory fills in the gaps and smooths over its contradictions, domesticating its disparate aspects and defusing its conflicts" (Eagleton, 1983: 181). In order to avoid such reduction, it is important to remember that, for Eagleton, psychoanalysis is also supposedly a 'hermeneutic of suspicion'. Its concern is not only to 'read the literary text' of the unconscious, but to uncover the processes, the dream-work by which the text was created. By doing this, certain distortions, ambiguities, absences and elisions are highlighted. These provide a valuable access to unconscious desires. In the case of Lawrence's novel, evasions, ambivalences and other points of intensity in the narrative, such as unspoken words, words which are spoken with unusual freq-

uency, language repetitions and slidings can expose an 'underlying text' which can work like an unconscious wish, concealing and revealing at the same time.

Lacan's view that the unconscious is a particular effect of language which expresses that which is 'deeply embedded in our souls' can thus be shared.

2.4.5. PSYCHOANALYSIS AND MATERIALISM

That Eagleton is especially concerned with a 'social sub-text' may be deduced from his evaluation of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytical theory, as well as from his attempt at a 'non-reductive' psychoanalytic-materialist reading of Lawrence's Sons and Lovers referred to above. In his defence of Freud - despite accusations that he substitutes 'private' psychological causes and explanations for social and historical ones - Eagleton (1983: 163) insists that "one point of Freud's work is that it makes it possible for us to think of the development of the human individual in social and historical terms". Accordingly, the Freudian theory, in his opinion, is nothing less than a materialist theory, namely that of the creating of a human subject. By an interrelation of bodies, by complex transactions which we go through during infancy between our bodies and those which surround us we BECOME that which we eventually are. This has nothing to do with biological reductionism, as Freud does not believe that we are ONLY governed by our bodies, and that our intellect, i.e. our minds, are merely the reflec-

tions thereof. It is neither an asocial model of life:

...since the bodies which surround us, and our relations with them are always socially specific. The roles of parents, the practices of child care, the images and beliefs associated with all of this are cultural matters which can vary considerably from one society or one point in history to another.

(Eagleton, 1983: 163)

Similarly, in his comment on Lacan's rewriting of Freudian concepts, Eagleton (1983: 164) again includes SOCIAL RELEVANCE in his favourable evaluation of Lacan's work as "a strikingly original attempt to 'rewrite' Freudianism in ways relevant to all those concerned with the question of the human subject, its PLACE IN SOCIETY [my emphasis], and above all its relationship to language". The child, on entering the symbolic stage where language is acquired, can only become 'socialized' by accepting the necessity of sexual difference and of distinct gender roles. Indeed, in moving from the imaginary stage to the symbolic order, he enters into "the pre-given structure of social and sexual roles and relations which make up the family and society" (Eagleton, 1983: 167). Although critical of the flaws in Althusser's attempt at exploring ideology via Lacanian psychoanalysis, Eagleton's final verdict is, nevertheless, that the ideological stance clearly shows that Lacan's work has implications for issues beyond the consulting room and that it con-

sequently has relevance for fields beyond psychoanalysis itself. Agreeably, then: "by reinterpreting Freudianism in terms of language, a preeminently social activity, Lacan permits us to explore the relations between the unconscious and human society" (Eagleton, 1983: 173).

In order to show how Eagleton attempts to 'apply' psychoanalysis non-reductively in reading a literary text, we may now return to his probing of the underlying 'sub-text' in Lawrence's Sons and Lovers. After having explained why the personal relationships between son and mother, son and mistress, son and father, etc. earmark Lawrence's novel as 'profoundly Oedipal', Eagleton (1983: 175) argues that Paul's psychological development "does not take place in a social void". Both the working conditions of the miners and the class differences between the father and the mother are used to explain the father's attitude to his wife and children, so that the 'Oedipality' of the novel, notably the father's apparent unsympathetic and 'unsocial' behaviour, becomes understandable in terms of the deficiencies inherent in a capitalist society. After having gone through these psychoanalytical and social exercises, Eagleton (1983: 176) confidently concludes:

A psychoanalytical reading of the novel, then, need not be an alternative to a social interpretation of it. We are speaking rather of two sides or aspects of a single human situation. We can discuss Paul's 'weak' image of his father and

'strong' image of his mother in both Oedipal and class terms; we can see how the human relationships between an absent, violent father, an ambitious, emotionally demanding mother and a sensitive child are understandable both in terms of unconscious processes and in terms of certain social forces and relations.

(Eagleton, 1983: 176; underlined M.W.)

However, for Eagleton a non-reductive psychoanalytical reading, should also, as already argued above, be more than a mere reflection of (psychological and social) reality - a reading of the literary work should ideally be experienced as a 'form of production'. Eagleton translates in formal terms here the interaction between text and reader, notably the EFFECT OF THE TEXT ON THE READER, stressed in post-Lacanian literary theory.

Shoshana Felman (1977), for instance, in her reading of Henry James's famous short story The Turn of the Screw first of all shows, in a typical Lacanian reading of the story, how meaning is constantly deferred because the master signifier, the phallus, could be the screw, the mast or the Master and therefore is caught up in a signifying chain with constantly sliding signifiers which prevent the text from stopping at a final, literal fixed signified or meaning, thereby failing to (purposefully) clarify 'once and for all' the existing opposing interpretations of the text: the governess is genuinely trying to save her charges from evil

(the ghosts exist) or the governess is hopelessly neurotic (the ghosts are a projection of her repressed passion for the absent master). By concentrating on HOW the text signifies rather than WHAT it signifies, Felman also illustrates how the text affects its reader. One could say that the reader begins as analyst (just as the governess begins as detective) and ends up as analysand. Instead of the reader getting hold of the story, "the reading effect is that of the story getting hold of readers, catching them out in a fiction of mastery" (Wright, 1984: 131; underlined M.W.).

The latter is, then, an example of a non-reductive psychoanalytic reading of a text, since psychoanalysis does not merely 'reflect' a particular 'neurotic reality', but it rather engages the reader in the intricacies of the text. Although Eagleton (1983: 177) is aware of the necessity to also turn to the question as to "how the novel delivers and structures its narrative", his discussion of point of view and the reader's access to Paul's thoughts and feelings to the exclusion of Miriam's, for instance, appears almost as an afterthought. Hence, his attempt at discovering the underlying 'sub-text' of the novel hinges almost exclusively on the 'social explanation' of its 'Oedipal' character. Consequently, in my opinion, his explanation of the discovery of the sub-text would probably be more applicable to Felman's tracing of the elusive textual signifiers in the James story, than his own social explanation of Oedipal complexes in Lawrence's novel:

In reading ... we are constructing what may be

called a 'sub-text' which runs within it, visible at certain 'symptomatic' points of ambiguity, evasion or overemphasis, and which we as readers are able to 'write' even if the novel itself does not. All literary works contain one or more such sub-texts, and there is a sense in which they may be spoken of as the 'unconscious' of the work itself. The work's insights, as with all writing, are deeply related to its blindnesses: what it does not say and how it does not say it, may be as important as what it articulates; what seems absent, marginal or ambivalent about it may provide a central clue to its meanings.

(Eagleton, 1983: 178)

2.4.6 CONCLUSION

Whether or not one agrees with Eagleton in his pursuit of a social rather than an individual (reading) subject, his singling out of the pleasure principle as central to both psychoanalysis and literature seems feasible. According to him, there is one simple and evident connection between psychoanalysis and literature: this connection is found in Freud's theory which considers the motivation of human behaviour as the AVOIDANCE of pain and the GAINING of pleasure.

According to this theory the reason for reading poems, novels and plays is because it is pleasurable. Seen thus,

one could argue that psychoanalysis is actually AMONG OTHER THINGS, a 'Theory of Pleasure' (Eagleton, 1983: 192).

It (this theory) explores such matters as what people find delightful and at the same time acceptable. Pleasure and displeasure are highlighted as extremely complex issues.

For the traditional literary critic, statements of personal liking or disliking satisfy enquiry. For other critics, however, this is precisely where analysis starts, namely by considering the complexities of human relations. This means that a critical literary enquiry based exclusively on psychoanalysis does not provide all the answers to problems of literary value and pleasure. The complex interaction between the unconscious play of drives that literature and therefore language affects in the reader and the conscious commitments the reader of literature has towards society, demand an enquiry into the ENTIRE phenomenon (Gestalt-einheit).

One may therefore agree that it is exactly these ENTIRE PHENOMENA which need to be examined, discussed and demonstrated in a detailed critical analysis of a particular literary text.

2.5 FEMINISM

2.5.1 INTRODUCTION:

THE FEMININE WAY OF WRITING

Perhaps the most important question raised in feminist

literary theory is whether there is a specially FEMININE WAY of writing, and if this is so, where and how this is revealed. In an attempt to define the woman as subject, contemporary feminist theorists often turn to (Lacanian) psychoanalytic theory as an explanatory model. However, feminist appropriations of psychoanalysis usually involve a shift of emphasis from castration and the resolution of the Oedipus complex to the pre-Oedipal relationship with the mother. For the French feminist Luce Irigaray, for instance, feminine libido has its source in the pre-Oedipal phase, "the time before repression, femininity and masculinity, when the infant is in an all-encompassing imaginary relationship with its mother" (Weedon, 1987: 66). In the post-Oedipal phase, due to the repression inherent in an essentially patriarchal society, the feminine will most often be located in the unconscious. It is for this reason that Julia Kristeva (as already indicated above), in her Revolution in Poetic Language (1984), emphasizes the disruptive and potentially revolutionary force for subjectivity of the marginal and repressed aspects of language. The feminine, to her, is a mode of language which is open to male AND female writers. Hence her development of the concept of the SEMIOTIC, as opposed to Lacan's SYMBOLIC mode of language. All signification incorporates both modes to some degree, but the semiotic, which has its origins in the pre-symbolic, pre-Oedipal is heavily repressed.

Because there are complex psychoanalytical reasons for believing that women maintain a closer relationship to the

mother's body than men do, it has been suggested that writing which explores mother-child relations is more typical of women. Although this point of view is not shared by all advocates of Feminism, 'feminine writing' is sometimes associated with experiences which seem to be directly related to the female rather than the male subject. While it is not necessary to give detailed analyses of several narrations, examples of two typical feminine narrations are being discussed in the following two sections, namely Nadine Gordimer's The Umbilical Cord, and Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse.

2.5.2 The Umbilical Cord by Nadine Gordimer

In this short discussion it may be seen that a text produced by a woman can indeed mirror a totally different status from any 'male' text:

The focus of the story, namely The Umbilical Cord is predominantly on the mother image. The title symbolizes the attachment of the character (Leo) to his mother.

He does not want to become DETACHED from his mother, as being detached would also mean detachment from his hitherto known, SECURE world. He is also too young to face the automatic world of sophistication. As the reader is predominantly in the mind of the main character, Leo, scenes such as the specific, continuous details of time, place, action etc. emerge, times of unsophisticated rural secure life, which signify the 'umbilical cord' to which Leo is still

tied subconsciously.

Whereas Leo's father is hardly more than his portrait as an old man, for the purpose of highlighting the contrasts of dissimilarities, the focus is almost entirely on the mother, who symbolizes all that which is protective and secure, displaying typical feminine features.

Revelation and PEACE OF MIND are acquired from the mother, the very embodiment of FEMININE WARMTH. Just as the embryo is securely attached to the umbilical cord, so Leo holds on to the life of maternal security.

2.5.3 To the Lighthouse by Virginia Woolf

The subject matter of 'feminine writing' is not restricted to topics or areas that are supposedly exclusive to the female body. Virginia Woolf, for example, argues that there is an unmistakable difference between a novel written by a man and a novel written by a woman:

There is the obvious and enormous difference of experience in the first place, but the essential difference lies in the fact not that men describe battles and women the birth of children, but that each sex describes itself.

(Quoted by Mary Eagleton, 1986: 225)

The feminist world in Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse is interestingly CONTRASTED in the character of Mr Ramsay and his typical male world.

This patriarchal male world is represented as materialist, historicist and philosophical. It works by abstract truths, sharp divisions and fixed tenets. Describing his abilities Woolf points out that Mr Ramsay is intelligent but unable to grasp 'the whole'. She also points out that the intellect by itself, as inherent in man, can only understand relative points of view but not reality as such. This incapacity to experience reality is revealed in that Mr Ramsay is blind to beauty. He cannot, for example, recognize the colour of a flower, as he does not look AT the flower but at a spot ABOVE it.

It is furthermore amazing to Mrs Ramsay, (as it was to Virginia Woolf) that her husband thinks beauty is superfluous. It is the same with Tansley. Both men are talking about fellowships, professorships etc. It is noteworthy that both Mr Ramsay and Tansley do not worry about others. They are sustained by their intellect. Their patriarchal world reflects a definite lack of feeling, they are immersed in the abstract. Their being sustained by their own intellect uncovers a trait of selfishness and egotism. They do not think of the plane of reality.

Mr Ramsay's insight is furthermore engulfed by his intellectual pursuits. It is, however, just this very preoccupation which evokes a sense of loneliness. He is still determined to continue with his pursuits for the search of reality. This shows Virginia Woolf's view of modern man as being abstract, in fact, it portrays a male world which is UNABLE TO

COPE WITH REALITY.

In contrast to Mr Ramsay, Mrs Ramsay represents all that which reflects the sensitive, intuitive, beautiful female world. The portrayal of this world reflects Virginia Woolf's belief that women have intuition which men lack.

There are quite a few other texts which could be cited as being typical 'feminist writings'. However, feminist theory and literary self-consciousness go far beyond the body and its psychological attachments. Their work also features an awareness of - and conscious response to - the socioliterary realities.

2.5.4 FEMINIST CRITICAL PRACTICE

Given both the psychoanalytical and socioliterary realities inherent to 'feminine writing' it remains to briefly have a look at what would supposedly be expected from a reader schooled in feminist literary theory and engaged in 'feminist critical practice'. If one assumes that feminist discourse implicates a study of literature, an awareness of what Woolf would see as distinctively 'feminine', could certainly enhance a better insight into both literary language usage and individual works of literature. Feminist criticism also has a radical side, however, because of its intent of unmasking phallogentric symbols and unseating any nonfeminist reading or interpretation. A feminist reading of a text would, for example, consist in forcing it to give up its underlying sexist ideology. On the assumption that

ideology comprises the often unarticulated preconceptions that govern society, it follows that sexist ideology comprises the conventions DICTATING SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE behaviour for men and women. It is therefore incumbent on the feminist reader to scrutinize works of literature for signs of ideologies from which they have emanated, regardless of whether or not the authors were aware of such ideologies at the time of writing.

It follows that a study of the image of women in literature, or a scrutiny of the so-called 'feminine' in literary language, usually has a TWO-PRONGED MOTIVATION: on the one hand, there is the desire to unmask the oppressive nature of stereotypical representations of women; and on the other hand, endeavours are made to heighten women's self-awareness by stimulating critical thought about the role of women in a patriarchal society.

Because feminist literary theory has been influenced by all the approaches discussed in the previous sections, indeed, because it is informed by such theories as semiotics, Materialism and psychoanalysis in its definition of subjectivity and language, it follows that feminist critical practice would implicate a whole range of different theoretical perspectives. Without going into these questions in detail, an enterprise that falls outside the objectives of this study, I would like to cite, in conclusion, a succinct summary of the main issues underlying 'feminist critical practice':

To practise literary criticism is to produce readings of literary texts and in the process of interpretation temporarily to fix meaning and privilege particular social interests. Feminist criticism seeks to privilege feminist interest in the understanding and transformation of patriarchy. How the feminist critic fixes meaning will depend on the framework within which she reads a text. Texts may be read, for example, as expressions of women's experience already constituted in the world beyond fiction, as repressions of an essentially feminine subjectivity which may be heterosexual or lesbian and which seeks to reassert itself through the discursive strategies of gender in language. These different types of reading represent different political as well as theoretical objectives.

(Weedon, 1987: 136-137)

2.5.5 CONCLUSION

In the introduction to this study it was stated that the main focus would be the nature of aesthetic perception as this is intimately related to a process of informed and perceptive reading, which, in turn, would be primarily based on the seminal work done by Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss in reception aesthetics. It was also argued that, in order to properly discuss the nature of the reading process, it would be necessary to outline briefly the shifts from

author to text to reader in some contemporary theoretical discourses before discussing in more detail the communicative 'transaction' between text and reader outlined in reception aesthetics.

Even in predominantly text oriented theories one could already glimpse an AWARENESS of the reader's perceptive faculties, thereby anticipating the focus on the reader's perceptive and productive role in literary studies that would become prevalent in the shift of focus from the text (or object) to the reader (or subject) in literary theory since the sixties. What I should like to emphasize, in the ensuing discussion, is the necessity to keep in mind, not only the insights gained by focusing on the psychological and sociological theorizing of the (reading) subject (psychoanalysis, Materialism and Feminism), but also to consider the understanding gleaned through a scrutiny of the formal properties of the linguistic sign and the literary text (Russian Formalism, Structuralism and semiotics, for example).

It is for this reason that the digression into text and subject oriented literary theories was undertaken in the previous sections.

Since it is doubtful, in terms of subject oriented post-structuralist theories, whether or not a 'gliding signifier' SHOULD or COULD be 'arrested', it is argued that an informed reader should at least, in principle, be able to arrive at a MEANINGFUL, rather than a DEFINITIVE, under-

standing of the 'message' embedded in the text. As will become clear in the course of chapter 3, such an 'informed' reader is a real reader who is 'informed' in the sense of being aware of Iser's characterization of the 'implied' reader as comprising the components of both 'textual structure' and 'structured act'. Iser's concept of the 'implied reader' is, then, essential for an investigation of the process of reading.

Because social classes and extra-aesthetic social RELATIONS play an important role in establishing recognizable view points, the object of investigation is ALSO to look into the importance of what the work of literature DOES and, at this point not so much what it MEANS. The work of art is thus placed in a propitious context for examining aesthetic RESPONSE. The INCORPORATION of sociological norms marks the basic requirements for such research, since it enables the critic to investigate in detail the variability and multiplicity of the aesthetic text, which of necessity requires the type of reader productivity that will result in multiple readings. Since after the investigation of text and subjected oriented theories outlined in this chapter, I firmly believe that a meaningful and productive interaction between text and reader is feasible, I turn, in the following section, to a more detailed scrutiny of the principles underlying reception aesthetics, i.e. the investigation of the intimate link between aesthetic perception and the PROCESS OF READING.

3 ASPECTS OF RECEPTION THEORY

3.1 INTRODUCTION: HISTORY AND PRECURSORS

One could broadly distinguish three approaches in the issue of reading and interpretation which are particularly relevant to a consideration of aesthetic perception: phenomenology, hermeneutics and reception theory. Before examining the work of the two main proponents of German reception aesthetics, namely Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss, it is first necessary to very briefly consider the ideas of a few illustrious precursors: the philosophers Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer.

In order to understand Husserl's 'ahistorical' and 'logician' account of meaning and understanding, it is perhaps necessary to reconstruct the sociopolitical conditions of the historical period in which his writings came about. Terry Eagleton (1983: 54-56) attempts such an historical situating of Husserl's philosophical thought against a European continent disrupted by war and revolution. After the first world war in 1914 to 1918 Europe lay in ruins. As a result thereof the continent was swept with social revolutions. Round about 1920 there was an uprising of the Berlin Spartacus and there was the Vienna General Strike, the establishment of workers' soviets in Munich and Budapest, and in Italy the factories were occupied by the masses.

All uprisings were forcefully crushed. However, because of these incidents the social order of the European Capitalism

had been uprooted by the war and its chaotic political aftermath. The cultural values on which ideologies rested were also deeply affected. Science, it seemed, had reduced into a sterile Positivism, its occupation became a mere obsession with the categorizing of facts. Philosophy seemed to be torn between Positivism and indefensible Subjectivism. Forms of Relativism and Irrationalism were growing uncontrollably, and ART reflected this LOSS OF SOCIAL ORDER.

At this time of ideological crisis, a time which actually pre-dated the first world war, Husserl, trying to stabilize a civilization which was on the brink of collapse, began to develop a new philosophical method.

Husserl was furthermore of the opinion that a choice had to be made between irrationalist barbarity and spiritual rebirth. This had to take place through an "absolutely self-sufficient science of the spirit" [Husserl, (reprint) 1970: The Crisis of European Sciences]. Like his philosopher predecessor René Descartes, Husserl began his quest for certainty by rejecting that which he called the 'national attitude'. The national attitude meaning the commonsensical belief of people in general, namely that objects have their existence independently of ourselves in the external world, and that which we know about them was generally sound. But the soundness of this philosophy had at least become questionable.

We can, however, be certain of how things APPEAR to us immediately in CONSCIOUSNESS, whether the actual things we

are experiencing are illusions or not. Husserl argues that all consciousness is the consciousness of SOMETHING. Moreover, consciousness is not just a passive registration of the world but actually constitutes or 'intends' it. His argumentation that all realities should be treated as pure phenomena in terms of their MANIFESTATION ON OUR MINDS was the beginning of phenomenology. Phenomenology is thus a science of pure phenomena.

This becomes possible by means of a so-called 'phenomenological reduction', whereby all that is contingent is 'bracketed', leaving only the necessary logical structure of the combined act of consciousness ('noesis' or intentional act') which is conscious of something (a 'noema' or intentional object') available for analysis. The consciousness thus investigated is said to be present to itself outside the context of 'real' time. It was the aim of phenomenology to return to the concrete, the solid ground, as the slogan 'back to the things themselves' suggested. From this brief account of phenomenology it may be obvious that Husserl's theory of consciousness suggests that 'being' and 'meaning' are always closely linked.

WHAT SIGNIFICANCE DOES THIS HAVE FOR LITERATURE?

According to William Ray (1984: 9) the Husserlian concept of intentionality in phenomenological theories of reading "authorizes viewing the literary work as an act of consciousness and as a structure". It follows that 'intentionality', not in the sense of an author's desire, but

rather as a definition of the act and structure of consciousness, can be used "to underwrite reader-response criticism and AUTHOR INTENTION readings as well as formalistic close reading and structural approaches that objectify the text" (Ray, 1984: 9). From a materialistic point of view Terry Eagleton (1983: 59) critically observes that, as with Husserl's 'bracketing of the real object', "the actual historical context of the literary work, its author, conditions of production and readership are ignored", with the result that phenomenological criticism aims instead at "a wholly IMMANENT reading of the text, totally unaffected by anything outside it". Leaving aside Eagleton's objections against a so-called 'immanent criticism' for the time being, one could stress here that the actual question in reader-response criticism may be in how far the TEXT determines its OWN meaning, and in how far the meaning is determined by the READER.

3.1.1 HERMENEUTICS

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger, Husserl's most celebrated pupil, challenges Husserl's 'logician' account of meaning by reintroducing historicity into phenomenology. In reflections on human existence (Dasein), he stresses that understanding is not an autonomous, ahistorical, human activity, but a medium through which the world comes to man and which characterizes his being. Heidegger's major work Being and Time (1927 reprint 1962) addresses itself, as

indicated by the title, to the question of BEING (ontology). He maintains that existence is in the first place always BEING IN THE WORLD: "we are human beings only because we are bound up with each other in a material world." In fact human existence is a dialogue with the world during which it is better to LISTEN than to speak. Interpretation is, therefore, not an activity so much as a disclosure, since any object encountered in the world already has an involvement which is disclosed in our UNDERSTANDING of the world. It follows that interpretation is necessarily always founded on what we already know - a kind of 'foreknowledge' or 'pre-understanding' (Vorverständnis) which cannot be separated from our being (Dasein) and which therefore shows that man cannot separate himself from the historical situatedness of understanding, because it is the nature of being in this world, (the ontological ground).

Human existence is furthermore not something which can be grasped as a finished object. It is a question of fresh possibilities and problems, which in Eagleton's (1983: 63) view, is then equivalent to saying that human being is constituted by history or time, so that TIME is shown to be the very STRUCTURE of human life itself.

For Heidegger language is the very dimension in which human life moves! Only by participating in language we become humans at all. His view of language is reminiscent of structuralist theories on the nature of language. If human existence is a constituent of TIME it is also made

up of LANGUAGE.

An interesting aspect of Heideggerian hermeneutics is the belief that art, in that it portrays familiar objects, like a pair of shoes in a Van Gogh painting for example, in unfamiliar circumstances, thereby discloses their profound essentiality i.e. 'the authentic shoeness' of the painted phenomenon will become perceptible. It would appear that Heidegger not only shares with the formalists the belief that artistic defamiliarization results in novel perception and a new awareness of REAL objects, but that "it is in art alone that such phenomenological truth is able to manifest itself..." (Eagleton, 1983: 64). Consequently, art, the same as language, should not be viewed as the expression of an individual subject, (as Husserl's theory taught). The subject as such is just a medium where the truth of the world speaks itself. It is this truth which the reader of, for example, a poem must hear. For Heidegger literary interpretation is not founded in human activity but is "something we must let happen" (quoted by Eagleton, 1983: 64).

Heidegger's form of philosophy is generally called 'hermeneutical phenomenology' to account for his engagement with historical interpretation. (The word 'hermeneutic' means the science of interpretation.) His 'historicist' position is thus distinguished from the 'transcendental philosophy' of Husserl and his followers who ascribe to a 'logician' account of meaning. Hence, it may be seen to what extent the objectivist/subjectivist debate in literary studies has

been informed by the different accents discernible in the views of these two precursors to reception aesthetics. Jefferson and Robey (1982: 123) offer the following comparison:

objectivist/subjectivist debate: the former position argues that there is one correct meaning inherent in any text, the latter that there are as many meanings as there are readers. These two positions correspond approximately to the 'logician' and 'historicist' accounts of meaning: the former argues that meaning is an ideal object which can be identified and reidentified by different individuals at different times, whereas the latter claims that meaning is an historical event determined by the context in which it occurred and possibly also by the historical situation of its interpreter.

Heidegger's claim that historicism and temporality should be at the centre of any philosophical enterprise is taken as the point of departure in the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's Truth and Method (1975). Gadamer's insistence on the historical nature of understanding, can be clearly perceived in his notion that temporal distance (Zeitabstand), that which separates the interpreter from the object to be interpreted, is not a barrier to be overcome but a productive feature of their RELATIONSHIP. Understanding is therefore intimately related to the ability of the interpreter to

situate himself within the process of tradition in which past and present are constantly 'fused'. The notion of 'horizon' is subsequently introduced by Gadamer to describe the subject's situatedness in the world, thereby also making provision for the particular 'prejudices' that any reader of a literary text would necessarily carry with him when encountering a work of literature. Gadamer therefore describes the act of understanding as a FUSION of one's OWN HORIZON with the HISTORICAL HORIZON, thereby coining what is sometimes called a 'most notorious' term, but which, in my opinion constitutes a BRILLIANT metaphor, namely Horizontverschmelzung (fusion of horizons, Holub, 1984: 42). Gadamer's relevance for reception aesthetics becomes clear in the appropriation of terms like 'horizon of expectations' (Erwartungshorizont), another splendid expression, in the work of Hans Robert Jauss and his students.

Before looking into Jauss's appropriation of the 'horizon of expectations' into his proposal for a 'new literary historiography' in an attempt to integrate literary history into reception aesthetics, it is first necessary to take note of Jauss's distinction of various paradigms in literary studies. Holub's (1984: 1-6) concise summary of Jauss's 'revolutionary' ideas on obsolete and emerging paradigms, delivered in 1969, will form the basis of the following brief exposition offered below.

3.1.2 THE BEGINNING OF A NEW PARADIGM

In The Change in the Paradigm of Literary Scholarship

(1969) Hans Robert Jauss outlined the history of literary method and claimed that the beginnings of a 'revolution' in contemporary literary studies were imminent. Jauss 'borrowed' the concepts of 'paradigm' and 'scientific revolution' from the work of Thomas S. Kuhn. He introduces literary investigation as an analogous engagement to strategies in the natural sciences. He maintains that the study of literature is not a process which involves the gradual accumulation of facts and evidence leading each successive generation closer to an understanding of literature. Consequently, he contends that a paradigm that once guided literary investigation must be discarded if it no longer satisfies the requirements posed for it by literary studies and its social-historical function. The obsolete is replaced by a new, more suitable one for the task of explaining works of literature. Such a new paradigm then creates both the technique for interpretation and the objects to be interpreted.

To support his thesis, Jauss discusses three previous paradigms and what he contends to be the emerging paradigm in literary studies. After a 'pre-scientific' phase of literary scholarship, Jauss notes the emergence of a 'classical-humanist' paradigm. The norm for literary studies in this paradigm required a COMPARISON with the APPROVED ANCIENT MODELS. Works which effectively imitated the requirements of the classics were acceptable. But those who broke with the convenience of time-honoured-traditional-models were judged as being unsatisfactory. It was the task of the literary critic to measure literary works of the present against

TRADITIONAL, FIXED RULES (of ancient models). Based on such criteria it was determined whether or not literary studies satisfied the accepted poetic practices.

The decomposition of the 'classical humanist' paradigm in the eighteenth and nineteenth century can be described as the result of the 'scientific revolution' of Historicism, which commenced in the wake of the establishment of nation-states and the endeavour for national unity throughout Europe. Consequential political changes and ideological necessities, of that time, resulted in an idealized literary history of national legitimation.

Activities thus focussed on source studies, endeavour to reconstruct pre-historical standard medieval texts, and the editing of critical editions in the national tradition. The positivistic approach of this paradigm produced some famous national histories of literature.

This 'historicist-positivist' approach is often compared with a mechanical approach to literary texts. As such it is identified as a narrow, almost chauvinistic view point, i.e. approach. Jauss is of the opinion that remnants of this paradigm still existed in the sixties. As evidence thereof he cites official government examination questions and the bulk of Marxist scholarship. However, it (the national tradition) had OUTLIVED its usefulness for productive literary research by the First World War.

A third paradigm emerging from the discontent with the pos-

itivist Asceticism was termed 'aesthetic-formalist' by Jauss. Related to this paradigm are such methods as the stylistic studies of Leo Spitzer and the Geistesgeschichte, translated by Holub as, roughly, the 'History of Ideas', of Oskar Walzel, Russian Formalism and New Criticism. That which various critics and schools have in common is their turning away from historical and causal explanations to an investigation and therefore concentration on the LITERARY WORK ITSELF. The detailed and precise description of linguistic technique, literary devices, composition and structure provides scholars of this paradigm with EXCELLENT interpretive tools for analysis.

This approach also raises the literary status of literature or the object to that of a SUFFICIENT artistic element for investigation.

3.1.3 PARADIGMS AND THEIR SOCIAL HISTORICAL FUNCTIONS

Since the end of the Second World War Jauss became aware of the signs of exhaustion of this paradigm. Symptoms for the crisis in the third paradigm may be detected in the rehabilitation of philosophical hermeneutics, the call for criticism with more SOCIAL RELEVANCE, as well as the appearance of alternatives like the archetypal criticism of Northrop Frye or Structuralism. However, despite these alternatives, Jauss sees little evidence of indications of an exact composition pointing to a new scholarly model. Although Structuralism (and possibly some varieties of Post-

Structuralism) may appear to be candidates for a new model, Jauss maintains that because of their opposition to the older philosophical-historical school of thought as well as the diversity of critical directions they have taken, they are excluded from consideration for the time being. Thus far the 'primary value' of Structuralism has been its challenge to literary scholarship to include categories and procedures developed by Linguistics into the analysis of literary works.

Although a methodological production of the fourth paradigm has not yet been defined, Jauss describes which demands it has to fulfil. The first and foremost requirement is that which has also satisfied every earlier paradigm, namely the interpretation, mediation, and actualization of past art:

This specific accomplishment (of a literary paradigm) ... is the ability to wrest works of art from the past by means of new interpretations, to translate them into a new present, to make the experiences preserved in past art accessible again; or, in other words, to ask the questions that are posed anew by every generation and to which the art of the past is able to speak and again to give us answers.

(Quoted by Holub, 1984: 3-4)

Jauss furthermore outlines three specific methodological pressing demands:

- 1) The mediation of aesthetic/formal and histori-

cal/reception-related analysis, as well as art history, and social reality;

- 2) The linking of structural and hermeneutical methods (which hardly take note of their respective procedures and results);
- 3) The probing of an aesthetics (no longer related solely to description) of effect (Wirkung) and a new rhetoric, which can equally well account for 'high-class' literature as well as popular literature and phenomena of the mass media.

(Quoted by Holub, 1984: 4)

The realization of such a paradigm, Jauss claims, can be traced in the reforms initiated by the department of literature at the University of Constance. Holub (1984: 4) notes that, although Jauss didn't mention reception theory by name, he may nevertheless have liked to see it become the fourth paradigm. Marxism and Structuralism which became very popular in German academia during the late 1960's, were disqualified in Jauss's opinion: Marxism was considered to consist of mechanistic procedures only; as such it could comfortably be consigned to a 'historicist-positivist dustbin'. Even though Structuralism was granted a degree of legitimacy it had, in the last analysis, been discredited because it did not exhibit the unity required for paradigmatic status.

Thus it would appear that in Jauss's view reception theory

alone, as opposed to (post)structuralist approaches, would meet the criteria postulated by him for a 'new paradigm' in literary studies. Jauss's own contribution in this regard may now be considered.

3.2 THE BEGINNING AND CONTINUATION OF RECEPTION THEORY

3.2.1 A 'NEW PARADIGM' FOR LITERARY HISTORY

For Hans Robert Jauss the matters of reception originate in his concern with the relationship between LITERATURE and HISTORY. In his earlier works, Jauss used to occupy himself with the disfavour into which literary history has fallen. He looks for possible remedies for this situation. That which he detects during his inquiry into German and international scholarship of the 1960s is an increasing disregard for the historical nature of literature. Scholars rather turned to "a variety of sociological psychoanalytical, semasociological, Gestalt-psychological or aesthetically oriented methods" (Holub, 1984: 53). He stated that it was his goal to help restore history to its rightful place, that is to the CENTRE of literary study.

The inaugural address he delivered at Constance in April 1967 contained clear allusions to Friedrich Schiller's initial speech as an historian at Jena in 1789. Jauss almost entirely chose Schiller's title, with one exception, he substituted 'universal' for 'literary'. (Translated by Holub (1984: 53) as "What is and for what purpose does one study literary history?") This means that he drew a mental image

of his predecessor in at least two ways: firstly, a sense of urgency was established as far as a REAWAKENING towards history was concerned, and consequently a need of a new orientation arose. The second connection with Schiller's lecture was to RESTORE some vital links between the artefacts of the past and the concerns of the present, as Schiller himself had advocated and emphasized 178 years before. Schiller's talk, which must have left a lasting impression on Jauss was delivered prior to the outbreak of the French Revolution. It was the intention to "announce a 'revolution' in the making, to proclaim the end of the ANCIEN RĒGIME of literary scholarship" (Holub, 1984: 54).

Jauss maintains that for literary scholarship a connection of this kind can only be established if literary HISTORY is no longer assigned to the periphery of that discipline. Consequently, the amended title of his lecture: "Literary history as a provocation for literary scholarship" was adopted. (Reprinted as "Literary history as a challenge to literary theory" in Jauss 1982: 3-45). Further references to this 'manifesto' of reception aesthetics will be to the 1982 reprint).

In his critical introduction to prevailing models for literary history and historiography, Jauss broadly adheres to the stages already distinguished in his 'paradigm' essay above. For our purposes, it is necessary to have a closer look at his discussion of the 'subjectivist/objectivist' debate, especially as this concerns his project to 'rec-

oncile', or at least to 'retain', some Marxist and formalist principles in his attempt to come up with a model that would not only challenge previous and/or prevailing models of literary studies, but which would hopefully also provide a viable alternative in the form of a 'new paradigm'. Jauss starts his discussion of the contribution as well as the shortcomings of Russian Formalism and Marxism by acknowledging differing (or 'opposite') attempts of both schools to:

...solve the problem of how the isolated literary fact or the seemingly autonomous literary work could be brought back into the historical coherence of literature and once again be productively conceived as evidence of the social process, or as a moment of literary evolution.

(Jauss, 1982: 10; underlined M.W.)

However, it becomes essential for Jauss to 'reform' Marxist and formalist premises in order to be able to present world literature as a PROCESS in which literature's SOCIAL or PERCEPTUALLY FORMATIVE FUNCTION would be elucidated. This means, first of all, that the Marxist's reductive view of literature as comprising primarily a COPYING function of REFLECTION i.e. a reflection of society had to be overcome, "in order finally to do justice to the long-suppressed insight into art's character as formative of reality" (Jauss, 1982: 11). However, the REVOLUTIONARY character of art seems to be foreclosed to Marxist aesthetics, since it is

unable to go beyond the imprisonment of a particular historical situation (usually to be translated into the bondages of capitalist economical realities determining literature's production) "toward a new perception of the world or an anticipated reality" (Jauss, 1982: 14). Following Karl Kosik, Jauss argues that Marxist aesthetics would only be able to escape from the 'aporias' of the theory of reflection, thereby once again becoming aware of the 'specific historicity of literature', when it acknowledges that:

Each work of art has a double character within an indivisible unity: it is the expression of reality, but it also forms the reality that exists not next to the work, nor before the work, but precisely only in the work.

(Quoted by Jauss, 1982: 14; underlined M.W.)

Jauss subsequently stresses the importance of Kosik's insight that the historical essence of the work of art lies not only in its REPRESENTATIONAL or EXPRESSIVE FUNCTION but also in its INFLUENCE. This means that the value (or the 'life') of the work resides not so much in its autonomous existence, but that it results rather from "the reciprocal interaction of work and mankind" (Kosik, as quoted by Jauss, 1982: 15). Clearly, this provides Jauss with the motivation for incorporating the READER into his conception of literary history, whereby the limitations of both formalist 'AUTONOMOUS' perceptions, i.e. the emphasis of language as the text medium and the concomitant deviation from a norm; and

Marxist 'REALIST' principles could hopefully be overcome. Consequently, Jauss argues that literary history would no longer be able to limit itself to a study of the single work, but that it would have to take into account the relationship of 'work to work', thereby viewing the historical coherence of works among themselves in the INTERRELATIONS of PRODUCTION and RECEPTION. Hence, it becomes clear that literature and art as such can only obtain a history with a character of a process if the succession of works is mediated through:

1. the producing subject, (the author) and
2. through the consuming subject, (the reader)

i.e. through the INTERACTION of author and public.

An explicit focus on the 'consuming subject' or the READER also provides Jauss with a strategy whereby the formalists' exclusive focus on the FORMAL DEVIANCE of a literary work as a means to renewed or heightened perception could be reincorporated into an historical awareness that would lead ultimately to a realization of the manner in which an art work could be perceived as 'formative' of reality. Discussing the formalist concept of 'defamiliarization', Jauss notes that it had the positive effect of going beyond the reception of art as 'the naive enjoyment of the beautiful' and that it demands instead, "the differentiation of form, and the recognition of the operation" (Jauss, 1982: 16). The process of perception in art thereby becomes an end in itself - formalist theory "made art criticism into a ra-

tional method in conscious renunciation of historical knowledge, and thereby brought forth critical achievements of lasting value" (Jauss, 1982: 16-17). Despite attempts in later Formalism to account for the historical in terms of literary evolution, Jauss observes that to see the work 'in its history' (i.e. within the literary system) is not the same as seeing "the work of art in history, that is in the historical horizon of its origination, social function, and historical influence" (Jauss, 1982: 18). Hence, the diagnosis of the central shortcomings in both Marxism and Formalism simultaneously provides the point of departure for the 'challenge' facing the literary theoretician, namely that of once again taking up the problem of literary history:

My attempt to bridge the gap between literature and history, between historical and aesthetic approaches, begins at the point at which both schools stop. Their methods conceive the literary fact within the closed circle of an aesthetics of production and of representation. In doing so, they deprive literature of a dimension that inalienably belongs to its aesthetic character as well as its social function; the dimension of its RECEPTION and INFLUENCE.

(Jauss, 1982: 18: underlined M.W.)

Jauss subsequently argues that it is the reader in his primary role, as the ADDRESSEE for whom the literary work is primarily destined, that should be the object of investiga-

tion. Referring to the basic communication process of the literary text, the triangle between author, work and public, Jauss argues that the latter is "no passive part, no chain of mere reactions, but rather itself an energy formative of history" (Jauss, 1982: 19). Indeed, the historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its addressees:

For it is only through the process of its mediation that the work enters into the changing horizon-of-experience of a continuity in which the perceptual inversion occurs from simple reception to critical understanding, from passive to active reception, from recognized aesthetic norms to a new production that surpasses them.

(Jauss, 1982: 19)

Thus the basic premise of Jauss's 'new paradigm' for literary studies is made explicit - the past methodology of production and representation must be opened up to an AESTHETICS OF RECEPTION, "if the problem of comprehending the historical sequence of literary works as the coherence of literary history is to find a new solution" (Jauss, 1982: 19).

In trying to take into consideration both the producing and consuming subjects, then, Jauss intends to meet the Marxist demand for HISTORICAL MEDIATIONS by situating literature in a LARGER process of events. He also intends to retain the formalist achievements by placing the perceiving subject at

the CENTRE of his concern, thereby UNITING HISTORY AND AESTHETICS:

The aesthetic implication lies in the fact that the first reception of a work by the reader includes a test of its aesthetic value in comparison with works already read. The obvious historical implication of this is that the understanding of the first reader will be sustained and enriched in a chain of receptions from generation to generation; in this way the historical significance of a work will be decided and its aesthetic value made evident.

(Jauss, 1982: 20)

This SHIFT thus also indicates a new type of literary history. Jauss envisions a historiography which plays a conscious, mediating role between the past and the present. He does not simply accept the tradition as such, but calls on the historian of literary reception to rethink the works in the light of their effect by current conditions and events.

The step from the history of the reception of the individual work to the history of literature has to lead to seeing and representing the historical consequence of works as they determine and clarify the coherence of literature, to the extent that it is meaningful, for us, as the prehistory of its present experience.

(Jauss, 1982: 20)

Viewed in this light, literature becomes meaningful. It becomes a source of mediation between past and present. Literary history becomes the centre for literary studies. After all, everything is built on the past i.e. on history. In order to understand past meanings as part of present practices, history must be taken into consideration.

Jauss's insistence, throughout this 'provocation' essay, on the function of the reading public in providing the literary historian with 'new solutions' to the problem of the production, representation and reception of literary works in the historical continuum, results in his coinage of the term HORIZON OF EXPECTATIONS in order to clarify his theoretical position. In his opinion, history of literature is a process of aesthetic reception and production "that takes place in the REALIZATION OF LITERARY TEXTS (my emphasis) on the part of the receptive reader, the reflective critic, and the author in his continuing productivity" (Jauss, 1982: 21). Hence, the historical context in which a literary work appears can never be independently established apart from an OBSERVER; and the continuity of past works and their re-evaluation similarly depends on the response of contemporary readers who are both able and willing to respond anew to such works:

The coherence of literature as an event is primarily mediated in the horizon of expectations of the literary experience of contemporary readers, critics, and authors. Whether it is possible to

comprehend and represent the history of literature in its unique historicity depends on whether this horizon of expectations can be objectified.

(Jauss, 1982: 22)

Jauss explains how even a supposedly new literary work inevitably conditions its readers to a specific kind of reception in that it awakens memories of that which was already read and creates expectations as to how it would proceed and end. Moreover, a process of continuous establishing and altering of horizons also determines the relationship of the individual text to the succession of texts that form the genre. In terms that faintly resemble Lotman's 'aesthetics of identity and opposition', Jauss argues that the new text evokes for the reader or listener the horizon of expectations and rules familiar from earlier texts, which are then varied, corrected, altered, or even just reproduced. It follows that:

The interpretative reception of a text always presupposes the context of experience of aesthetic perception: the question of the subjectivity of the interpretation and of the taste of different readers or levels of readers can be asked meaningfully only when one has first clarified which transsubjective horizon of understanding conditions the influence of the text.

(Jauss, 1982: 23; underlined M.W.)

Still trying to provide an answer to both Marxist and

formalist principles, namely LITERARINESS of the literary work of art, the formalist reader having to concentrate on the interrelationship of the text per se, whereas the Marxist reader is confronted with the social reality which is mirrored in the text, Jauss emphasizes the fact that the horizon of expectations is determined BOTH by the AESTHETIC 'COMPETENCE' of the reader AND by his SOCIAL 'EXPERIENCE'. He thus aims at accomplishing a reconciliation:

literature belongs to its aesthetic character
as well as its social function...

(Jauss, 1982: 18; underlined M.W.)

As far as the GAP between literature and history is concerned, Jauss points out that Flaubert's Madame Bovary did not only appear to be morally objectionable to some of its first readers because, seen against their horizon of expectations, it offended their concepts of marriage and adultery, but it was also misunderstood because the readers were not familiar with 'free indirect speech' (style indirect libre) and hence confused subjective emotions of the character with stated opinions of the author (Jauss's 'pitfall of subjective response'). As the reader gradually became more familiar with new stylistic techniques, Flaubert's Madame Bovary was eventually re-evaluated as an important novel whereas its contemporary 'rival' (the novel Fanny by another French author), which was far more popular at the time of its publication, had more or less receded into oblivion. Hence, Jauss claims at the end of his essay, that his concept of the 'horizon of

expectations' will ensure the realization of the SOCIALLY FORMATIVE function of literature:

The gap between literature and history, between aesthetic and historical knowledge, can be bridged if literary history does not simply describe the process of general history in the reflection of its works one more time, but rather when it discovers in the course of 'literary evolution' that properly socially formative function that belongs to literature as it competes with other arts and social forces in the emancipation of mankind from its natural, religious, and social bonds.

(Jauss, 1982: 45; underlined M.W.)

3.2.2 AESTHETICS OF NEGATIVITY AND THE REINTRODUCTION OF PLEASURE ('GENUSS')

Despite the widespread influence of Jauss's term 'horizon of expectations', there were several problems surrounding Jauss's definition and explanation of the term. Holub (1984: 60) refers to the notion of 'objectification' in this regard. He argues that the so-called 'familiar standards' for a given era are verifiable only by assuming that from a present perspective we can make objective judgments of what these standards actually were. Apparently, the reader is asked here to bracket his own historical situatedness. This is borne out when Jauss tries to overcome the 'pitfalls' of subjective response (the dangers of the 'affective fallacy')

warned against in New Criticism) by taking into consideration the possibility (even the necessity) to 'correct' initial responses (as in the case of Madame Bovary) in order to arrive at 'transsubjective understanding' that determined the 'influence of the text'. Holub ascribes these difficulties to Jauss's apparent adherence to an 'objectivist' model:

As long as he insists on the possibility of a 'reconstruction of the horizon of expectations' and sets out to accomplish this reconstruction with evidence or signals from the works themselves, he is going to be measuring the effect or impact of works against a horizon that is abstracted from those works.

(Holub, 1984: 61-62)

Another problem concerns Jauss's notion of aesthetic value, which relies heavily on the Russian formalist concept of 'defamiliarization' in that Jauss contends that the artistic character of a work can be determined by 'aesthetic distance', that is, "the difference or separation between the horizon of expectations and the work or as the 'change of horizon'" (Holub, 1984: 62). As we have seen with regard to the example of Flaubert's Madame Bovary which Jauss uses as an illustration, the 'historical aesthetic distance' between the 'negative moral' response of the readers and the value of the work can, in terms of Jauss's 'horizon of expectations', be reconstructed by a contemporary reader. The advantage that such a reader has over the initial 'histo-

rical' reader is twofold: not only does he have access to the historical documents describing the arguments of the prosecuting and defending attorneys during the trial of the work, but he also has access to contemporary theories on narrative structure in which the then unfamiliar (and therefore 'defamiliarizing') narrative technique of 'free indirect speech' is described.

Although Jauss's discussion of the noticeability of 'aesthetic distance' which relies heavily on 'novelty' and 'originality' as evaluative criteria, seems feasible enough in the case of Madame Bovary, he himself became critical of a so-called 'aesthetics of negativity' in his later work. Reacting on Theodor Adorno's Aesthetic Theory (1970) Jauss is bothered by the fact that it seems to allow a positive social function for art only when the artwork negates the specific society in which it is produced. The similarities with his own notion of 'aesthetic distance' detectable in and through an examination of the 'horizon of expectations' are clear enough. The implication of such a position is that it leaves no room for an affirmative and progressive literature, since literature in general is defined by its opposition to social practices, by its 'aesthetic character'.

Jauss argues that Adorno's notion of art is unable to account for the artistic value of art throughout the ages, since its being caught up in perpetual negativity, results in an aesthetics "that effectively severs art from any but the most indirect formative role" (Holub, 1984: 71). Jauss

notices that such one-sidedness is also true, to a certain extent, of both the formalist notion of defamiliarized perception and his own reception theory based on aesthetic distance and the breaking of a 'horizon of expectations'. Consequently, he tries, in his later work, to address the partial nature of his former depiction of aesthetic experience by turning to 'primary aesthetic experience' and the principle of pleasure as constitutive of an interest in art through the ages.

The word GENUSS has two meanings in German. Jauss includes both of these meanings in his concept. The most commonly used interpretation of Genuss would be pleasure or enjoyment. An older version of the meaning of this word, however, is to be found in the verb 'geniessen'. The meaning of which could be described as 'to make use of something.' According to Jauss the word 'geniessen' was commonly used in the eighteenth century. 'Genuss', in both senses, has been the seminal inspiration for the interest in art, even though this has been practically disregarded by the aesthetic tradition. The decline of the interest in this role has occurred during the past two centuries. While aesthetic experience was once considered to have a legitimate cognitive and communicative function, current theories have debarred it from these roles and assigned pleasure to cultural attitudes of the middle classes. In this connection Jauss states:

Now shorn of its cognitive and communicative efficiency aesthetic pleasure appears either as the

sentimental or utopian opposite of alienation in the three-phase models of the philosophy of history or, in contemporary aesthetic theory, as the essence of an attitude that is considered philistine when adopted toward classical art and simply excluded vis-a-vis modern art.

(Jauss, 1982: 26)

It is Jauss's ambition to challenge this tradition by restoring primary aesthetic experience to its rightful domain, namely at the CENTRE of literary theory. Pleasure, identification and affirmation are an integral part of his model. The problem of pleasure and art has, however, not been completely ignored. As we have already seen, inquiry into this problem was conducted by the celebrated writer Roland Barthes in The Pleasure of the Text (1973). It has also been taken up by Julia Kristeva in Desire in Language (1979) (discussed in 2.3.6 and 2.3.7).

Jauss challenges Barthes because of his "alleged adherence to an aesthetics of negativity" (Holub, 1984: 74). Although Barthes is credited with denying the simplistic idea that all aesthetic pleasure is the privilege of the ruling class and as such condemnable, his separation of aesthetic experience into PLAISIR and JOUISSANCE for affirmative and negative aesthetic pleasure respectively, reintroduces an ambivalent attitude towards art, which Jauss finds to be problematic.

Barthes's 'negative aesthetics' is consequently criticized

for apparently supporting only the pleasure of the scholar in 'writerly' texts, whilst slighting the pleasure of, by implication, the 'general' or 'common' reader in 'readerly' texts. To break away from the harmful consequences of negative aesthetics, Jauss adopts a different approach: if PLEASURE is understood as the opposite of WORK, then it must be separated from aesthetic pleasure phenomenologically. Jauss maintains that aesthetic pleasure consists of two moments:

1. the pleasure which occurs as an unmediated surrender (Hingabe) of the ego to the object, and
2. the second moment which is peculiar to aesthetic pleasure, consists of:
the taking up of a position that brackets the existence of the object and thereby makes it as an aesthetic one.

(Quoted by Holub, 1984: 74)

For Jauss an aesthetic attitude thus includes a distancing of the observer from the object. This aesthetic distancing is simultaneously a creative act of consciousness: in aesthetic contemplation the observer produces an imaginary object. In Kantian terms this phenomenon may be explained as a movement between subject and object in which MAN acquires an INTEREST in HIS DISINTERESTEDNESS (Groeben, 1977: 32). Jauss describes aesthetic enjoyment in the formula SELBSTGENUSS IM FREMDGENUSS (selfenjoyment in the enjoyment of something other); thereby suggesting that artistic pleasure

is not 'subjective' in the sense of being self-centred, but rather that it is firmly embedded in social experience.

3.2.3 DIFFERENT ACCENTS IN RECEPTION THEORY

Although Jauss's self-critical attitude towards his former position is admirable, his 'aesthetics of experience', as part of his critique against the 'aesthetics of negativity' in recent theory, failed to elicit the same kind of almost 'revolutionary response' which earmarked the reaction on his two 'manifesto' papers. The marked difference in response could probably be sought in the changed attitudes of the German critical community. Students are no longer concerned with participating in a 'theoretical revolution' nor are literary scholars eagerly involved with a renewed relevance of literary studies. Holub (1984: 82) observes that in such a climate a theory of aesthetic experience is perceived as "just another academic enterprise".

The reception of Wolfgang Iser's work paralleled, to a certain extent, the response to Jauss's writings as is evidenced in the difference in reaction sparked off by his earlier 'manifesto' paper as opposed to his later major works. Before incorporating Iser's ideas on the interaction between text and reader and the nature of the reading process in the following sections, the main similarities and differences in the work of these two eminent advocates of reception theory may first be briefly indicated.

Both Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, the main propon-

ents of reception aesthetics, were affected by general cultural factors. Wolfgang Iser's most successful early work, Die Appellstruktur der Texte (1970), appeared in English as Indeterminacy and the Reader's Response in Prose Fiction (1971). It was originally a lecture which had been delivered at the University of Constance where both Iser and Jauss lectured. The impact of this talk established Iser as one of the most important theorists of this school of thought.

Although both theorists concern themselves with the remodelling of literary theory by drawing attention AWAY from the author of the text to REFOCUS on the text/reader relationship, their respective methods of approaching this shift are sharply divided. Whereas the Romance scholar, namely Jauss, is primarily concerned with literary HISTORY as its BASIS for reception theory, Iser, a scholar of English literature, and versed in the interpretative orientations of New Criticism and narrative theory, inquires into the question of HOW AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS A TEXT HAS MEANING FOR A READER.

Jauss firstly depended on hermeneutics and was largely influenced by Hans Georg Gadamer. Iser particularly concerned himself with the work of Roman Ingarden from whom he adopts his basic model as well as a number of key concepts. Jauss's enquiry into the history of the aesthetic experience is elaborated in grand historical style in which individual works have mainly an illustrative function. By contrast,

Iser is primarily concerned with the individual text and, as pointed out above, the way readers relate to it. Even though he does NOT exclude social and historical factors, these are clearly SUBORDINATE.

In wider terms the difference between Jauss and Iser can be described as:

1. Jauss concerning himself with the macrocosm of reception, and
2. Iser concerning himself with the microcosm of response (Wirkung).

The studies of reception aesthetics pursued by these theorists are individually contingent of the distinction between the implied reader (Iser) within a literary text and the actual reader outside the text (Jauss). A response towards the text (Wirkung) can however only be brought about during the READING PROCESS. It is thus virtually impossible to describe this response without also analysing the reading process. Iser's primary investigation is therefore the process whereby the meaning of a literary text emerges as a product of "an interaction between the textual signals and the reader's acts of comprehension" (Iser, 1978: 9). Jauss, on the other hand, concentrates on the reception of the actual reader situated in a specific historical period. As such he renders a major contribution to the theory of historiography.

Since the process of concretization by the reader of the

physical artefact into an AESTHETIC OBJECT is one of the main tenets of this thesis, section 3.3 will be devoted to a more detailed discussion of Iser's theorization of the PROCESS OF READING, which is inextricably interlinked with his complex and somewhat problematical conception of the 'IMPLIED READER'. Since the latter presumably comprises the components of both 'textual structure' and 'structured act', Iser's notion of the 'implied reader' may best be understood as a 'textual instruction' to any reader (such as myself, for instance) to be complied with during his/her concretization of the text.

As far as the title 'Reception Theory' is concerned Jauss himself noted humorously in 1979 that to the foreign ear the word 'reception' may seem more appropriate to 'hotel management' than to literature. In my view, the meaning of reception can however very easily be derived from the verb RECEIVING (a literary message). HOW a reader receives a literary message depends on his PERCEPTION. His perception, on the other hand, is dependent on the philosophical, sociological, psychological, historical, literary and theoretical KNOWLEDGE he keeps in his 'storehouse', i.e. his mind.

This approach investigates the rudiments of a theory of aesthetic response: it is as such reader-oriented, as a literary text can only have a meaning when it is read, and after it is read, elicit a RESPONSE. Obviously, before the event of reception aesthetics, this fact was taken for granted, as we know very little about this very important

person, namely the person who attributes MEANING to the text, by involving himself in the literary text. In order to investigate further the nature of READER ACTIVITY, or READER INVOLVEMENT during the process of reading, THE READER is divided into two categories, namely

the implied reader (Iser); and
 the actual reader (Jauss)

The reader's significance in assigning meaning to the literary text is thus investigated in terms of the above distinctions. Note that whenever the term 'reader' is used by itself, a 'real' reader is meant, who could be any individual (like myself, for instance). Thus a real reader's activity will be investigated in terms of the different accents attributed by Iser and Jauss to, respectively, a 'textual construct' determining the reading process; and an actual, 'historical' reader experiencing the text in terms of his 'horizon of expectations' at a particular point in history.

Without the active participation of the reader the literary text would remain a PHYSICAL artefact prior to its meaningful concretization into an aesthetic object. Because the physical text contains discrepancies of meaning resulting from gaps caused by indeterminacies, these can only be remedied by the reader. The meaning of one and the same text can, however be concretized in VARIOUS ways by different readers, which may be contradictory. It subsequently follows that the aesthetic object is SUBJECT TO CHANGE. It

also follows that the OPENNESS of the literary text is modified in the act of reading as the reader concretizes the text according to his own knowledge and views. It is in the process of reading that an interaction between the structure of the text and its recipient takes place; and which causes a modification of the text. In terms of the reception theory the emphatic attention to this fact, namely that the study of a literary work should concern itself not only with the actual literary text, but also, and that in EQUAL measure, with actions involved in RESPONDING to the text. The text itself simply offering 'schematized aspects':

...through which the subject matter of the work can be produced while the actual production takes place through an act of concretization.

(Iser, 1978: 21, underlined M.W.)

Iser (1978: 21) subsequently concludes that the literary work has two poles:

1. The artistic pole, being the author's text, and
2. the aesthetic pole, which is set into motion by the REALIZATION of the reader, brought about by INTERACTION with the text.

In view of the above polarity Iser argues that the literary work itself cannot be identical with either the text or its concretization. It has to be placed somewhere between the two. Its character must be virtual, since it cannot be reduced to the reality of the text nor to the subjectivity of

the reader:

and it is from this virtuality that it derives its dynamism. As the reader passes through the various perspectives offered by the text and relates the different views and patterns to one another he sets the work in motion, and sets himself in motion, too.

(Iser, 1978: 21)

Accordingly, the artistic pole, the author's text, sets that which Iser calls the 'realization' of the reader in motion. The 'realization' being that which he 'grasps' through the medium of the 'artistic pole'. This actualization of the work is, then, the result of an INTERACTION between TEXT and READER. However, to exclusively concentrate on or investigate either the textual strategies or the reader's psychology will not let us have an access to the READING PROCESS itself. Both are important, of course, but not in isolation. Text (artistic pole) and reader (aesthetic pole) are inseparable, one cannot do without the other. The reason why Iser emphasizes the reader in this regard, is because, according to him, "the message is transmitted in two ways, in that the reader 'receives' it by composing it" (1978: 21). In accordance with what he sees as the verbal and affective two-sidedness of literary structure, Iser maintains that:

The verbal aspect guides the reaction and prevents it from being arbitrary; the affective aspect is the fulfillment of that which has been pre-

structured by the language of the text. Any description of the interaction between the two must therefore incorporate both the structure of effects (the text) and that of response (the reader).

(Iser, 1978: 21)

It follows that the nature of aesthetic experience is a 'dynamic happening' rather than a 'definable entity' (Iser, 1978: 22). I would attempt briefly to explain this phenomenon, i.e. the dynamic nature of aesthetic experience, with reference to a poem in which the VOICE, and therefore LANGUAGE, elicits a particular response from this reader (i.e. M.W.):

Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt,
 Weiß was ich leide!
 Allein und abgetrennt
 Von aller Freude,
 Seh ich ans Firmament
 Nach jener Seite.
 Ach! der mich liebt und kennt,
 Ist in der Weite.
 Es schwindelt mir, es brennt
 Mein Eingeweide.
 Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt,
 Weiß, was ich leide! (None, but the lonely heart ...)

(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

That which becomes audible through language in the poem is perceived as one HARMONIOUS UNITY. It expresses the longing

of the soul, the meaning thereof can, in my opinion, be defined in other meanings. I therefore do not ENTIRELY agree with Iser, namely that "the aesthetic effect is robbed of its unique quality the moment one tries to define what is meant in other meanings" (1978: 22).

Textual models nevertheless only offer a FRAME within which THE READER must construct the aesthetic object, according to his own FRAME OF MIND. Textual structures and structured acts of COMPREHENSION are therefore the two poles i.e. the artistic pole and the aesthetic pole. This means that the TRANSFER of the text is INITIATED by the text, however, the success of the TRANSFER depends on the extent to which this text CAN activate the reader's faculties of PERCEPTION. Whether the reader, in the case of the poem, quoted above, has an aesthetic experience or not, depends once again on the EXTENT to which the text can ACTIVATE his facilities of perception. Whether the text which is given is PERCEIVED i.e. understood and as such received in the way it is intended by the author depends AS MUCH ON THE READER AS ON THE TEXT ITSELF, as reading is not a one-way process. A dynamic interaction between text and reader thus depends on the reader's sensibility and his faculties of perception. However the same (poetic or other) text may not elicit the same feelings in every reader. Hence, it stands to reason that the full potential of the literary text may never be fully realized.

The aforementioned arguments are important as a reader-

oriented theory is open to criticism from the very outset. Iser quotes Philip Hobsbaum, who has summed up the two extremes thus:

Roughly it can be said that theories of the arts differ according to the degree of SUBJECTIVITY they attribute to the RESPONSE of the percipient. Or, what comes to the same thing, they differ according to the extent of the objectivity they attribute to the work of art. Thus the gamut of stretches from Subjectivism, where it is felt that each person will create the work in his own private way, to Absolutism, where it is felt that an ideal standard has been revealed to which each work of art should conform.

(Iser, 1978: 23; emphasis M.W.)

A theory of aesthetic response is thus complicated, to say the least. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the text as the objective embodiment of an IDEAL STANDARD incorporates several premises that can by no means be ignored.

Although there seems to be no doubt that the acts of perception (here meaning 'to become AWARE of the text') and therefore comprehension (understanding of the message) are GUIDED by the structures of the text, the same text cannot exercise COMPLETE control. This is the point where one can sense a touch of arbitrariness. However, the very fact that ideality has to be 'brought out' i.e. conveyed by interpretation

shows that it is not directly 'given' by the text to the reader. One can therefore agree with Iser when he says:

so we can safely say that the relative indeterminacy of the text allows a spectrum of actualizations. This, however, is not the same as saying that COMPREHENSION is arbitrary, for the mixture of determinacy and indeterminacy (pole versus opposing pole) CONDITIONS the interaction between text and reader, and such a two-way process cannot be called arbitrary....

(Iser, 1978: 24; emphasis
and bracketed insertion M.W.)

It follows, once again, that the text AND the reader, whose imaginative faculties are awakened by the text as a result of an INTERACTION between text and reader, contribute towards an understanding and evaluation of the literary text.

The fact that a reader arrives at an understanding and therefore evaluation of the literary text by interaction with the text, does however NOT mean that the text has the quality of being a CLOSED text. On the contrary: as each reader has a different knowledge and changing horizon of expectations the indeterminacies in the text i.e. the 'gaps' will be 'filled' and eventually interpreted differently by different readers.

As has already been pointed out above different interpretations emanate from the changing horizons of expecta-

tions of readers. Although this seems problematic, the OPENNESS of the literary text is the most characteristic feature of literature because it INVITES and GUIDES the reader to different interpretations, viewpoints and therefore salient points for discussion. This fact should also eliminate possible premature judgements of a literary text, which would indeed degrade it from an aesthetic object to a cold analytical prescript. As far as this most characteristic feature, namely the 'openness' of literature is concerned, Umberto Eco (1976) already built on such traditional semiotic notions of AESTHETIC ENCODING by characterising the literary text as not only self-focusing but also as ambiguous. As may be deduced from the previous outline of some accents in reception theory, Iser, too, stresses the importance of 'openness' in literature which could lead to a 'kind of ambiguity', i.e. the text having different kinds of meaning.

I shall now proceed with a more detailed discussion of the reading activity, as this is outlined in Wolfgang Iser's concept of the 'implied reader' and the resultant process of the reader's gradual perception of the literary text.

3.3 THE PROCESS OF READING

Since Iser's views on aesthetic response (Wirkung) and the nature of the reading process will provide the basic issue for the ensuing discussion, the 'history' of Iser's ideas is not traced (unlike the exposition of Jauss's concept of the 'horizon of expectations' in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2).

Rather, certain concepts that have been touched upon in the previous section will be explained in more detail with a view to assessing their value in the reader's encounter with literary texts.

3.3.1 THE IMPLIED READER

To describe the interaction between text and reader, Iser introduces the concept of the IMPLIED READER as a counterpart to Wayne Booth's concept of the IMPLIED AUTHOR, elaborated in his well-known The Rhetoric of Fiction (1963). Both these terms have created controversy in narratological studies, but they are usually incorporated when the communication situation of narrative texts is described.

In the introduction to his collection of essays entitled The Implied Reader (1974), translated from the German Der implizite Leser (1972), Iser sets out to investigate literary effects and responses with reference to novels ranging from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, since the novel happens to be "the genre in which reader involvement coincides with meaning production" (Iser, 1974: 11). One could argue that Iser concerns himself more with the 'objectivist' i.e. the LITERARY TEXT than with the 'subjectivist' i.e. the READER. In defence I would attempt to point out that it is impossible to investigate READER involvement UNLESS there is a TEXT. Involving oneself with a reader, one is automatically involved in more detail with the text, as one necessitates the other!

Apparently utilizing Jauss's concept of the 'horizon of expectations', in his own way, Iser argues that although the novel deals with social and historical norms, this does not mean that it simply reproduces contemporary values. Rather, novelistic representation creates a new context:

which changes their function, insofar as they no longer act as social regulations but as the subject of a discussion which, more often than not, ends in a questioning rather than a confirmation of their validity.

(Iser, 1974: 12)

Implicitly using the formalist concept of defamiliarization, Iser argues that a negation of 'familiar norms' in the novel induces the reader "to take an active part in the composition of the novel's meaning, which revolves round a basic divergence from the familiar" (Iser, 1974: xii). The shift towards the reader becomes clear in the insistence on the 'active participation' of the reader to 'make sense' of defamiliarizing effects of negation. This type of active reader involvement or participation in an interaction between (novelistic) text and reader is then defined in terms of the concept of the 'implied reader':

This term incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process.

(Iser, 1974: 12; underlined M.W.)

The fact that the term thus defined comprised both "a textual condition and a process of meaning production" (Holub, 1984: 84) has given rise to criticism of its ambiguity from both 'textually oriented' and 'reader and materialist inclined critics' - it would appear that Iser's detractors suspected him of 'preaching' reader activity, whilst still 'practising' formalist or new critical 'objective criticism'.

In his later work, first published in German as Der Akt des Lesens. Theorie Aesthetischer Wirkung (1976) and translated in English as The Act of Reading. A Theory of Aesthetic Response (1978), the reasons for defining the reader's role in terms of the concept of the 'implied reader' are developed much more carefully by Iser. Setting off his concept against constructs as Riffaterre's 'super-reader', Fish's 'informed reader' and Wolff's 'intended reader', Iser sees as the common denominator in the above concepts:

a means of transcending the limitations of (1) structural linguistics, (2) generative-transformational grammar, or (3) literary sociology, by introducing the figure of the reader.

(Iser, 1978: 34)

Whilst he acknowledges the importance of introducing the 'figure of the reader' as a means to transcend limiting 'objective' frameworks, he argues that a proper investigation of the reader's role involves, especially, an understanding of the 'effects caused' and the 'responses elic-

ited' by literary works. As we have already seen, this informs his conviction that the reading process is characterized both by textual givens and the reader's acts of comprehension whilst 'receiving' the text. To arrive at such an understanding of the reader's role, it is then necessary to "allow for the reader's presence without in any way pre-determining his character or his historical situation" (Iser, 1978: 34). The 'textual condition', referred to above by Holub (1984) is flashed out as follows:

He embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect - predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with real reader.

(Iser, 1978: 34)

As I understand the 'textual condition' (Holub) in Iser's concept, one could argue that, as the structure of literary texts invariably contains indications of their prospective readership, the text also presupposes a class of reader who would be, in Iser's terms, to a greater or lesser extent familiar with stylistic conventions or specific communication techniques in different types of literary texts. A reader of poetry, for instance, could be expected to be well versed in the process of analysing and interpreting 'defamiliarized' poetic language, since, for example, the use

of metaphors that have to be meticulously decoded, seems to be an expected communication technique in most poetic texts. This stems from the fact that this type of reader has acquired a certain cultural knowledge and can therefore draw from his 'storehouse of knowledge' which enables him to respond to the textual givens. I am, of course, referring here to a 'real' reader and not to a construct. This is not in contradistinction to Iser's definition of the 'implied reader' since his concept is not intended to exclude or bypass the 'generally recognized' fact "that literary texts take on their reality by being read" (Iser, 1978: 34). It should be clear, then, that although Iser stated emphatically that the 'implied reader' is a construct which should not be identified in any way with any 'real' reader, he is not thereby ignoring 'real recipients' of literary texts. How, then, does Iser reconcile the apparent contradiction of 'abstract' versus 'real' in his concept of the 'implied reader'? In order to clarify this apparent contradiction, it is necessary to quote Iser extensively on the manner in which the dual characterization of the 'implied reader' as both 'textual structure' and 'structured act' informs the role intended for 'real' recipients of literary texts:

The concept of the implied reader is ... a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining him: this concept pre-structures the role to be assumed by each recipient, and this holds true even when texts deliberately appear to ignore their possible recipient or active-

ly exclude him. Thus the concept of the implied reader designates a network of response-inviting structures, which impel the reader to grasp the text.

No matter who or what he may be, the real reader is always offered a particular role to play, and it is this role that constitutes the concept of the implied reader. There are two basic, interrelated aspects to this concept: the reader's role as a structured act.

(Iser, 1978: 34-35)

Turning, firstly, to 'textual structure' Iser attempts to explain how the text ought to "bring about (Iser's accentuation - M.W.) a standpoint from which the reader will be able to view things that would never have come into focus as long as his own habitual dispositions were determining his orientation..." (1978: 35). It should be clear that Iser never loses sight of the essential INTERACTION between TEXT and READER: although the text may only be concretized by a reader, the nature of this concretization, or the role 'offered' to the reader in Iser's terms, seems to be already 'prestructured' by the text.

Iser attempts to explain this peculiar interlinking of text and reader with reference to novelistic structure, which is characterized by "a variety of perspectives that outline the author's view and also provide access to what the reader is meant to visualize" (1978: 35). The novelistic 'perspec-

tives' singled out by Iser are: those of the narrator, the character, the plot and the fictitious reader (i.e. the so-called 'explicit' reader mentioned in the text - M.W.). As will become clear in chapter 5: 5.2, Iser's idea of novelistic structure could profitably be complemented by more detailed work done in structuralist narratology by theorists such as Gerard Genette, for example. Nevertheless, Iser's idea of how the meaning of a novelistic text may be gradually assembled by a reader is explained clearly enough in terms of the four 'perspectives' mentioned above. According to him, the reader's role, in the course of the reading process, "is to copy shifting vantage points that are geared to a prestructured activity and to fit the diverse perspectives into a gradually evolving pattern" (1978: 35). Thus the text, with which the reader is busy, offers a variety of perspectives, outlining or mirroring the author's view and providing access to what the reader is meant to visualize. The novel exemplifies this most accurately, as it represents a system of perspectives which transmits the author's vision.

Accordingly, the reader's role is prestructured by three components:

1. The different perspectives as represented in the text
2. The vantage point from which he joins them together, and
3. the MEETING PLACE from where they converge.

To explain the reader's role as being prestructured by the

above mentioned three components, the following may be pointed out: the different perspectives are being represented to the reader in the TEXT. The next step of the reader's role is the vantage point or the ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION that allows the reader a clear and broad view from which he joins them together, and the MEETING PLACE which will enable the reader to grasp the meaning of the text.

This concludes Iser's explanation of the reader's role as 'textual structure'. He immediately emphasizes the fact that this role does not end here, but that it could be "fully implemented only when it induces structured acts in the reader" (1978: 36). Here, once again, is evidence of the manner in which, for Iser, text and reader are inextricably intertwined in the reading act. Although the textual perspectives are given in the text, "their gradual convergence and final meeting place are not linguistically formulated and so have to be IMAGINED" (1978: 36; accentuation M.W.). Iser explains this shading of the reader's role as 'textual structure' into that of 'structured act' as the point "where the textual structure of his role begins to AFFECT the READER" (1978: 36); accentuation M.W.). In order to explain what takes place during this process, Iser himself may once again be quoted extensively:

A sequence of mental images is bound to arise during the reading process, as new instructions have continually to be accommodated, resulting not only in the replacement of images formed but also

in a shifting position of the vantage point, which differentiates the attitudes to be adopted in the process of image-building. Thus the vantage point of the reader and the meeting place of perspectives become interrelated during the ideational activity and so draw the reader inescapably into the world of the text. (Just as the researcher into reader participation is drawn 'inescapably into the world of the text').

(Iser, 1978:36; underlined and bracketed last sentence M.W.)

The reader's role as both textual structure and structured act has thus been elaborated. Textual perspectives influence the reader but the gradual convergence is not linguistically formulated. The, in the text embedded instructions, stimulate mental images which animate what is LINGUISTICALLY IMPLIED. The 'real' reader, submitting to the role constituted by the concept of the 'implied reader', is thus able to GRASP the IMPLIED message in the text, since he has the sensibility, due to his general knowledge and his knowledge of literary conventions, to be 'affected' by the message which is inherent in the textual structure. Thus 'textual structure' and 'structured act' are related and, in the concept of the 'implied reader', they are connected, i.e. joined together in a dynamic process of interaction one with the other.

The implied reader is, furthermore, to use Iser's term 'a

transcendental model' which enables the structural effects of literary texts to be described. It indicates the role of the reader definable in textual structure and acts. The implied reader and the textual structure may therefore be compared with the OBSERVING SUBJECT and the REPRESENTED OBJECT which have a certain relationship one to the other.

It would be clear from the above why it was stated before (in section 3.2.3) that Iser's concept of the implied reader could best be understood as a textual instruction to be complied with by an individual or 'real' reader. Iser himself expressed the 'relation' between 'implied' and 'real' reader as follows:

The concept of the implied reader as an expression of the role offered by the text is in no way an abstraction derived from a real reader, but is rather the conditioning force behind a particular kind of tension produced by the real reader when he accepts the role.

(Iser, 1978: 36)

The tension referred to is caused by the fact that it would never be possible (or even advisable if it would be possible) for any real reader totally to succumb to the role prestructured by the text. Thus the criticism against Iser's so-called bias towards 'Objectivism' in his concept of the implied reader seems unwarranted. Although Iser concedes that the role 'prescribed by the text', will tend to be stronger than the 'reader's own disposition', he states

quite emphatically that the latter will always form a necessary "background to and a frame of reference for the act of grasping and comprehending" (1978: 37). Having said that, the affect of the text on the reader, during the dynamic process of assembling the meaning of the text, is important, since "by the end of our reading we are liable consciously to want to incorporate the new experience into our own store of knowledge" (1978: 37).

Besides the dynamic interaction between text and reader, which points to their mutual dependence in the act of reading, the fact that the concept of the implied reader allows for different actualizations shows that Iser is not only concerned with an 'abstraction' but also aware of the importance of individual 'real' readers. It is at this point that Iser seems to come closer to Jauss, in that he claims for his concept of the implied reader a so-called 'vital function' of providing a link between different actualizations of the text:

...the process of fulfillment is always a selective one, and any one actualization therefore represents a selective realization of the implied reader, whose own structure provides a reference within which individual responses to a text can be communicated to others. This is a vital function of the whole concept of the implied reader: it provides a link between all the historical and individual actualizations of the text and makes them

accessible to analysis.

(Iser, 1978: 37-38)

In conclusion, it may be noted that Iser sees the concept of the implied reader as a 'transcendental model' which makes it possible for the structural effects of literary texts to be described. It indicates the role of the reader definable in terms of textual structure and structured acts.

The reader is thus situated in a position that enables him to assemble the meaning towards which the perspectives of the text have guided him. This meaning is however not a given external reality nor a copy of a reader's own world, but is something which originates from an idea of the reader initiated by the structure of the text which animates and therefore creates a sequence of mental images. It is thus the TEXT which translates itself into the reader's consciousness. The contents of these mental images are coloured by the reader's experience, acting as a referential background against which the unfamiliar can be imagined, i.e. conceived and then processed:

The concept of the implied reader offers a means of describing the process whereby textual structures are transmuted through ideational activities into personal experiences.

(Iser, 1978: 38)

3.3.2 THE ACT OF READING

In the act of reading the physical, constant literary text

is converted to the reader's text. It is for this reason that Wolfgang Iser, in his phenomenological approach to the reading process, observes that "in considering a literary work, one must take into account not only the actual text but also, and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to that text" (Iser, 1974: 274; underlined M.W.). The process thereof may be explained thus: the artefact is transformed into an aesthetic object by the reader's interpretation of the text in the act of reading. This is a process which involves constant deduction, association and the filling of 'gaps' in the text by the reader. This means that, in Iser's view, the literary work lies halfway between the artistic text created by the author and the aesthetic object as brought about by the reader:

The convergence of the text and reader brings the literary work into existence, and this convergence can never be precisely pinpointed, but must always remain virtual, as it is not to be identified either with the reality of the text or with the individual disposition of the reader.

(Iser, 1974: 275; underlined M.W.)

As Ray (1984: 51) correctly points out, it is this notion of an object both 'in' the text and 'in the activity of the reader' that assures Iser's investigation into 'reader activity'. The reader's activity consists of constantly drawing on his knowledge of the world and reality, which means his universal storehouse, and in particular on his

knowledge of literary conventions i.e. his storehouse of knowledge and convention. This is the reader who, as we have seen, will attempt to actualize the role prestructured for him/her in the dual concept of the implied reader as comprising the aspects of both textual structure and structured acts of comprehension. In seeking to perform the mental exercises required of him during the so-called 'structured acts of comprehension', the reader will be continuously occupied in formulating hypotheses or assumptions in order to assign meaning to the literary text. He is helped to do this by the clues which he detects within the text itself.

In terms of reception theory this process is described as the reader's concretization of the physical literary text. Iser elucidates that without this active participation of the reader, a literary text could not be grasped at all, as a physical literary text inevitably contains gaps caused by discrepancies of meaning, and indeterminacies (vague, left doubtful text). These gaps, caused by indeterminacies, have to be corrected by the interpretation of the reader himself.

As each reader is an individual being, this can be concretized in different or even in contradictory ways. Consequently, as the same constant physical artefact with its discrepancies and indeterminacies can be concretized in different ways by various different readers, it is, as already stated but once more emphasized, evident that the aes-

thetic object is SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

The act of reading is viewed as a dynamic process in regard to the reader's active engagement in the concretization of the literary text. While the reader is engaged in reading, he will continuously enlarge on or revise initial surmises in the light of further textual data with which he comes into contact as he reads. The act of reading is thus not merely a linear process, because the reader is INSPIRED by cross-references to read laterally (sideways). In this respect Iser refers to specific strategies embodied in the text which guide the reader's concretization:

This process is steered by two main structural components within the text: first, a repertoire of familiar literary patterns and recurrent literary themes, together with allusions to familiar social and historical contexts; second, techniques or strategies used to set the familiar against the unfamiliar.

(Iser, 1974: 288)

Iser also maintains that the reader must be acquainted with certain literary techniques and conventions. He must also comprehend the codes of the text, which means that he must be familiar with the rules governing the generation of meaning in the text. The moment the reader applies these techniques which he has 'stored' in his mind, he is in the process of accepting the role prestructured for him in the concept of the implied reader.

Iser further contends that indeterminacies in the literary text are inevitable as there is no direct connection between the subject matter of the literary text and the relevant objects in real life. The reader may have one of two options to normalize these indeterminacies: he can either project his OWN STANDARDS onto the text, or he can concede the necessity of REVISING his own PRECONCEIVED IDEAS.

It can thus once again be confirmed that the literary text is indeed OPEN insofar as the reader must assign meaning to its indeterminacies while he concretizes the text.

Subsequently, Iser considers the text as something which forces the reader to ACTION, (the text) INSPIRING him to learn new codes of comprehension as the most effective ones. There is a certain similarity between this effect and the defamiliarizing effect of literature claimed as a prerequisite by the Russian formalists as a key concept in their theory of literariness. However, the Russian formalists emphasize the concept of LITERARINESS ('literaturnost') i.e. their preoccupation with the TEXT as such, whereas reception aesthetics's emphasis is (said to be) on the READER, although I would like to emphasize once again that an investigation into reader activity automatically involves an investigation into the text. I think one can therefore confidently assess that reception aesthetics is AS SUCH READER/TEXT ORIENTED.

One is also reminded, of course, of Jauss's 'horizon of expectations' that may be broken when the reader encounters a literary text. Iser, being READER/TEXT-ORIENTED, relates

such a process more pertinently to the (psychological) effect this has on the reader in the act of reading:

The manner in which the reader experiences the text will reflect his own disposition, and in this respect the literary text acts as a kind of mirror; but at the same time, the reality which this process helps create is one that will be different from his own (since, normally, we tend to be bored by texts that present us with things we already know perfectly well ourselves). Thus we have the apparently paradoxical situation in which the reader is forced to reveal aspects of himself in order to experience a reality which is different from his own. The impact this reality makes on him will depend largely on the extent to which he himself actively provides the unwritten part of the text, and yet in supplying all the missing links, he must think in terms of experiences different from his own; indeed, it is only by leaving behind the familiar world of his own experience that the reader can truly participate in the adventure the literary text offers him.

(Iser, 1974: 281-282; underlined M.W.)

The 'apparently paradoxical situation' in which the reader is forced to reveal aspects of himself is that which may sometimes be called an 'aha experience': it is something which is quite different from that which he is acquainted

with. As it is pointed out by Iser, this experience can only be brought about by filling the gaps caused by indeterminacies which the reader can only provide if he thinks in terms of experiences different from his own i.e. experienced by others. The reader is thus GUIDED by the text to leave behind the familiar world of his own experience in order to 'truly participate in the adventure the literary text offers him'. One can therefore also emphasize once again that the OPENNESS of the text allows the reader to form his OWN, - TO HIM HITHERTO UNKNOWN,- reality.

The actual or real reader's concretization of the physical text as an aesthetic object is thus brought about by a TRANSFER of the text to the reader. But, although the transfer is certainly INITIATED by the text, the same (transfer) depends on the extent to which the text can affect the READER'S FACULTIES of PERCEPTION and IMAGINATION. It must consequently once again be emphasized that whereas the artefact or the physical literary text remains constant, the aesthetic object, which is the literary text AS CONCRETIZED BY THE READER, is SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Accordingly, it is only as a result of the READER'S COMPETENCE, which involves an acceptance of the reader's role as defined by Iser in the concept of the implied reader, that the physical literary text, initiated by the sender, can be concretized by the recipient.

In the following chapter an outline of structuralist and semiotic studies on the structure of poetic, narrative and

dramatic texts will be given, as an indication of the emphasis on the text regarding the process of INTERACTION between the poetic, narrative and dramatic TEXT and the READER.

B THE READER'S PERCEPTION OF LITERARY TEXTS

4 THE PROCESS OF READING

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Section A of this study I have tried to situate the general principles of reception aesthetics, as developed by its main German proponents Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, within a general theoretical framework of some prominent text and subject oriented theories of literary studies in the twentieth century. Whereas the so-called objectivist/subjectivist debate in literary interpretation seems to suggest that particular approaches favour either the text or the producing or receiving subject(s) in literary communication, it is precisely the explicit emphasis on the INTERACTION between TEXT and READER that distinguishes Iser's phenomenological reading process from, for example, the belief in 'objective' truth in formalist approaches and the indulgence in 'subjective' relativity in some poststructuralist theories respectively. Despite the attractiveness of Iser's notion of productive reader activity that is, to some extent, curtailed by textual strategies one can pose the apparently simple questions, namely in how far a text determines its own meaning, and in HOW FAR that meaning is determined by a reader. To answer these questions may not be an easy task. However, in the subsequent account of my own encounters with various literary texts, I shall try to make explicit what a 'two way process' of meaning production, that is reading as 'an effect to be experienced' rather than

'an object to be identified' (Iser, 1978: 10), entails. In this regard, it may be useful to keep in mind that, in Iser's view, a literary work is neither COMPLETELY TEXT nor COMPLETELY the SUBJECTIVITY of the reader. It is rather a COMBINATION or even a MERGER of the two. Consequently, Iser sketches three domains for exploration:

1. THE TEXT IN ITS POTENTIALITY TO ALLOW AND MANIPULATE THE PRODUCTION OF MEANING: here, the text is regarded as a skeleton of 'schematized aspects' that must be actualized or concretized by the reader.
2. THE PROCESSING OF THE TEXT IN READING: here, what is of central importance are the mental images formed when attempting to construct a consistent and cohesive aesthetic object.
3. THE COMMUNICATORY STRUCTURE OF LITERATURE: here, the conditions that cause and govern the text-reader interaction are examined.

(Adapted from Holub, 1984: 84)

Considering these three points or areas Iser is determined to clarify:

- a) how meaning is produced, and
- b) what effects literature has on the reader.

In the introduction to his collection of essays entitled The Implied Reader (1974) Iser observes that the reading process

becomes very complex in the twentieth-century novel, "for here the discovery concerns the functioning of our own faculties of perception" (1974: 14). As I understand Iser, the reason why the reading process becomes a self-conscious activity in 'modern literature' is to be sought in the 'deviant' nature of such literature when the reader's 'store-house of knowledge' is taken into account. In other words, 'rule-breaking' will apply in the reader's horizon of expectations as this concerns both the relation of literature to the 'reality' of the reader and the novelistic conventions or 'textual strategies' employed in the work.

In a South-African context, a text like J.M. Coetzee's novel In the Heart of the Country (1978) certainly produced 'difficulties' for readers who were, at the time of the novel's publication, apparently not prepared for this type of 'radical' writing in which 'familiar' images of rural life associated with the South African landscape were seemingly deliberately disrupted. It is interesting to note, in this regard, that Teresa Dovey (1988), in her recent poststructuralist study of Coetzee's novels, sees this text as a 're-writing' of Olive Schreiner's A Story of an African Farm (1883), which is written in the pastoral mode. In the following section I shall try to give an account of the factors determining the reading process, at least for this reader with my particular 'store-house of knowledge'. In other words, I shall be trying to comply with the instructions inherent in both the 'role of the reader as textual structure' and 'the role of the reader as structured act' as these

are embodied in Iser's concept of the implied reader. This means, of course, that I am setting myself a daunting task: I am assuming that my reading of Coetzee's novel, through an activation of my own 'faculties of perception', will reflect an acceptable understanding of the codified message of this rather unconventional novel.

4.2 ENCOUNTER WITH A MODERN TEXT: J.M. Coetzee's In the Heart of the Country

Coetzee's novel is indeed taxing because it requires adjustments from the reader on two levels: its 'content' or the 'reality' depicted and the MANNER in which it is depicted. This means that the 'textual givens' in the novel are so unfamiliar that to try and comply with the reader's role as 'textual structure', in Iser's terms, would already require from the reader a concerted effort at coming to terms with a deviant content and structure. As already noted above, this is especially true of the typical South African reader who, at the time of the publication of Coetzee's novel, was suddenly, in terms of his 'horizon of expectations' at that time, confronted with an ALMOST VIOLENT defamiliarization of the pastoral mode. This means that the reader's role as 'structured act', where the 'textual structure' according to Iser has to be 'experienced', will also require a concerted effort. In other words, for any individual reader to try and comply with the 'instructions' inherent in the concept of the implied reader for this particular text will be especially daunting.

In what follows I shall try to give an account of some of the effects 'experienced' by me in the reading and rereading of this novel. I shall not try to keep separate the two aspects of 'the reader's role as textual structure' and 'the reader's role as a structured act' outlined by Iser in his concept of the implied reader. Rather, I shall attempt to make clear how the defamiliarization of novelistic convention, in regard to the depiction of TIME, SPACE or CHARACTER, affected this particular reader. I shall also try to give special attention to what, in my opinion, is required from the reader in an attempt to 'experience' the novelistic 'world' through the 'mind' of the main character. One should keep in mind here, that one of Iser's much emphasized aspects of the role of the reader as a 'structured act' concerns the necessity to share different perspectives - in Coetzee's novel, however, one particular 'perspective', namely that of the main protagonist, is predominant. Due to the further defamiliarization technique of situating this main 'perspective' in the mind of a person becoming increasingly more detached from any familiar 'reality', some attention is also given to the possible 'psychology' of such a character.

By having to reflect a troubled interior and exterior world, the novel itself experiences a crisis. Narrative techniques must accommodate a world which has become problematic. The confidence of a steadfast reality, a reality of the 19th century has lost its value. The narrative technique of the progressive or linear sequence related to the STRUCTURAL

principle of causality towards a predictable end is something of the past.

The time of the FABULA is gone. In its place, the place of the logical and chronological sequence, an ILLUSION is created. The novel now reflects the MIND in the moment of AGITATION itself. It does so by means of deviation from the chronological sequence, (fabula) to an ARTISTIC ORDER (sjuzet). The mind has now become all important, in fact the mind has become autonomous, the imagination projecting its own reality.

In this infinitely too large world icons which reflect a one-to-one relationship are replaced by symbols (forms), where the relationship between signified and signifier is arbitrary. Imagination is projecting new FORMS of REALITY. An autonomous mind is mirrored in an autonomous text, which governs itself. Forms and images together with other literary devices are taken as meaningful elements in their own right. Shklovsky assigned them to ONE central use, namely that of MAKING STRANGE (OSTRANENIE). Iser refers to this kind of narrative as a narrative in subjective-time.

In this story of In the Heart of the Country there is a 'today' that points towards a 'tomorrow', but at the end of the novel we don't know whether the 'today' ever really took place:

My father lies on his back, naked, the fingers of his right hand twined in the fingers of her

left... The axe sweeps up over my shoulder...
I have two fullgrown bodies to get rid of ...

(Coetzee, 1979 In the Heart of the Country: 11)

After killing her father and stepmother, Magda, the protagonist and narrator, buries her father:

Again the body slides in as far as the hips ...

(In the Heart of the Country: 91)

Now, according to the entry in her diary, her father is dead. However, later on in the novel we read:

My father sits, if you can call it sitting, in his old leather armchair with the cool breeze on his skin.

(In the Heart of the Country: 137)

Still later we find that time in In the Heart of the Country is not solid-, but pseudo (false) time, not objective-, but subjective time:

I feed my father his broth and weak tea. Then I press my lips to his forehead and fold him away for the night.

(In the Heart of the Country: 137)

The character's (Magda's) autonomous imagination reflects total insecurity, for her solidity does not exist anymore:

...And mother, soft scented loving mother who drugged me with milk and slumber in the featherbed

and then, to the sound of bells in the night, vanished, leaving me alone among rough hands and hard bodies - where are you? My lost world is a world of men, of cold nights, woodfire, gleaming eyes, and a long tale of dead heroes in a language I have not unlearned.

(In the Heart of the Country: 7)

She finds herself in an empty world in which even memories are rather uncertain:

...I have drunk in a myth of a past when beast and man and master lived a common life as innocent as the stars in the sky, and I am far from laughing. How am I to endure the ache of WHATEVER it is that is lost ...

(In the Heart of the Country: 7)

Because memories are uncertain there is no comfort for her. There is an allusion to the myth of expulsion, when man was expelled from paradisaal conditions, and a whole new phase was going to start.

For Magda, (mankind?), there is only the 'here and now'. But, in order to be able to live, she has to try and make sense of it. But how? The world around her (Umwelt) has become problematic. All she has is the present moment. Consequently, and to make sense of it, she writes. She does not want to be one of the forgotten ones of history:

One day some as yet unborn scholar will recognize

One day some as yet unborn scholar will recognize in the clock the machine that has tamed the wilds. But will he ever know the desolation of the hour of the siesta chiming ... in cool green high-ceilinged houses where the daughters of the colonies lie counting with their eyes shut? The land is full of melancholy spinsters like me, lost to history, blue as roaches in our ancestral homes, keeping a high shine on the copperware and laying in jam. Wooed when we were little by our masterful fathers, we are bitter vestals, spoiled for life. The childhood rape: someone should study the kernel of truth in this fancy.

(In the Heart of the Country: 3)

In her loneliness she talks to insects and asks questions upon questions but receives no answer:

I ask myself ...

I ask myself ...

I ask myself ...

I ask myself ...

(In the Heart of the Country:12,13)

Space is almost vacuous, it is void and meaningless. If she doesn't write words she knows, she will disappear, (similar to Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern, who, if they don't act will disappear, the stage being their world, their reality). Her world is the world of crisis:

who am I? what am I? where am I going?

mirroring a nihilistic world, a God-less world. A world in which what is rational becomes alienated. She is living in a 'planet of her own', leading a phantom-like demonic life. The 'old codes' which make sense and have substance are those she inherited from the past, but even these are vague:

How am I to endure the ache of whatever it is
that is lost...

(In the Heart of the Country: 7)

When Magda finds her father, the lonely sheepfarmer in the arms of a black woman, she executes a bloody revenge, after which she shuts off the farm from the world. -OR DOES SHE?- The dividing line between reality and her vivid imagination is difficult to find. A clear histoire (Genette, 1980) or the underlying story or signified, which the formalists typify as fabula, is absent.

In place thereof the novel mirrors a character who has become the product of estrangement from a solid world. The autonomy of interiority has taken over. The character, in this case Magda, is the law onto herself because of the antagonistic nature of the inner- towards the outer world.

The emphasis now shifts to the happenings of consciousness, the feature of this narrative becoming a mere reducing to registering a passive contemplative interiority or consciousness. Magda's reflections of nature, in which she desperately tries to find solidity are forms created by her OWN DUALITY (mind).

The distantiation between her and the world is of such a nature that contact becomes impossible and both the 'I' and the world become autonomous. Although she desperately wants to, she cannot know the world anymore because her projections have overpowered her. These projections are forms which become cold reality, as Magda experiences a useless and goal-less existence. For her there is nothing left but to withdraw into her autonomous 'I'!

'I am going to be the authoress of my life', she writes. This way she hopes to attribute meaning to her meaningless life. However, her endeavour is futile and she finds herself in total isolation, in the heart of NO-WHERE!

A further possibility of estrangement between the 'I' and the world (Magda and the world) is that the interiority in its total isolation is only busy with itself in a kind of ILLUSIONARY OMNIPOTENCE. She BECOMES the novel:

...or am I a monologue moving through time, approximately five feet above the ground, if the ground does not turn out to be just another word, in which case I am indeed lost?

(In the Heart of the Country: 62)

She usurps the whole diary, the autobiographical form subjectifies the object. She also usurps the whole world of the novel.

The outer world only exists as if it comes through into the consciousness and crystallizes therein; her reality is in

her head, in her imagination: 'cogito ergo sum', I think, therefore I am.

Reflections become incomprehensible. She looks for concepts in or within her own deep authenticity, where she really exists, her explorations of deeds.

By asking questions and weighing up, murdering and watching how her father dies she tries to make sense of her life. There is no communication but the questions she asks herself. She exists in a shell, the shell is her own mind which finds its expression in a monologue interior. The condition of being isolated becomes FOREGROUNDED: it symbolizes a world which has become alienated, a time reflecting uncertainty, a pseudo or subjective time (reception aesthetics).

Magda is the spinster (of spinsters) with a locked diary: When is today? When is tomorrow? Is there a past? Can there possibly be a future? Will my questions ever be answered? Magda, no doubt experiences an existential anxiety and encounter with NOTHINGNESS. In psychoanalytical terms this means Magda experiences a psychotic breakdown. R.D. Laing, a British existential psychiatrist who has emphasized the social roots of psychopathology for his views of why people experience psychotic breakdowns, highlights the damaging effects of pathological social relationships upon the individual. Laing elaborates that each of us is not a discrete entity but is part of our culture, or of the groups to which we belong. This includes the family group. As such we are

shaped by significant OTHERS, just as we shape others: In this never ending process an illimitable number of transactions may occur between people, with potentially DESTRUCTIVE results. (Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life 5th Edition, 1976: 71).

Magda's diary reveals this never ending process of shaping and being shaped: her diary illustrating a subjective-time, a time which also reveals the problem of relating to a solid world with solid values, as to Magda this solid world DOES NO MORE EXIST. However, in order to perceive the message of the text as such, it is the READER who must take an active part in the process of comprehension, as he must be able to view the text in the aforementioned discussed perspectives namely, that he has to be familiar, or become familiar with the unfamiliar e.g. with time-manipulation as well as psycho-analytical issues. As Iser would put it the whole process of comprehension must be set in motion by the need to FAMILIARIZE the UNFAMILIAR.

4.3 ANALYSIS IN TERMS OF DIFFERENT THEORETICAL ASPECTS

In an attempt to clarify the above account of my particular 'experience' of the novel, I shall try to relate my reading of the novel to some work done on novelistic structure and meaning. Towards the end of this discussion I shall also refer to a number of concluding arguments in Iser's (1978) theorization of the 'structured acts of comprehension', which presumably become apparent during the process of reading.

In J M Coetzee's sensational narrative text the defamiliarizing effect is not achieved by using deviant language but by transforming the chronological sequence of events with the aid of devices such as TIME MANIPULATION. In this context the Russian formalists as well as the structural narratologists like Gerard Genette, for example, refer to the FABULA or HISTOIRE (Genette) as the chain of events in their CHRONOLOGICAL, ORDER (sequence) as opposed to the SJUZET or RÉCIT (Genette), the artistic order, which exhibits a deviation from the chronological order or sequence to an ARTISTIC order. The SJUZET is however created FROM the FABULA by means of artistic devices such as are evident in this text, namely time manipulation. According to reception theory the novel reflects a SUBJECTIVE time, which in Genette's (1980) structuralist model would correspond to the notion of time deviation, or ANACHRONY. However, as regards Coetzee's text one could say that the dramatic information in the course of the performance of the events has been rearranged to suggest a FALSE time, the solid time of FABULA having disappeared:

F A B U L A	→	S J U Z E T	
(chronological time)		(anachrony, pseudo-time of dramatic information)	(achrony, timelessness)

Normally the linear presentation of time is disrupted by means of various deviations from the chronological sequence of the fabula or underlying story, with the result that the actual text or sjuzet of a novel is characterized by a number of anachronies. However, in Coetzee's text the crea-

tion of a pseudo- or false time goes beyond the time manipulation associated with anachronies. To a reader familiar with narrative conventions and studies on narrative structure, (i.e. a reader capable of adhering to 'the role of the reader as textual structure' in Iser's concept of the implied reader) it becomes clear that ANACHRONIES create so many interruptions (gaps) in the story or fabula, thereby causing so many disruptions of reader expectations regarding the SEQUENTIAL progression of events, as to suggest ACHRONY or 'timelessness'. In employing such narrative strategies, the reader is forced to continuously reflect upon the MANNER in which the narrative is presented:

The story order is explicitly indicated by the narrative itself ... where temporal reference is deliberately sabotaged.

(Genette, 1980: 34)

Thus effects of defamiliarization seem to have a specific function BEYOND the formalist notion of heightened perception. Both the unfamiliar 'reality' (which contradicts the reader's horizon of expectations regarding a rural milieu); and the strategy of time manipulation and temporal disruption, create indeterminacies and gaps, which coerce the reader into an active consideration of narrative possibilities. However, a competent reader, in the sense referred to above, will also rely on the 'tools' available in PSYCHOANALYSIS as part of his 'store-house of knowledge' where a character like Magda, who is shaped into an apparent neurotic being by her loneliness, her surroundings, by her father

who seeks a bit of happiness in the arms of a black concubine in the suppressive conditions of colonial South Africa, will in the end not only be able to 'fathom' the tunate woman.

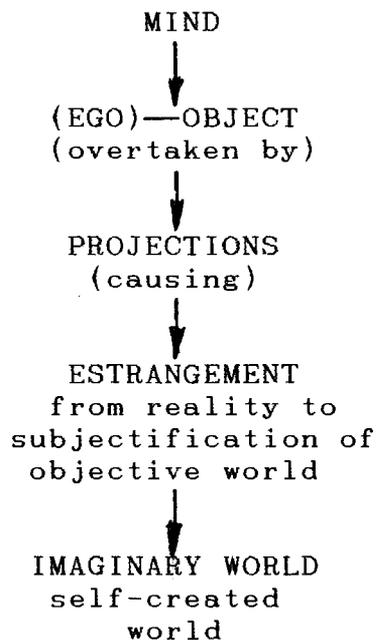
According to Freud's Psychoanalysis, also called SELF THEORY or EGO psychology (concepts of Freud, Jung, Adler and Sullivan), the structure of this narration may be said to be dominated by an UNDERMINING of the superego, in the sense of Magda's 'interior world' representing a disruption of prevalent moral and social norms. The SELF or EGO making the concept of the self the central theme in its exposition of human behaviour. According to this theory, and as evidenced in the narration under discussion, the narrator uses the concepts to denote the behaviour of ego, self, ideal self, observed self, self-actualization, self-image etc. In this, and in most similar cases these concepts have two connotations:

- 1) the self as the INDIVIDUAL,
his/her attitudes,
feeling and perception
and
- 2) the self as DIRECTOR, motivator
and
functioning processor

Thus, as far as Magda is concerned, she is still the individual when she becomes (not unlike Laing's theory through

circumstances), an 'open field' in and through which realities disappear. As a result thereof she becomes her own director, the creator of her own projections, a (neurotic) character out of time, not in the 'heart of of the country' but in the 'heart of NO-WHERE. As such she symbolizes modern life and modern literature which mirror the senselessness of life reflected in such questions as: who am I? What am I? Where am I going? Because there are no answers she uses a selfdefence mechanism creating her own forms (projections) in order to at least TRY to escape a world she cannot cope with. Doing so the 'self' becomes the 'functioning processor' who tries to make sense of an otherwise senseless life.

C.J. Jung calls this condition the collective consciousness versus the unconscious as manifested in the dualism when reality disappears and Subjectivism (projections, or imaginative forms) become the object world. In this condition space and time exist only in the MIND where DUALISM dwells:



The device of defamiliarizing strategies is effectively used by the narrator and brings about heightened intensity in the perception of a text which exhibits typical characteristics of MODERN LITERATURE.

It follows that such heightened perception results in maximum attention being focused on the narrative text. This is also reminiscent of Roman Jakobson's notion that poetry is a manifestation of language in its AESTHETIC function. Although his definition of the poetic function does not cover all the distinctive characteristics of poetic language or narrative structure, it is nevertheless true that his observation could be useful in describing a particular response that the aesthetic text could elicit during the reading process (this also relates to the poem by Goethe quoted in chapter 3).

When, as is the case with Coetzee's novel, the 'message' is important in itself - that is, the text draws attention to itself as a (deviant) structure - and it is emphasized in the communication process, the aesthetic function is dominant. Hawkes (1977: 86) describes what it means when the communication act is directed to the poetic function:

...it is of the distinctive essence of the aesthetic use of language, seen thus 'functionally' and in relation to the totality of human communication, that it is SELF-conscious; concerned ABOVE ALL to draw attention to its OWN NATURE ...

The aesthetic nature seen as such emphasizes the interdepen-

dence of form and content. Consequently, in text-oriented models the literary work is regarded as a self-contained whole which does not need any reference beyond its limits to justify its nature. The literary work is therefore regarded as an autonomous, selfcontained structure or STRUCTURAL WHOLE. However, as I have tried to illustrate in my account of the reading process thusfar, it is not only the text which enables the reader to break out of his accustomed conception of conventions, but the 'signals' within the text which arouse the reader's imagination allowing him to formulate that which had hitherto been unfamiliar.

It follows that in terms of the theory of reception aesthetics the most important fact is the reader himself, the addressee of the text. Whether the point of interest is the author's intention, or the contemporary, psychological, social, or historical meaning of the text, or the way in which it is constructed, it seems logical that this text can only have meaning when it is read. Reading is thus the essential precondition for all processes of literary interpretation. It is as such only by an INTERACTION between text AND reader that the artistic text can be turned into an aesthetic object. Evaluation of the individual texts are thus determined by the schemata which are potentially presented by the text itself which arouse the faculties of knowledge and imagination of the reader needed to GRASP or perceive the in the text embedded, codified message.

The 'tool' of reception aesthetics partly applied in the

analysis of this particular text is to be traced to references of 'subjective- or pseudo-time'. This refers to Iser's (1978: 163-179) appropriation of the theory of interaction, as advanced by Edward E Jones and Harold B Gerard. Iser (1978) highlights conditions of interaction, wherein different types of contingencies are found. These arise in or out of, all human interactions.

Some of the types are categorized as follows:

pseudocontingency, asymmetrical, reactive, and mutual contingency.

Pseudocontingency exists when both partners know each other's 'behavioural plan' so well that the replies and their consequences can be accurately predicted. If this is the case, the partner's behaviour reflects a well rehearsed scene, 'through which such ritualization the contingency disappears':

Asymmetrical contingency occurs when Partner A gives up trying to implement his own behavioral plan and without resistance follows that of Partner B. He adapts himself to and is absorbed by the behavioral strategy of B.

Reactive contingency occurs when the respective behavioral plans of the partners are continually overshadowed by their momentary reactions to what has just been said or done. Here contingency becomes dominant and blocks all attempts by the part-

ners to bring their own plans into play.

(Iser, 1978: 163)

It is, however, not really essential to explain all the DIFFERENT contingencies. That which is prevalent to the narration is that social communication arises out of contingency. The situation regulates the manner in which gaps are filled, "but the gaps in turn arise out of contingency and inexperienceability and, consequently, function as a basic inducement to communication". (Iser, 1978: 166)

It is, according to reception aesthetics, through the complexity of the textual structure that the reader has to reformulate his (own) projections in order to receive the message.:

And in this process of continual correction there arises a frame of reference for the situation - a definite, though not a definitive, shape. It is only through readjustment of his own projections that the reader can experience something previously not within his experience.

(Iser, 1978: 167)

From the above discussion it can be deduced that a reader of such a text as In the Heart of the Country needs to adjust his own projections to Magda's projections in order to understand her predicament. It should be clear, then, that it is through interaction between text and reader that aesthetic perception comes about.

5 TEXTUAL STRATEGIES IN LITERARY TEXTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the following sections on poetic, narrative and dramatic texts, I intend examining in more detail the extent to which the reader's understanding of a particular text will depend on his familiarity with literary conventions and typical textual strategies that are usually employed in texts associated with a specific genre. I intend focussing more pertinently, then, on the TEXTUAL axis of the text-reader transaction outlined in Iser's phenomenological READING PROCESS. However, since my main objective still remains to illustrate primarily what an INTERACTION between TEXT and READER entails, my discussion of communicative devices employed by the author in the artistic text and decoded by the reader in his concretization of the aesthetic object, will naturally be selective. Whilst it falls somewhat outside the scope of this study to examine in any detail the most recent theories on, for example, aspects of poetic language (such as the use of novel metaphors), focalization and narration in stories and novels or the nature of theatrical and dramatic communication, I shall nevertheless try to make explicit my own theoretical frame of reference.

In the outline of text and subject oriented theories in chapter 2 of this study, it was already apparent how a reader's theoretical frame of reference, that is, his 'storehouse of knowledge' could affect his understanding of a literary work. So, for instance, a materialist theoret-

ician like Terry Eagleton, in his re-reading of Lawrence's Sons and Lovers attempted to show how Mr Morel's conduct could be better understood if a psychoanalytical reading was to be complemented with a materialist analysis. One could deduce, then, that for Eagleton the most important 'tool' for literary analysis would be an awareness of social factors that could have determined an author's portrayal of the behaviour of characters in a novel. Naturally, in terms of Marxist theory, it is not surprising that in Eagleton's reading Mr Morel's conduct gets blamed on class differences and the working conditions of miners within an 'unfair' capitalist system. Feminist theorists would probably be inclined, with reference to the same text, to focus on the oppressive sexist ideology inherent in a patriarchal society and accordingly set out to explain Mrs Morel's relationship with both her husband and her children (particularly Paul) in terms of suppressed feelings to be ascribed to the frustration of not being able to exercise fully her potential as an intellectual person.

It is clear that different theoretical points of departure will tend to yield different readings of the same artistic text. In this regard Shoshana Felman, in her analysis of divergent readings offered for Henry James's notoriously ambiguous story The Turn of the Screw, has convincingly demonstrated how NEW CRITICAL 'close readings' and PSYCHOANALYTIC ANALYSES of the same text gave rise to the controversy over the governess's credibility as a reliable or unreliable witness to the fictional events. She has also brilliantly

demonstrated how a reading informed by both formal and psychoanalytic principles could 'open up' (decodify) the (codified) text.

It would appear that a text's meaning is largely determined by its readers and that, in principle, there is no limit to the 'free play of meanings' and no 'sure' way of ever arriving at a DEFINITIVE interpretation of poems, stories or dramas. Undoubtedly, the shift from textual object to (reading) subject in literary theory has created an awareness of the 'subjectivity' inherent in literary interpretation. This is certainly an advantage over the belief that a 'mere' structuralist analysis of 'objective textual features' would yield a reliable interpretation. However, as I have argued before, what remains attractive in Iser's proposal is his insistence that the meaning of a text resides in the TRANSACTION between 'objective' formal features and the 'subjective' ability of the reader to conduct a 'PRODUCTIVE' reading in his concretization of the aesthetic object. This however does not mean that a literary text may not give rise to many different subjective realizations. The wandering viewpoint (Barthes's gliding signifier) permits the reader to 'travel' ('glide') through the text:

...thus unfolding the multiplicity of interconnecting perspectives which are offset whenever there is a switch from one to another. This gives rise to a network of possible connections, which are characterized by the fact that they do not join to-

gether isolated data from the different perspectives, but actually establish a relationship of reciprocal observation between stimulant and stimulated perspectives. This network of connections potentially encompasses the whole text, but the potential can never be fully realized; instead it forms the basis for the many selections which have to be made during the reading process and which, though intersubjectively not identical- as is shown by the many different interpretations of a single text - NEVERTHELESS REMAIN INTERSUBJECTIVELY COMPREHENSIBLE in so far as they are all attempts to optimize the same structure.

(Iser, 1978: 118; underlined and emphasized M.W.)

In my reading of Coetzee's novel In the Heart of the Country I have tried to show how Jauss's concept of the reader's 'horizon of expectations' could be employed in reconstructing an encounter with an 'unfamiliar' text. It was already apparent, in this section, that the reader's 'store-house of knowledge' and his power of imagination crucially determine his ability to use his perceptive faculties in concretizing a 'difficult' or 'unfamiliar' text. In the following sections I intend to explore certain 'textual strategies' that should, in my opinion, form part of the reader's 'store-house of knowledge', since they present the 'textual constraints' that could hopefully ensure that, without unnecessarily curtailing reader activity, the reading process will remain a 'two-way process' in which BOTH the TEXT and the

READER will be seen to be functional in aesthetic perception.

5.2 POETIC LANGUAGE

Taking as my point of departure Jakobson's notion that the poetic function entails language used in its AESTHETIC FUNCTION, I shall examine some views on certain aspects of poetic language. Although the use of metaphor is not restricted to the language of poems only, the NOVEL use of metaphorical constructions nevertheless is assumed for most poems. In other words, the poetry reader will probably take for granted a presumed ability to be able to analyse 'unfamiliar' or 'strange' metaphorical constructions. In order to make explicit what such a 'presumed ability' would entail, some views on the nature of metaphors will next be discussed.

Different theories of metaphor have been established by various theorists as far back as Aristotle. Even the Antique teaching of Quintilianus (c.A.D.35-c.100 Marcus Fabius according to Sachwoerterbuch der deutschen Literatur, 1976) has studied the phenomenon of metaphor. Philosophers, experts on literature and theoreticians alike have studied and furthered the understanding of the literary device of metaphorical transmission, the mediated form of poetic speech. According to The Concise Oxford Dictionary, the word METAPHOR originates from the Greek word METAPHORA which:

TRANSMISSION (Verwandlung: change), literally the 'carrying over of a certain meaning to another'

er word's meaning', by which this word's meaning experiences a CHANGE of its MEANING. The application of metaphor in poetry thus enables the poet to limit the words in the poem to an economizing effect whereby maximum content (space) is pressed into minimum words.

Artistotle attributes the use of metaphor, for example, to the DELIGHT IN LEARNING. CICERO ascribes delight in metaphor to the enjoyment of the author's ingenuity in overpassing the immediate in a vivid presentation of the principal subject. The meaning here implies that 'due to the author's ingenuity', metaphor can delight if presented vividly and enthusiastically in the main subject. It can thus afford an ESCAPE ('overpassing') from the present, troubled time. In THE POETICS Artistotle states briefly:

Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference from genus to species, or from species to genus or from species, to species, or on grounds of analogy.

What Aristotle refers to here is THE THING as the TIP OF AN ICEBERG, of which a small part only is open to view. THE TRANSFERENCE ON GROUNDS OF ANALOGY is that which lies underneath: the BIG part of the iceberg, namely the REAL THING, the MESSAGE itself. The perception thereof is of utmost importance. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus in the antique teaching, differentiates between transmission of the LIVING FOX to the animation of a FOXY person:

'...nach Quintilian aus e. abgekürzten Vergleich, indem e. Wort(gruppe) aus dem eigentlichen Bedeutungszusammenhang auf e. anderen, im entscheidenden Punkt vergleichbaren, doch ursprünglich fremden übertragen wird, doch ohne formale Ausführung des Vergleichs im Nebeneinander der Werte ('sowie') unmittelbar und komplex anstelle desselben tritt: es steht nicht in eigentlicher Bedeutung, sondern 'übertragen'. Die antike Figurenlehre (Quintilian) unterscheidet Übertragung von Belebtem auf Belebtes (Fuchs = listiger Mensch), von Leblosem auf Lebloses (Flußbett), von Leblosem auf Belebtes (Schiff der Wüste = Kamel) und am häufigsten von Belebtem auf Lebloses (Fluß des Berges) ...'

(Sachwörterbuch der Literatur, 1976: 34)

The antique teaching of Quintilianus differentiates between the transference from the vigorous to the living. A similar approach can be observed between this antique teaching of Quintilianus, and the twentieth century philosophers Black and Richards ('Man is a WOLF' / 'Richard is a LION'). As a result the reader is challenged to select from the connotation of fox to 'foxy person' (Quintilianus), Wolf to 'vicious person' (Black), and lion to 'brave person' (Richards). And as already pointed out above, Quintilianus also transfers from that which is lifeless to that which is alive, or in existence:

'ship of the desert' equals a camel
 'river of a mountain' equals that which is
 flowing' etc.

(Ridout & Hern, 1973: 293,294)

The philosopher Max Black's contribution and explanation towards an understanding of metaphor is based on the contextually determined use of the metaphorical word within a sentence providing a specific contrasting frame. Before Black (1962) attempts to give an explanation of metaphor, he illustrates some indisputable and easily recognizable instances of metaphorical language:

- 1) The chairman plowed through the discussion
- 2) A smoke screen of witnesses
- 3) An argumentative melody
- 4) Blotting-paper voices (Henry James)
- 5) The poor are the negroes of Europe (Chamfort)
- 6) Light is but the shadow of God (Sir Thomas Browne)
- 7) Oh dear white children, casual as birds Playing amid the ruined languages (Auden)

When looking at example one (1) the point of contrast lies between the word 'plowed' and the remaining words. Because of this contrast created by the word PLOWED it is obvious that this word has, within the context in which it appears,

a METAPHORICAL sense, the other words having LITERAL senses. Although the meaning of the entire sentence is metaphoric, the reader's view narrows entirely towards one word which is the reason of the reader's belief of the sense as not being literal. No matter how easy the recognition of metaphor in this sentence is, the reader is still anxious to investigate this metaphorical phenomenon!

In this regard Max Black's explanation speaks for itself:

Although we point to the whole sentence as an instance (a 'clear case') of metaphor, our attention quickly narrows to a single word whose presence is the proximate reason for the attribution ...

(Black, 1962: 28)

The metaphorically used word, Black's "a single word whose presence is the proximate reason for the attribution", is here to be found in PLOWED and becomes the FOCUS in Black's terminology, or the FOCUS EXPRESSION in Reinhart's (1976) redefining of Black's term; and the rest of the meaning of the sentence is the (literal) FRAME (Black) or ARGUMENT (Reinhart). The partitioning of the sentence can thus be shown as follows:

(i) The chairman PLOWED through the discussion
 frame focus frame

As far as the literal associations of the focus expression are concerned, the word PLOWED 'guides' the sensitive

reader to the assumption that the chairman administered a meeting in an overriding, impatient fashion.

The sentences from two (2) to five (5) can be partitioned or divided in the same manner, with the FOCUS expression in each case being:

- (2) SMOKE SCREEN, (3) ARGUMENTATIVE, (4) BLOTTING-PAPER and (5) NEGROES

These examples prove clearly that recognition of focus expression and figurative functioning are determined by their special syntactical contexts wherein they may be perceived as 'unusual' or 'deviant'. Black however also states in this connection that "to call a sentence an instance of metaphor is to say something about its MEANING". Metaphor must therefore be classified as a term belonging to the area of SEMANTICS and NOT TO SYNTAX. He also gives the example wherein the same word, namely PLOWED can have similarities or differentiations compared with sentence (1) above. To investigate this claim the reader looks at the following sentence:

'I like to plow my memories regularly'

Now the same reader may ask himself whether he can say that this is the same metaphor as in the case already discussed? The answer indeed depends upon the DEGREE OF SIMILARITY he is willing to attribute on comparing the two FRAMES. We certainly do have the same focus expression each time. However, there is a DIFFERENTIATION between the two frames:

The chairman ... through the discussion
and

I like to ... my memories regularly

This explanation refers to the differentiation which is determined by the INTERPLAY between focus and frame. The similarity between the two sentences is determined by the same focus of metaphor as already mentioned. However, the same word PLOWED used in ANOTHER syntactic surrounding or in another frame can actually have a LITERAL meaning:

- (a) The farmer plowed through the field
- (b) The child plowed through the mud
- (c) The bull-dozer plowed through the sand

'Plowed' in these syntactical surroundings has literal meanings only. When looking at example five (5) and another example which Black used in 'Man is a Wolf', the reader with a particular 'storehouse of knowledge, (that is, at least aware of the importance of his role regarding the 'textual condition' embodied in Iser's implied reader) immediately perceives and can thus discern a more complicated situation:

- (5) The poor are the NEGROES of Europe
 - (i) (ii) (i)
 - frame focus frame

and Black's example:

Man is a Wolf
(i) (ii)

Focus and frame are terms of Black's terminology which foreground the differentiation between two subjects. Black here speaks of two subjects namely the principal subject MAN and the subsidiary subject WOLF. By application of the 'system of associated commonplaces' six (6), the reader normally associates WOLF with something FIERCE, CARNIVOROUS, TREACHEROUS, WILD, VICIOUS, CRUEL, DECEIVING, MALEVOLENT, even GREEDY and so on. Considering these words and their respective meanings, the reader may realize that the idea of a WOLF as we know it, is part of a SYSTEM of ideas sufficiently definite to admit detailed enumeration. Each of the aforementioned implied assertions is now being made to FIT the principal subject, namely MAN.

The wolf-metaphor thus functions like a FILTER superimposed upon man and organizing a DIFFERENT VIEW of man as such. This example is indeed very much like the manner in which the antique theorist/philosopher Quintilianus transmits fox-qualities to man. He calls this changed conception FOX-PERSON. Subsequently, in Black's example, the changed conception would be called a WOLF-PERSON. The principal subject having experienced a change through the methaphorical expression:

A suitable hearer will be led by the wolf-system of implications to construct a corresponding system of implications about the principal subject. But these implications will not be those comprised in the commonplaces NORMALLY implied by literal uses of 'man'. The new implications must be

determined by the pattern of implications associated with literal uses of the word 'wolf'. Any 'wolf-language' will be rendered prominent, and any that cannot will be pushed into the background. The wolf-metaphor suppresses some details, emphasizes others - in short ORGANIZES our view of man.

(Black, 1962: 41)

This then explains what Black means by the interplay between focus and frame, namely that recognition and figurative function are dependent upon a CONTRASTING framework.

As far as examples six (6) and seven (7) are concerned the situation is more complicated: In six (6) LIGHT has a definite symbolic meaning, hence the metaphorical sense of 'the shadow of God' impresses upon the reader a far richer meaning than without the symbolical meaning of LIGHT. Similar effects can be determined in seven (7) if the reader considers the meaning of 'white' in the first line.

The literal and figurative poles of metaphorical expression of I.A. Richards (1936: 98) are expressed in terms of 'tenor' and 'vehicle'. They work on a somewhat different level than the focus/frame terminology of Max Black. The examples quoted by Black wherein there are two subjects may easily explain Richard's theory:

(5) The POOR are the NEGROES of Europe

(6) LIGHT is but the SHADOW of God

(7) Oh dear white Children, casual as Birds
 Playing amid the ruined languages

(8) MAN is a WOLF

(Richards, 1936: 96)

In this connection it is interesting to look at the following characteristics which Richards attributes to these terms:

<u>TENOR</u>	<u>and</u>	<u>VEHICLE</u>
original idea (what is really being said and thought of)		borrowed idea (what it is compared to)

<u>TENOR</u>	<u>and</u>	<u>VEHICLE</u>
and thought of (the principal subject) (the meaning) (the idea)		(what it resembles) (the metaphor) (its image)

(Richards, 1936: 96)

From the above characterization of tenor versus vehicle it becomes clear that the original sense of the metaphorical idea is to be found in the UNDERLYING IDEA, derived from the realm of values, intentions and purposes, to be ascribed to the 'borrowed' vehicle. These concepts differ from reader to reader. Nevertheless, it is incumbent on the reader to decode the metaphor by considering the INTERACTION between TENOR and VEHICLE. This means that the reader will be actively involved in considering the meaning derived as a result of the INTERACTION between words or phrases, as the case may be:

hicle for the given tenor. On account of the reader's knowledge of the literal uses of the focus 'riding' Black's 'system of associated commonplaces', which is comparable to Jauss's 'horizon of expectations', it becomes possible to identify the 'missing' vehicle as something like 'horses'; which means that the IMPLIED tenor and vehicle relationship in ten (10) would be:

(11) The WAVES are like HORSES

Tenor	Vehicle
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It is to Tanya Reinhart's credit that she has pointed out that a reader of poetry needs to be familiar with the procedures of both 'focus-interpretation' and 'vehicle-construction' when trying to assign meaning to poetic metaphors. In a subsequent refinement of interaction processes in poetic language, Grøbe (1985) has argued that 'tenor-construction' should be added to Reinhart's procedures, since the metaphorical status of arguments in the frame, i.e. whether they will function as tenors or vehicles in the global context of the poem, can only be ascertained if the context of the entire poem is taken into account. It was also argued in the above study that poetic metaphor is characterized by a high degree of specificity. Which means that, in terms of Iser's phenomenological reading process - if both Reinhart (1976) and Grøbe (1985) are to be believed (and in my opinion they are) - TEXTUAL STRATEGIES will essentially GUIDE the reader's understanding and appreciation of poetic language.

I shall refrain from further discussion of the intricacies

of theoretical arguments on the nature and function of metaphor in (poetic) language. However, in my opinion, a reader of poetry should at least be familiar with the basic components of metaphorical constructions and the manner in which the reader may become aware of interaction processes that could provide clues as to the interpretation of metaphors in poetry. What I should like to illustrate in the following reading of poems, then, is the extent to which reader activity is dependent upon familiarity with a communicative device like the employment of metaphor in poetic texts.

An analysis of tenor-vehicle interaction taken from DRAYTON'S SONNET Since ther's no helpe (Hayward, 1975: The Penguin Book of English Verse: 47) reveals the following complications:

- 1 Now at the last gaspe, of loves latest breath
- 2 When his pulse fayling, passion speechless lies
- 3 When faith is kneeling by his bed of death
- 4 From death to life, thou might'st him recover

The main theme here obviously is love, passion and faith. These (love, passion, faith) should therefore be tenors. At first sight GASPE could be called a tenor, which should be understood literally. However, considering the subsequent focus-expressions and the context in which GASPE, through the metaphorical characterization of LOVE, PASSION, and FAITH, becomes 'humanized', the reader gets wise to the fact that personification results in a metaphorical expression. This means that GASPE could be viewed as a tenor in the

local context of the line, but that it is actually gradually revealed as a vehicle in the global context of the poem. Indeed, even PASSION and FAITH become vehicles: the main theme LOVE (local tenor and global vehicle) penetrates right through the poem (extended metaphor). Its state and the state or condition of passion and faith qualified by various associative connections, are examples of compound metaphors/vehicles through the aiding of adjectival foci and focal phrases which contribute definite meaning to the nouns or arguments throughout the lines quoted above.

As can be observed, the relationship between tenor and vehicle can become quite complicated. This could undoubtedly result in divergent interpretations of the suggested implications inherent in the 'novel' or 'unfamiliar' use of metaphorical expressions in poetic language.

One is reminded again of Wolfgang Iser's observation that different interpretations are indicative of the INDETERMINACY which comes about from individual aesthetic sensibility:

For the "spots of indeterminacy" make the intentional object open and, indeed, impossible to close, so that the filling in of these gaps, which Ingarden says initiates and proceeds during the act of concretization, must in principle allow a whole spectrum of concretization.

(Iser, 1978: 171; underlined M.W.)

This means, once again, that the reader is not only paying

attention to metaphorical expressions but to what the juxtaposition of these terms 'awaken' within him. The same text may thus be interpreted differently by different readers. Complexities are to be viewed as a result of different horizons of expectations of readers, as they have to fill in gaps in the narrative text and also, as in the lines of poetry quoted above, the hidden associations elicited by poetic metaphor.

Occasionally, metaphorical expressions also rely on symbols or symbolic connotations for their effect on the reader. An example of complexities brought about by SYMBOLICAL implications are evident in the following:

- i Schwarze Milch der Fruehe wir trinken sie
- ii abends
- iii wir trinken sie mittags und morgens wir
- iv trinken sie nachts
- v wir trinken und trinken
- vi wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lueften
- da liegt man nicht eng (Mohn und Gedaechnis)

in English it may be translated thus:

Black milk of daybreak we drink it at
 nightfall
 we drink it at noon and in the morning
 we drink it at night
 we drink it and drink it
 we are digging a grave in the air

it is more spacious to lie there

The reader may notice that in Black's examples six (6) and seven (7) quoted above the complexity of metaphor can be identified not only in the recognition of deviant language, but it becomes clear from the reflection on the metaphor, attitudes, feelings, and images conjured up by certain concepts. The perceptive reader recognizes that these complexities are brought about by their symbolic implications. In the last example, the colour-adjective BLACK within its context is symbolical for DEATH (deathfuge). Death is therefore the TENOR, whereas the adjectival focus BLACK emphasizes the paradoxical characterization of the vehicle MILK. Thus the complex vehicle BLACK MILK, being a paradox, immediately conjures up an image of that which was ONCE wholesome and life-giving but which now has turned BLACK, within the context black is symbolic of destruction, as WHITE has been substituted by BLACK. The adjective therefore 'hovers' over the noun, qualifying it by means of symbolic associations of 'black death'.

The opposite meaning in the relief of drought can be observed in a line such as "The black cloud that brought us white rain" (from Lament for a Dead Cow by Francis Carey Slater; reprinted in F.C.H. Rumboll and J.B. Gardener, For all Seasons, 1973: 182). In this example the colour-adjective BLACK is NOT symbolic for death or destruction, as it was observed in 'Schwarze Milch', but within the context BLACK is now symbolic for life i.e. the black cloud being

pregnant with the much sought after rain, the RELIEF of drought. After the rain, grass grows once again, which is the food for the 'black cow'. She in turn is the very source of nourishment for the people who own her. Her coat is BLACK AND SHINING (line 4; my emphasis). Even here the word 'black' may not be interpreted as 'destructive', but because of the context within which it is found, namely 'shiny', its meaning is that of HEALTH and therefore productiveness. This is also expressed by the colouradjective WHITE within its context.

It is clear that by drawing on his universal knowledge, which should preferably include both a socio-cultural knowledge and familiarity with formal devices such as metaphor, the reader, in taking on the 'role of the reader as textual structure' in accordance with Iser's implied reader, should be able to perceive and make sense of the elements of the poem. With this adequate knowledge of literary convention, he may now be able to conceptualize the indirectly addressed, abstract, symbolic relations of the poetic language used. As the poet gathers his information from the system of previous literature and literary norms so does the reader perceive and recognize the implied message because he too has a similar, gathered knowledge. Thus, whether or not the message of the text is perceived as intended by the sender, depends a.o. on the 'horizon' (storehouse of knowledge) and expectation of each individual reader as the perception of complex metaphorical symbolic language like any other literary text, PRESUPPOSES a class of reader with (at least to

a certain extent) the same knowledge as the poet. The meaning or interpretation arrived at must thus clearly be seen as the product of an INTERACTION between the TEXTUAL SIGNALS and the READER'S ACTS OF COMPREHENSION.

The complexity of metaphor (Miller: 1971), as evident in the next example can be identified by the different associations which suggest themselves, causing 'ambiguity' (complexity). When such complexities arise the interpretation of the poem as an open entity, depends on the reader's relevant ideas, his aptitude of imagination and the associations he may be willing or able to attribute to the text.

Sometimes different referents and associations may simultaneously suggest themselves and by indeterminacy, or 'ambiguity' give depth AND complexity to the experience lived through as a result of an interaction with the (poetic) text. In the light of the aforementioned, let us look at the following lines which have been subjected to a 'close reading' by William Empson in his Seven Types of Ambiguity (1965):

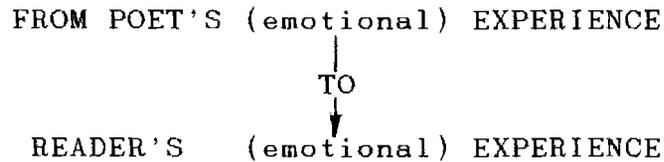
1. That time of the year thou may'st in me behold
2. When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
3. Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
4. Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds
sang.

(Shakespeare's Sonnet 73)

First of all the sensitive reader will perceive the first word in line one (1) as being FOREGROUNDED: it is the word

'THAT' which is foregrounded in order to qualify 'TIME' i.e. the time of the year, when leaves turn yellow with 'AGE'.

Either yellow or none or few DO hang and shake against the COLD BARE RUINED choirs. Because 'that' is foregrounded it is to be understood as being EMPHASIZED, as it is 'that' time of year when AUTUMN-FALL i.e. OLD AGE manifests itself: the time when leaves change their colour from green to yellow. The colour symbol yellow is, within the context and associations with THE TIME OF THE YEAR, the symbol of disintegration and impotence (Fall). Before THAT time of the year the choirs were 'young', because it is stated that the young choir boys were sitting there in rows. Their sweet singing is emphasized by the implied simile in the fourth line 'where late the birds sang'. Whereas before THAT time of year they were green and young and full of vitality, now do hang. The word 'do' has been chosen by the poet as an emphasizing agent, making certain that his embedded message namely that this ageing process is severely felt is perceived as such by the reader, and that it has the desired effect (Iser's Wirkung). The yellow leaves indicate that their time to fall has come, they do indeed hang suspended, ready to fall (down) anytime, expressed in the autumn-symbol. The inevitability of the 'fall' WILL and MUST happen because of THAT time of year when the cycle of nature experiences a change, from summer to autumn and therefore to harvest time. I would like to argue that Empson's examination of ambiguity draws attention to the poet's use of figurative language which guides the reader to emotional experience:



'Travelling' through the text, the reader will perceive that which keeps mankind ever spell-bound, namely the tragedy of old age which is keenly felt by all. Man's predicament, the process of getting old is cleverly compared to nature's fall: whereas the bough was once full of green leaves, they (the leaves) have now become yellow with age. Because the colour of the GREEN (young) leaves are turning yellow, the reader may now be stimulated to think of his youth when his hair, once 'coloured' has now turned grey and even fallen out with old age. The personification in 'shake' attributes a human trait, even an ability of feeling, strengthening the realization of old age and death, which evidently is the theme of this sonnet. Shakespeare presents this realization by means of three parallel statements each mirroring a DIFFERENT ASPECT of the SAME SUBJECT:

That time of year thou mayst in me behold ...

In me thou seest the twilight of such day ...

In me thou seest the glowing of such fire ...

To show how rich the texture of the sonnet is I want to comment once more on one of the images:

BARE RUINED CHOIRS, where late the sweet birds sang.

Shakespeare brings together several different matters in this image in order to strengthen the effect of desolation

which is so keenly felt in old age. There are visual comparisons between the barren, over-arching branches of trees and the stone arches of a deserted and ruined abbey, as well as an aural comparison between the songs of birds which once sang on the boughs, and the chanting of the people who were once occupying the abbeys. The aural comparison is also imitated in the very sound of the words, namely 'Bare ruin'd choirs', suggesting, as already discussed in other words that, just as nature in winter subjects everything to death and decay, the same is evident in the works of man which in time are destroyed and desolated.

Simultaneously all this is to be viewed as a part of a LARGER COMPARISON between the winter time of the year in nature and the time when old age has manifested itself in the speaker, and as such in man. The poet has awakened in the reader the image of the desolate winter scene, the lonely deserted stalls and, AS A CONTRAST, the fresh and happy summertime joyful and crowded choir stalls. The reader interprets this as the CONTRAST between OLD AGE and YOUTH. He is certainly 'touched' by the poet's masterful choice of juxtaposition of word-phrases. This certainly evokes moods and emotions in the reader who is sensitive enough to 'grasp' its overall meaning: as we grow old and approach death, the thought that all natural and material things that we love must be left behind, certainly makes our love for these meanings even stronger. The same meanings coexist and simultaneously reinforce one another in the couplet. The poem

concludes with an expression of intense emotion with which man holds on to the values of life.

It should be clear from the above that sometimes different referents and associations simultaneously suggest themselves and by 'ambiguity' give complexity to the experience lived through from the involvement with the text.

'Spots of indeterminacy' have therefore the role of "initiating the concretization of the (poetic) text" (Iser, 1978: 171). They are said to initiate and proceed during the act of concretization (making sense of the poetic or narrative text) and allow a whole series of concretizations, causing different interpretations of one and the same text. However, although the text is perceived intersubjectively, from the poet's to the reader's emotional and therefore subjective experience, it can nevertheless remain intersubjectively COMPREHENSIBLE.

How the involvement of the reader's EMOTION (especially evident in certain poetic texts) takes care of the filling of 'gaps' caused by indeterminacies, will be the topic of the further discussion.

Iser (1978: 170-179) discusses both the advantages and disadvantages inherent in Ingarden's concept of 'spots of indeterminacy' that have to be concretized by the reader in order satisfactorily to 'complete' the literary work and so ensure the 'harmony' of its layered structure. Ingarden's use of the concept of concretization is seen as ambivalent,

in that "... he uses it as if it denoted the act of communication, whereas in actual fact, it merely describes the actualization of schemata potentially presented by the text. In other words, Ingarden is referring to a one-way incline from text to reader and not to a two-way relationship" (Iser, 1978: 173). In Ingarden's 'differentiation' of the work itself from its concretization he provides for 'places of indeterminacy' as well as 'potential elements', which require different procedures in the reader's concretization of the literary work: " 'Places of indeterminacy' must be removed, whereas potential elements must be actualized" (Iser, 1978: 173). Since the first does not automatically result in the second, Iser points out that, for Ingarden, there exists an emotional aspect which 'motivates' the link between text and reader and which will eventually ensure a TWO-WAY relationship between text and reader. Thus, he emphasizes the fact that, for Ingarden, actualization is taken care of by the 'original emotion', which earmarks the beginning

For the original emotion is full of inner dynamism, a kind of unsatisfied hunger which appears when and only when we have already been excited by a quality but have not yet succeeded in beholding it in direct intuition so that we can be intoxicated with it. In this condition of being unsatisfied (of "hunger") we can see, if we will an element of discomfort, of unpleasantness, but the characteristic quality of the original emotion

as the first phase of the aesthetic experience does not consist in this unpleasantness but in inner unrest, in being unsatisfied. It is an original emotion precisely because from the elements present in it are developed both the further course of the aesthetic experience and the formation of its intentional correlate, the aesthetic object.

(Quoted by Iser, 1978: 174)

For Ingarden, then, empathy and emotion MOTIVATE and GUIDE THE LINK BETWEEN TEXT and READER. It is thus not so much the 'places of indeterminacy' themselves which are of great importance, but rather the manner in which the 'original motion' sets the concretization of the text in motion.

One may refer, in this regard, to different emotions resulting in different concretizations for different poems. For example, emotions are certainly (also) aroused in Keat's Ode to Autumn which is, unlike Shakespeare's sonnet with its passage of time (from spring to autumn) as a symbol of disintegration and death, a lyric meditation on the JOYS of autumn. But as a poetic text (as well as any literary text) can only produce a response, leading to an interaction between poem and reader, and finally to a concretization, it is first of all necessary to analyse the poem in the light of several components. Keats, the poet himself, views this season (autumn) not as a time of decay, as Shakespeare does, but as a season of complete ripeness and fulfilment. He conveys a richly glowing description capturing the spirit of

calm, severe fruition. He finds a sense of response in his own condition where the joys of creativity compensate for the lost 'songs of Spring', portraying the exact opposite image to the fourth line of: 'Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang' (Shakespeare). The only joy here is experienced by the 'sweet birds' but even their joyous singing is a thing of the past (expressed in 'sang').

There are echoes of Wordsworth's Solitary Reaper in the image of the gleaner working alone. Keats expresses again the romantic ethos for the individual close to nature unencumbered by the masses huddled together in towns. Yet Keats presents a very different, a GENTLE AUTUMN WIND to that of Shakespeare's COLD WIND which 'shakes the bare ruined choirs...', and Shelly's FIERCE 'destroyer and preserver'. Keat's wind is CREATIVE, not destructive. Even the 'end' can be GENTLE: his light wind 'lives OR dies'. It is the GENTLE quality of PURPOSEFULNESS which is conveyed.

The reader thus perceives a deep UNITY between the meditations and sensuous qualities expressed in the JOYS OF AUTUMN, the title being indicative of the poetic message, in contrast to Shakespeare's Sonnet which focuses on the DECLINE of an ageing person caused by the passage of time, symbolized in the WINTRY SEASON.

Here, as already pointed out in another context, the juxtaposed associations and ideas are fused into a more morbid experience: the reader's consciousness OPENS itself to the implications awakened by the poetic text, focussing on such

notions as helplessness, an inability to conquer the inevitable, namely demise leading to death. However, the very idea of mortality, the knowledge that he must 'leave ere long', is the reason for making her 'love more strong'.

It is thus once again the reader, who having absorbed the images through the reading process, affects his OWN production. Image building is meaningful in that:

...the image adheres to perception in constituting the object. It is not a piece of mental equipment in consciousness but a way in which consciousness opens itself to the object, prefiguring it from deep within itself as a function of its implicit knowledge.

(Dufrenne as quoted by Iser, 1978: 137)

It is consequently image building which awakens the quality of imagination. This in turn constructs meaning which is governed by the individuality of the poetic text, 'speaking' to the individuality of the reader. As the text causes an interaction between text and reader a concretization takes place which eventually turns into an aesthetic object, according to the reader's sense of aesthetic perception, his own individuality, which of course differs from reader to reader.

It should be clear from the foregoing analyses that the reader's RESPONSES are triggered by particular textual strategies, notably the employment of language in its AESTHETIC FUNCTION (Jakobson), which are to be found in the use of

metaphors, symbols and/or sound effects. If these are comprehended and perceived for what they are, they result in actual involvement of the reader's emotion.

5.3 NARRATIVE TRANSACTION

In order to make explicit the interaction between text and reader in NARRATIVE TEXTS, the observations arrived at in the encounter with J.M. Coetzee's In the Heart of the Country (in sections 4.2 and 4.3) may be complemented with reference to TEXTUAL STRATEGIES which usually have bearing on the NARRATIVE TRANSACTION. Narrative literary texts, which include fiction, novels, short stories, epic poems etc. are usually referred to as NARRATIVE FICTION.

The term NARRATIVE therefore indicates the portrayal of either true or fictitious events in any medium in which a 'story' is told. These events are reflected in oral narrations or written stories, pictorial art such as comic strips, film, dance mime, etc. Following Rimmon-Kenan (1983) one could say that a narrative literary text or narrative fiction differs from the above broad category of narrative portrayals in two respects:

1. the term TEXT is indicative of the story as being told in the medium of language and in written form. This distinguishes a written story of this kind from stories told in comic strips, films, dance or mime; and

2. the term FICTION is indicative of the story in written form originating from the author's creative imagination. It is, as such, not merely a recording or copying of events exactly as they take place in reality. Thus novels, short stories, and novellettes are differentiated from journalistic reports or history textbooks.

Without trying to provide a detailed account of various aspects of narrative structure, we may now have a closer look at Alan Paton's short story The Waste Land (in: De Villiers, Close to the Sun, 1979). One should bear in mind, here, Iser's observation that part of the reader's role requires a 'travelling' through the text in exploring 'various textual perspectives' represented by, for example, the narrator or various characters. In the Paton story one will have to move or 'shift' (Iser) between the opposing perspectives (or focalizations) which the narrator provides of the father and his son (as represented by the collective attitude of the gangsters) respectively.

The reader is first offered a perspective on the father who is about to be robbed by a gang; the leader of the gang, unbeknowingly being his own son in The Waste Land. This is presented by implication, using free indirect speech:

His wages were in his purse, ... His wife could be made a widow, his children fatherless, nothing counted against that. ... Death was near him, and for a moment he was filled with the injustice of

life, that could end thus for one who had always been hard-working and law-abiding.

(De Villiers, The Waste Land, 1979: 194,5)

The character traits of the father in this narration is foregrounded by indirect portrayal as being the provider image. This provider image is set in direct contrast with the Judas image of the leader of the gang, namely his own son. The father's characterization is suggested by such phrases as... 'for one who had always been hard working and law abiding'.

Such words as: '...the barred door that would not open before a man was dead' a.o., conjure up the poignant agony of his shock, the dreamlike awareness of danger. His impotence in this condition is evident in his utter speechlessness: '... his mouth was already dry, his heart was pounding in his breast, something within him was crying out in protest against the coming event' (The Waste Land: 194).

Throughout the narration biblical allusions are echoed. Freddy, for example becomes the Judas who betrays his provider, his own father, not for 30 pieces of silver, but for his (father's) hard earned money. Freddy and the young men who form a gang are, because of their lack of human feeling, agents through which the dilemma of their physical existence is highlighted. Their intention is criminal, the ruthlessness towards their victim (Freddy's own father) is vividly expressed in:

That was the thing feared by all, to be waited for by the young men. ...His wages were in his purse, he could feel them weighing heavily against his thigh. That was what they wanted from him. ...

(The Waste Land: 194)

Although at the beginning of the narrative it is not yet evident that Freddy is the man's own son, as the story progresses Freddy is told:

'Freddy' said one, 'your father's got away.'

(The Waste Land: 196)

The opposing perspectives represented by the father, on the one hand, and the group of gangster, on the other hand, may be explained in terms of the well known distinction between 'personage' or 'character' and actant'. The latter term denotes a common purpose and may refer to a group of people fulfilling the same function or sharing the same role in a story. For example, in Alan Paton's The Waste Land the contrast between the father and his son may be described in terms of the opposite actantial roles they fulfil; on the other hand, the son and the youths taking part in the attack on the father may be characterized in terms of their similar actantial role.

Thus the same actant can be manifested by more than one acteur, and the same acteur can be assigned to more than one actant.

The gang of young men 'feared by all', because of their evil

intentions are thus actors functioning as ONE ACTANT as they all have one particular thing in common: the intention to hurt, even kill for the sake of money. That Freddy, and not the father, as was originally intended by the gang, is the victim of the circumstances is at least ironical (the twist in the story) considering that the father, unbeknowingly, kills his own son accidentally in self-defence:

In the darkness a form loomed up at him, and he swung the stick at it, and heard it give a cry of pain. ...He lifted the heavy stick and brought it down on the head of his pursuer, so that the man crumpled to the ground, moaning and groaning as though life had been unjust to him also.

(The Waste Land: 94,5)

A reader who considers the human aspect of life, who can draw from his sense of aesthetic compassion, may however view them as those unfortunate creatures who reflect a vision of a world essentially devoid of rational purpose and therefore of applicable rules of conduct. As such the 'young men' (gang, functioning as ONE ACTANT), are representing MODERN narration of a morally changed world. They are no more the traditional heroic figures defying a pre-ordained cosmic order, but are, like their victim, themselves SUFFERING VICTIMS of a hostile, incomprehensible world. The young men's predicament is thus not easily solved. It finds its expression in the following simile:

...but they themselves were gasping like drowned

men, and their speech came by fits and starts.

(The Waste Land: 195)

The thematic implication represents the reader with at least two aspects of the world. Firstly, there is the father figure, the honest representative of a poor world. Secondly there is the hostile lawlessness represented by the gang, who react to a hostile cosmos which has perhaps denied them the opportunity to do better. Their predicament may be that of trapped, disoriented man. This is strengthened in the image of the 'waste land', in its unbendingness, the hardness of the iron symbolizing the unbending, hardheartedness of the young men. Darkness, the wilderness of wire, the personification of 'dead bodies' of cars symbolize a heartless rather mechanical unfeeling existence. Although the father also lives in a hard world, his image stands for moral integrity. His fate is, unfortunately, shared by many.

As already mentioned, there are Biblical connotations e.g. there is the Judas image, versus the Father-image. If the reader is willing to apply these Biblical allusions to the text, the father's hard life could be likened to man's fate, after the 'disobedience':

With the sweat on your brow shall you eat your
bread until you return to the soil as you were
taken from it. For dust you are and to dust you
shall return.

(1.Moses 3:19)

The lights of the bus, within the context here, symbolize

SECURITY. Once removed, the same light signifies lost security, as when the bus with its lights MOVES AWAY the man's only hope for survival is gone:

It was too late to run after the bus; it went down the dark street like an island of safety in a sea of perils. ...for by the lights of the bus he saw the figures of the young men waiting under the tree. He saw the bus returning, and cried out again in the great voiceless voice. 'Help me, help me!' Against the lights of it he could plainly see the form of one of the young men.

(The Waste Land: 194-195)

Because of the intensity of fear the man experiences, he becomes voiceless. The words he forms in his mind at the moment of agitation cannot be expressed. His voicelessness significantly expresses the complete paralysis (Ohnmacht), of man in a corrupt world. When the unexpected happens in a way of manipulation into a twist, it is not the old man who is killed as a result of violence, but the betrayer himself, the leader of the gang, Freddy, the old man's son.

The lack of feeling of his accomplices is described in their own words:

'It's Freddy,' one said. 'He's dead.' '...lift him up,' he said. Put him under the lorry.'

(Close to the Sun, 1979 The Waste Land: 196)

In the end the (omnipotent) author challenges the readers in

the idiom of his own language to arise to a better world:

'People, arise! The world is dead.'

(The Waste Land: 196)

The word-phrase 'people arise the world is dead', emphasizes the foregrounded message: 'People' should arise to a re-birth of true ideology. But in order to awaken to a better way of life sounder circumstances have to be created. Only then can these unfortunate people burn, i.e. destroy their vices and turn to a life of moral dignity.

Drawing from his storehouse of universal and empirical knowledge, the reader may be inspired to think of the Phoenix-symbol, subsequently applying this knowledge to establish a sound basis for the perception of the literary message:

Phoenix, EGYPTIAN MYTH. a beautiful bird which consumed itself in fire, rising renewed from the the ashes: a symbol of immortality.

(Collins Pocket Dictionary of the English Language, 1981)

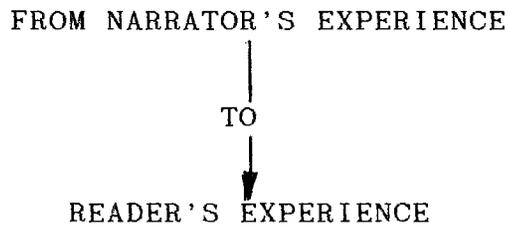
'Immortality' here may be understood to mean a valuable life of moral dignity.

Formed by his own sense of aesthetic compassion and moral sensibility, the sender, Alan Paton conveys in plain, unadorned yet functional (effective) language a story which (should) move the reader to deep sympathy.

The discussion of the Short Story The Waste Land may in-

deed draw other parallels which will not escape the discerning reader who has the knowledge of the 'name of the game'. However it is the READER who, by reading the literary work, formulates a hypothesis which attributes meaning to the cold (paper and ink) written text. The act of reading is therefore rightly regarded as a dynamic process of the reader's engagement in the concretization of the literary text. The literary text being the 'frame' guiding the reader to creatively construct his own aesthetic object.

The signals provided by the sender stimulate the recipient and form a certain perception (in this case of compassion) in space and time. It is his awareness which causes the aesthetic experience, as the literary text influences and guides the reader. Shown in different examples the FUNCTION of concretizing the physical literary text into an aesthetic object can be schematized thus:



Consequently, it is through the act of reading, from the narrator's experience to the reader's experience, that the reader's views may, hopefully, be modified by such a convincing literary text as Alan Paton's.

5.4 DRAMATIC COMMUNICATION

Having examined a number of TEXTUAL STRATEGIES typical of poetic and narrative texts, we may now briefly turn our attention to aspects concerning the nature of DRAMATIC COMMUNICATION.

The term tragedy (Greek: TRAGOIDIA: 'goat song') most likely refers to an ancient totemic ritual, namely the sacrifice of the goat. This (ritual) was associated with the Greek god of the fields and vineyards, Dionysus. In time, contests in the writing of tragedies were held at Athens as part of the ceremonies of the Great Dionysia, the springtime festival of the death and the resurrection of the gods. It was from these contests which were held around 450 B.C. that the literature called Greek Tragedy had developed.

Based on the pattern of death and resurrection, tragedies were trilogies. These trilogies consisted of three related plays in which suffering was shown as an ultimate discharge of pain, mostly ending in reconciliation. The only complete trilogy is Aeschylus's Oresteia, the three Oedipus plays which also move from suffering to reconciliation.

Aristotle's Poetics contributes the primary starting point for the discussion of tragedy. Classical tragedy of ancient Greece, was represented by Sophocles's King Oedipus, the hero, humanist tragedy of Elizabethan England and modern tragedy. Tragedy also deals with Seneca's Roman Tragedies of Blood, Restoration tragedy, seventeenth-century French

neo-classical tragedy, Romantic tragedy represented in English by the plays of Byron and Shelley, classically-derived Spanish tragedy of F. Garcia Lorca, and modern plays such as Ibsen's Ghosts, O'Neill's The Cathedral and The Family Reunion.

Modern drama which may be described as tragicomedy, or black or dark comedy falls under the category of three main emphases:

1. the realistic tragicomedy
2. the theatre of the absurd, according to Bertolt Brecht the 'epic' theatre, and
3. naturalistic and expressionistic tragicomedy.

Tragicomedy also refers to plays by John Milton, for example Samson Agonistes, Anton Chekhov, The Cherry Orchard, Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman, Luigi Pirandello Six Characters in Search of an Author and Bertolt Brecht The Life of Galilei.

It is not easy to define the term 'tragedy', because of the fact that it can also describe an incident from everyday life which arouses feelings of extreme shock, horror or sympathy. The 'academia' often dismisses the 'common use' as described above. The so-called 'educated' response to tragedy which claims that tragic events only become tragedy when shaped into the aesthetic experience of a work of art, has been satirized by Stephen Dedalus in his homily on tra-

gedy in James Joyce's novel A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: the death of the girl in a cab was called 'tragic' by a newspaper reporter. However, according to Stephen it is not so at all, as it is remote from terror and pity ACCORDING TO ARISTOTLE'S definition.

Commenting on Stephen's argument, Joyce satirized the so-called 'educated' response to tragedy. According to 'academic' criteria the story of Oedipus is tragic, whereas the death of a child is NOT TRAGEDY as such, but also is in my opinion, quite rightly considered to be a TRAGIC EVENT, as TRAGEDY is a play on a stage i.e. a human condition is being mirrored, whereas the other is an example of life itself.

The aesthetic experience of tragedy, transmitted by Greek tragic philosophy has consequently been separated from common tragic events, and I would argue logically so, as common tragic events cannot be compared with tragedy expressed through ART. SUFFERING may be the same BUT the MODE or PRESENTATION of EXPRESSION in ART differs totally from that of a tragic event as experienced in EVERYDAY LIFE.

In The Death of Tragedy (1961) George Steiner argues that tragedy is dead. Christianity with its promise of salvation is said to have undermined the deterministic, religious and artistic frameworks which contributed to the powerful character of classic tragic actions. The separation of tragedy from common (tragic) experience is an illusion. Thus the academic tradition of tragedy is an ideology. As a reaction

tial, as they are not spoken in the stage production, but are merely implemented as nonlinguistic signs, the dialogue (from actor to actor as illustrated in situation 2) reflected in the actor's text is the focal aspect of drama.

Dialogue, dialogic units or speech turns are inseparable from the actors, as they are directly involved in furthering the action and consequently creating the dramatic world. The complex relationship between dialogue and action is intense as the speech turns constitute forms of action on stage which are directly relevant and which generate actions. The 'unnatural' way in which the actors are assigned to behave and speak is to be viewed as dramatic convention: they do not interrupt each other, respond fluently, and pronounce each word in a specifically speech-trained way. This departure from real life conversational situations is said to be a necessary mode which helps the audience to interpret the dialogue. The breach of this convention in the dramas of Brecht, Beckett, and Ionesco is one of the characteristics of the theatre of the absurd.

Usually the actors in the dialogic situation occupy the same space at the same moment in time, consequently, producing the IMMEDIACY known as the MISE EN SCENE of the dialogue. This other 'unnatural' feature represents a significant dramatic convention as it illustrates one of the limitations of the production-orientation of drama which must be taken into consideration by the dramatist.

By secondary text or stage directions, part of the dramatic

text is formed, the main text or dialogue being embedded in it. This secondary text is presented to the reader as a guide in addition to the main text.

As the world to be presented is visibly portrayed on stage, the dramatic situation is not narrated. This portrayal has certain specific implications with regard to the presentation of such elements like events, time relations, personages (characters) and space.

As dramatic convention requests that action takes place in the 'here and now', this imposes certain restrictions on drama. It is subsequently necessary that action has to be CONCENTRATED because the audience will be watching the performance for a LIMITED time only. Action often centres on some crisis in traditional dramas. A different way of effecting concentration is to impart only the most essential information in the dialogue, and perform only the most important actions, thereby each word and act becomes a sign in the dramatic communication process. Events are even cut down to the bare essentials as the audience will lose concentration by too many simultaneous presentations.

Whereas narrative texts permit flashbacks and glimpses of the future in different ways, scenic presentation must be presented in chronological sequence. The events in a drama must be presented in chronological time sequence.

If the past or the future wants to be drawn into the dramatic present, a messenger is used to RECOUNT the events that

have occurred elsewhere at a different time, thus bringing in a narrative element. Although this means that the possibilities of drama are extended, it must be carefully considered not to overdo the aspect of narration as the possibility exists that the action may stagnate. References to the past or future in the form of reminiscences, dreams foretelling the future, soothsaying and the like can also be incorporated in dramatic dialogue.

As it is the case in narrative texts, the term PERSONAGES (characters) is used here the moment actors in the basic events of the story are individually characterized. As the author/narrator is completely 'eliminated', the information available to the reader is largely limited to what the characters do and say.

When one personage comments directly about another, or when a personage characterizes himself in a monologue, explicit characterization may be effected as a result. The credibility of such statements is dependent upon the impression which the audience forms of the speaker in question.

In drama implicit characterization through words or actions very important as these eventually build a vivid image in the audience's mind of the kind of personages acting in the drama. A personage's appearance or dress may be indicated in the secondary text which could/should suggest easily detectable character traits. Because it can be said that the STAGE in drama is also the SPACE in drama, it is not easy to separate text from production. This space is, after all,

concretized (terminology of aesthetic reception) on the stage during the performance. It can, of course, be checked what spatial directions are specified in the secondary text, or what spatial directions are specified in the dialogue. Crucial for the presentation of space on stage are stage directions which concern decor.

Various elements of the dramatic world were concentrated on in this chapter. It may however be pointed out that dramatic presentation is more complex because the theory of theatre should also be considered as far as the production oriented character of dramatic works is concerned. The use of not only textual and linguistic signs, but also many visual and auditory signs is required to transmit the dramatic message to the audience.

We may now turn our attention to an account of the manner in which communicative signs in the dramatic text or the theatrical production influence the reader's (or spectator's) perception of Shakespeare's Macbeth.

In exploring the significance of this play, the greatest concern will be attributed to the character of Macbeth. The question the reader has to ask himself is whether Macbeth is an essentially evil person, or whether he is possessed of an unmasterable 'tragic flaw'.

The term 'tragic flaw' is actually carefully defined by Hamlet, when he speaks of essentially noble people, who are brought low:

That, for some vicious mole of nature in them,
 As in their birth, wherein they are not guilty
 Since nature cannot choose his origin;
 By the o'ergrowth of some complexion,
 Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason;
 Or by some habit that too much o'erleavens
 The form of plausible manners—that these men,
 Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect, ...
 Being nature's livery or fortune's star,
 His virtues else, be they as pure as grace,
 As infinite as man may undergo,
 Shall in the general censure take corruption
 From that particular fault...'

(Shakespeare, Hamlet: Act 1, Scene iv p.1035)

But does the 'tragic flaw' excuse the most heinous of crimes, namely the killing of the king, in order to attain power and the praise of Lady Macbeth? Is Macbeth the victim of Lady Macbeth's ambitious strives, constituting a distortion of moral values in him? The reader or spectator may, in a sense, observe two Macbeths: a gentle and loyal one, and a man who EVENTUALLY succumbs to evil. What is stressed is the PERVERSION, a kind of schizophrenia.

From his following speech the reader can determine that he was indeed a LOYAL, DUTIFUL subject to the throne:

The service and the loyalty I owe,
 In doing it, pays itself. Your Highness' part
 Is to receive our duties; and our duties

Are to your throne and state children and servants,
 Which do but what they should by doing everything
 Safe toward your love and honour.

(Macbeth: Act 1: iv)

Calling Hamlet's speech on '...that particular fault' back to memory, the reader becomes alert to the signals set in the text. The dramatic actor presents the same from one particular point of view, namely from his moral intuition. This sharpens the reader's perception to the extent that he cannot avoid the clues (signals) which could throw light on Macbeth's character. An all important clue to Macbeth's nature is indicated by Lady Macbeth:

'Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
 what thou art promis'd. Yet do I fear thy nature,
 It is too full o'the milk of human kindness
 To catch the nearest way; thou wouldst be great;
 Art not without ambition, but without...'

(Macbeth: Act 1, Scene v)

But it is exactly because he seems to be kind of nature and somewhat weak that he lets his ambition be 'fanned' by her 'spirit in his ears':

The illness should attend it; what thou wouldst
 highly,
 That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
 And yet wouldst wrongly win; thou'dst have, great
 Glamis,

That which cries, 'Thus thou must do, if thou
 have it';
 And that which rather thou dost fear to do
 Than wishest should be undone. Hie thee hither,
 That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
 And chastise with the valour of my tongue
 All that impedes thee from the golden round,
 Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
 To have thee crown'd withal.'

(Macbeth: Act 1, Scene iv)

Although Macbeth is driven by ambition and evil desire,
 Lady Macbeth 'chastises' him with the 'valour of her tongue'
 to ruthless resolution.

Lady Macbeth's nature is obviously not that of a gentle,
 kindly inclined woman. Listening to Macbeth, the reader be-
 comes aware of this:

Bring forth men-children only;
 For thy undaunted mettle should compose
 Nothing but males

(Macbeth: Act 1, Scene vii)

She has that which Macbeth seems to be lacking. Accordingly,
 she takes the opportunity to influence Macbeth by SUGGESTION
 to act:

'Was the hope drunk
 Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since,
 And wakes it now to look so green, and pale

At what it did so freely? From this time
 Such I account thy love. Art thou afeard
 To be the same in thine own act and valour
 As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
 which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
 And live a coward in thine own esteem
 Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,'
 Like the poor cat I' the adage?'

(Macbeth: Act 1, Scene vii)

Macbeth is easily swayed from his purpose by the prompting of his wife. Although he tells her:

'We will proceed no further in this business:
 He hath honour'd me of late...,'

he immediately adds:

...and I have bought
 Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
 Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
 Not cast aside so soon.

(Macbeth: Act 1, Scene vii)

The meaning derived from the text up to now and furthermore is clearly the product of an interaction between the textual signals and the reader's act of comprehension (either by reading or viewing): The 'evilness' of his reign is partly the result of his 'poisoning' ambition, partly the influence of his wife's 'spirit in his ear'. The role of suggestion is a serious mechanism; in Macbeth's case it has worked. There

is no turning back. After the murderous deed he is determined to make his life thoroughly evil, in order to erase a conscience which might cause him affliction. By surrendering to evil he becomes that tragic figure Hamlet speaks of when he refers to 'essentially noble people, who are brought low'. Macbeth's attitude reveals furthermore a denial of life, in psychological terms this would be called 'a general behavioural disorder', as already pointed out, a kind of schizophrenia. He exposes himself totally and without reserve:

...I am in blood
 Stepped in so far, that should I wade no more,
 Returning were as tedious as go o'er...
 Strange things I have in head that will to hand,
 Which must be acted ere they may be scann'd.

(Macbeth: Act III, Scene iv)

The severity of his situation has turned him into a very tragic figure, a man driving himself on, as he realizes that he is trapped in his own web of destruction, and cannot turn back. Alternatively he bolsters himself up:

Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of woman ...

After his famous 'Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow' speech he says tiredly:

I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,
 And wish the estate o' the world were now undone.
 Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack!

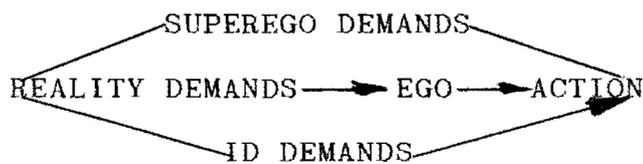
At least we'll die with harness on our back.

(Macbeth: Act V, Scene v)

At this moment of extreme emotional feeling, the reader, equally emotional, cannot detach himself anymore. The feeling stimulated in him will spontaneously link him to the text inducing him to create the conditions necessary for the effectiveness of that dramatic text to be truly transmuted (in Iser's terms) into a personal experience. As text and reader thus merge into one experience, the division between subject and object no longer exists. Consequently, meaning is no longer an object to be DEFINED, but it is an EFFECT which is actually EXPERIENCED. The reader/spectator thus perceives Macbeth as one who although once vigorous and vital, as someone whom the evil deed has reduced into a state of lethargy, his death being the only sense of relief!

Apart from Macbeth and his wife, who are the dominating characters of the play, the other characters may be regarded as minor, even unimportant, although they all have important contributions to make to the final pattern.

Although psychoanalytical concepts applied to literary analysis MAY result in reductionist readings (as I have indicated in chapter 2 above), in order to arrive at a valid conclusion, especially as far as a play like Macbeth is concerned, the psychoanalytical model may, to a certain extent, be used to explain Macbeth's behaviour:



The Superego being the outgrowth of learning the taboos and moral values of society is overruled by the demands of the Ego, the central integrating core of man and center point of (any) personality. In the case of Macbeth his ambition and urge to be praised by Lady Macbeth. Macbeth's ego should however have mediated between inner demands from the ID, which is the pleasure, or biological drive. His biological drives, his 'overriding' ambitions were however supported and even 'fanned' by Lady Macbeth's 'spirit in his ear'. Lady Macbeth's influence by word, 'the valour of her tongue', and attitude resulted in complete acceptance of the heinous deeds which caused the ultimate disintegration of his personality.

THE ROLE OF SUGGESTION has been widely appreciated, beginning at least as early as 1902 with the "Suggestive Therapeutics" of Forel, as stated in Behavior Therapy in Psychiatry (1962). In "The Role of Suggestion" (1962: 67) it has been established that suggestion must be taken as a very serious mechanism, sometimes as an influencing power towards evil, but also as an underlying improvement in any psychotherapy. While suggestion as a mechanism for improvement with behavioural techniques can never be totally excluded, one must remember that the same is true for all psychotherapy and psychoanalysis.

Thus, the influencing power through suggestion as evident in the play, by means of Lady Macbeth's 'spirit in his ear' has a far reaching effect on Macbeth. As far as Lady Macbeth is

concerned it has its DESIRED EFFECT.

The reader or spectator may also become aware how the words of the weird sisters indicate the sweeping, radical change of moral and aesthetic values:

'Fair is foul, and foul is fair'

(Macbeth: Act 1, Scene 1)

After all, there can be no doubt that the play has fully tragic qualities as they are linked

with a CAPACITY for SUFFERING which is as EXTREME and ABSOLUTE as it is conscious.

(Krook, 1969: 44; capitalization M.W.).

The study of the play certainly offers systematic proof of Shakespeare's mastery of resources of the language. His use of adjectives, throughout all his plays, are so richly suggestive, eliciting different mental images in different types of readers. Whatever conclusion the reader may arrive at, he will realize that Shakespeare's vision of humanity was too farranging to be simple, hence NO GENERALIZATION will suffice to explain the nature of that vision.

In RESPONSE to the text the conclusion elicited is reminiscent of that which fascinates and moves us most of all: it is the very fascination with the paradoxes and complexities of human existence, the mystery of life itself. It can and should never really be completely unravelled.

Having examined both the theory and the application of the

INTERACTION between TEXT and READER in the previous sections, we may now turn to a kind of 'final stock-taking' regarding the question of AESTHETIC RESPONSE.

6 . CONCLUSION

The premise of this thesis was to investigate the nature of aesthetic perception in literature, the interaction between text and reader in the process of perceiving literary texts. As such b o t h the literary text a n d the reader have been subjected to investigation.

In the past, i.e. before the event of reception aesthetics, investigations have lavishly been centred on authors and texts. Only a few theorists have begun to recognize the important CONTRIBUTION of the READER. HOW does the reader PERCEIVE the literary message, what is his REACTION to the message, and how does he RESPOND to it? These questions led to an investigation of the READER'S DYNAMIC ACTIVITIES DURING THE PROCESS OF READING.

This thesis centred, therefore, on the reader's contribution towards the act of perception and interpretation of the text. I hope it has convincingly been argued that the act of perceiving the literary message embedded in the text can only result from a two-way transactional process which comes about through the relationship between the reader AND the text.

In emphasizing the READING PROCESS, shifts from author to reader, from text to reader were emphasized. Indeterminacies i.e. gaps in the literary text have to be 'filled' by the reader which invariably influence infinite reactions and as such fluctuating interpretations. As a result of these find-

ings it was argued that consistent meanings of the text or an arresting of the gliding signifier could and should not be achieved, as the most characteristic feature of literature is its OPENNESS.

Subsequently, as far as the reader, the receiver or recipient and the narrator, the writer, the sender, or author of the literary text are concerned, it can now, from the foregoing discussions be deduced that any attempt to arrive at a DETERMINATE INTERPRETATION IS DOOMED TO FAIL as the reader's wandering viewpoint guides him through a text with multiple interconnecting perspectives. These multiple interconnecting perspectives give rise to a network of possible connections, which potentially encompass the whole text, but which potential can never be fully realized. It does instead form a basis for MANY selections which have to be made during the READING PROCESS, and although they are intersubjectively NOT IDENTICAL, as it was shown during the discussion in this dissertation, they can nevertheless claim to be intersubjectively COMPREHENSIBLE because they are all attempts to favour the same structure.

I furthermore attempted to show that the reason for the different interpretations and therefore evaluations of one and the same text also emanates from the different competence of readers.

In conclusion and in order to make the same argument more pertinently comprehensible I would like to add a similar, in my opinion valid explanation on this subject of verifiable

reader opinions on one and the same literary text which has also been discussed by Wolfgang Iser of reception aesthetics, as he draws from psychoanalytical research into communication as carried out by R.D.Laing, in INTERPERSONAL PERCEPTION as follows:

My feeling of experience is, however, filled not only by my direct view of myself (ego) and of the other (alter), but of what we shall call METAPER-
spectives - MY VIEW of the OTHER'S (and their)
VIEW of me. I may not actually be able to see myself as others see me, but I am constantly supposing them to be seeing me in particular ways, and I am constantly acting in the light of the actual or supposed attitudes, opinions, needs, and so on the other has in respect of me.

(Quoted by Iser, 1978: 164/5)

Iser, here quite logically adds to this that the views others have of a person cannot be called 'pure perception', as they are a result of INTERPRETATION. The need for interpretation then, follows from the structure of what he calls the 'interpersonal experience'. Indeed, we all have experience of one another in so far as we know one another's conduct. However, we have no experience of HOW i.e. in which way OTHERS EXPERIENCE US. I dare say it is the same with a literary text: the way I experience a literary text may not at all be the way you experience it, as each of us has a different preconception without which we cannot perceive. As has already

been pointed out in different examples, the WAY we perceive the text therefore depends upon the way the reader is ABLE to fill in gaps caused by indeterminacies within the text. It is because of the different preconceptions, varied background experience, (un)familiarity with literary conventions and text strategies employed by narrators of distinctive genre, that each reader will consequently form verifiable opinions and thus interpretations of one and the same text. Readers and critics of literary texts alike, will thus always have to 'deal' with the phenomenon of different opinions/reactions on ONE AND THE SAME LITERARY TEXT when decoding the same and when concretizing the text into the aesthetic object. However, as it has been pointed out time and again, although opinions vary they can nevertheless be made comprehensible by the perceptive, or in Iser's terminology the reader who tries to comply with the role prestructured for him in the concept of the implied reader, who by interaction with the text, fills gaps which were caused by indeterminacies within the text.

This type of reader is well able to do this because of his varied knowledgeability. He will consequently arrive at an intersubjectively comprehensible, valid conclusion which represents a worthwhile aesthetic experience.

The gliding signifier, a post-structuralist expression, or the wandering viewpoint, expression of aesthetic reception, may therefore be significant for the most characteristic feature of literature, namely the OPENNESS OF THE LITERARY

TEXT. The wandering viewpoint may at the same time be indicative of the COMPLEXITY of life itself and as such of the life which is reflected in one way or the other in the literary work.

In consequence: the represented investigation aimed to show that the aesthetic object arises both from the text itself and from the reader's disposition and competence. The PRODUCTION OF MEANING can therefore be said to be AESTHETIC IN CHARACTER:

It does not arise solely from the fact that there are many different possibilities from which we choose one and exclude the rest, but also from the fact that there is no frame of reference to offer criteria of right or wrong. This does not imply that the meaning must, consequently, be purely subjective; although it requires the subject to produce and experience it, the very existence of alternatives make it necessary for a meaning to be defensible and so intersubjectively accessible. The intersubjective communication of a meaning will show up those elements that have been sacrificed, and so, through ... one's own process of meaning assembly, one may again be in a position to observe one's own decisions. ... For the most part it is the reader's own competence that will enable the various possibilities to be narrowed down...

(Iser, 1978: 230/31; underlined M.W.)

A whole range of 'gestalten' (term used in psychology, here Iser's terminology) which emerge from the same text may not be viewed as being negative or being a DEFICIENCY at all. On the contrary: as the very existence of alternatives is defensible and therefore accessible for discussion, the interpretation may well turn into a productive form or matrix which enables the interpretation of the text to be meaningful in VARIOUS WAYS for different contexts.

Without ignoring the essentiality of the text, I attempted to analyze literary texts according to the aesthetic role in any valid conception of literary theory or critical enterprise. For this analysis all 'workable tools' for the investigation into the literary phenomenon were used.

By defining the correlative process of reading through which act the aesthetic experience functions, reception aesthetics provided a systematic framework for assessing the communicative act of a literary text in the reading process.

In Iser's book The Act of Reading (1978), he developed a theory of AESTHETIC RESPONSE, as it was realized that the reading process sets into motion a chain of activities that depend BOTH ON THE TEXT and on the READER. It was this very chain of activity which, amongst others, inspired me to critically analyze and discuss this important aspect in which the aesthetic nature of reader-perception is highlighted.

Various theories were under discussion as I firmly believe that the study of language and literature should become

more fully merged with each efficient, workable literary theory. As my study investigated a.o. the primary importance of the nature of the reader's aesthetic perception of literature, as far as an interaction between text and reader is concerned, the significance of the reader TOGETHER with the text has been emphasized, as one cannot do without the other: the literary text would remain a cold impersonal paper and ink product (script), an incomplete, abstract impulse without the reader. On the other hand, without the literary text, there would (logically) be no reader. It is thus by interaction between text AND reader that a valid, meaningful concretization can emerge:

When a work is produced, the creative act is only an incomplete, abstract impulse; if the author existed all of his own, he could write as much as he liked, but his work would never see the light of day as an object, and he would have to lay down his pen in despair. The process of writing however, includes as a dialectic correlative the process of reading, and these two interdependent acts require two differently active people. The combined efforts of author and reader bring into being the work of the mind. Art exists only for and through other people.

(Sartre as quoted by Iser, 1978: 108; underlined M.W.)

The reader's ability to perceive the literary text is brought about by his essential quality of aesthetic ex-

perience, during the process of participation with the text as guide. The reader's stored experience makes him aware not only of the experience but also of the empirical MEANS whereby it developed. The observation of that which is investigated by the text makes it possible for the reader to:

...formulate a reference for what he is restructuring. Herein lies the practical relevance of aesthetic experience: it induces this observation, which takes the place of codes that otherwise would be essential for the success of communication.

(Iser, 1978: 134; underlined M.W.)

It is consequently the combined effort of author AND reader which sets into motion an aesthetic response. The reader's contribution is however brought about by a type of reader, who is, not only because of his knowledgeability of literary convention but also through his essential quality of his aesthetic experience able to put together that which has been signalled to him by the text, initiated by the author.

With this study I have set myself the task of explaining the hitherto somewhat neglected significance of the reader. As it was shown, it is the reader himself who, by his function or strategy organizes links between the different elements of the text, thus providing a MEETING POINT between the text and the sender.

As it is precisely the reader who provides a meeting point

between text and sender, the discussion mainly centred on the question of aesthetic perception which is intimately linked to the reading process. Only through an interaction between the competent reader, i.e. the reader complying, be it selectively, with the reading role prestructured in Iser's concept of the implied reader, and the literary text a concretization of the physical artefact into the aesthetic object can take place.

Although this topic can, because of its various implications, never be fully realized, the attempt to provide an investigation into the validity of a transaction between reader and sender through which the relevance of the aesthetic experience emerges has hopefully been convincingly argued.

APPENDIX

hold
 fast to dreams
 for if dreams die
 life is a broken winged
 bird that cannot fly Hold fast
 to dreams for if dreams go life
 is a barren field frozen with snow

ich
 hatte
 einst ein
 schoenes vaterland
 der eichenbaum wuchs
 dort so hoch die veilchen
 nickten sanft es war ein traum
 ein traum
 traum
 traum
 traum
 traum
 traum
 traum

nur wer die sehnsucht
 kennt weiss was ich
 leide allein und
 abgetrennt von
 aller freude
 seh ich
 ans
 firmament ach
 der mich liebt und
 kennt ist in der weite
 nur wer die sehnsucht
 kennt weiss was ich
 leide nur wer die
 sehnsucht kennt
 weiss was ich
 leide

Note: If used as a symbolic sign, the aesthetic object draws attention to itself. It is as such not a vehicle for information only.

[German capital words (nouns) have been kept small for the purpose of visual effect. Poem in shape of a pyramid by Hughes USA; poem in the shape of a tree by Heine and poem in the shape of a vase by Goethe].

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