An Online Academic Journal of
Interdisciplinary & transcultural topics in Huminites

TJHSS

Designed by Abeer Azmy& Omnia Raafat

BUC Press House

Transcultural Journal for Humanities and Social Sciences (TJHSS) is a journal committed to disseminate a new range of interdisciplinary and transcultural topics in Humanities and social sciences. It is an open access, peer reviewed and refereed journal, published by Badr University in Cairo, BUC, to provide original and updated knowledge platform of international scholars interested in multi-inter disciplinary researches in all languages and from the widest range of world cultures. It's an online academic journal that offers print on demand services.

TJHSS Aims and Objectives:

To promote interdisciplinary studies in the fields of Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences and provide a reliable academically trusted and approved venue of publishing Language and culture research.

Email:
elsayed.madbouly@buc.edu.eg

Prof. Dr. Herbert Zeman
Neuere deutsche Literatur
Institut für Germanistik
Universitätsring 1

Prof. Dr. Richard Wiese
University of Marburg/
Germany
**Prof. Renate
Freudenberg-Findeisen**
Universität Trier/ Germany
Email: freufin@uni-trier.de

**Professor Georg
Guntermann**
Universität Trier/ Germany
Email: Guntermann-Bonn@t-online.de

**Prof. Manar Abd El
Moez**
BUC, Cairo Egypt
Email:
manar.moez@buc.edu.eg

Isabel Hernández
Universidad Complutense
de Madrid, Spain
Email: isabelhg@ucm.es

Elena Gómez
Universidad Europea de
Madrid, Spain
Email:elena.gomez@universidadeuropea.es

1010 Wien
E-Mail:
herbert.zeman@univie.ac.at

**Prof. Dr. p`hil. Elke
Montanari**

Email: wiese@uni-marburg.de,
wiese.richard@gmail.com

Universidad de Alicante,
Spain Email: spc@ua.es
**Mohamed El-Madkouri
Maataoui**
Universidad Autónoma de
Madrid, Spain
Email: el-madkouri@uam.es

Carmen Cazorla
Universidad Complutense
de Madrid, Spain
Email: mccazorl@filol.ucm.es

Prof. Lin Fengmin
Head of the Department of
Arabic Language
Vice President of The
institute of Eastern
Literatures studies
Peking University
Email: emirlin@pku.edu.cn
Prof. **Sun Yixue**
President of The
International School of
Tongji University

University of Hildesheim/
Germany
Email: montanar@uni-hildesheim.de,
elke.montanari@uni-hildesheim.de

Email: 98078@tongji.edu.cn
Prof. Wang Genming
President of the Institute of
Arab Studies
Xi'an International Studies
University
Email: genmingwang@xisu.cn

Prof. Zhang hua
Dean of post graduate
institute
Beijing language
university
Email: zhanghua@bluc.edu.cn

Prof. Belal Abdelhadi
Expert of Arabic Chinese
studies
Lebanon university
Email: Babulhadi59@yahoo.fr

The Implied Reader as a Component of Fantasy Fiction:
with Reference to Rowling's *The Ickabog*

Asmaa Elshikh
Assistant Professor
English Department College of Arts, Damnhour University

Abstract: The "implied reader" is a concept which has not received a considerable attention from practical literary criticism given that it is basically related to Reception Theory and is concerned with entities that are outside the text. This paper tends to examine the concept of "The Implied Reader" as designed by Wolfgang Iser in his two major works *The Implied Reader* (1974) and *The Act of Reading* (1978), which are considered a corner stone of Reception Theory. It investigates the possibilities of opening wider realms of reading when applying Iser's theory to fantasy fiction as a genre. The term offers realms of new patterns of cognition and communication between the text and the reader, even beyond the claimed intentions of the text. Texts intended for young readers like fantasy fiction are proposed to be having one category of implied reader, the youth. However, as this study will discuss, the term of the implied reader as coined by Iser can dig out other categories of readers implied in such texts and explain why fantasy, unlike realistic texts, invites categories of readers of greater variety and differences.

Keywords: *The Implied Reader, Reception theory, fiction, fantasy, Iser*.

Introduction: There is a strong tendency from intellectuals and critics to understand the nature of the literary text as a phenomenon. It is a need to go beyond the historical roots of a literary text (a trend which prevailed in the early twentieth century and which used to pay much attention to the psychological and cultural influences that control the author). Besides, the need is to get free from the confines of the formalist or structuralist views of a literary text which strict themselves to study the form or the language structure of the text to the degree that they consider the "meaning" as something marginal or even impossible. These two main trends in literary criticism couldn't afford satisfying answers for questions like: What controls the reception of a literary text? What differentiates a literary text from another? How is a literary genre responsible for creating a specific effect on the reader? And, more importantly, what makes a specific text accepted by a specific reader? All these questions consider the text a phenomenon rather than a structured language or a conveyed meaning. Phenomenological studies of literature have brought questions of this type to the front, shedding light on the relation between the text on one side and the reader or the writer on the other side. Consequently, terms like "reader response", "the implied author" and "the implied reader" found a considerable place in the crowd of terminology of modern literary theory. They are designed by modern narratologies to find out authorial entities inside a narrative text.

The "implied reader" unlike the "implied author" does not receive considerable attention from recent applied literary criticism for two reasons. First, the term is presupposed to be referring to an entity that lies outside the text which occurs prior to it. In other words, the reader only becomes a "reader" when there is a "text" to read. This makes the concept indefinite and useless for critics who aim to investigate the authorial entities inside the text; and who, like New Criticism, believe that meaning can only be found inside the text. Second, the concept of the implied reader as designed and offered by literary theorists, has different versions and definitions, sometimes overlapping. Definitions of the term as laid out by Booth, Holland, Jauss and Iser do not create as much a common ground as differences. Iser's theory, specifically, could make a consolidation between Reader Response theory and the New Criticism. The "implied reader" as offered by Iser is basically a "pre-structuring" of a recipient role which interact with the reader's "imagination" to give the final effect of the literary text. It is there "in" the text, waiting to interact with a reader's imagination. Imagination is essential to Iser's concept of the implied reader.

Among the different genres of literature, fantasy fiction is the most imagination-evoking genre. It is commonly known that the more distracted from reality, the more fantasy the literary work is. Imagination finds its richest ground in fantasy; and hence the "implied reader" finds a variety of pre-structuring in the fantasy text. This is what makes fantasy fiction most suitable for the thesis of this paper. Unlike realistic fiction, the fantasy text finds a huge range of possibilities to challenge the reader's imagination and to call for its interaction. This paper takes as its thesis locating the possible various in-text structures of the "implied reader", as designed by Iser, in a fantasy-fiction text. As a component of fantasy fiction, the implied reader is a component related to the reader's imagination rather than his historical moment or situation. To use Iser's words, the implied reader "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" (Iser, *The Implied Reader* 34). So, the implied reader is not identical with any real reader, but it is an in-text challenge of the reader's imagination.

1. Iser's "Implied Reader:"

The implied reader for Iser is "a sequence of mental images which lead to the text translating itself into the reader's consciousness" (*The Implied Reader* 38). He devotes a great deal of his work to the "implied reader". In his famous book *The Act of Reading* he states that the implied reader 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 its roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; it is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader (34).

This definition is essential to Iser's theory which, one can say, is a combination between Reader Response theory and the New Criticism. This definition establishes a direct relation between the "effect" exercised by the text and its own structure. Just like the Reader Response theory, the text is brought to being only when it is read. The role of the reader is essential for the literary text, to give it a meaning and an effect. At the same time, according to Iser's definition, we don't need to go outside the text to detect this role, because it is "firmly planted in the structure of the text"(34), a view which agrees with New Criticism.

Like other phenomenological Reader Response theorists Iser adopts a phenomenological cognitive approach in which a literary text is a phenomenon which only has meaning when received by a human consciousness. He used to argue for the impossibility of the text to offer a single meaning. Each time it is read it reveals meanings, sometimes even contradictory. So, the text doesn't imply a specific meaning; but it surly implies a reader who gives the text a meaning with every act on reading. Hence, the process of reading is a phenomenon which deserves consideration. In his preface to *The Act of Reading*, Iser maintains that reading is the focal point of his study "for it sets in motion a whole chain of activities that depend both on the text and on the exercise of certain basic human faculties. Effects and responses are properties neither of the text nor of the reader; the text represents a potential effect that is realized in the reading process." (i) The act of reading thus is a phenomenon which occurs as an interaction between the text and the reader.

Iser differentiates between reading and perception in the sense that reading, as an act, is part of a dichotomy with the literary text. Reading is a "creative" activity without which the text will remain just "words and statements". Without the reader's imagination the "virtual dimension" of the text cannot be fulfilled. Unlike mere perception, reading, for Iser, is a "sort of kaleidoscope of perspectives, pre-intentions, recollections …. [that is to say] anticipation and retrospection"(Iser, *The Implied Reader* 204). "Reading", by which Iser means basically reading literary texts, is thus a kind of rich and creative process of perception, not mere perception. In an article entitled "The Process of Reading: A Phenomenological Approach", Iser considers reading as specific kind of perception which is conditioned by the role of imagination. Thus, terms like "anticipation" and "retrospection" which Iser borrows from phenomenology, are applicable to the process of reading only as conditioned by the presence of imagination. So, if a text is the creation of a writer's imagination, a "literary text is the creation of two imaginations, the writer's and the reader's" (204).

The process of reading is a process of communication which Iser sees as of pragmatic nature. He relies to a great deal on J. L. Austin's speech-act theory in which a unit of communication, which is the "speech act", is "situated within a context" (Iser, The Act of Reading 31). Iser relates the literary text to Austin's pragmatic concept of "illocutionary" speech act; hence the situational context is essential for the fulfillment of the communication process. A literary text like any communicative text cannot stand alone; it is situated in a context; and the implied reader lies somewhere between the point of the text to be created and the point of becoming a "literary text", that is having an interactive reader. The process of communication is successfully fulfilled when the implied reader and the real reader come to a common ground.

A close view of Iser's theory will find that the "implied reader", unlike what Chatman argues for, is not "the mirror of the implied author". The "implied author", one can say, is one facet of the "wandering viewpoint" which Iser relates to his concept of "the implied reader". Though Iser does not state this directly, a close reading of his "wandering viewpoint" will find a close relation between what Iser means by this term, the wondering viewpoint, and "the implied author" as offered by Booth. Booth is the first to introduce the concept of the implied author to literary criticism in his assertion that "every literary text has one and only one implied author, and identifying this implied author is always a necessary component of the correct interpretation of a work. From this perspective, a text can give rise to differing interpretations only if its implied author is mistakenly identified or assessed in different ways."(Kindt 55). So if the implied author is one correct "interpretation" of the text, it can simply belong to the many interpretations practiced by the wandering viewpoint. "An increase of blanks is bound to occur through the frequent subdivisions of each of the textual perspectives: thus the narrator's perspective is often split into that of the implied author set against that of the author as narrator; the hero's perspective may be set against that of the minor characters"(Iser, *The Act of Reading*196).

The implied reader for Iser is basically structured "in" the text but still relies to a great deal on the outer context and the real reader. The reader shares in determining the context of the literary text by performing a kind of tension on the author: The literary text, like an "illocutionary" speech act, does something to the reader not just make statements; and this something is what gives the text its value and uniqueness. The text challenges the reader's imagination to interact in the creative process through "gaps", "blanks" and "indeterminate elements". These tools in the text stand as "response inviting structures" for the reader. So, the reading process is established first in the text then moves on to the reader. The reader's perception of the text varies according to his/her own experience. In other words, a literary text is not fulfilled until it interacts with a reader's experience and imagination, and the implied reader is what charges this interaction.

Iser's theory is criticized on the ground that "it is hard to put Iser's theory into practice" (Schwab 170). This is due to the sever relativity of this theory which doesn't intend to make any finite lines. It is like an explanation of a phenomena rather than declaring any rules. Iser explains how the same text can go through different interpretations by different readers, without answering the question: what are the limits of these differences? He also discusses the ability of the text to imply its own reader and to make "limits" to its perception without clarifying to what extent is the text able to control the reading process. Iser concludes his Implied Reader by a theoretical chapter in which he argues for the "individual" and "variable" nature of the process of reading and this variation depends on the guidelines offered inside the text. (282)

2. Fantasy and the wandering viewpoint:

Fantasy fiction which was originated as a subgenre of children literature has gone through considerable changes since Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) to the most recent J. K. Rowling's *The Ickabog* (2020). Readers who were once supposed to be children and young adults are not of any exclusion now. Even the most serious, educated adult reader can be a fan of fantasy fiction. It is worth note, however, that earlier fantasies like those of *the Arabian Nights* were not originally intended for children, but with their recent revival they found a good portion of children audience, and adult audience alike. This distinctive nature of the genre as wide range reader-inviting brings forth the question of the relationship between the implied reader and his wandering viewpoint in these texts and the possibilities of inviting this wide range of audience.

Of central importance for Iser's "implied reader" is the concept of the wandering viewpoint. "The wandering viewpoint is a means of describing the way in which the reader is present in the text. This presence is at a point where memory and expectation converge, and the resultant dialectic movement brings about a continual modification of memory and an increasing complexity of expectation" (Iser, *The Act of Reading* 118). This continual modification of the reader's expectation is essential to any communication process between a reader and a literary text. The "wandering viewpoint" is the means by which the reader keeps ongoing with this continuing process of modification and expectations interplay.

> Each individual sentence correlate prefigures a particular horizon, but this is immediately transformed into the background for the next correlate and must therefore necessarily be modified. Since each sentence correlate aims at things to come, the prefigured horizon will offer a view which—however concrete it may be—-must contain indeterminacies, and so arouse expectations as to the manner in which these are to be resolved (Iser, *The Act of Reading* 111).

The wandering viewpoint established in the text is, thus, responsible for inviting a specific reader. It can also exclude a specific reader who is not ready, willing or able to go with the continual process of modification of the "prefigured horizons". This justifies why some literary genres are not much celebrated by all types of reader; for example, realistic literature is not much celebrated by young readers, who do not already have these prefigured horizons required to imply a reader.

As mentioned above, the interplay of memory and expectations is responsible for determining the range of the wandering viewpoint. Memory, one may add, is historically rooted. Social and personal history determine the memory of the reader. Also, the text forms some memories during the reading process. Iser, however, did not mention which "memory" he refers to in his definition of the wandering viewpoint: the one formed by the social and personal history of the reader, or the one formed by the text during the reading process. The first kind of memory will be of weak importance in the case of a literary genre like fantasy, which implants its world out of our real world; and which contains, according to O'Keefe, " something impossible, contrary to the laws of nature as we know them" (22). It can be even described as the most escapist literary genre. Unlike realistic or satirist forms, fantasy fiction doesn't abide by the reader's real memories; it can form specific memories for its own then modify the reader's expectation during the reading process. The text thus has more freedom and more authority over the game of expectation-modification than the realistic text. So, in the case of fantasy, memory and expectations have more chances and points to converge at; and the text have a wider range and more freedom for the "wandering viewpoint" to interact. One can say, the wider the "wandering viewpoint" becomes the wider the range of readers it invites, and this may justify the varied categories of readers of fantasy fiction. Much fantasy fiction was first intended for young readers and unexpectedly became a phenomenon by fulfilling a huge number of adult readers.

The unspecified settings of fantasy make it easier for its implied reader to be of a universal nature. Historical and geographical specifications do not far fit a fantasy text, hence the "wandering viewpoint" finds fresh ground and wider space to move through. The fantasy text is set somewhere in the imagination of the "implied author" who, as we mentioned earlier, is one facet of the wandering viewpoint of the implied reader. Most of fantasy texts are set somewhere in places never visited in real life; most of them are described as "far" kingdoms or galaxies, "fairy" lands, "magic" schools or towns. So, words like "far", "fairy", "magic" are to ensure the distancing of the story from our ordinary life thus the memory formed by the reader's real life is now set aside to leave a wider space for the memory formed by the text itself which begins to take control over the memory-expectations interplay.

The time flow of the process of reading is essential in Iser's wandering viewpoint, for the process of perception goes through phases and does not happen as a whole. "Apperception can only take place in phases, each of which contains aspects of the object to be constituted, but none of which can claim to be representative of it" (Iser, *The Act of Reading* 109). Each phase is not complete in itself but important to the next one. "Thus, the aesthetic object cannot be identified with any of its manifestations during the time-flow of reading. The incompleteness of each manifestation necessitates syntheses, which in turn bring about the transfer of the text to the reader's consciousness. The synthesizing process, however, is not sporadic—it continues throughout every phase of the journey of the wandering viewpoint" (Iser, *The Act of Reading* 109). Fantasies and realistic fiction are alike in this concern; for the time flow of the reading process would not be of great difference when we read, for example, *Gulliver's Travels* or *Silas Mariner*, despite the difference in the genres of the two novels. In both novels the reader, in few hours, is supposed to take into his consciousness a series of events which are supposed to fall in tens of years; and this "taking into consciousness" process goes through phases which are to be controlled by the text.

What causes the text to be a literary work is not the time flow of the reading process as much as the connections that happen between its phases in the reader's consciousness. As Iser puts it, "the reader, in establishing these interrelations between past, present and future, actually causes the text to reveal its potential multiplicity of connections" (278). In establishing these interrelations, the reader will use his own experience together with the leading guidelines offered by the text. In case of fantasy, which is presupposed to be unrelated to the reader's experience, the reader will find himself willing to be guided by the text's guidelines. A child reader will find this process easy and amusing while it will be more complicated for an adult one whose experience will linker everywhere possible during the reading process. In the *Ickabog* for example a child reader will go smoothly with the journey of the growing kids who grow during the sixty-four chapters and change from just small kids who ask questions to heroes who are indulged in the action and who change the life of the whole kingdom of Cornecopia. On the other side the adult reader will find himself busy with making interrelations of the phases of the political and social changes that happen in the kingdom.

3. Gaps and Blanks in fantasy

Gaps, or blanks, are responsible for the fluctuating nature of the reader-text relationship. They are what invite the consciousness of the reader to take part in the "game" of reading, by keeping in search for answers for the questions that continue to be formed by the text through the reading process. As Iser puts it, "the blank in the fictional text induces and guides the reader's

29

constitutive activity. As a suspension of connectability between perspective segments, it marks the need for an equivalence, thus transforming the segments into reciprocal projections, which, in turn, organize the reader's wandering viewpoint as a referential field."(Iser, "Indeterminacy" 202). One should note three important notions about the gaps in a literary text. First, they are responsible for giving multiple meanings for the text with multiple readings. Second: a gap is not a gap anymore once it is recognized as a gap; and the reader will keep looking for the not-yet-recognized gaps throughout the reading process. Third, the nature of the gaps determines the nature of the reader, as to be filled or resolved they need specific faculties of the reader. "Thus whenever the flow is interrupted and we [the readers] are led off in unexpected directions, the opportunity is given to us [readers] to bring into play our own faculty for establishing connections—for filling in the gaps left by the text itself" (Iser, *The Act of Reading* 280)

It is worth noting that the gap as designed by Iser can occur between different "segments of meanings" created by the text or can happen between the text and the reader's own reality. The first kind is referred to by Iser as the "gap between the different elements, and this can only be filled by the reader's imagination"(Iser, *The Act of Reading* 85). The other type of gaps involves the reader and his historical situation. In his analysis of Fielding's *Tom Jones*, Iser states that "a historical gap between text and reader does not necessarily lead to the text losing its innovative character; the difference will only lie in the nature of the innovation" (78). And this is what makes innovative texts like Fielding's *Tom Jones* celebrated by readers of later generations and not just by the contemporary reader of the text. Thus, according to Iser, the success of a literary text is not bound to the historical moment, though it could be related to it; and what keeps this success is the "nature of innovation"(78). When we relate this notion to a fantasy text, which is naturally out of the historical moment, and where the historical gap is at its greatest, one will recognize the important role of the "nature of innovation" offered by the text.

In the case of fantasy, the second type of gaps doesn't need a reader of later generations to occur. This historical gap already exists with the first text-reader generation, since the nature of the fantasy texts guarantees its being out of the historical moment of the reader. A reader of Rowling's the Ickabog, for example, will feel the gap between the kingdom of "Cornucopia" and any other kingdoms in his real world, still this does not make the text lose its innovative nature. In the beginning of the novel we see people living almost in a heaven-like world, totally different from ours. Their very simple life is full of pleasure and happiness. However, the text does not leave this gap without giving clues for the reader to fill. With each description of this heavenly-like kingdom the reader is invited to make comparisons and raise questions about his own life, then to form his own answers.

Rowling's *The Ickabog* is a fantasy novel about how people perceive "fantasy". It narrates the difference between the world of adults and the world of children in accepting and inventing fantasy stories, embodied in a monster named "the Ickabog". This monster is perceived as only "invented" and "unreal" in the world of adults, whereas it could be brought into reality only by a group pf kids who are the heroes of the novel. In the end of the novel this fantastic creature, the Ickabog, turns out to be real, to be good and strong enough to defeat malicious authority, injustice, weakness and evil in the world of adults which causes the suffering in the world of children. Only a kid, Daisy, with the aid of her friends could prove the importance of bringing this fantastic creature into real; or at least proving that "it is" real. Daisy's love for her people, her dead mother and lost father was the main motivation beyond her search for the Ickabog, by helping it to get rid of its fears and to know itself and discover the good sides in itself. Just like fantasy fiction, the Ickabog seems only real in the minds of children while perceived as pure imagination and unreal by adults; but in the end it proves its valuable existence for both adults and children.

Unlike her previous work, Rowling tends to use a slight metafiction technique in *the Ickabog*. The narrator pauses the flow of the action from time to time to show herself up as an implied author. The first-person narration she uses makes her an integrated part of the whole symphony she creates, and which intends to erase the borders between reality and fantasy. The borders between the narrator on one side and the implied author of *the Ickabog* on the other side are obscure. The first person singular "I" is employed to place the narrator equally in the world of the reader and the world of the story at the same time. The narrator here is the writer: "the king at the time of which I write was called king Fred", "who at the time of which I write, was called Gordon Goodfellow"(Rowling, 8, 264). This is enhanced with the first-person plural "we" and the second person "you". Direct speech to the reader is common in the text: "think if you please…", "and you didn't get into the history books by replacing …", "I shall tell you a secret, which nobody else know..."(9,36, 47). She comments on the characters and the action in a direct speech to the reader. this technique clearly implies a child reader who is aided directly by the implied author to cross the gaps in the text.

The narrator's comments on the action are very realistic and personal to the degree that we cannot tell if there is any difference between the narrator, the implied author and the real author. The last lines of the novel are very honest and real words on the tongue of the narrator, like most of her other comments in the novel.

> Whether people were really Bornded from Ickabog, I cannot tell you. Perhaps we go through a kind of Bornding when we change, for better or for worse. All I know is that

countries, like Ickabogs, can be made gentle by kindness, which is why the kingdom of Cornucopia lived happily ever after (Rowling, 268).

In this quote, the objective tone and simple language offer the child implied reader a hand to cross the gap between the fantasy of "Bornding" and the "change" in real life. The child reader, thus, has been taken in an adventure whose heroes are children like him, living in a world "made gentle by kindness" and "lived happily ever after". The direct commentary Rowling makes during the text gives direct aid to the reader to cross the gaps between the two worlds. This clearly suits the child reader whom she considers as her target. In the foreword of her novel she states: "I read the story aloud to my two youngest children when they were very small" (ii).

An adult reader is also implied in this context. The seemingly objective tone and direct commentary imply verbal ironies of the adults' world; and, Irony can easily create solvable gaps by inviting the reader to make comparisons and ask questions like:how far sarcastic our human nature is. Exaggeration also creates irony, which in turn helps the reader to cross such gaps. In the very beginning of the novel we understand that "King Fred" titled himself the "Fearless" because "he'd once managed to catch and kill a wasp"(11). The Chouxville town considers it a shame if "a grown man's eyes" are not fill with "tears of pleasure"(9).

4. Conclusion

Some critics argue for the inapplicability of Iser's theory concerning terms like "wandering viewpoint", "gaps" or "blanks", on the basis that Iser relies in a great part of his theory on consciousness which he himself admits as mysterious "the mystery that still surrounds consciousness" (27). This would have been true only if Iser's theory is understood outside the confines of literary theory, which is nonscientific, relative and surrounded with many abstract terms. In this context one recalls Iser's statement that "Literary theory is soft theory because it does not make predictions." (Iser, "Do I Write" 311). Compared to scientific theories literary theory "remains tied to a subject matter that it alone can elucidate" (311). Literary theory is not supposed to give facts or measurements; its relativity is part of its being directly related to an aesthetic subject matter. Text, meaning, author and reader, are all fields for the literary theory to investigate, but it hardly makes scientific or final statements about these concepts; and this justifies why most literary theorists adhere to the aid of other sciences like psychology, sociology, linguistic and phenomenology. Iser's concept of the implied reader, which derives mainly from phenomenology, can dig out new areas of reading fiction, notably fantasy. The implied reader, as structured by concepts like "the wandering viewpoint" and the "gap", is an important component of fantasy fiction. This component makes it easier for the critic to understand the nature of the audience of such texts, like *The Ickabog*, which are basically written

for children and young audience. As we have discussed, it can provide explanation to the phenomena of adult and realistic readers attracted to such types of texts.

Works Cited

Calé, Luisa. "A Visual Interface for the Act of Reading." *Comparative Critical Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1–2, 2004, pp. 97–118, doi:10.3366/ccs.2004.1.1-2.97.

Champagne, Roland A., and Wolfgang Iser. "Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology." *World Literature Today*, 1990, doi:10.2307/40146615.

Fish, Stanley. "Why No One's Afraid of Wolfgang Iser." *Doing What Comes Naturally*, 2013, doi:10.1215/9780822381600-003.

Flynn, Elizabeth A. 'Reader Response in the Nineties." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1998, pp. 197–206, doi:10.1017/S1060150300002345.

Hamilton, Craig A., and Ralf Schneider. "From Iser to Turner and beyond: Reception Theory Meets Cognitive Criticism." *Style*, 2002.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. John Hopkins University Press, 1974, Baltimore.

---, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, Baltimore.

---, Wolfgang. "Do I Write for an Audience?"*: Modern Language Association Stable* Vol. 115, no. 3, 2000, pp. 310–314.

Kindt, Tom, and Hans-Harald Müller. *The Implied Author: Concept and Controversy*. De Gruyter, 2006.

Lobo, Alejandra Giangiulio. "Reader-Response Theory: A Path Towards Wolfgang Iser." *Letras*, 2013.

Rowling, J. K. *The Ickabog*. London, Hodder & Stoughton, 2020.

O'Hara, Daniel T. Review of *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, by Wolfgang Iser. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 1979 doi:10.2307/430052.

O'Keefe, Deborah. "Readers in Wonderland: Liberating World of Fantasy Fiction." *Continium International Publishing Group* New York, 2004.

Richardson, Brian. "Singular Text, Multiple Implied Readers." *Style*, vol. 41, no. 3, 2007, pp. 259–74.

Schwáb, Zoltán. "Mind the Gap: the Impact of Wolfgang Iser's Reader—Response Criticism on Biblical Studies—a Critical Assessment." *Literature and Theology*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2003, pp. 170–181. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/23925202. Accessed 6 June 2021..