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Transactional Theory

- A “mutually shaping” exchange between reader and text.
- Both are changed in the reading.

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- “Transactional theory proposes that the relationship between reader and text is much like that between the river and its banks, each working its effects upon the other, each contributing to the shape of the poem. “

The Reader

- The reader brings their version of the world to the reading experience.
 - Literacy skills
 - Lived experiences
 - Educational experiences

The text:

- It's simply ink and paper until a reader reads it.

The Poem

- What happens when the text is brought into the reader's mind.
 - symbolic
 - evoking, in the transaction
 - images
 - emotions
 - concepts

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- **Happens only in the reader's mind.**
 - It does not take place on the page nor in the text, but in the act of reading.

Reader Response

- Stance: The expectations readers have of texts.

Efferent reading:

- Rosenblatt states, "the reader's attention is primarily focused on what will remain as a residue *after* the reading -- the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out." (p.23)

Aesthetic reading:

- Rosenblatt states, "In aesthetic reading, the reader's attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text." (p. 25)

Implications for Literacy Instruction

- Teachers may not lead classes along to preordained conclusions.
- Primary responses are considered.
(examined by themselves and others)
- Classroom atmosphere is cooperative
- The conception of literary knowledge is expanded (Who “owns” knowledge?)

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- Rosenblatt, L. "Efferent and Aesthetic Reading." *The reader, the text, the poem: A transactional theory of the literary work*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1978. 22-47.
 - *Transactional Theory in the Teaching of Literature*. ERIC Digest.
<http://www.ericdigests.org/pre-926/theory.htm>