1) RHETORICAL READER-RESPONSE THEORY (Peter Rabinowitz)

Reading is a contract between the author and the reader that "specifies the grounds on which the reading should take place." In other words, readers expect certain things from the writer and the writer expects the reader to expect these things. Rabinowitz categorizes this contract into four rules.

a) RULES OF NOTICE: What we pay attention to. We don't pay attention to everything (not everything is important). Authors direct our attention by: telling us; using repetition; their diction, or word choice (words like "immediately" or "realized" or "that was the day"); using metaphors and similes, and lots more. **Two rules of notice we'll focus on:**

i) **Privileged positions**
   1. Pay attention to titles
   2. Beginnings and endings are important [novels, sections, chapters]
   3. Take note of threats, warnings, and promises
   4. Details at climatic moments warrant notice

ii) **Rules of rupture**
   1. Disruptions attract our notice
   2. So does blatantly irrelevant information
   3. We notice stuff that's inappropriate (especially behavior from characters)
   4. Take note of changes in direction of plot (this might be literal--a character stops moving, for example)
   5. A change in perspective requires our attention
   6. Also changes in narrative distance (like a camera lens)
   7. Shifts in style attract our notice as we read.

b) RULES OF SIGNIFICATION: How we pay attention to it

i) **Rule of snap moral judgment:** We expect certain behavior from certain characters based on how they act. Authors establish who's who and engineer [create, get] from readers opinions about the characters.
   1. **Rule of appearance:** We judge characters by their exterior until the text gives us sufficient reason to judge them some other way. Physical appearance stands metaphorically for inner quality. Author's tell us what we should think with the following:
      (a) Eyes
      (b) How characters sound [tenor, voice]
(c) How characters use language [how they talk, what they say]
(d) Names
(2) Rule of enchainment: The assumption that one moral quality is linked to the presence of another [that is close to it]
   (a) A character's claim about other characters that we trust or dislike helps to formulate our judgment of the character making the claim
   (b) We trust our friends and our enemies
   (c) Authors trick readers--sometimes the characters we trust are wrong
   (d) We assume that one moral failing accompanies another [depends greatly on context, as moral failings are different for different groups]
   (e) People who invade space (physical, emotional, literary) are not to be trusted--whose story is it and who invades?
   (f) We judge characters by their aesthetic takes--their taste in art, music, literature, fashion, etc. [correct aesthetic views = morally correct characters; aesthetic failings = moral failings] Also very influenced by context.

c) RULES OF CONFIGURATION: This is how we shape reading as it takes place. In general, readers have a good idea of the direction of a story. The tenet of this rule are: Something will happen and not anything can happen (configuration limits the possibilities). Writers have control over the events in a book that do not exist in real life. We expect resolutions, surprises, climaxes to PAN OUT. In other words, we expect what we read to have some end.
   i) Rule of undermining: Readers can expect that stable situations will be undermined (changed)
      (1) Lure of the unfamiliar: Novels are more likely to move from the familiar to the unfamiliar (and perhaps back again at the end) than the other way round.
      (2) Rule of chutzpah (Yiddish word for boldness): When a character says something that he or she has no real reason to believe (especially when the claim is important to the outcome of the plot) we can expect the character to be wrong. Or if
the character says something that is particularly arrogant we can expect them to be wrong. [I never lose.]

(3) If the course of action seems smooth, anything that looks like a potential obstacle has the likelihood of turning into one.

ii) **Rules of balance**

   (1) **Rule of repetition**: Repetitions will continue until they are blocked (characters who act unwisely will continue to do so until something changes)

   (2) **Rule of parallel**: Diverse strands will be linked; plot lines will merge (come together)

   (3) **The other shoe rule**: When one shoe drops, you can expect the other. This allows readers to develop a sense of anticipation that authors can foster and resolve or frustrate. In other words, sometimes the things you expect will happen and at other times they will not. In general:

      (a) Events produce results.
      (b) Actions have consequences.
      (c) Strong attractions or dissonances between characters will have consequences.
      (d) Warnings and promises will be followed up.
      (e) Maxims (general truths about life or rule about behavior), especially those in privileged positions, create the expectation that they will be followed up. Some explicitly predict events. Some are promises of truths that will be exemplified throughout the novel.

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d) **RULES OF COHERENCE**: Using the other three rules we put things together so the novel comes together as a whole. Authors expect us to do this. In general:

   i) Authors anticipate that will will try to bring things together so gaps are there on purpose. Authors leave out parts that are important and we have to figure it out.

   ii) If information is given notice but does not seem to contribute to the plot then the information is figurative and is left to our interpretation. [Recurring images, for example, and similes and metaphors.]

   iii) Readers assume that authors place their most important thought last, so readers assign special value to the end of a text. Authors can maintain the balance or upset it.