9. Hans Robert Jauss[1]

[1 The key for Jauss citations is: AL: *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics* (1982a); EH*: Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik* (1982b); and TAR: *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (1982c). Though due to the processes of compilation and translation, these works were all published in the same year, there were originally of very diverse date. EH is a much revised and expanded German version of AL, the original of which appeared in 1977. All quotes frorn EH are my translation. I occasionally amended the translations in the English books. Inconsistencies between AL and TAR (e.g., "aesthesis" vs. "aisthesis") were resolved.'

Hans Robert Jauss has drafted an ambitious new program for literary history. That discipline has been in "a steady decline" during "the last one hundred and fifty years" and is "now drained of all exemplary scholarly character" (TAR 3, 49). Historians would "arrange" the "materials unilinearly according to the chronology of great authors" or situate "the individual work in a chronological series" formed by some "general tendency" or "genre" (TAR 4). "The authors" biography and the evaluation of their oeuvre pop up in some accidental spot." The weaknesses are plain: "the development of genres" gets "dismembered"; "the presentation" of "closed periods" in a "closed past" stays "one to two generations behind" the "standpoint of the present time"; "the research into tradition neutralizes the lived praxis of history"; and so on (TAR 4f, 7, 9). Indeed, "the form of literary history sanctioned by the historian is conceivably the worst medium" to "display the historicity of literature" (TAR 51).

"At first sight, history in the realm of the arts presents two contradictory views" (TAR 46). "With the first, it would appear that the history" of art "is more consistent and coherent than that of society," because "the chronological sequence of works of art is more closely connected than a chain of political events, and the transformations of style are easier to follow than the transformations of social history" (TAR 46). Thus, "the history of art" might serve as "a paradigm of historical knowledge" (TAR 48). "Pragmatic histories are of monotonous uniformity; only through the perfection of the arts can the human spirit rise to its own particular greatness" (cf. Voltaire, 1751) (TAR 49). "Political and war history"' only tells us how a "people" "let itself be governed and killed," but not how they "thought," or what they "hoped and wished for" (Herder, 1796) (TAR 50). "The history of the arts" can be "a medium through which the historical individuation of the human spirit is presented throughout the course of times and nations."

"With the second view, the paradigm of art historiography" "shows that this greater consistency of detail is purchased at the price of an overall inconsistency as regards the links between art genres as well as their relation to the general historical and social process" (TAR 46). "The sequential link between one work and the next is lost in a historical vacuum" (TAR 47). One might wonder "whether art history" must "borrow its overall coherence from pragmatic

history" -- typically seen as the "factual ruler-and-state type of history" (TAR 47f.) Whereas "historicism," "positivism," and "orthodox Marxism" focused on pragmatic history (TAR 47, 51, 10f), Jauss focuses on a mode of art history for which he outlines a program.

Past approaches to literary history were guided by several main ideas. "Before it turned to tracing the history of style, art history had always taken the form of artists' biographies" organized according to "chronological order," "categories of authors," and "patterns of parallels"' (TAR 46). Due to a fascination with "golden ages," the "appearance of art split up into a variety of different elemental courses," each "directed toward its own "point of perfection" (TAR 47). Later, research pursued "the idea of a national individuality" as "the one basic idea that permeates" an entire "series of events"' (cf. Gervinus, 1962 [1883]) (TAR 8, 6). "To represent" that idea "in the history of literary works" was the "highest goal" (TAR 3). "National unification" or "national classicism" was considered the "peak" and "fulfillment" of the whole enterprise (TAR 7, 51).

But gradually, "the teleological model of idealist philosophy of history," seeking to "comprehend the course of events from an "end, an ideal high point"' fell into "disrepute" as "unhistorical" (TAR 7). The eventual successor was "positivism": "the application of the principle of pure causal explanation to the history of literature" (TAR 8). "Objectivity" demanded that "the historian should disappear before his object," namely, the "series of events in an isolated past" (TAR 7, 21). "Representing the "objective facts" of literary history are data of works, authors, trends, and periods" (TAR 51f). A "blind empiricism" stressed "externally determining factors" (TAR 8f.) "Source study" "dissolved the specific character of the literary work into a collection of "influences"' (TAR 8f) (a practice also disdained by Bloom, ANX 70; MAP 116).

"The protest" against "positivism" "was not long in coming" (TAR 8). The history of ideas ("Geistesgeschichte") "set an aesthetics of irrational creation in opposition to the causal explanation of history and sought the coherence of literature in the recurrence of atemporal ideas and motifs." This trend "allowed itself to be drawn into" the "literary studies of National Socialism" and was therefore replaced in Germany "after the war" with "new methods" (TAR 8).

In contrast to these past approaches, "the modern theory of literary studies" "lays emphasis on stylistic, formalist, and structural methods" (TAR 51). New attention is given to "literary sociology," notably in Marxism, and to "the work-immanent rnethod"[2] [2. The "work-immanent method" was something of a German counterpart to American "New Criticism" after World War II, but with the added impetus of disowning the cultural chauvenism of the Hitler period], notably in Formalism (TAR 9). These two directions tried 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" (TAR 10). Jauss (almost alone among our other critics except Jameson) accordingly treats the Marxist and Formalist schools as plausible groundwork to be revised and synthesized within a general hermeneutics or aesthetics.

By relating "artistic production" to "the material production and social praxis of human beings" in "the appropriation of nature," "Marxist literary theory" tends to "deny" "art" its "own history" (TAR 10; cf. TAR 75). "The orthodox theory of reflection" favours the "reduction of cultural phenomena to economic, social or class equivalents that, as the given reality, are to determine the origin of art and literature and explain them as a merely reproduced reality" (TAR 11). "The concrete multiplicity of works and genres always had to be traced back to the same factors or conceptual hypostases, such as feudalism, the rise of the bourgeois society," and "early, high, or late capitalistic modes of production" (TAR 12). Curiously, "Marxist theory" extended the "classical aesthetics" of the "irritation of nature" by "putting "reality" in the place of "nature" (TAR 11). "Bourgeois realism" functioned as "the mimetic ideal." Conversely, the "modern development of art and literature" was deemed "decadent" because "true reality" was missing."

This outlook led to the "striking contradictions" diagnosed in Lucács, who upheld "the normative value of classical art" and attempted the "canonization of Balzac for modern literature" (TAR 13). But "if one denies" "any independence to the artistic form," "how can the art of the distant past survive the annihilation of the socio-economic basis" (or infrastructure) and "still provide us aesthetic pleasure"? Lukács "helps himself along" with the "concept of the "classical" that "transcends history" and makes art live on despite being "a mere reflex of a long overcome form of social development." Here, "determinations of a timeless ideality" contravene the "dialectical materialist mediation" whereby reality determines art. The same problem arises when Lukács says that "each superstructure not only reflects reality, but actively takes a position for or against the old or the new basis""; again, "economic necessity" seems weaker than was assumed in orthodox Marxism, for instance by Engels (TAR 13f.).

Jauss opposes the "reduction of the work of art to a merely copying function" (TAR 11). For him, "literature, in the fullness of its forms, allows itself to be referred back only in part and not in any exact manner to concrete conditions of the economic process." "Literary works" absorb "historical reality" in various ways, according to their "genre" or "period" (TAR 12). "An interpretation of the conditions of the economic infrastructure is seldom to be had" "without" a."method of allegoresis" (TAR 172; cf. Jameson, PU 32f; MF 215). Such a method is "thoroughly legitimate herrneneutically when it recognizes its subjective heuristics and therefore its partiality," instead of claiming to "achieve the true" and "objective" reading" (TAR 173).

"The more rapidly changing" rate of "literary production," as compared to "the economic structure," collides with the outlook, attributed to Lucien Goldmann[3] [3. Goldmann is said to "postulate a series of 'world-views' that are class-specific, then degraded by late capitalism" and "finally reified" (TAR 14), as well as to Lukács, that "literary production remains confined to a secondary function of only allowing an already known" "reality to be once again recognized" (TAR 12, 14). Jauss observes that art can also be "formative of reality," as more recent Marxist theorizing has acknowledged: "art both expresses and forms reality that exists not next to the

work nor before the work, but precisely only in the work" (Kosik, 1967: 123) (TAR 14). The account of a “dialectical relationship between the production of the new and the reproduction of the old" prevents the "revolutionary character of art” from being “foreclosed” (TAR 12, 14). For Jauss, “the specific achievement of artistic form" is not just “mimetic,” but “dialectic as a medium capable of forming and altering perception" (TAR 16). One such alteration was brought about by Baudelaire's "style of decadence” designed to “bring to light" “hitherto unacknowledged suffering under the unnatural conditions of the contemporary society" (TAR 171).

In contrast to Marxism, “Formalism” insisted on “a rigorous foregrounding of the artistic character of literature” (TAR 16). Yet when the “result” of a work is "defined" as "the sum total of all the stylistic devices employed in it” (Sklovskij),[4] [4. Sklovskij's "formula" -- cited after Erlich (1955: 90) -- was soon “improved upon with the concept of an aesthetic ‘system’ in which each artistic device had a definite function” (TAR 195).], the "work” is "detached" “from all historical conditions.” The centrality of the “opposition between poetic and practical language” seems to "sever the link between literature” and the “praxis” of life. We risk losing sight of that “functional relationship to the nonliterary” whereby “art” is "a means of disrupting the automatization of everyday perception" (cf. pp. 133, 398).

Whereas Formalism at first “made art criticism into a rational method in conscious renunciation of historical knowledge," “history” was later comprehended as “the “dialectical self-production of new forms" (Eikhenbaum, 1965 [1927: 47) (TAR 17). Perception can be renewed by departing not just from everyday language, but also from “the givens of the genre and the preceding form of the literary series.” Yet Formalism did not go on to “place the “literary series” and the “non-literary series” into a relation" revealing the parallel between "literature and history” (TAR 18).

Jauss demurs that in both “Marxist and Formalist methods," “the reader” plays an extremely limited role.” They “conceived the literary fact within the closed circle of an aesthetics of production and representation" and neglected “the dimension of its reception and influence." “Orthodox Marxist aesthetics treats the reader" “no differently from the author" with respect to "social position" in "the structure of a represented society,” and “candidly equates the spontaneous experience of the reader with the scholarly interest of historical materialism” examining “relationships between superstructure and infrastructure in the literary work" (TAR 18f.) “The Forrnalist school needs the reader only as a perceiving subject who follows the directions in the text" by applying “the theoretical understanding of the philologist who can reflect on the artistic devices, already knowing them." Hence, both methods used their own procedures as a model for the act of reading. They “lack the reader in his genuine role" “as the addressee for whom the literary work is primarily destined”; even “writer," “critic," and “literary historian” are “at first simply readers" (TAR 19).

Jauss also scrutinizes “structuralism” in two of its more developed approaches. In the Prague school, Vodicka (1969 [1941-42) proposed to "reconstruct" the "literary norm" and “the

hierarchy of literary values of a given period"; and to “ascertain" “literary structure through the ‘concretisation’of literary works" (TAR 72).[5] [5 “By coneretization, Vodicka means the picture of the work in the consciousness of those “for whom the work is an aesthetic object" (TAR 73). lser uses the same term in a comparably phenomenological sense (p. 140)]. Here, "literary history" "arises out of the dynamic tension between work and norm." This “polarity" is to be “materialized and historically described according to the manner of its perception.”

In the Paris school, the “elitist idea of culture and art" was displaced by a "new interest in primitive art, folklore, and sub-literature" (TAR 66).[6] [6 Jauss suggests that Northrop Frye similarly wanted to see “literature as a complication of a relatively restricted and simple group of formulas that can be studied in primitive culture” (TAR 66). But Frye is more preoccupied with the archaic than the primitive.] Lévi-Strauss (1968) searched "behind the myths” to find “the closed synchronic system of a functional logic.” “Every work of art" should be "completely explicable through its function within the secondary system of reference of society; every act of speech is reduced to a combinatory element in a primary system of signs” (TAR 67). Jauss demurs that such a view opens a “gulf between structure and event, between" “system and history,” by “merging” “all meaning and individuation" “into an anonymous, subjectless system." He also echoes Starobinski's (1968) complaint that “structuralism in its strict form is applicable only to literatures that represent a “regulated play in a regulated society" where literature does not "question the given order of institutions and traditions" (TAR 71), such as the rituals in primitive cultures. “Cultic participation" is quite different from “aesthetic reflection" (AL 154).

Jauss offers his own program to meet the “challenge” of “literary history.” [7] [7 “Provocation” is the more polemical term in the title, appearing within the text only for “Marxist literary theory's” denial of a separate art history (TAR 10). The bulk of Jauss” “challenge” is grouped around “seven theses" about “how literary history can today be methodologically grounded and written anew" (TAR 20). I do not follow this seven-part format exactly, though I cover the main points.] Here, “history” is viewed in terms of “the triangle of author, work, and public," and of the "dialogical” and “process-like relationship between work, audience, and new work" (TAR 19). “The methodology of literary studies" must be “opened to an aesthetics of reception and influence if the problem of comprehending the historical sequence of literary works is to find a new solution.” Due to "the dialogical character of the literary work," “philological understanding can exist only in a perpetual confrontation with the text" and in the ensuing "reflection" and "description" as a “moment of new understanding" (TAR 21). “The history of literature is a process of aesthetic reception and production that takes place in the realization of literary texts on the part of the receptive reader, the reflective critic, and the author in his continuing productivity."

“The retrospectively established ‘actual’ connection of literary ‘facts’ captures neither the continuity in which a past work arose nor that in which the contemporary reader or historian recognizes its meaning and importance” (TAR 52). The same holds for attempts of "historicism" to “explain a work of art by the sum of its historical conditions" and to make

"literary history" "a mere imitation of the external linking of events" (TAR 51, 47). Instead, “the historical coherence of works among themselves must be seen in the interrelations of production and reception" (TAR 15).

In such a programme, “a literary work" “is not a monument that monologically reveals its timeless essence” (TAR 21). Nor is it “an object that stands by itself and offers the same view to each reader in each period," as “the prejudices of historical objectivism” imagine (TAR 20f.) The "facts” that wind up in conventional literary histories” are "merely left over from this process” -- just a “pseudo-history" (TAR 21). The work is “not a fact that could be explained as caused by a series of situational preconditions and motives." “In contrast to a political event, a literary event has no unavoidable consequences subsisting on their own that no succeeding generation can ever escape" (TAR 22). "Readers” must “again appropriate it,” or "authors" must "want to imitate, outdo, or refute it.”

In view of the “discrepancies of the various “histories” of the arts, law, econornics, politics, and so forth,” "any historical period must" "be imagined as a mixture of events which emerge at different moments of their own time" (TAR 36f.) This idea fits Siegfried Kracauer's (1963, 1969) rebuttal of the notion that "everything that happens contemporaneously is equally informed by the significance of this moment” (TAR 36). Actually, “literature that appears contemporaneously breaks down into a heterogeneous multiplicity of the non-contemporaneous,” which “coalesces again for the audience" within "the unity of a common horizon of literary expectations, memories, and anticipations that establishes their significance” (TAR 37f.)

If this process could be clearly defined, “the history of art, through the manner of its progression in time, and the study of art, through its continuous mediation of past and present art, would become a paradigm” for any “history that is to show “the development of this present" (TAR 62). “But art history can take on this function only if it overcomes the organon-principle of style, and thus liberates itself from traditionalism and its metaphysics of supra-temporal beauty." "Literary production" must be “seen as a “special history” in its own unique relationship to “general history"' (TAR 39). Hence, as noted before, Jauss favours a centrifugal focus proceeding outward from art history to history at large.

“The diachronic perspective," which Jauss says is “previously the only one practiced in literary history,” should be complemented by “arranging" “synchronic cross-sections" of “contemporaneous works in equivalent, opposing, and hierarchical structures," “so as to articulate historically the change" “in its epoch-making moments" (TAR 36). “Horizonal change in the historical process of “literary evolution" should be "established" not just through “the web of all the diachronic facts and filiations," but also through “the altered remains of the synchronic literary system" revealed in “the literary horizon of a specific historical moment” (TAR 38f.) Such a “system” contains “a limited number of recurrent functions" (TAR 83). The “relatively fixed relations" of “literature" can be viewed as “a kind of grammar or syntax': “the traditional and the uncanonized genres; modes of expression; kinds of style, and rhetorical figures”; plus

“the more variable realm of semantics: literary subjects, archetypes, symbols, and rnetaphors” (TAR 38).

The selection of “points of intersection between diachrony and synchrony” should not be “arbitrary,” but should single out the “works that articulate the process-like character of “literary evolution” in its “formative” “moments" (TAR 39). This task can rely neither on "statistics[8] [8 However, “the statistical curves of bestsellers" can "provide historical knowledge” if studied with respect to “horizonal change" (TAR 27).], nor the subjective wilfulness of the literary historian," but only on “the history of influence.” Appropriate “structural analysis, still lacking for many literary genres, could gradually lead to a synchronic cross-section in which the organization” of “genres appears not as a logical classification" (an “organon"), “but rather as the literary system of a definite historical situation" (TAR 87). This “historical systematics” “demands further cross-sections of literary production in the before and after of diachrony.” However, in his study of “identification with the hero," Jauss first “works out” the "levels” “diachronically" and “only then" “describes their functional connection synchronically" (AL 162).

For so large an enterprise, the “interpreter" needs sufficient “experience” to survey “the past horizon of old and new forms, problems, and solutions” "recognizable" "within the present horizon of the received work” (TAR 34f.) “Founding “literary evolution” on the aesthetics of reception" “opens to view the temporal depths of literary experience” as well as “the distance between the actual and the virtual significance of a literary work." “The artistic character of a work” might not be “immediately perceptible” at “its first appearance," but only after “a long process of reception to gather in that which was unexpected and unusable within the first horizon" (TAR 34f; cf. TAR 26). Such cases can “reopen access to forgotten literature,” as when “the obscure lyrics of Mallarmé and his school prepared the ground for a return to baroque poetry” (TAR 35).

The “literary history of readers" is formed by the way their ‘horizon’ changes" over time (TAR 27). “Change" can come about "through negation of familiar experiences or through raising newly articulated experiences to the level of consciousness” (TAR 25). Some "works" “at the historical moment of their appearance are not yet directed at any specific audience, but break through the familiar horizon of literary expectations so completely that an audience can only gradually develop for them” (TAR 26). Contrarily, "aesthetic distance" can disappear for later readers when "the original negativity of the work has become self-evident” -- just one more “expectation” for “the horizon of future aesthetic experience” (TAR 25). “The classical character of the so-called masterworks” is due to “this second horizon change”; "it requires a special effort” to recover “their artistic character” (TAR 25f.)

Quite against the grain of commonplace cultural adulation, the "classic" functions here as the negation of a negation and hence -- in a model that prizes negativity -- as an object of diminished functional value. Jauss opposes theoreticians who make the classical a standard for value, in his view Lukács, Gadamer, Hegel, and adherents of Lévi-Strauss (TAR 13, 30, 31, 40).[9] [9. The classicism in Lukács was already discussed. Gadarner is thought to have “taken

over from Hegel” the “concept of the classic that interprets itself”; and to “elevate the concept of the classical to the status of a prototype for all historical mediation of past with present” (TAR 30f.) In contrast, Goldmann's “ideal of ‘'coherent expression” is claimed to “betray” his “classicism,” as in the “unity of content and form” (TAR 14). The “literary structuralism” "which appeals, often with dubious justification,” to Lévi-Strauss, “still remains quite dependent on the basically classical aesthetics of representation” (TAR 39f).] The “classical" all too readily stands for "probability,” “simplicity, harmony of part and whole" and of "form and content," and so on (cf. TAR 29, 41, e.d.). For Jauss, “art" is "in no way bound to the classical function of recognition" as prescribed by the “aesthetics of mimesis” that dominated “the humanist period”, though not the “medieval" or “modern" periods (TAR 31). Moreover, that “function” is only a later imposition, since "classical art at the time of its production did not yet appear “classical” (cf. Ch. 2).

“The reconstruction of the horizon of expectations” "enables one” “to pose questions that the text gave an answer to,” and “to discover how the contemporary reader could have viewed and understood the work" (TAR 28). The dialectic of "question and answer" is accordingly a thematic concept in Jauss's work (c. g., TAR 5, 19, 29, 32, 38, 41, 44, 65, 68, 113, 117ff, 142, 185) -- matching Gadamer's (1960: 355) dictum, following Collingwood, that "to understand a text means to understand a question"' (TAR 65). “The answering character of the text” is “a rnodality of its structure,” not an "invariable value within the work itself" (TAR 69). The “author” may not have “formulated an explicit answer in his work; “the answer" may remain “indeterminate" so as to preserve the "aesthetic effectiveness" and “artistic character of the work,” as “Iser has shown" (TAR 69). During the “act of interpretive understanding"[10] [10. This “act" is in the second stage of Jauss's three-stage scheme for an experimental self-study I report later.]. the “interpreter” has to “uncover or reformulate the question," “proceeding from the answer that the text” “appears to contain” (TAR 142, 6 5, e.d.). “A past work survives not through eternal questions, nor through permanent answers, but through" the “dynamic interrelationship between question and answer, between problem and solution, which can stimulate new understanding and allow a resumption of the dialogue between present and past" (TAR 70).

This dialectic of a reader “posing a question” that the “work can answer” escapes the “platonizing dogma" that the text's “objective meaning" is “determined for once and for all” and “is at all times immediately accessible to the interpreter” (TAR 28, 32). “The coherence of question and answer in the history of an interpretation is primarily determined by categories of the enrichment of understanding," and “only secondarily by the logic of falsifiability” (TAR 185). All the same, “the historical communication of question and answer limits the mere arbitrariness of interpretation,” and “can be falsified” less by “historical errors or objective mistakes” than by “falsely posed or illegitimate questions on the part of the interpreter” (TAR 69, 185). A “question" counts as “legitimate” “when it is shown that the text" is “consistently interpretable as the meaning of this response” (TAR 185). Moreover, the “question” must not “completely abolish the answer” that a previous interpreter “found in the text to his questions.”

“Different responses" need not “falsify one another”; they may only “testify to the historically progressive concretisation of meaning in the struggle of interpretation.”

Accordingly, “literary hermeneutics" is “no longer interested today in interpreting the text as the revelation of a single truth” (TAR 147). “The understanding within the act of aesthetic perception may not be assigned to an interpretation” that “reduces the surplus of meaning of the poetic text to one of its possible utterances” (TAR 142). “A reader may” “hypostasize one among other possible significations of the poem, the relevance of which for him does not exclude the worth of others for discussion” (TAR 145). “In the horizon of aesthetic experience,” “different interpretations need not contradict one another, because literary communication opens a dialogue in which true and false can only be measured by whether a further interpretation contributes to the development of the inexhaustible meaning of the work of art" (EH 703) (cf. Jauss, 1979).

Still, control is exerted by “textual signals” “within their syntagmatic coherence as the givens of the course of reception that establish consistency"; and by “the pre-given elements of the reception” which “limit the arbitrariness of readings that are supposedly merely subjective” (TAR 144, 141). Jauss suggests that “as a regulative principle," “the aesthetic character of the text” “allows for there being a series of interpretations” “capable of being reintegrated with respect to the meaning made concrete" (TAR 148). This account is far more moderate than Barthes” (1973b) “theory of the “plural text," with its “interminable play of a free-floating intertextuality” and its “limitless arbitrary production of possibilities of meaning” (TAR 147).[11]

[11. Jauss commends Barthes for “showing what the structuralist analysis of a literary work could really achieve”; and for “rehabilitating aesthetic pleasure” (TAR 67; AL 29) (compare Note 16). Yet Barthes' method is decried for its “yawning gap of subjective arbitrariness” within “the open relation between meaning, question, and answer” and for its “naive fusing of horizons” (TAR 68, 147). In the TAR-introduction, de Man laments “Jauss's lack of interest, bordering on outright dismissal” of “the “play” of the signifier” (TAR xix).]

In this way, Jauss joins Iser in maintaining that “the psychic process in the reception of a text is, in the primary horizon of aesthetic experience, by no means only an arbitrary series of merely subjective impressions, but rather the carrying out of specific instructions in a process of directed perception, which can be comprehended according to its constitutive motivations and triggering signals, and which also can be described by text linguistics” (TAR 23). The “work” will be found to “predispose its audience to a very specific kind of reception by announcements, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics, or implicit allusions."

Within this framework, Jauss hopes to “avoid” the “pitfalls of psychologism” by "describing the reception and the influence of a work within the objectifiable system of expectations that arises for each work in the historical moment of its appearance, from a pre-understanding of the genre, from the form and themes of already familiar works, and from the opposition between poetic and practical language” (TAR 22). Whereas Wellek (1936: 179) argued that “the individual state of consciousness,” being “momentary and only personal,” cannot “be

determined by empirical means," Jauss salutes new “empirical means that had never been thought of before -- literary data that allow one to ascertain a specific disposition of the audience for each work, a disposition that precedes the psychological reaction” and “the subjective understanding of the individual reader" (TAR 22f). If the reader's “horizon of expectations can be objectified," we might then “comprehend and represent the history of literature in its unique historicity” (TAR 22). Again like Iser, Jauss conceded however that he himself does "not yet suffer from not having become an empiricist” and “has yet to provide the model for the overdue empirical research into reception” (TAR 144). Later on, he did a study of himself performing a reading, the results of which I summarize below.

Jauss is adamant that the experiences provided though literature are the only objects literary history has. “Aesthetic distance can be objectified historically along the spectrum of the audience's reactions and criticism's judgment” (TAR 25). He will admit “no objective link between work and work that is not brought about by the creating and receiving subjects of literature” (TAR 52). “Intersubjective communication separates the historicity of literature from the factual objectivity of pragmatic history." A work's “historically concrete appearance” “has its basis in the form and meaning created by the author” and “realized by his readers” "over and over.”

"The analogy” "between art history and pragmatic history” can now be defined: it “lies in the character of both the work of art and of the historical fact as an event” (TAR 53). "This difference narrows” when we “accept that diffuse events are only “understood and combined" through their "interpretation as a coherent process"; and that they “can also be interpreted differently from the later standpoint of the observer” (TAR 52). We thus arrive at a thesis latent in the theories of other critics, especially Iser: that the “classic form of historiography” is derived from “unacknowledged fictional narrative forms” and “made possible” by “the aesthetic categories of the history of style” (TAR 53) (cf. Ch. 3).

Johann Gustav Droysen (1967 [1857-63]) already worked to "expose the illusions that accompany the apparently objective narration of the traditional facts.” “The historical narrative uses the law of fiction, that even disparate elements of a story come closer and closer together for the reader, and ultimately combine in a picture of the whole” (TAR 54). “The illusion of the completed process" projects a finished chain of events, motives, and purposes" (TAR 53). “The illusion of the first beginning and the definitive end" derives from "the Aristotelian definition of the poetic fiction, which must have “a beginning” “that does not originate out of something else,” “a middle, and an end" “followed by nothing” (TAR 54). “The illusion” of the "objective picture of the past” refuses to realize that "the facts” "would be dumb without the narrator who makes them speak." The “judgment, selection, motivation, or linking of events presupposes the hindsight of the historian,” and cannot be “inherent in the original event” (TAR 5 5f.) “The flourishing historiography of the nineteenth century, which sought to disavow the artistic character of historical writing in order to gain recognition as a science, devolved upon the fictionalisation” that “history" can “tell its own story" (TAR 5 5).[12] [12. In the “historical novel,”

Sir Walter Scott developed the “narrative” with “the narrator” “completely in the background” and created “the illusion” that “the reader” is “present at the drama” and "can make his own judgments” (TAR 55). Iser's analysis of Scott contains the remark that “history can best be captured by aesthetic means” (IR 96).

The “positivist" and “objectivist” demand that “the historian should disappear before his object” was thus doomed (cf. TAR 7f.) When science was less narrowly conceived, the concept of the “horizon of expectations” could “play a role in the social sciences since Karl Mannheim" (TAR 40).[13] [13. Bleich salutes Mannheim for similar reasons (SC 25). Wellek and Warren decry Mannheimian “sociology of knowledge” for “its excessive historicism” (TL 108). The concept is also taken up by Karl R. Popper (1964), “who would anchor the scientific formation of theory in the pre-scientific experience of a lived praxis.”] Yet the arguments marshalled not only by Jauss and Iser, but by Holland, Bleich, Culler, de Man, Bloom, and Hartman, reveal that objectivism lives on, a polemical adversary and target in our own times.

The “relapse into objectivism" implied for instance in Wellek's (1936) plea for "isolating the object” (TAR 30) may have been triggered by the acute dilemma of disparate times. “The actual standards of a past could be so narrow that their use would only make poorer a work that in the history of its influence had unfolded a rich semantic potential.” The “judgment of the present would favour a canon of works that correspond to modern taste.” For Jauss, the solution is to treat the “original horizon" in "fusion" with “the horizon of the present" (TAR 290 (cf. Gadamer, 1960: 289). “The “verdict of the ages" must be viewed as “the successive unfolding of the potential for meaning that is embedded in a work and actualised in the stages of its historical reception as it discloses itself to understanding judgment, so long as this faculty achieves in a controlled fashion the ‘fusion of horizons’ in the encounter with the tradition" (TAR 30).

We might thereby “correct the mostly unrecognized norms of a classicist or modernizing understanding of art” among “interpreters who, supposedly bracketing themselves, nonetheless raise their own aesthetic preconceptions to an unacknowledged norm". (TAR 28f.) “Whoever believes that the “timelessly true” meaning of a literary work must immediately, and simply through one's mere absorption in the text, disclose itself to the interpreter as if he had a standpoint outside history and beyond all “errors” of his predecessors,” merely "conceals the involvement of the historical consciousness itself in the history of influence” (TAR 29) (cf. Gadamer, 1960: 283). “He denies “those presuppositions" "that govern his own understanding,” and can only feign an objectivity “that in truth depends on the legitimacy of the questions asked."

This “denial" is still prevalent enough to make Jauss emphasize the dynamic processes involved. “A historical fact as event -- just like a work of art -- is constituted by the range of its possible meanings and can therefore be made concrete only through the interpretation of later observers or performers" (TAR 60). A historiographer like Leopold von Ranke (1852-61), who "believed" “that the historian need only disregard his own partiality and cause his present to be

forgotten in order to capture an undistorted past” has no better "guarantee" of “truth” than do “poets and novelists” (TAR 54). “Precision” gets sacrificed to “harmonious flow,” and “the contingency of events" gets converted into a “continuity of significant moments" (TAR 58). The “presentation" “brushes aside the heterogeneity” of "historical processes” and moves toward the "culminating point” at which “all heterogeneous trends are homogenized" (TAR 57f.) “The concept of tradition” “harmonizes history" and “suppresses the contrary, the revolutionary, the unsuccessful” (TAR 63) (cf. Adorno, 1966).

To resolve such dilemmas, “the closed horizon of the classical narrative form must be surmounted," so that “historical explanation" can “keep open the possibility of further narrative statements about the same event” (TAR 600 (cf. Danto, 1965). “Paradoxically, the poetics of modern literature offers paradigms” for an "anti-literary” form of presentation -- with a limited perspective, aware of its own location, and a horizon that is left open” (TAR 60). If the “aesthetic effect is to be avoided and the imagination prevented from closing the gaps" to get a “picture of the whole,” “special preventive measures are required" that are “common to modern artistic prose” (TAR 54). Jauss points to “the modern novel,” which, "since Flaubert, has systematically dismantled the teleology of the epic story and developed new techniques in order to incorporate the open horizon of the future into the story of the past, to replace the omniscient narrator by localized perspectives, and to destroy the illusion of completeness through unexpected and unexplained details” (TAR 61).

Though Jauss does not borrow avant-garde literary techniques for his own treatises, he does seem to follow Droysen's proposals for making the “narrative" “include and reflect “our interpretation of important events,” “nd for introducing such “non-narrative forms” as “the “examining,” the “didactic,” the “discursive” TAR 59). Yet if “narrative” is already a “basic category of historical perception," then the "narrative link" is hard to eliminate (TAR 60). Moreover, aesthetic harmonizing and closing of gaps might occur in Jauss's own projects of “discovering an overarching system of relationships in the literature of a historical moment" and of making the “heterogeneous multiplicity" of “literature" “coalesce again” within “the unity of a common horizon of literary expectations" (cf. TAR 36ff).

Jauss's enterprise is thus still implicated in a literary approach to historiography -- which may raise its appeal among literary scholars nostalgic for “a coherent whole" (cf. TAR 50). Yet he is far removed from the principles of traditional art history. He does not rely on the “exemplary character” of “classical art” (TAR 46f.) He denounces any referrals to a “normative element of perfection” (TAR 50). He castigates the “substantialist misconception” that “in the history of genres the multiplicity of historical events is countered by an invariable form which, as “historical law,” subsumes every possible historical form of a genre” (TAR 61). And he follows Droysen in rejecting “the false doctrine” of the “organic development in history” implicit for instance in Herder's (1796) “natural history of art” with its “imagery of growth and old age, the cyclic completion of every culture” (TAR 54, 50).

Jauss accepts “the hermeneutic principle of partiality,” whereby the “meaningful whole can be found only through a selective taking of perspectives” (TAR 145f.) He also assents to the “hermeneutic” “hypothesis” that "the concretization of the meaning of literary works progresses historically and follows a certain “logic” that precipitates in the formation and transformation of the aesthetic canon” (TAR 147). By studying “the change of horizons," we might even be able to “distinguish absolutely between arbitrary interpretations and those available to a consensus, between those that are merely original and those that are formative of a norm” (TAR 147f.)

Ideally, “the process of reception becomes describable in the expansion of a semiotic system” operating “between the specification and the correction of a system” (TAR 23) (cf. Jauss, 1959; Stempel, 1971). The “corresponding process of the continuous establishing and altering of horizons also determines the relationship of the individual text to the succession of texts that forms the genre." “Variation and correction determine the scope, whereas alteration and reproduction determine the borders of a genre-structure. " Readers rely on such “factors” as the “familiar norms of the immanent poetics of the genre”; “the implicit relationships to familiar works of the literary-historical surroundings and the "opposition between fiction and reality, between the poetic and practical function of language, which is always available to the reflective reader during the reading as a possibility of comparison” (TAR 24).

The “act of distancing” “demanded" in “all aesthetic experience” registers the "disparity between the given horizon of expectations and the appearance of a new work” (AL 160). “The new is thus not only an aesthetic category,” concerned with “innovation, surprise, surpassing, rearrangement, or alienation,” but also a historical category,” helping to decide “which historical moments are really the ones" that make something “new in a literary phenomenon” (TAR 35). We can probe “to what degree this new element is already perceptible in the historical instant of its emergence; which distance, path or detour of understanding were required for its realization in content; and whether the moment of its full actualisation was so influential that it could alter the perspective on the old, and thereby the canonization of the literary past.”

Though Jauss allows that every “response links up with an expectation or supposed meaning” either by “fulfilment or non-fulfilment-” (TAR 69), he usually follows the Formalists (and Adorno and Iser) in attaching a higher value to non-fulfilment (cf. EjH 695). “The Formalist method would relate the series to one another and discover the evolutionary alternating relationship of functions and forms” (TAR 33, e.d.) (cf. Tynjanov, 1929). “The new work arises against the background of preceding or competing works,” so that “the dialectical production of forms" “requires no teleology," but only "innovation” (TAR 32f.)

Jauss objects here that “mere opposition or aesthetic variation does not suffice to explain the growth of literature" because "innovation" “does not alone make up artistic character” (TAR 33f.) We cannot “reduce the historical character of literature to the one-dimensional actuality of its changes,” nor “limit historical understanding to their perception” (TAR 34). We must also consider the “mediation” within “the step from the old to the new form in the interaction of work

and recipient (audience, critic, new producer)" and examine "the formal and substantive problem "that each work of art, as the horizon of the solutions" which are possible after it, poses and leaves behind." "The next work can solve formal and moral problems left behind by the last work and present new problems in turn" (TAR 32).[14] [14. One demonstration is Jauss's comparison of Valéry's *Mon Faust* with Goethe's *Faust* (TAR 10-38). "No overarching significance can be determined from shared and distinguishing features alone"; the works "only enter into dialogical relationship" if we "recognize the questions that, in Valéry's view, Goethe left behind" (TAR 113). A comparison of Rousseau and Goethe is summarized below.]

Jauss would base the "determination" of "aesthetic value" on the more general criterion" of how "the literary work" "satisfies, surpasses, disappoints, or even refutes the expectations of its first audience," or how an "audience experiences formerly successful works as outmoded and withdraws its appreciation" (TAR 25f). "Innovation" is balanced against the "return" of the "forgotten, as developed in the aesthetics of Baudelaire and Proust (cf. AL 33f, 87ff, 160f, 251f.) In the "modern period" at least, "the totalizing power of memory" can be "the ultimate authority of aesthetic production" (AL 12) (cf. Gombrich, 1960).

Nonetheless, Jauss was disposed to believe that "for progress" "in the experience of life, the most important moment is the "disappointment of expectations" "then, "we actually make contact with reality" (Popper, 1964: 102) (TAR 41). This emphasis on "the productive meaning of negative experience" extends a thesis also implied by Marxism and Formalism: that literature can be a means of human emancipation via an aesthetic renewal and alteration of perception. "The experience of reading can liberate one from adaptations, prejudices, and predicaments" in life by "compelling a new perception of things" and "broadening the limited space off social behaviour for new desires, claims, and goals."

Conversely, commercialised "entertainment art" "fulfils expectations prescribed by a ruling standard of taste": it "satisfies the desire for the reproduction of the familiarly beautiful"; "confirms familiar sentiments"; "sanctions wishful notions"; "makes unusual experiences enjoyable as '"sensations'"; and "raises moral problems, only to "solve" them in an edifying manner as predecided questions" (TAR 25; cf. Iser, IR 284; AR 46, 174, 219).

Such remarks indicate that the violation of expectations acted as a transhistorical value standard in Jauss's theorizing. He may have been motivated by his search for predispositions, which become most visible when violated. He once suggested that "the ideal cases" of "literary-historical frames of reference are works that evoke the reader's horizon of expectations, formed by a convention of genre, style, or form, only in order to destroy it step by step" (TAR 23f). He later realized he had "almost exclusively foregrounded" "the norm-breaking function" "because of his "dominant interest in the emancipatory function of art" (EH 751). He had been overanxious to separate "constitutive negativity" from the "affirmative character of mere entertainment literature" (EH 695). For a theory like Adorno's, "affirmative works of art remain a vexation," the more so since we have.an incomparably larger number" of them (AL 15f.) "The history of art cannot be reduced to the common denominator of negativity" (AL 16).

As was already argued, “classical" works “tend to lose their original negativity” as they undergo “incorporation in institutions that confer cultural sanction" and “reaffirm authoritative traditions” (AL 16). Yet “the halo of the classical, positive, and eternally ideal" “need by no means have merely affirmed" "the state of a given society when it appeared.”

Consequently, Jauss revised his earlier polarity by situating in between the two extremes of negating or “norm-breaking" and affirming or “norm-imposing," a region he called “motivating or norm-forming” (EH 751). In this new middle ground, “a whole spectrum of practical achievements” ranges from “heroic” to "didactic” art (EH 752). “The literature of courtly love” supported "a developing social norm or life-style” when it enacted an “affirmative transformation" in the name of a new “love ethic” and “contributed” to the “emancipation” of "communication between the sexes” (AL 18).**15** [15. Iser also allows medieval courtly-love literature to be both affirmative and high in quality (AR 77), but Millett rejects it on comparable grounds (SX 50f. See Note 22 to Ch. 8 and Note 15 to Ch. 18] Even art that is “devalued” by “aestheticism" and “engaged literature” can have an “exemplary" role in “the formation of identity” (EH 752). Jauss's new tolerance, like Fiedler's, reflects a concern for the “question of whether and how art today can recover its almost lost communicative function.”

The emancipatory function of literature must be estimated in view of “the fundamental ambivalence of aesthetic experience" (AL 96; cf. AL 158, 161). Art "may break the hold of the real world but in so doing, it can either bring the spectator to a free, moral identification with an exemplary action or let him remain in a state of pure curiosity” or “in manipulated collective behaviour” (AL 96). “The exemplary” further “includes two possibilities of irritation: the free, learning comprehension by example" versus “the unfree, mechanical following of a rule" (AL 110).**16** [16. Compare Barthes” “double canon” of “affirmative pleasure” (plaisir) versus the “subversive” “negative” enjoyment he called “jouissance” (TAR 29).]

The tradition has been to stress the positive aspects. For Goethe, the “beautiful appearance" “has the function of conveying the illusion of a higher reality along with what is true to nature" (AL 59). For Hegel, “man satisfies his general need to be at home in the world by producing art” and “makes" the “world" “into his own product” (AL 34). In “Baudelaire's theory of aesthetics,” anticipating “Freud's and Proust’s," a “sharpened perception of the new” “requires” a “concurrent” “rediscovery of buried experience” (AL 12). For Valéry, “the artist experiences his work as a blissful seizing of the possibilities of his own, finite world” (AL 11).

The formalists and structuralists also stressed the brighter side. For. Mukarovsky (1970 [1936]: 95), “the aesthetic function” is a “dynamic principle" of "potentially unlimited” scope: "it can accompany every human act, and every object can manifest it” (AL 115). “Because the aesthetic function" "lacks unequivocal content,” it “can take hold of the contents of other functions and give their expression the most effective form" (AL 116). "Aesthetic experience can illuminate the structure of a historical life world, its official and implied interaction patterns and legitimations, and even its latent ideology” (AL 121). Thus, "art” can be “a specific shaping" and a “humanization of reality” (AL 116) (cf. Kalivoda, 1970).

Though hoping that “art could serve as a paradigm of non-alienated labour” (AL 55), Marxist theorizing was less uniformly optimistic. For Marcuse (1968), "all aesthetic experience falls under the suspicion of being idealistically corrupted” (AL 45). The "more ideal world” of “culture detached” from “civilization" via “the rule of the commodity form" becomes a mere “escape route from an increasingly reified world. " For Adorno (1970), “taking pleasure in art” is “the precondition for the culture industry" that “serves hidden ruling interests in a cycle of manipulated need and aesthetic substitute gratification” (AL 27). On the other hand, Adorno believes art can become “the agency of a social truth before which the false appearance of the factual, the untrue and the unreconciled in society's actual condition must reveal itself”; hence, art "makes clear that “the world itself must change" (AL 15). “Bloch saw the disclosing quality of aesthetic experience as a utopian harbinger” able to “give linguistic expression to something hoped for” (AL 9). Adorno concurred by relating the “negativity" of such an “experience" to “the utopian figure of art" and to the "measuring" of "the gulf between praxis and happiness" (AL 15).

This guarded optimism is found in Jauss's method as well. He strives to maintain a view of the “entire range” of “possibilities for the social effectiveness of art" in between “the extremes of the norm-breaking and the norm-fulfilling functions" (AL 154). On the reader's side, “aesthetic experience” “offers through the function of discovery the pleasure of a fulfilled present” (AL 10). “It perfects the imperfect world not merely by projecting future experience but also by preserving past experience which would continue unrecovered" if it were not “transfigured and monumentalised” by “the luminosity” of “poetry and art.” Hence, the “experience is effective both in utopian foreshadowing and in retrospective recognition.” On the author's side, artistic “production” can “give perfect expression to all the things that the demands and conventions of daily existence would otherwise cause to remain mute, suppressed, or unrecognized.” “The poet who transforms his experience into literature also finds a liberation of his mind which his addressee can share.” Moreover, “a revelatory power" is attained for “showing the reader in exemplary fashion that human passion is a distinctive characteristic of individuality” -- a power beyond “biology,” “empirical psychology," or “psychoanalysis” (cf. Plessner, 1971) (AL 8).

In recent times, “the growing alienation of social existence” imposed another “task" upon "aesthetic experience” "which had never previously been set for it in the history of the arts" (AL 92). A need arose “to counter the shrunk experience and subservient language of the culture industry by the language-critical and creative function of aesthetic perception." "In view of the pluralism of social roles and scientific perspectives, such perception was also to preserve the experience of the world others have and thus to safeguard a common horizon which, the cosmological whole being gone, art can most readily sustain.”

This task re-emphasizes “the social 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" (TAR 45, e.d.). This “function” is “a genuine possibility only where the literary experience of the reader enters into the horizon of expectations of his lived praxis,

preforms his understanding of the world," and “has an effect on his social behaviour" (TAR 39). Indeed, the sociological concept of role” has itself “been shaped by the history of aesthetics” (AL 134; cf. AL 137, 165; Plessner, 1960). "The doubleness of the public and the private individual” is an “aesthetic paradigm” (AL 137). “The threshold between social and aesthetic role behaviour would always be crossed when the implicitly adopted role distance" “is made explicit" in “the aesthetic attitude” that “frees" a person from “the seriousness and motivational pressures of daily roles" (AL 138). Perhaps "the latitude of interpretation that becomes available to man through the self-estrangement of role enactment" might “make up for the inevitability of predetermined behaviour" (AL 138).

Jauss feels that the pleasure or enjoyment in aesthetic experience has received insufficient consideration. Adorno mistrusted “pleasure" as a “bourgeois reaction” to “the intellectualisation of art” and believed art could be “autonomous only where it rids itself of taste and its pleasures" (AL 27, 21). So he favoured an “ascetic experience of art" such as befits the works of Samuel Beckett or Philippe Sollers (AL 27f, 87).

Jauss replies that “in all its uses, literary communication retains the character of an aesthetic experience” only if “enjoyment” is not “sacrificed” (AL 36). He stipulates, however, that "neither mere absorption in an emotion nor the wholly detached reflection about it, but only the to-and-fro movement, the ever renewed disengagement of the self from a fictional experience” “makes up the distinctive pleasure" in “aesthetic identification” (AL 160). “All aesthetic experience, including such primary levels as admiration or pity, demands an act of distancing” “which never breaks its connection with the offer of emotional identification." “The avant-gardism of modern écriture" (e.g., Sollers), which engages in “continual reflection about narrative functions," “can expect no more from the mocked reader than a theoretical and philological interest in a reference-less language game” (AL 87). It "surrenders the cognitive and communicative efficacy of aesthesis along with the aesthetic pleasure it denies” (cf. Wellershoff, 1976). As we see, modernism is accepted here only as far as basic artistic functions are preserved.

Jauss identifies “three” “fundamental categories of the attitude of aesthetic enjoyment” corresponding to "three concepts of aesthetic tradition” since Aristotle (AL 34). "Three functions" are listed: "for the producing consciousness, in the production of world as its own work (poiesis); for the receiving consciousness, in the seizing of the possibility of renewing one's perception of outer and inner reality (aesthesis)"; and "in the assent to a judgment demanded by the work, or in the identification” with "norms of action" ('catharsis”) (AL 35). These three form “a nexus of independent functions" in a "reciprocal relation of results." “Catharsis” is not merely the "release" of “aroused passions” (Aristotelian sense), but “the fundamental communicative aesthetic experience,” and “corresponds" both to “the practical enjoyment of the arts” whose “social functions" include “conveying, inaugurating, and justifying norms of action”; and to "the ideal object of all autonomous art [17] [17. The “autonomy” of art broadly designates not just freedom from “everyday reality,” but the “break with the irritation of

nature” and the “detachment from social functions” (AL 52, 179)]. which is to free the viewer from the practical interest and entanglements of his everyday reality” (AL 23, 35). Hence, catharsis is also the function in which “subjective opens up toward intersubjective experience” (AL 35).

Jauss also has a scheme for describing "identification" on five "levels" of response to the “hero.” This response may be: “associative” when the audience “assumes a role in the closed, imaginary world of a play action”; "admiring" when the “model” has a “perfection” beyond “tragic or comic"; "Sympathetic," when the audience “projects itself into an alien self” and "eliminates" “distance" in favour of “solidarity with the suffering hero"; “cathartic, " when the audience is “freed” "from the real interests and entanglements of its world" and finds "liberation through tragic emotion or comic relief”; and “ironic" when the “identification” is offered to the audience “only to be subsequently refused" by "the destruction of illusion" (AL 164, 167, 172, 177, 181f.)**18** [18. Note the different sense of “cathartic” here. Apparently, the rule that “all aesthetic experience" “demands an act of distancing” is amended; "pity," “sympathetic identification,” and the “comic of the grotesque” are said to “eliminate" or "annul" “distance" (AL 160, 157, 172, 163).]

Frye too used the ratio between audience and hero for a framework of classification (Ch. 5). There, the hero is simply superior, equal, or inferior to other people, including the audience. In Jauss's scheme of responses, the audience need not perform such comparisons. We might feel admiration, association or sympathy with characters who seem far above or below ourselves. Moreover, Jauss's responses differ from Frye's in not purporting to separate “tragic" from "comic." Hence, Jauss's scheme is more flexible and detailed than Frye's and seems better adapted to the mixing of genre and to the variability of individual response.

Jauss conducted an “experiment" on himself to explore how "the three moments of understanding,” "interpretation," and “application” might be "described phenomenologically as three successive readings” of the same text (TAR 139F), though these three are not systematically related to his the triad of poiesis, aesthesis, and catharsis. **19** [19. Jauss says this “triad” is "the precondition for the hermeneutic” one (letter to me, October 1984). He “situates all five identification patterns in the domain of catharsis," which seems odd if one pattern is called “cathartic.”]

"Poiesis” would be less in focus here, being associated with “the producing consciousness" (AL 35). If “aesthesis” is "perception" “able to rejuvenate cognitive vision or visual recognition” (TAR 142), it should go mainly in the first stage ('understanding"). The broad relation of “catharsis" to “social functions" and “norms of action" (AL 35) would best fit the third stage ('application") that can “disclose a possible significance for the contemporary situation” (TAR 143).

This three-stage model -- Jauss considers it "one of the most exact applications of his theory" (interview, August 1984) -- indicates how “the poetic text can be disclosed in its aesthetic function" “when the poetic structures that are read out of the finished aesthetic object

as its characteristics, are retranslated out of the objectification of the description, back into the process of the experience of the text" (TAR 140f.) This “process-like effect” cannot be “directly deduced from a description" of the “final structure" of the text as “artefact" along the lines of “traditional stylistics,” “linguistic poetics, and “text analysis" (TAR 140).

However, Jauss's account of how “the reader” “takes part in the genesis of the aesthetic object” (TAR 141) is still a scholarly reconstruction presupposing a fairly advanced stage of appreciation. The moment when the text is only “the point of departure for its aesthetic effect” (TAR 141) is necessarily revised by the scholar's attempt to articulate it in retrospect. Jauss produces a miniature history (Culler would say a “story of reading") which, like history in general, devolves upon the conventions of fictional narrative. Introspection is his only channel for relating his narrative to some empirical record of his actual activities of processing when he read the poem.

Jauss “goes further and in another direction than Riffaterre" (TAR 141). The latter's "model for the reception of a poem presupposes the ideal reader ('super-reader’)” who commands all “literary historical knowledge available” and can "consciously register every aesthetic impression and refer it back to the text's structure of effect" (TAR 144). Jauss “escapes this dilemma” by dividing himself into different people. In the first stage, he assumes the role of “a reader with the educational horizon of our contemporary present" -- someone “experienced” with “lyrics" but able to “initially suspend" “literary historical or linguistic competence." “Beside this" "reader" Jauss “places a commentator with scholarly competence, who deepens aesthetic impressions” of the "reader” engaged in "pleasure, and who refers back to the text's structure of effect as much as possible." In the second stage, we are back to just one “reader," and in the third, Jauss personally steps into the foreground.

Jauss grants that his “three stages” are not “normally" “distinguished" in “philological commentary” and “textual analysis,” and that the “distinction between” them “must be fabricated to a certain degree” (TAR 139f.) But they follow the traditional “triadic unity of the hermeneutic process” envisioned for theology and jurisprudence and recently “brought back to light" by Jauss's teacher Gadamer, Jauss also sees a correspondence to “the three horizons of relevance": “thematic, interpretive, and motivational," which, “according to Alfred Schütz" (1971), “determine the constitution of the subjective experience of the life-world” (TAR 143) -- a further link between aesthetics and sociology.

From a more practical standpoint, “repeated readings” are “often" needed to make "the horizon of expectations of the first reading" become “visible in its shaped coherence and its fullness of detail,” especially when dealing "with historically distant texts,” “hermetic lyrics,” or “modern poems” (TAR 141f, 148). This argument doesn't say why we need exactly three readings; the number was probably picked because of the older “triadic unity" just cited. In at least some particulars, the materials Jauss includes must reflect a larger number, since he “already knew and valued the poem for a long time,” although he claims “an unknown poem would not have materially changed the experiment” (letter to me).

Jauss implies that the three readings occur in an operational sequence, whether or not any real-time boundaries can be demarcated. In the first stage, the process of “understanding the text as an answer to an implicit question" (cf. p. 364f) “can for the time being remain suspended," so that “the reader” can “experience language in its power, and thereby, the world in its fullness of significance" (TAR 142). Here, the reader “performs the score[20] [20 German “Partitur” is a musical score, equated here with the literary text to stress the performative aspect of reading. Holland's “promptuary” is even more emphatic (Note 17 to Ch. 10)] of the text” “verse after verse” and moves “toward the ending in a perceptual act of anticipation" (TAR 145). He or she "becomes aware of the fulfilled form of the poem, but not yet of its fulfilled significance.”

In the "second reading," “the reader will seek to establish the still unfulfilled significance retrospectively" in "a return from the end to the beginning, from the whole to the particular.” "What the reader received in the progressive horizon of aesthetic perception can be articulated as a theme in the retrospective horizon of interpretation” (TAR 143). Here, "understanding"' the text "as an answer can only concretise significances that appeared or could have appeared possible to the interpreter within the horizon of his preceding reading” (TAR 142). This proviso helps limit the range of meanings; and any initial misunderstandings are disregarded.

Finally, “the third" “reading" concerns "the historical horizon” that “conditioned the genesis and effect of the work and that once again delirnits the present reader's interpretation” (TAR 146). “This third step” “is the one most familiar to historical-philological hermeneutics” seeking to “privilege historical understanding" over "aesthetic appreciation." But for Jauss, “the aesthetic character of texts” is what “makes possible the historical understanding of art across the distance in time in the first place.” In exchange, “the historicist-reconstructive reading” "prevents the text from being naively assimilated to the prejudices and expectations of meaning of the present', and “allows the poetic text to be seen in its alterity, " its "otherness. “One can “use literary communication with the past to measure and to broaden the horizon of one's own experience" (TAR 147).

Jauss's treatment of the poem is explicated in three stages, each purporting to cover one “reading” of the text (TAR 149-85). The first reading is presented with two typographical styles, one for the "historical reader of the present,” and one for the “scholarly” “commentator” looking over his shoulder (TAR 144, 150, 156). In this stage, Jauss does not report any responses in the first person, but only those which “the reader" or “one” experiences (e.g., TAR 152ff, 156, 158). The “author” is conspicuously absent too. Throughout the first and second readings, “Baudelaire" enters as the author of the poem only twice (TAR 164, 167), though some mention is made of his career and his other works (TAR 157, 162, 166, 168). More often, Jauss infers a “lyric I"[21] [21 In view of the psychoanalytic reading we'll get to in a moment, the coincidence of “I” and “ego” in German “Ich” may be of interest. I use “ego” here where I feel it's appropriate.] from the text (notably from first person pronouns), e.g., as the one who "describes his state of mind” and tries “to rebuild the collapsed world within the imaginary”

(TAR 156, 165). The text also appears as agent, e.g., when “the poem” "announces itself,” “the title” "discloses the horizon,” or “the lyric structure confirms” (TAR 152, 163).

The hypothetical reader is often puzzled by the poem when his “expectations” are “not fulfilled” (TAR 156, 157, 159). He is “burdened” with an “enigma” or has to “step across a threshold into the unreal and the uncanny" (TAR 160, 156). He “expresses" his “wonder" in “questions": “will this movement come to an end?”; "will the “I” perhaps arrive at itself?"; “who can speak in such a manner, and with what authority?” (TAR 155, 159). He is able to notice style, both generally in terms of "high lyrical tones" or a “tone of definitional formality,” and specifically in terms of formal features, such as a "repeating vowel,” the "rhythm” of a "line,” or a “typographical signal” like a "dash” (TAR 158, 151, 155, 159).

Meanwhile, "the scholarly analyst adds that" our reader is aware of such subtle effects as “parallel line openings” and a “distant but still audible internal rhyme” (TAR 156f.) The analyst further comments in his own right on a variety of “phonetic," “morphological,” “syntactic," and “semantic” issues, including “subtle word meanings" and such “technical details of prosody" as "onomatopoeia" and the "Alexandrine” (TAR 150ff, 154f, 159ff). He also appreciates the "lyric consistency” in which “everything works together," and reminds how “in the medium of poetry the everyday and the occasional can take on a new and deeper significance, or recover an older, forgotten meaning” (TAR 151f.) And he decides what is “beautiful, “ be it “disorder, " "regularity, “ "monotony, " or "withered roses” (TAR 154, 158f.)[22] [22 “Beauty” is detected in the scene where the Sphinx sings at sunset (TAR 169). But we should recall Gautier's premonition that “the beautiful may no longer owe anything to nature”; and “Baudelaire's definition of beauty via an indeterminacy that leaves free play to “conjecture" (TAR 173, 161). Jauss's Freudian reading (below) brings to mind the fact that “the communicative function of aesthetic experience” is “missing in Freud's theory,” though Jauss thinks (and I don't) that it “can easily be supplemented on the intersubjective side" (AL 34). See Note 16 to Ch. 8.]

The second reading is managed by just one “reader,” still in a dialogue with “the lyric I” (e.g. TAR 162ff). "The conjectures and questions left open by the first reading” now “allow themselves to be brought formally and thematically into a certain common denominator” (TAR 161). “An overarching motivation” and a “latent principle of unity” offset “lyric movement,” which appears “manifestly fragmentary” or occurs in “an asymmetrical unfolding and retraction” (TAR 161f.) A classic Formalist or New Critical move is performed when “the formal discovery coincides with the thematic one”: “the asymmetrical development of the rhythmic movement” “being cut off "coincides with the fragmented continuity of an experience of self become ceaseless” (TAR 165).

The “psychiatry of anxiety-psychoses” is brought in to interpret the "anxiety” “described” in the “poem': "the collapse of the primordial situation, that is, the construction of the world from out of the “ego'-body center” (TAR 166). Baudelaire's general use of the "personifying allegory” is said to “make visible the overpowering of the self through the alien,” or “the ego through the id” (TAR 168). However, we are reassured that “the poem transcends its psychopathological

substratum," just as "aesthetic sublimation" "always" succeeds in "mastering anxiety" "in its literary representation" (TAR 167). This concession reminds us of the approach propounded by Holland " who is however "oriented more toward the psychic disposition of the reader and the forms of his fantasies" than toward "the communicative achievement and the interaction patterns of aesthetic experience" (AL 158; cf. AL 163).

In the third reading, Jauss finally steps forward with "my opinion" and "my interpretation" (TAR 179, 184). The author also comes to the fore: Baudelaire is mentioned by name on every page (TAR 170-184), and the question is raised, "how might the author himself have understood his poem?" (TAR 170). Jauss now explores "which expectations on the part of its contemporary readers," including ones related to some "literary tradition" or some "historical and social situation," the poem can "have fulfilled or denied." He sorts out "the meaning given to it by the first reception" versus those "made concrete" in "later history." This "brings into view the temporal distance that was leaped over in the first and second" "readings" and makes an "explicit separation of past and present."

Jauss adduces Théophile Gautier's "famous forward to the 1868 edition *of Fleurs du mal*" as a "first appreciation of the work" (TAR 170f.) This "eyewitness" "recognized more clearly than other contemporaries just what kind of horizonal change had unexpectedly been introduced" (TAR 171). Gautier's "avant-garde" status (TAR 174), though it empowered him to see a norm-creating event, also made him a non-representative reader. We might feel uneasy when his "interpretation" is said to "already specify everything that the ideological research of our time might know how to investigate," including "social expectations and illusions" and "material conditions of the life-world" (TAR 172). From this perspective, "Baudelaire's intention" was that his "cycle of poems" be "understood" as "a critique of the present age, of the ideology and the morality of appearances of the society of the Second Empire." Yet a method concerned with first responses should keep in mind that the "thoroughly offended" "contemporary reader" who raised a "public uproar" (TAR 172, 174) can hardly have grasped this intent.

Whereas Jauss seems to trust Gautier's judgment by virtue of its progressive anticipation of later norms, scepticism greets several other witnesses to the poem's reception, ranging from "a trend-setting Figaro critic" of 1857 though Walter Benjamin down to the then "most recent" scholar Laurent Jenny (1976) (TAR 171, 179f, 183ff). Jauss disagrees with their interpretations in part, even when, as with Benjamin, he shows an overall sympathy.**23** [23 Benjamin is praised for "recognizing the "modern allegorist" in Baudelaire," but elsewhere blamed for his "violent attempt to bring dialectical materialism to bear on the *Fleurs du mal*" (TAR 179f; AL 82f.)] We get the impression that these witnesses may be unreliable, as when Jauss "must doubt whether" a critic's "initial grasp of the poem," "presupposing" "the classicist harmony of form and content," "could withstand a historical critique" (TAR 182). Of course, Jauss owes it to his own historical hindsight that he can doubt his "predecessors" and pose "questions left unposed" by them (cf. TAR 185).

To some degree, historical understanding offers the benefit of both including and transcending one's predecessors. When Jauss prefers the untypical Gautier over more typical critics of the same period, simple hindsight helps decide whose opinion to accept. But Jauss is also applying his own innovative theoretical program that set certain priorities as he developed it. “The Formalist and Marxist schools” were his "first point of orientation"; “later, it was Adorno and Gadamer” (letter to me; cf. EH 26ff). He therefore began with a strong commitment to innovation and emancipation, as we have seen, and subsequently attenuated it, though without granting fully equal merit to affirmative literature.

“The verdict of the ages” about particular works of art is thus only one guideline within his retrospective summation, alongside the insights made available by theories which past sources couldn't have consulted. “Petrarch did not yet have at his command aesthetic perception as a world-appropriating understanding” (AL 77). Gautier made a “groping attempt to describe something for which the theory of the unconscious was not yet available" (TAR 174). Even a recent critic like Judd Hubert (1953) “did not yet have the hermeneutic key of the allegorical method at his disposal” and tried to apply “a universal code of symbolic meanings” (TAR 180f.) Or, an adherent of “linguistic poetics" like Kari Blüher (1975) produced an “interpretation” in which “the singular meaning and individual shape of the poem” got “lost” (TAR 181).

The problem here is that past theories or concepts Jauss does not share --timeless truth, organic growth, harmony of form and content, art for art sake, and so on -- were historically real enough to influence the development of art for a time. The "classicism” Jauss sees as a potential impediment to progress, individuality, and perceptual renewal, dominated various periods in European literature and artistic theory. Just as we may now fail to experience the original impact of the “classicalised” work, we may discount the vitalizing effect of classicism in the past, as when the French stage had to move beyond the confines of comrnedia dell'arte (cf. AL 16, 180).

Like critics, authors may not seem to us properly aware of what the issues were. Jauss's method, seeking more leeway for the reader, does not bind the text to authorial data as much as most historical approaches. For him, “the validity of texts does not derive from the author's authority” (AL 36). “The author cannot tie the reception to the intention with which he produced the work"; the latter “unfolds a plenitude of meaning which far transcends the horizon of its creation” (AL 35). “In all aesthetic experience, there is a gap between genesis and effect which even the creative artist cannot bridge” (AL 115). “The activity of the observer who concretizes the significance of the finished work neither directly continues nor presupposes the experience that the artist gained in the course of his work.”

Authors are, of course, also readers of other authors, and Jauss's question/answer model capitalizes on this factor. In one study he recommended to my attention, he traces the function of Goethe's *Werther* as an “answer” to Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloise* (EH 627). In this act of "productive reception,” as “often happens under the pressure of the ‘anxiety of influence,’”

[24 The English phrase “anxiety of influence" appears in the German text to signal the association with Bloom, whose categories are deemed “better” than "organic” metaphors” (AL 133). “Tessera” is Jauss's favorite ratio (TAR 114, 122; EH 514). But he suggests that “the intuitive results of antithetical criticism” need to he “subject to hermeneutic control” (TAR 136)], “imitation and continuation, renewal and revision of the basic pattern” occur all at once.

Rousseau had “diagnosed a division between natural and bourgeois existence” and “reversed the traditional relation between fiction and reality" (EH 619, 600). “The horizon of expectations” he “left behind” was “transcended” when Goethe's work presented “an altered relation to nature" and "retreated into the inferiority of the feeling self” (EH 626, 621, 638). Yet Goethe also “fulfilled Rousseau's postulate that the task of literature” should be “to unmask the illusions of prevailing society and to prepare the way for authentic experience and realization of the self” (EH 630). Goethe "actually” “performed the reversal of the traditional relation of fiction and self-realization,” an act Rousseau only “announced." But neither novel managed a “dialectic resolution of the antinomies of natural and social existence, of sentiment and reason, self-sufficiency and morality" (EH 638)-a tall order for any work.

“For both Rousseau's and Goethe's novels, very rich materials have already been collected and published, but not interpreted in terms of the horizonal change between French Enlightenment and German Idealism,” one that affected both “literary and social experience" (EH 588, 629). Being unable to cover everything, Jauss proceeds by a “selective expansion of context” (EH 589, 614). He brings in a number of literary sources, both for Rousseau's text (Petrarch, Plutarch, La Fayette, Richardson, pastoral novel) and Goethe's (Homer, Goldsmith, Klopstock, Lessing) (EH 590-95, 615-18). Most of these are fairly plainly alluded to by the novels themselves, though a “secret model” may exert its” influence, as in the relation between these same two novels (EH 623, 625, 627). “All direct testimony” on Goethe's part about his use of Rousseau “conceals more than it reveals" (EH 623).

A variety of readers” reactions are also documented, but the picture is again complicated by the extent to which the novels were not received as Jauss thinks they should have been.[25] [25 Even Rousseau is judged mistaken about his own source, the myth of Abelard and Heloisa (EH 590).] The responses of the “men of letters” to Rousseau's book “demonstrate a scandalous misunderstanding” (EH 587). Undaunted by the “applause of general public,” “official criticism" “rejected” the book and “completely missed" its “dual utopian and critical function” (EH 622 601). Goethe's book was “trivialized” “into a sentimental love story" by the public, and assailed by critics who demanded “moral edification" for having “omitted any moral comment" (EH 602, 630f.)[26] [26. The scandal aroused by Madame Bovary was similarly stirred because its “impersonal narration” created an “alienating uncertainty of judgment” that could “turn a predecided question of public morals back into an open problem” (TAR 42ff).] Only a small group of readers met the expectation” of a “self-reliant reader” freed from the “tutelage of the Enlightenment” (EH 632). I feel uneasy about a history that casts naive readers mainly as perpetrators of inadequate readings.

In hindsight, Jauss finds a theme few eighteenth-century readers could have imagined. Rousseau's thesis that “the state of society” is a human "product" that makes them “misconstrue their true nature," implies a “concept” he didn't define as such, namely “alienation” (EH 607). Goethe went “far beyond Rousseau's critique of civilization" and “to an astonishingly farsighted degree beyond the horizon of expectations of his contemporaries” (EH 638). He “saw in the division of labour the basic principle of the nascent bourgeois economy and denounced it as the true evil of alienated existence.” Jauss was perhaps aided in finding this idea by Ulrich Plenzdorf’s recent critical adaptation of *Werther* for the East German stage (cf. EH 642, 806-11).

Evidently, the “historical reception" Jauss judges "indispensable for the understanding of literature from the distant past" (TAR 28) is prodigiously dynamic. Not only must the critics continually rewrite history as time passes; their own intervention becomes part of that history and calls for a fresh estimate. The "open horizon of meaning” of “the work of art” “becomes apparent in the never-ending process of interpretation” (TAR 63). In this sense (a different one from the Yale-school's method), literature and criticism merge and blend within a complex totality of production and reception. Intertextuality asserts itself and erases the borders of the text-not as a “historical-sequential” "event,” but as the “fact” to which it had been “reduced" by “positivistic literary theory” (TAR 32).

The wealth of material Jauss adduces in his historical readings indicates the ambitious size of the tasks he envisions for literary history. Problems of selectivity and scope become much more acute here than in critical theories which make no promise of historical depth or dialectical synthesis. In principle, expectations are likely to be less specific and more diffuse than textual occurrences, so that the “horizon” would always be far wider than the text itself.

“For a cross-sectional analysis of the literary horizon of expectations in 1857,” for instance, “700 lyric pieces” were “collected, classified, and interpreted as representations of communicative patterns" (AL 270), though no one piece could be read as thoroughly as in the three-stage Baudelaire explication. Moreover, "sociological theory” (e.g. Schütz & Luckmann, 1975) was consulted to expound “the social history of the family" (AL 287, 284). This combined mass of evidence showed how the “interaction pattern" within this “subuniverse” “idealizes norms and values of bourgeois life" as “naturally given," while “the reality of working for a livelihood” is “ignored” (AL 289f.) The various poems range from “legitimation” over to “denunciation of social conditions" (AL 280f.)

This range matches the “fundamental ambivalence” we found Jauss admitting for aesthetic experience in general (AL 96). In this set of materials, “detemporalisation and idealisation” “increase” the “suggestiveness” of the “patterns” of such "experience” and “poetically legitimate their norm-creating or norm-sustaining function” (AL 283). “But the semblance of timeless validity” also allow them “to serve as means of ideological obfuscation. “ The Rousseau-Goethe demonstration suggests that obfuscation is quite common, so that criticism needs to counteract it.

Criticism also has to contend with “those in authority,” who are “interested in making” art's “powers of seduction and transformation serve their ends" (AL 13). “Aesthetic experience is always and necessarily suspected of refractoriness” (AL 4). “The uncontrollable effects of art” "become the target of polemics carried on in the name of religious authority, social morality, or practical reason” (AL 97). "The claim of the arts to autonomy” “provoked the opposition of Christian and social authorities, and even of an enlightened morality" (AL 39). Still, as Jurij Lotman (1972) remarks, “art” can “always rise again and outlive its oppressors" (AL 13).

Despite the flood of materials, certain kinds of historical evidence may be unobtainable. Jauss concedes that “the forms" of “aesthetic experience” are “less amply documented in historical sources" than “other functions of everyday life” (AL 3). Similarly, “documents detailing the specific sensory perception of past periods" are "usually lacking” (AL 64). In the social sphere, a prominent theme such as “paternal authority” might “normally go unmentioned" or be “tacitly passed over” (AL 272, 28 5). De Man's introduction to TAR even claims that "the historical consciousness of a given period can never exist as a set of openly stated or recorded propositions”; and that the “horizon of expectations brought to a work of art is never available in objective or even objectifiable form, neither to its author nor to its contemporaries or later recipients" (TAR xis. However, de Man is plainly speaking for himself, not for Jauss, whose efforts to “objectify" the background we examined above.

Much remains to be done.[27] [27.Jauss points out to me in a letter that this gallery of failings was “addressed to traditional philology in Germany," which is "interested neither in hermeneutics nor aesthetics.” He says “the New Critics" created a better situation in the United States.] Jauss “regards as necessary the destruction of literary history in its old monographic or “epic” tradition, in order to arouse a new interest in the history and historicity of literature” (TAR 71). Until recently, "no theory of understanding has been developed for texts of aesthetic character” (TAR 140). “Aesthetic appreciation," “identification,” and “role concept” have "hardly been considered” (TAR 146; AL 158, 138). “Analysis of the dialectic of question and answer” that forms literary tradition "has scarcely even begun” (TAR 70). “Cross-sectional analyses” have “not yet been attempted” (TAR 38). “For centuries no attempt has been undertaken to bring the totality of literary genres of a period into a system of contemporary phenomena” (TAR 95). “The social function of literary genres" has been "ignored in medieval scholarship" (TAR 99). And so forth.

Thus it is that Jauss’s project of looking back to history looks still more emphatically forward. Properly "reconstructed," “the horizon of expectations of a work allows one to determine its artistic character by the kind and degree of influence on a presupposed audience” (TAR 25). But this reconstruction waits on the enormous research it requires. The effort will be rewarded to the degree that “the past belongs" “to our suffering present" (letter to me). Paradoxically, the old can be itself again only when it becomes new for us.

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