Chapter: 3
Jauss’ Reception Theory

Introduction:

This chapter is an attempt to study the reception theory thoroughly and by various perspectives. The chapter deals with the background i.e. reader response criticism, Konstanz school of criticism, Hans Robert Jauss, reception theory and various concepts related to the theory. The attempt also is made to investigate the reception theory of Jauss into the light of different perspectives.

Reader Response Criticism:

Reader response criticism is a group of critics and philosopher in modern literary criticism who tries to know and understand the literature through reader’s perspective. It insists the role of reader in understanding, creating the meaning and experience of a text. Their focus is on the reader as an individual and a reader belongs to particular categories, such as gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, class, age etc. and their response to the literary work. Reader response criticism aims to explain the diversity and divergence of the readers and their response to literary work. It also aims to study how the audiences or readers response to literary work. If you admire the creator/ the author of the text without much thought about the spectator, you are classists, but if you believe that there is no beauty without a beholder, you are a reader response theorist. (N Krishnaswami, 64)
The theorist of Reader Response Criticism considers reader as an active agent in the meaning creation of the text; he/she completes the text and brings it to the real existence. They view literature as performing art, where every reader performs a text-related performance. Reader Response Critics do not agree with new critics who deny the readers' role in recreating the literary work and focus only on text as complete and objective, fixed text. They also reject the formalist view that necessarily highlights only form of a text as an active element of meaning creation.

The critics of this school consider reader as a quite important as the writer of the text and text is not pure or neutral as formalists think, because every work is created or read differently. Reader response criticism emphasizes on the construction of a text and originates in the branch of philosophy called phenomenology which deals with the understanding of how things appear. The phenomenological idea of knowledge is that, reality is to be found not in the external world itself, but rather in the mental perception of externals. The actual knowledge is ones collective and personal understanding of the world and his conclusions about it. The theorist of reader response criticism holds that a reader is necessarily in relation to text and author who constitutes the literary work. The work in other words, is not fully perceived until readers make a transaction with it by assimilating and actualizing it in the light of their own knowledge and experience. (Joseph Chandra, 90)

Reader response criticism is really a collective term used to describe a number of critical theories that have emerged since 1960’s all of which focus on the response of the reader to the text rather than the
text itself as the source of meaning in a literary work. In reader response criticism a text is viewed as a process that goes on in the mind of the reader rather than as a stable entity with a single “correct meaning”. In this sense the reader actually participates in creating the text. Regardless of their particular perspectives, all reader response critics agree that since, in varying degrees, the individual reader creates the meaning of a text. Questioning prominent to the studies of reader response theorist is: what are the specific factors that influence the reader’s response? What meaning, if any, is inherent in the text? What power does the author or the text have in shaping the responses of the reader? (Manoharlal Shah, 171)

This school of criticism emerged in 1960s and 70s in America and Germany. Norman Holland, Stanley fish, Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss are some major pioneers of the school. Louise Rosenblatt is also regarded as first pioneer of this school, her Literature as Exploration and 1938 and an essay Towards a Transactional Theory of Reading gives some aspects of Reader-Response Theory.

Stanley Fish’s critical work Surprised by Sin (1967) is considered as true beginning of contemporary reader response criticism. In his work he tries to answer some questions to reader oriented theories, who is the reader, types of reader, the standards of response of reader to the literary work and the standards of true judgment? He coins the term interpretative community and puts multiple opinions in the direction. The notion of interpretative community institutionalizes the reader in the form of a group. According to Fish, interpretative communities are made
up of those who share interpretative strategies and he further argues that there is more stability in meaning if readers belong to the same interpretative community. (N. Krishnaswami, 67) He states that, no reading; however outlandish it may appear is inherently an impossible one.

Wolfgang Iser is German scholar who contributes the school importantly. He coins the term like implied reader and actual reader and makes distinction between them. His important works are the implied reader (1974) and the act of reading (1978). Iser tries to show how texts set up certain requirement for the reader. According to him, the words on the pages (the text) are but one half of the perpetual dynamic; the text is an object without perceiving subject and the reader is guided to fill in the gaps. Iser’s notion of reading is gap filling and gap filling is affected by the reader movement through the text. In Iser’s view, reading is a dynamic tension between the readers’ expectations and the schematic instruction of the text for meaning production. (N. Krishnaswami, 68) Iser’s actual reader do not participates in the process of gap filling but implied reader is an active reader who is also invited by the author to fill the gap and create the meaning of the text. Literary competency is a notion that reader response theorist use. It dents that a reader should deal with certain / different ungrammaticalities to understand and disclose the higher level meaning of a text.

Hans Robert Jauss, an eminent theorist of 20th century has given new direction to the Reader Response Criticism through his Reception aesthetic. His “Towards an Aesthetic of Reception” (1982) is a
compromise between Formalism which neglected History and Socialism which marginalized the text. Formalism is literary theory which developed in Russia in the early 1920s practitioners or followers of the theory were called Formalist who emphasized on the study of poetic language or literary text as a form. Indeed the Formalist collapsed the distinction between Form and Content. Socialism were primarily concerned with Economic Political and Philosophical issues and worked out explanation of the capitalist theory and mode of production. They have not developed an aesthetic of culture or literature. The Socialist critic wrote from the definite standpoint of Marx’s philosophical ideas, and from his view of history in which the class struggle is fundamental, or in terms of socio-historical factors. They have been devoted to reconstruction of the part on the basic of historical evidences in order to find out to what extent a text is truthful and accurate representation of social reality at any given time.

In his text Hans Robert Jauss holds the place of compromiser; he does not admire the Socialism and not take the side of Formalist view. He explains on ‘an act of reading’ instead of ‘individual reception’, according to him; reading happens in particular situation, the reader does not percept the meaning of the text as same when text was published. Jauss argues that reader uses different criteria at different periods, which he calls ‘Horizon and Expectation’, to judge the nature of literariness in text or genre to which it belongs. What appeals to our generation at given period may not interest reader at some other periods; according to him ‘no work is universal’. A literary work is not an object which stands
by itself and which offers a same face to each reader in each period or its timeless essence.

In this sense, the notion of history becomes fundamental to the horizon of expectations, and this is what differentiates Jauss’ approach to Reception Theory from one of Iser. Jauss also points out that the horizon of expectations is a crucial element in connecting literature and society. Jauss argues, “The social function of literature manifests itself in its genuine possibility only where the literary experience of the reader enters into the horizon of expectation.” (Jauss, 39)

In his critical work structuralist poetics Jonathan Cullar tries to establish the theory of interpretation and aims to uncover the regularities in readers strategies, he also agree that reader uncover the text and meaning, further he states that, the theory of reading should explain the interpretative operations used by the readers. He also clears the theory of the structure of the text or genre is difficult, because there is no particular form of competency available.

Above general understanding of the theory clears that meaning of a text is what happens when the reader reads it. They contemplate on:

1. The question of, in what sense a text exists?
2. The extent to which knowledge is objective or subjective.
3. The problem of whether the world as we experience it is culturally constructed or has an essential existence.
4. How the gap, historically, culturally and semiotically between the reader and writer is bridged and the extent to which it is bridged.
5. The question of the extent to which interpretation is a public act, conditioned by the particular material and cultural circumstances of the reader, vs. the extent to which reading is a private act governed by response to the relatively codes of the text.

6. The issue of, what the process of reading is like, what it entails. (Joseph Chandra, 94-96)

Although, reader response critics hold the place of a reader in reading and understanding process, but there are some limitations, such as, text oriented critics think that, to allow readers to evaluate and interpret the text as they want is an lawless subjectivism, and some time readers can use amateur or professional procedure for their own interest. Reader response critics bring major part of the creation and interpretation of literary work in light. They also try to reveal some aspect of meaning creation, role of reader, types of reader, reading strategies and author-text-reader relationship. For the first time in the field of literary history and theory, this school of criticism holds the reader at center of meaning process.

**Konstanz School of Reception Aesthetic:**

Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, both of them are faculty members at the University of Konstanz, Germany. Both the theorists examine how readers realize the potential of a text and how readings change over the course of history. (www.library.utoronto.cq/utl/glossary) Reception aesthetic was developed by the Konstanz School of literary studies in the mid 1960’s to confront a similar literary divide in literary studies. The Konstanz
school determined that literary studies had been largely concerned with establishing a history of the best literary achievements that had contributed to the idea of national individuality on its way to itself and comprehended the relationship between literature and history, at the expense of its character as art, into a function of mere copying or commentary. The authors of the Konstanz school on the other hand, strove to address the relationship between creation and interpretation.

(www.booksgoogle.co.in)

**Hans Robert Jauss:**

Hans Robert Jauss is German literary theorist, he is best known for the establishment of Reception Aesthetics. Together with his colleague Wolfgang Iser, he is the founder of the Konstanz school, which has a significant influence on Anglo-American reader response criticism. He born in Goppingen, Germany, Jauss studied in Esslingen and Gesslingen. In 1939 he joined the army and saw service on Russian Front. He is briefly imprisoned at the end of the war as an enemy combatant, thus delaying his university studies until 1948. He completed his undergraduates and postgraduates degrees at the University of Heidelberg, graduating in 1957 with a dissertation on Marcel Proust. Between 1959 and 1966, Jauss held jobs in Munster and Giessen. In 1966, he is invited to join the newly established university of Konstanz to set up the subject area of literary studies. He does this in collaboration with several colleagues and the end result become known as the Konstanz school. Jauss own inaugural lecture in 1967 entitled “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary theory” is seminal in launching what
he describes as reception aesthetics. It is a mode literary history interested in the interaction between readers and writers. His most important works include: *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (1982), *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics* (1982), *Question and Answer: Forms of Dialogic Understanding* (1989). ([www.oxfordindex.oup.com](http://www.oxfordindex.oup.com))

**Toward An Aesthetic of Reception:**

Hans Robert Jauss is a Germanic Philosopher. He works as an associate professor in the University of Konstanz. In 1982 he writes a book entitled as “Rezeptionasthetik”. It is written in Germanic language. Timothy Bahty, professor in university of Minnesota has translated the “Rezeptionasthetik” into English entitled as *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* and it is introduced by Paul de Man. The text is divided into five chapters. The first chapter of the text deals with Jauss main arguments on reception aesthetic. It is entitled as *Literary History as Challenge to Literary Theory*. The second chapter deals with History or art and Pragmatics theory. The third chapter of the text is related to the genres and medieval literature. The fourth chapter is an applied study and Goethe’s and Valery’s Faust: on the Hermeneutics of question and answer. In the fifth chapter Jauss has discussed the Poetic Text Within the change of Horizons of Readings with the example of Baudelaire’s “Spleen II”. The translation of Timothy Bahti is scholarly endeavor and it has been accepted as most slandered translation of Jauss “Rezeptionasthetik”. This volume presents for the first time into English as the foundational writings of the leading proponent of the aesthetic of
reception. Jauss here attempts to develop categories to channel conventional literary history into a history of aesthetic experience. The essays in the volume explore the relation of art history to social history, the nature of genres in the middle ages, and provide exemplary readings in the comparative analysis of literature. (www.upress.umn.edu) The Journal of Religious writes, this book sows the seeds of an exciting new hermeneutical program with a heavy emphasis on history and social scientific enquiry. According to journal of Film and Video: the question concerning aesthetic praxis which underlay all art as productive, receptive and communicative activity remains un-clarified and deserves to asked a new. This volume covers question about aesthetic praxis and about the contagious relationship between aesthetic experience and other provinces of meaning in the word of everyday reality. Journal of Aesthetic and Art criticism refers Jauss as one of those courageous pioneers who not only aspires to fathom the nature of aesthetic experience in its various historical manifestation, but also ask with great intensity and sincerely how we today can be interested in art at all how aesthetic communication is still possible in our present day consumer society.

**Reception Theory:**

Hans Robert Jauss is a leading figure in theory of reception since he delivered the lecture “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory” at Konstanz University, Germany. In Anglo-American surrounding, the theory of reception is not thoroughly known as it is in Germany. Jauss noticed the fact as he says “to the foreign ear question of
Robert Holub thinks that, the primary reason for this is that we hate tended to be more heavily influenced by the French tradition than in Germany. The work of Roland Barth’s, Paul De Man and Paul Ricoeur are very influential our hermeneutics. However Wolfgang Iser works are widely read in English among the many German scholars who worked in reception Theory. But Anglo-American readers have not got an adequate introduction to reception theory through the study of Iser’s work for two reasons; first, Iser makes very few references to Jauss in his work, thus giving the false impression that these two colleagues at Konstanz University do not work that closely together. And secondly, he does not fully develop of History as Jauss does. (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk. 126) In 1980s the University of Minnesota Press and the Journal “New Literary History” have printed several articles on reception aesthetic by Hans Robert Jauss and his work become available for English reader where the situation slightly improved, but it is still thought as peripheral hermeneutic or literary theory. The use of title ‘reception theory’ is problematic itself, because of complex of German terms and concepts which are related to this idea. These concepts include \textit{wirkungsgeschichte} (the history of the impact of the text), \textit{rezeptionsgeschichte} (the history of reception), \textit{wirkungsdesthetik} (the aesthetic effect or response) and \textit{rezeptionsdesthetik} (aesthetic of reception). (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk. 126) it is difficult to follow the particular strategy for to help reader navigate amongst this complex of German Hermeneutical terms. Robert Holub adopts the policy that
“reception theory refers a general shifts in concern from the author and the work to the text and the umbrella term and encompasses both Jauss and Iser projects as well as empirical research and the traditional occupation with influence. (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk. 126)

In order to understand the reception theory in detail one should be aware of the concept, horizon of expectation.

Horizon of Expectations:

The term Horizon of expectation is formulated by Hans Robert Jauss in his aesthetic of reception. Every reader has some background, has some own principles and judgments. Jauss uses the term to denote the criteria which readers use to evaluate literary text in any given period. In his dictionary Cuddon explains: it is devised by Jauss to denote the criteria which readers use to judge literary text in any given period. It is a crucial aspect of Jauss’ aesthetic of reception, and the term designates the shared set of assumptions which can be attributed to any given generation of readers, the criteria helps constitutes readers’ judgments of, say, a poem in a trans-subjective way, horizons of expectation change. The poetry of one age is judged, valued and interpreted by its contemporaries, but the views of that age do not necessarily establish the meaning and value of poetry definitively. Neither meaning nor value is permanently fixed, because the horizon of expectation of each generation will change. As Jauss puts it: A literary work is not an object which stand by itself and which offers the same face to each reader in each period. It is not a monument which reveals its timeless essence in a monologue. Each age reinterprets poetry in the
light of its own knowledge and Experience, its own cultural environment. Literary value is measured according to ‘aesthetic distance’, the degree to which a work departs from the ‘horizon of expectations’ of its first readers. (Cuddon, 387)

In his essay “Literary History as Challenge to Literary Theory” (1967) Jauss attempts to formulate a theory of aesthetic of reception based on socio-historical context and a solution to the problem of how texts are interpreted and evaluated. Ian Maclean comments on the concept “Horizon of Expectations……is detectable through the textual strategies (genre, literary illusion, the nature of fictional and poetical language) which confirm, modify subvert or ironize the expectations of readers. Aesthetic distance becomes the measure of literary value ‘creating a spectrum on an end of which lies “culinary” (totally consumable) reading, and on the other hand, works which have a radical effect on their readers. (Cuddon, 388)

**Background to Jauss’ Reception Aesthetic:**

The several major shifts took place in Germany during 1960s help to understand and explain the rise and background of Jauss’ reception theory. The discontentment in the academic realm was growing with the dissatisfaction with economic problems. A good example of this is that the “Memorandum for the reform at the study of linguistic and literature” written by Jauss, Iser and other Philosophers which argues for the methodological and institutional changes in the universities. The methods and values of teaching literary contexts were being doubted by Germen literary studies had come to a point of crises within the current
paradigm by which it was being practiced. The problem with the historical critical and the aesthetic formalist approach was that they suppressed and concealed the role of the reader. While the reader is an indispensible element to any act of interpretation, the function of the reader was rarely discussed. It is only through the experiences of those who read, interpret and apply the massage of the texts that literary tradition is formed. As a result Jauss sought to find theory which did justice to the dynamic process of production and reception from author, work and public that would helpful to lead the study of literature out of the dead ends of literary history which bagged down in positivism. (www.ethesis.nottinghum.ac.uk 127)

During the 1960s, there is a revival in the study of literary hermeneutics; the study of Gadmer in this area raised the question for Jauss. The concept in question is that of horizon insofar as it as historical masker and at the same time the necessary condition for the possibility of experimental knowledge-constitutes all structures of meaning related to human action and primary modes of comprehending the word. (www.ethesis.nottinghum.ac.uk 128) Jauss is studied medieval literature. His interest in these aesthetic arose from his studies. His study of the medieval literature raised the problems for him relating the possibilities of direct aesthetic of understanding through the text itself the role which the original horizon of the text first played in the understanding and the possibilities of historical meditation through background information. Jauss delivered lecture “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary History” in an attempt to address the shortcomings in existing in literary theories and to introduce the conclusion he reached at. In an interview
Jauss says: *I tried to imagine a new literary history, once that opened the closed circuit of author and work in the direction of the receiver and was meant to make of this receiver, whether a reader or the public, the intermediary, between the past and the present, the work and its effects. Such history would have to stand up against the ideal of objectivity espoused by the old, discredited literary history, and also the demands for exactness lay down by those sociologist and structuralist who scoffed at historical understanding.* (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk, 128)

**The fall of Literary History:**

Jauss is mainly concerned with the relationship between literature and history. During 1960s the traditional literary history is fallen from its position that is enjoyed for years together, this is the period, when the literary history is seen as an outdated form of knowledge as it is historically bounded and not approached literature aesthetically. Jauss found it as the challenge to reformulate and revise the concept of literary history. This is the valid criticism to which the reception is to succeed and overcome it.

This crisis in literary history has its roots in nineteenth century positive history. Positivistic history’s appropriation of scientific methodology removed a unique framework from literary history. The result is that literary history is swallowed up by general history. This approach does not make justice to the history of literature in two ways. First, it does not consider the categorical distinction between literary effects and positivistic history. In literature there is a connection between the author who creates the meaning and readers who realizes it one and
over. Positivistic history misses this connection because it compares works with other works and authors. And, second it served the communication process between author, text and not receiver. This follows the same criticism which Gadmer makes concerning a positivistic approach to history by objectifying what ought to confront you, the text you have emasculated it. ([www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk](http://www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk). 129) As a result, the text is detached from the creative act and you are only left with the traces or relics of the creative mind. The individual text has no value itself but only serves as a source – i.e., only as a material conveying knowledge of the past historical context, just like other silent relics of the past.

The inversions of positivistic history in literary studies were solved by two traditional solutions: first to study the literary history by genre and second to study the literary history according to the life and works of authors. But, these solutions not overcome fully the inversions of positivistic history. The first solution approaches literary history by arranging the material according to general patterns, such as genre in order to consider the individual works within the framework of a chronological series. The significance of the author or the interpretation of his or her work is reduced to an occasional aside. In the end literary history is swallowed up by a history of culture. The second approach arranges literary history according to the history of great authors and evaluated different literary text according to a rubric of life and work essays. In this approach the less known authors and works are ignored and the development of elements such as literary genres is overlooked. Both also suffer the loos of the aesthetic dimension of qualitative
judgments and the result of such studies are put aside as mere antiquarian knowledge. (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk, 129) There is good reason for hesitancy to include any form of judgment about the quality and significance of past works within literary theory. According to Jauss: for the quality and rank of literary work results neither from the biographical or historical conditions of its origin, nor from its place in the sequence of development of a genre alone, but rather from the criteria of influence, reception and posthumous fame, criteria that are more difficult to grasp. (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk, 129)

**Marxism:**

According to Jauss there are two promising schools of thought to offer solution to crisis in literary history in 20th century. Marxism views art (literature) as a kind of human appropriation of the world. It emphasizes on the idea that art and literature are not independent modes but they are part of life-process and only when this is considered does history cease to be a collection of lifeless facts. Marxism does not have a relativistic or an uncritical attitude towards tradition as other theories do. The main focus of Jauss critique of Marxism is East German Marxist theory. He writes: “the original provocation of Marxists literary theory that is also always renewed is that it denies their own histories to art and to the corresponding forms of consciousness of ethics, religion or metaphysics. The history of literature, like that of art, can no longer maintain the “appearance of its independence” when one has realized that its production presupposes the material production and social praxis of human being, that even artistic production is a part of the real life
process of appropriation of nature that determines the history of human labor or development. Only when the active life process is represented does history stop being a collection of dead facts. Thus literature and art can be viewed as a process “only in relation to the praxis of historical human beings,” in their ‘social function’ (Werner Krauss), conceived as one of the coeval “kinds of human appropriation of the world and represented as part of the general process of history in which man overcomes the natural condition in order to work his way up to being human (Karl Kosik).” (Jauss, 10)

The role of production is a main point of contention between Jauss and Marxism.

The Marxist theorists criticize the Jauss perspectives for not given more weight to productive side of the study of literary art. On the other side, Jauss criticizes Marxist for making literary effect and reception less important to issues concerning the production of literary text. He argues that; literary production is secondary and always in harmony with the gives economic process; it gives a coherent expression to the objective social structures in which the literary text is produced. Literature is reduced to mankind’s appropriation of nature and the control of economic processes. This reveals a platonic unity of idea and form, essences and appearances in Marxist theory. Marxism replaced the concept of the ideal with economic factors. Further Jauss argues that; this has the consequences that the social dimension of literature and art with respect to their reception is likewise limited to the secondary function of only allowing an already previously known reality to be once
In his “Play as the Being of Artwork” (chapter 2) Jauss writes: that the play of interpretation is restricted to what is already known and mimesis is likewise restricted, you cannot recognize more in the text or work of art. He raises a question that how can literature serve a revolutionary function then if one can only recognizes what is already known. But it is precisely at this point that the possibility of grasping the revolutionary character of art is foreclosed to Marxist aesthetic: the characteristics that can lead human beings beyond the established images and prejudices of their historical situation toward a new perception of the world or an anticipated reality. (Jauss, 14)

According to Jauss one must understand the double character of literature to understand the weakness inherent in Marxist literary theory. Literature not only represents reality but creates reality. He opines that there is an essential unity to the text between its expression of reality and the reality that it forms. Literature not only products social influence and serves as a repository culture; it also performs a social formative function. In Marxist theory literature is a product of social forces and not as agent of social change. (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk, 132) By going beyond the Marxist literary theory Jauss wants to include the effect and reception of the literary work in literary history. He says: “the insight that the historical essence of the work of art lies not only in its representational or expressive function but also in its influence must have two consequences for a new founding of literary history. If the life of the work results “not from autonomous existence but rather from the reciprocal interaction of work and mankind” this perpetual labor of
understanding and of the active reproduction of the past cannot remain limited to the single work. On the contrary, the relationship of work to work must now be brought into this interaction between work and mankind, and the historical coherence of works among themselves must be seen in the interrelation of production and reception. Put another way: literature and art only obtain a history that has the character of a process when the succession of work is mediated not only through the producing subject but also through the consuming subject-through the interaction of author and public. And if on the other hand “human reality is not only a production of the new, but also a (critical and dialectical) reproduction of the past” the function of art in the process of this perpetual totalizing can only come into view in its independence when the specific achievement of artistic form as well as is no longer just mimetically defined, but rather is viewed dialectically as medium capable of forming and altering perception, in which the “formation of the senses” chiefly takes place.” (Jauss, 15-16)

**Formalism:**

Formalism as a literary movement and primarily as a Russian linguistic movement originated in the work of Roman Jacobson (Studies in the Theory of Poetic Language) published during 1916 to 1919. By the end of Formalism many advocates of it were asked to unrestraint their views by constant criticism by Marxist critics. Though formalism has faced bitter criticism, it has lived for longtime in literary practices. It has considerable impact on the Prague School of literary thought. It became widely known in Germany, Anglo-American literary and
biblical studies after 1955 with the publication Viktor Erich’s book, Russian Formalism: History and Doctrine the translation of some of the original formalist works. Hans Robert Jauss tries to retrieve the useful concepts of formalism, and reincorporate them into literary studies/theory.

Formalism arose from the seedbed of dissatisfaction in literary studies that dominated by the historical positivistic approach of the 19th century. Jacobson criticized the tendency that he perceives in literary studies to exchange the study of literature for something else, namely the examination of the historical condition external to the text in order to gain an understanding of the intention of the author and aid in the interpretation of the text which the historical- positivistic paradigm practiced. The two stands which bound the various formalists together was: 1) their attempt to redefine the study of literature and place it on equal footing with other scientific method and 2) the idea that a text was an aesthetic entity which reflected reality through its own internal structures formalist employed the following tools to achieve these goals: the difference between poetic and practical language in texts, defamiliarisation, the relationship between story and plot, and literary evolution. The shift to an autonomous text, stylistics and the immanent effect of the aesthetics of the text represents a move away from the historical positivistic paradigm of the 19th century. ([www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk](http://www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk), 133-34)

Formalism represents a turn from the external conditions of historical and casual explanation of studying texts to the strategic
priority of the internal organization of the literary text. The ideology of formalism has both strength and weakness of it. It focuses on aesthetic perception and the relationships between the texts and its recipients are its strong points. However, its focuses on the sum total of literary devices in the text to the exclusion of historical and social factors are its weakness. (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk, 134) Jauss agrees with the assessment by formalist of the ability of literature to break open everyday language and understanding through the devices of defamiliarisation and the difference between poetic and practical language. According Jauss; *practical language was concerned with clear communication through reference to objects or accepted concepts while the goal of poetical language was the experience of the sounds or texture of the text.* (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk, 134) Paul Ricoeur agrees with binds poetic discourses, then, is the need to bring to language modes of being that ordinary vision obscures or even represses. Literary work of art achieves the goal by the process of ‘defamiliarisation’ i.e. presenting the objects in new, different and unexpected ways. Jon Mukorvsky observes that this opposition between the world presented in the text (poetical language) and the reality (practical language) gives the reader a basis for comparing the claims or perspectives of the text with their horizon of expectation. (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk, 134) Formalism argues that the primary goal of literature is to present the idea in new manner through unexpected way and this disrupts our habitual pattern of recognition. Gadmer says; *this line of thought to show the power or effect of art involves a push which disrupts or breaks complacent meaning expectation. Reading always involves how the text*
strikes the reader and how the meaning of the text is then related back to the reader’s pre-understanding. For Jauss; the process of defamiliarisation and the tension between poetical and practical language allow the text to disclose new perspectives for the reader to view the world by disrupting the reader’s expectation and everyday understanding. (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk, 135-136)

Though the relation between poetical and practical language may play the role of tool for the study of particular genres, poetical or literary texts, its applicability to other forms of art is limited. By questioning the Jauss hermeneutics, Gadmer argues that; we cannot restricts the manner in which we experience art or texts to reflective aesthetic pleasure, which is built upon the different action between poetic and practical language. In this connection Jauss says; the formalists brought out the relationship between texts, both synchronically is the tension between poetic and practical language and diachronically in the tension between work, genres and past works. (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk, 136)

Further Jauss thinks that, formalism introduced the diachronic perspective into literary study and coined new terms like literary forms, functions and genres, which is a significant contribution of formalist school of literary thought. Formalism corrects the positivistic view of seeing the study of literary works as a closed system that is connected at best by a general sketch of history, the works of an author a style or a particular genre. It seeks to relate one text to other in order to discover their evolutionary relationships. An author has a certain amount of genres and linguistic style from which to select in composing her text. It
is through the creativity of the author, and her use of the literary convention that genres are modified or new ones are created through her works. However, once a text is written it becomes a literary fact and is incorporated into the literary tradition which then shapes the possibilities for future authors. The elements of defamiliarisation which were new and unexpected for the original audience have been “leveled down” and become part of the horizon of expectation for successive generations of readers and no longer function to disrupt their expectation. (www.ethesis.nottinghum.ac.uk, 136-137) Jauss writes; the works that thereby stand out from correspond to or replace one another would appear as a moment of a process that no longer needs to be constituted as tending toward some end point, since as the dialectical self-production of new forms it requires teleology. (www.ethesis.nottinghum.ac.uk, 136)

Jauss criticizes formalism for lacking the historical and social perspective. He also criticizes formalism for viewing the text as autonomous and only examining that which is internal to the text and inter-textual system. Formalism through its program of explaining does not provide adequate basis from which to construct literary history. According to Jauss; “formalism must be opened up so that the relation of the text to the questions left by preceding works, and the questions that the text in turn leaves behind must be considered. Thus Marxism and formalism misses how literature informs culture and progress of history.” (Jauss, 16-20) Jauss proposes that formalism should be modified to include an aesthetic of reception which involves examining the original horizon of expectation in which the text first appeared, the
horizon of the reader, as well as those elements which are internal to the text. (www.ethesis.nottinghum.ac.uk, 137) By keeping the reader at the center of the discourse Jauss writes; reader, listener and – in short, the factor of the audience- play an extremely limited role in both literary theories. Orthodox Marxists aesthetics treats the reader- if at all – no differently from the author: it inquires about his social position or seeks to recognize him in the structure of a represented society. The formalist school needs the reader only as a perceiving subject who follows the directions in the text in order to distinguish the (literary) form or discover the (literary) procedure. Jauss considers reader as active agent, who plays important role in shaping the literary history, he also appeals to reader to be active and play important role in the literary theory. He writes: ‘the historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its addressees. For it is only through the process of its mediation that the work enters into the changing horizon-of-expectation of a continuity in which the perpetual inversion occurs from simple reception to critical understanding, from recognized aesthetic norms to a new production that surpasses them.” (Jauss, 19)

Hans Robert Jauss is known for his best known and widely accepted essay entitled as “Literary History as Challenges to Literary Theory” for the past twenty to forty years in Germany. This essay is provocative by nature and presents not only a challenge to the inadequacy of literary theories of that time but also offers a solution in the forms of a proposal for a new paradigm in literary studies. (www.ethesis.nottinghum.ac.uk, 138) Friedrich Schiller in his lecture, delivered in 1789, on “What is and Toward What End Does One Study
Universal History” called for a new perspective on history and literary to answer the classical humanist. Schiller realized that with the rise of historicism classical literature could no longer be held as embodying a temporal norms and this approach was in crisis. (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk, 139) Jauss’ essay is an appeal to Schaller’s lecture, he says: not only did Schiller explain why they were facing a crisis in literary studies at that time but he also established the expectation of nineteenth century literary history. (Jauss, 6)

Jauss sees literary history as challenge to literary theory in order to take up the unresolved dispute between the Marxist and Formalist School. At the very beginning Jauss clears his intention: my attempt to bridge the gap between literature and history, between historical and aesthetic approach, begins at the point at which both schools stops. Their methods understand the literary fact in terms of the circular aesthetic system of production and representation. In doing so, they deprive literature of a dimension which unalterable belongs to its aesthetic characters as well as to its social function: its reception and impact. Reader listener and spectator- in short the audience- plays an extremely limited role in both literary theories. Orthodox Marxists aesthetics treats the reader if at all – the same way as it does the author; it inquires about his social position or describes his place within the structure of society. The formalist school needs the reader only as a perceiving subject who follows the directions in the text in order to perceive its form or discover its techniques of procedure. It assumes that the reader has the theoretical knowledge of a philologist sufficiently versed in the tools of literature to be able to reflect on them. The
Marxists school, on the other hand, actually equates the spontaneous experience of the reader with the scholarly interest of historical materialism, which seeks to discover relationship between the economic basis of production and the literary work as part of the intellectual superstructure. (Jauss and Benzinger, 7)

According to Jauss the role of reader is not recognized by both the approach to which the literary work is basically addressed. He says; for the critics who conceives of his work in light of positive or negative norms of an earlier work and the literary historian who classifies a work in his tradition and explains it historically are also readers before their reflex relationship to literature can become productive again. In the triangle of author, work and reading public the latter is no passive part, no chain of mere reactions, but even history making energy. The historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its audience. For it is only through the process of its communication that the work reaches the changing horizon of experience in a continuity in which continual change occurs from simple reception to critical understanding, from passive to active reception, from recognized aesthetic norms to a new production which surpasses them. The historicity of literature as well as its communicative characters presupposes a relation of work, audience and new work which takes the form of a dialogue as well as a process, and which can be understood in the relationship of message and receiver as well as in the relationship of question and answer, problem and solution. The circular system of production and of representation within which the methodology of literary criticism has mainly moved in the past must
therefore be widened to include an aesthetic of reception and impact if the problem of understanding the historical sequence of literary works as a literary history is to find a new solution. (Jauss and Benzinger, 8)

Further Jauss explains the significance of the aesthetic of reception as following; *the perspective of the aesthetic of reception mediates between passive reception and active understanding, norm setting experience and new production. If the history of literature is viewed in this way as a dialogue between work and public, the contrast between its aesthetic and its historical aspects is also continually mediated. Thus the thread from the past appearance to the present experience of a work, which historicism had cut, is tied together. (Jauss and Benzinger, 8)*

Jauss insists that the relationship of literature and reader has aesthetic as well as historical implication. According to him; “the aesthetic implication is seen in the fact that the first reception of a work by the reader includes a test of its aesthetic value in comparison with works which he has already read. The obvious historical implication of this is that the appreciation of the first reader will be continued and enriched through further “reception” from generation to generation; in this way historical significance of a work will be determined and its aesthetic value revealed. In this process of the history of reception, which the literary historian can only escape at the price of ignoring his own principles of comprehension and judgment, the repossession of past works occurs simultaneously with the continual mediation of past and present art and of traditional evaluation and current literary attempts.
The merit of literary history based on aesthetic of reception will depend upon the degree to which it can take an active part in the continual integration of past art by aesthetic experience. This demand on the one hand- in opposition to the objectivism of positivist literary history- a conscious attempt to establish canon, which on the other hand- in opposition to the classicism of the study of traditions- presupposes a critical review if not destruction of the traditional literary canon. The criterion for establishing such a canon and the ever necessary retelling of literary history is clearly set out by the aesthetic of reception. The step from the history of the reception of the individual work to the history of literature has to lead us to see and in turn to present the historical sequence of works in the way in which they determine and clarify our present literary experience.” (Jauss and Benzinger, 9)

Literary history can be rewritten on this premise, and the following remarks suggest seven theses that provide a systematic approach to such rewriting.

**Thesis: I**

In the very first thesis Jauss states that the literary history must move from historical objectivism because that is based on aesthetic of production and representation and it should rest on the aesthetic of reception and influence. He says; “a renewal of history demands the removal of the prejudices of historical objectivism and the grounding of the traditional aesthetic of production and representation in aesthetics of reception and influence. The historicity of literature rests not on an
organization of literary facts that is established post festum, but rather on
the preceding experience of the literary work by its readers.” (Jauss, 20)

To write literary history through historical objectivism is a
traditional approach of looking at literature. Jauss with Benzinger (9)
writes that; if literary history is to be rejuvenated, the prejudices of
historical objectivism must be removed and the traditional approach to
literature must be replaced by an aesthetic of reception and impact. The
historical relevance of literature is not based on an organization of
literary works which is established post factum but not on the readers
past experience of the literary data. This relationship creates a dialogue
that is the first condition for a literary history. For the literary historian
must first become a reader again himself before he can understand and
classify a work, in other words, before he can justify his own evaluation
in light of his present position in the historical progression of
readers.

Jauss refers the criticism of R G Collingwood that history is
nothing but the reenactment of past thought in the histories mind and
find it more valid for literary history. The artistic quality as well as the
specific historical relevance of literature is neglected in positivistic view
of history as the objective description of a series of events in an isolated
past. According to Jauss; a literary work is not an object which stands by
itself and which offers the same face to each reader in each period. It is
not monument which reveals its timeless essence in a monologue. It is
much more like an orchestration which strikes ever new chords among
its readers and which frees the text from the substance of the words and
makes it meaningful for the time: words which must, at the same time that they speak to him, create an interlocutor capable of listening. A literary work must be understood as creating a dialogue and philological scholarship has to be founded on continues re-reading of texts, not on mere facts. (Jauss & Benzinger, 10)

Further Jauss explains that, philological understanding must set its goal as a moment of new understanding. He says; “philological understanding can exist only in a perpetual confrontation with the text, and cannot be allowed to be reduced to knowledge of facts. Philological understanding always remains related to interpretation that must set as its goal, along with learning about the object, the reflection on and description of the completion of this knowledge as a moment of new understanding.” (Jauss, 21)

The conventional literary history is not history at all, but it is pseudo-history, because that is only collected and classified the past. He says; “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 endlessly growing sum of literary facts that winds up in the conventional literary histories is merely left over from this process; it is only the collected and classified past and therefore not history at all, but pseudo-history. Anyone who considers a series of such literary facts as piece of the history of literature confuses the eventful character of a work of art with that of historical matter of fact.” (Jauss, 21) Literary text or events are not historical events and facts which could
be explained as caused by a series of situational preconditions and motives. He says; the *historical context in which a literary work appears is not a factual, independence series of events which exists apart from reader.......in contrast to political event, a literary event has no lasting results which succeeding generations cannot avoid. It can continue to have an effect only if future generations still respond to it or rediscover it- if there are readers who take up the work of the past again or authors who want to imitate, outdo, or refute it.* (Jauss & Benzinger, 11)

The organization of literature is possible only when the present aesthetic standards of contemporary and succeeding readers, critics and authors can be comprehend and objectified. He says; “the coherence of literature as an event is primarily mediated in the horizon of expectation of the literary experience of contemporary and later readers, critics and authors. Whether it is possible to comprehend and represent the history of literature in its unique historicity depends on whether this horizon of expectation can be objectified.”(Jauss, 22)

**Thesis: II**

In the second thesis Jauss talk about the threatening pitfalls of psychology in the aesthetic of reception. A text does not appear in absolute vacuum but it appears with the uses of signals, genres and other familiar characteristics. The aesthetic of reception can avoid psychologizing by looking at the influence of work in the period of its appearance from pre-understanding of genres and from themes already familiar in other works. Jauss says; “the analysis of literary experience of the reader avoids the threatening pitfalls of psychology if it describes
the reception and influence of a work within the objectifiable system of expectation 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.” (Jauss, 22)

Raj Gaurav Varma explains the thesis as; *Jauss establishes the drawbacks of psychology can be avoided if the literary experience of the reader is described within “objectifiable system of expectations.” This objectifiable system of expectations includes the understanding of genres, form and themes of previous works and cognizance of difference between poetic language and practical language. According to him, Jauss refers to Roman Jacobson who wanted to replace the collective state of consciousness by a collective ideology in the form of system of norms that exists for each literary work as langue and that is actualized as parole by the receiver. Mikhail K. Bakhtin points that not only language but understanding itself is a dialogic process: understanding comes to fruition only in response. Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other. (Bakhtin, 82) what Bakhtin has termed as dialogic is sociocultural, historical and ideological background that comes into play. (R G Verma, 262-263) as in the case of every literary experience Jauss says that the first literary experience of a previously unknown work demands a previous knowledge which is an element of experience itself and which makes it possible that anything new we come across may also be read, as it were, in some context of experience. (Jauss & Benzinger, 12)
A literary work does not appear in something absolutely new in an informational vacuum. According to Jauss; *literary work predisposes its readers to a very definite type of reception by textual strategies, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics or implicit allusions. It awakens memories of the familiar, stirs particular emotions in the reader and with its “beginning” arouses expectations for the middle and end which can then be continued intact, changed, re-oriented or even ironically fulfilled in the course of reading according to certain rules of the genre or type of the text.* (Jauss & Benzinger, 12) Jauss also focuses on the reader’s past experience of art and literature which results into their expectation when they read any other literary work. He says; *a corresponding process of continuous horizon setting and horizon changing also determines the relation of the individual text which form genre. The new text evokes for the reader (listener) the horizon of expectations and rules familiar from earlier texts, which are then varied, corrected, changed or just reproduced. Variation and correction determine the scope, alteration and reproduction of the borders and structures of genre. The interpretative reception of a text always presupposes the context of experience of aesthetic perception. The question of subjectivity of the interpretation and the taste of different readers or levels of readers can be asked significantly only after it has been decided which trans-subjective horizon of understanding determines the impact of the text.* Jauss further says; *the ideal cases of the objective capability of such literary frames of reference are works which, using the artistic standards of the reader, have been formed by conventions of genre, style or form. These purposely evoke responses so*
that they can frustrate them. This can serve not only a critical purpose but can even have a poetic effect. (Jauss & Benzinger, 13)

Thus to observe at the subjective interpretation of different readers or level of readers, one has to take into consideration the specific horizon that influence’s the understanding of the text. Jauss says; there is also the possibility of objectifying the expectation in works which are historically less sharp delineated. For the specific reception which the author anticipates from the reader for a particular work can be achieved, even explicit signals are missing, by three generally acceptable means: first by the familiar standards or the inherent poetry of the genre; second by the implicit relationship to familiar works of the literary-historical context; and third, by the contrast between fiction and reality, between the poetic and the practical function of language, which is reflective reader can always realize while he is reading. The third factors include the possibility that the reader of a new work has to perceive it not only within the narrow horizon of his literary expectations but also within the wider horizon of his experience of life. (Jauss & Benzinger, 14)

**Thesis: III**

In this thesis Jauss explains that the aesthetic value of a literary work of art can be determined in the judgment of its affection on horizon of expectations of a reader. Jauss says; “reconstructed in this way, the horizon of expectations allows one to determine its artistic character by the kind and the degree of its influence on a presupposed audience. If one characterizes as aesthetic distance the disparity between the given
horizon of expectations and the appearance of a new work, whose reception can result in a “change of horizon” through negation of familiar experiences or through raising newly articulated experiences to the level of consciousness, then this aesthetic distance can be objectified historically along the spectrum of the audience’s reactions and criticism’s judgment (spontaneous success, rejection or shock, scattered approval, gradual or belated understanding.” (Jauss, 25) If the horizon of expectations of a work is reconstructed in this way, it is possible to determine its artistic nature by the nature and degree of its effect on a given audience. If the aesthetic distance is considered as the distance between the given horizon of expectations and the appearance of a new work, whose reception results in a horizon change because it negates familiar experience or articulates an experience for the first time, this aesthetic distance can be measured historically in the spectrum of the reaction of the audience and the judgment of criticism (spontaneous success, rejection or shock, scattered approval, gradual or later understanding). (Jauss, & Benzinger, 14) The thesis explains the relation between reader and work of art. Raj Gaurav Verma clears that; if audience changes its horizon and adapts itself to the aesthetic of new work then it will result in “horizon change.” If work fulfills the horizon of expectation than no “horizontal changes” will occur and audience will enjoy it in accordance with prevalent norms of aesthetics. It may happen that the work may have auspicious or inauspicious reception by its first audience but this may gradually disappear for later readers and that may become a familiar expectation. The classical works belong to “second horizontal change” because of “their beautiful form that has
become self-evident, and their seemingly unquestioned “eternal meaning.” They are read against the background of “accustomed experience” for artistic evaluation. (Raj Gaurav Verma, 263)

The way in which a literary work affects the reader’s expectations gives criterion for the determination of its aesthetic value. According to Jauss; the way in which a literary work satisfies, surpasses, disappoints or disproves the expectations of its first readers in the historical moment of its appearance obviously gives a criterion for the determination of its aesthetic value. The distance between the horizon of expectations and the work, between the familiarity of previous aesthetic experiences and the “horizon change” demanded by the response to new works, determines the artistic nature of a literary work along the lines of the aesthetic of reception: the smaller this distance, which means that no demands are made upon the receiving consciousness to make a change on the horizon of unknown experience, the closer the work comes to the realm of “culinary” or light reading. This last phrase can be characterized from the point of view of the aesthetic of reception in this way: it demands no horizon change but actually fulfills expectation, which are prescribed by a predominant taste, by satisfying the demand for the reproduction of familiar beauty, conferring familiar sentiments, encouraging dreams, making unusual experiences palatable as “sensations” or even raising moral problems, but only to be able to “solve” them in an edifying manner when the solution is already oblivious. On the other hand, if the artistic character of a work is to be measured by the aesthetic distance with which it confronts the expectations of its first readers, it follows that this distance, which at
first is experienced as a happy or distasteful new perspective, can disappear for later readers to the same degree to which the original negativity of the work has become self-evident and, as henceforth familiar expectation, has even become part of the horizon of future aesthetic of experience. Especially the classic nature of so called masterworks belongs to this second horizon change; their self-evident beauty and their seemingly unquestionable “eternal significance” bring them, from the point of view of the aesthetics of reception, into dangerous proximity with the irresistibile convincing and enjoyable “culinary” art, and special effort is needed to read them “against the grain” of accustomed experience so that their artistic nature becomes evident again. (Jauss & Benzinger, 15)

Further, Jauss states that the relationship of literature and reader is depend upon its society, ideology and historicity which writer has keep in the mind the ambiance of his period. It has two implications: a work may lose its importance when the change occurs in ambiance; or the writer creates such work that it has universal appeal so that it caters to the taste of forthcoming generations. (Raj Gaurav Verma, 264). Jauss says; “the relationship between literature and audience includes more than the facts that every work has its own specific, historically and sociologically determinable audience, that every writer is dependent on the milieu, views and ideology of his audience, and that literary success presupposes a book “which expresses what the group expects, a book which presents the group with its own image…………….when, then, the new horizon of expectations has achieved more general currency, the power of the altered aesthetic norm can be demonstrated in that the
audience experiences formerly successful works as outmoded, and withdraws its appreciation. Only in view of such horizontal change does the analysis of literary influence achieve the dimension of a literary history of readers, and do the statistical curves of the bestsellers provide historical knowledge.” (Jauss, 26-27) Jauss gives the example of Feydeu’s Fanny which was succeed immediately in 1857 and overshadowed Flaubert’s Madame Bovary. But in later period the horizon of expectation has changed and fanny went back from its success and Madame Bovary became popular.

**Thesis IV:**

Thesis IV explains that the reconstruction of horizon of expectations allows us to compare past and present understanding and forces us to become aware of the text’s history of reception which mediates the two horizons. Jauss says; “the reconstruction of the horizon of expectations, in the face of which a work was created and received in the past, enables one on the other hand to pose questions that the text gave and answer to, and thereby to discover how the contemporary reader could have viewed and understood the work. This approach corrects the mostly unrecognized of a classicist or modernizing understanding of art, and avoids the circular recourse to a general “spirit of the age.” It brings to view the hermeneutical difference between the former and current understanding of a work; it raises to consciousness the history of its reception, which mediates both positions; and thereby calls into questions as a Platonizing dogma of philological metaphysics the apparently self-evident claims that in the literary text, literature is
eternally present, and that its objective meaning, determined once and for all, is at all times immediately accessible to the interpreter.” (Jauss, 28)

The method of the history of reception is essential for the understanding of literary work which appeared in the distance past. Whenever the writer is unknown, the intent is not cleared, or if his relationship with the work is indirectly accessible, according to Jauss; “the philological question of how the text is “properly” to be understood, that is according to its intention and time can best be answered if one foregrounds it against those works that the author explicitly or implicitly presupposed his contemporary audience to know.” (Jauss, 28) Rene Wellek described it as the problem of literary judgment and he also suggests three ways to solve it, according to him the philologist should evaluate a literary work according to the perspective of past, according to the viewpoint of the present or according to the “judgment of the centuries.” But Jauss denies this solution and says that; the actual criteria of the past could be so narrow that their use would only make a work, whose historical impact had a great potential, poorer. The aesthetic judgment of the present would favor a group of works which appeal to the modern taste and evaluate all other works unjustly because their function in their own day is no longer evident…………….this view, however, is not a solution for the dilemma but relapse into objectivism. The judgment of the centuries of a literary work is more than just “collected judgments of other readers, critics, audiences and even professors; it is successive development of potential meaning which is present in a work and which is gradually realized in its historical
reception by knowledgeable criticism. This judgment must, however, take place in contact with tradition and thus cause a controlled fusion of the horizons. (Jauss & Benzinger, 21) Jauss windrows his agreement with H G Gadmer while basing a possible literary history on an aesthetic of reception. According to Gadmer; whatever is called classical does not first require the overcoming of historical distance- for it continuously accomplishes this overcoming itself, he denies the constitutive relationship of question and answer in historical tradition. According to Raj Gaurav Verma; Jauss opposes the Gadmer’s notions and describes classical as (which signifies itself and interpret itself) as “second horizontal change because the classical art at the time of its production was not classical; it is with change in horizon that audience perceives the ‘timeless truth it expresses.’” (Raj Gaurav Verma, 265)

The influence of even the great works of the past can be compared neither with a self-mediating event nor with an emanation: the tradition of art also presupposes a dialogical relationship of the present to the past, according to which the past work can answer and say something to us only when the present observer has posed the question that draws it back out of its seclusion……this project must consider the historicity of literature in a threefold manner: diachronically in the interrelationships of the reception of literary works, synchronically in the frame of reference of literature of the same moment, as well as in the sequence of such frames and finally in the relationship of the immanent literary development to the general process of history. (Jauss, 32)
Thesis V:

A text must be seen by its position in its literary series in order for someone to recognize its historical significance. Jauss says; “the theory of the aesthetics of reception not only allows one to conceive the meaning and form of a literary work in the historical unfolding of its understanding. It also demands that one insert the individual work into its “literary series” to recognize its historical position and significance in the context of the experiences of literature. In the step from a history of reception of works to an eventful history of literature, the latter manifests itself as a process in which the passive reception is on the part of the authors. Put another way, the next work can solve formal and moral problems left behind by the last work, and present new problems in turn.” (Jauss, 32)

The theory of aesthetics of reception serves two purposes: firstly it conceives the meaning of work in its historical context; secondly, it helps in serializing of literary work to recognize its conspicuousness in the context of the experience of literature. The transition from history of reception of works to the eventful history of literature renders the author’s passive. In other words, the next work can solve problems presented by the previous work and simultaneously confront new problems. (Raj Gaurav Verma, 265) Jauss raises the questions that, how can individual work, which determines chronological order in positivistic literary history and thereby superficially turns it into a “fact” be brought back into its historical order and thus be understood as an “event” again? Further, Jauss thinks that the theory of formalism seeks
to solve this problem with its principle of “literary evolution.” According to him; *in this theory the new works appears against a background of previous or competing works, reaches the high ridge of a literary epoch as a successful form, is reproduced and thereby continuously automated so that finally, when the next form has won out genre and thus as a part of commonplace literature. If one analyzed and described a literary period according to this program which so far has hardly been begun one might expect a result far superior to the conventional literary history…………… the unique criterion is the work entering the literary series as a new form, not the reproduction of worn out forms, styles and genres which now move to the background until a new turn in the evolutionary development makes them perceptible again. Finally, in the formalist plan of literary history, which is understood as “evolution” and, contrary to the normal meaning of this term, rejects every directed course, the historical character of a work would remain the same as its artistic character. The evolutionary meaning and characteristics of a literary work presupposes innovations as the decisive feature just as does the tenet that the work of art is to be perceived against the background of other artistic works.* (Jauss & Benzinger, 25, 26) Though formalism’s concept literary evolution was a step in direction to recognize its historical significance, its criterion of innovation in the process of literary evolution is unfair and cannot effectively explain the progress and growth of literature. One should remember the horizon of the reader and the appealing of reception and literary history is not just chronological series of facts. It must look for the questions left behind by the writing and the elucidation the writing
offered to the questions that were pretended to the writer. In order to identify these questions, the interpreter must bring their experiences into play, “since the past horizon of old and new form, problems and solutions is only recognizable in its further mediation, within the present horizon of received work.” (Jauss, 34) All literary texts are seen as proposing possible answers to the questions that were pretended by previous texts also bestowing new questions. This means that the new is not just literary invention but is historical classification or categories. This take place when a writer deliberately re-appropriates the past in his work or offers an unpredicted or new perception on past literature, “allowing something to be found that one previously could not have sought in it.” According to Jauss; “the new also becomes a historical category when the diachronic analysis of literature is pushed further to ask which historical moments are really the ones that first make new that which is new in a literary phenomenon; 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 actualization was so influential that it could alter the perspective on the old, and thereby the canonization of the literary past.” (Jauss, 35)

**Thesis VI:**

In this thesis Jauss refers to linguistic uses of diachronic (the way in which language has developed) and synchronic (concerned with language as it existed one time) relationship which is helpful in overcoming the diachronic perspective in literary history as well. He
“the achievement made in linguistics through the distinction and methodological interrelations of diachronic and synchronic analysis are the occasion for overcoming the diachronic perspective previously the only practiced in literary history as well. If the perspective of the history of reception always bumps up against the functional connections between the understanding of new works and the significance of older ones when changes in aesthetic attitudes are considered, it must also be possible to take a synchronic cross-section of a moment in the development, to arrange the heterogeneous multiplicity of contemporaneous works in equivalent, opposing and hierarchical structure, and thereby to discover an overarching system of relationship in the literature of a historical moment. From this the principle of representation of new literary history could be developed, if further cross-sections diachronically before and after were so arranged as to articulate historically the change in literary structures in its epoch-making moment.” (Jauss, 36)

The primacy of the diachronic perspective in historiography has been questioned by Siegfried Kracuer in his study ‘Time and History’. His study disputes the claim of general history to render comprehensible events from all spheres of life within a homogeneous medium of chronological time as a unified process, consistent in each historical moment. This understanding of history, still standing under the influence of Hegel’s concept of the “objective Spirit,” presupposes that everything that happens contemporaneously is equally informed by the significance of this moment, and it thereby conceals the actual non-contemporaneity of the contemporaneous. According to Jauss; “for the multiplicity of
events of one historical moment, which the universal historians believes can be understood as exponents of a unified content are de facto moments of entirely different time-curves, conditioned by the laws of their “spatial history” as becomes immediately evident in the discrepancies of the various histories of the arts, law, economics, politics, and so forth: the shaped times of the diverse areas overshadow the uniform flow of time, any historical period must therefore be imagined as a mixture of events which emerge at different moments of their own time.” (Jauss, 36-37) Kracaur raises radical doubt concerning historical reason which extends from the pluralism of chronological and morphological courses of time to the fundamental antinomy of the general and the particular in history, in fact proves that universal history is philosophically illegitimate today. Jauss says; “for the sphere of literature in any case, one can say that Kracaur’s insights into the coexistence of the contemporaneous and non-contemporaneous far from leading historical knowledge into an aporia, rather make apparent the necessity and possibility of discovering the historical dimension of literary phenomena in synchronic cross-sections. For it follows from these insights that the chronological fiction of the moment that informs all contemporaneous phenomena corresponds as little to the historicity of literature as does the morphological fiction of a homogeneous literary series, in which all phenomena in their sequential order only follow immanent laws. The purely diachronic perspective, however conclusively it might explain the changes in, for example, the histories of genres according to the immanent logic of innovation and automatization, problem and solution, nonetheless only arrives at the
properly historical dimension when it breaks through the morphological canon, to confront the work that is important in historical influence with the historically warn out, conventional works of the genre, and at the same time does not ignore its relationship to the literary milieu in which it had to make its way alongside works of other genres.” (Jauss, 37) The intersections of diachrony and synchrony brings the historicity of literature into the light, according to Jauss, it must also be possible to make the literary horizon of specific historical moment comprehensible as that synchronic system in relation to which literature that appears contemoporaneously could be received diachronically in relation of non-contemporaneity, and the work could be received as current or not, as modish, outdated, perennial, as premature or belated. Jauss says; since each synchronic system must contain its past and its future as inseparable structural elements, the synchronic cross-sections of the literary production of a historical point in time necessarily implies further cross-sections that are diachronically before and after. Analogues to the history of language, constant and variable factors are thereby brought to the light that can be localized as a function of a system. For literature as well as kind of grammar or syntax, with relatively fixed relations of its own: the arrangement of traditional and un-canonized genres; modes of expressions, kinds of style, and rhetorical figures; contrasted with the arrangement is the much more variable realm of semantics: the literary subjects, archetypes, symbols and metaphors. (Jauss, 38) Jauss also argues that once the substantialist notion of a self-reproducing literary tradition is overcome through a functional explanation of the process like relationship of production and
reception, it must also be possible to recognize behind the transformation of literary forms and contents those reshufflings in a literary system of world understanding that make the horizontal change in the process of aesthetic experience comprehensible.

According to Jauss, on these premises one could develop the principle of representation of literary history that would neither have to follow the all too familiar high road of the traditional great books, nor have to lose itself in the lowlands of the sum-total of all texts that can no longer be historically articulated. Jauss says; the problem of selecting that which is important for a new history of literature can be solved with the help of the synchronic perspective in a manner that has not yet been attempted: a horizon change in the historical process of “literary evolution” need not be pursued only throughout the web of all the diachronic facts and filiations, but can also be established in the altered remains of the synchronic literary system and read out of further cross-sectional analyses. In principle, a representation of literature in the historical succession of such systems would be possible through a series of arbitrary points of intersection between diachrony and synchrony. The historical dimension of literature, its eventful continuity that is lost in traditionalism as in positivism, can meanwhile be recovered only if the literary historian finds points of intersections and brings works to light that articulate the process like character of literary evolution in its moments formative of history as well as its caesurae between periods.

But neither statistics nor the subjective willfulness of the literary historian decides on this historical articulation, but rather the history of influence: that which results from the event and which from the
perspective of the present constitutes the coherence of literature as the prehistory of its present manifestation. (Jauss, 38-39)

**Thesis: VII**

In this thesis Jauss states that only diachronic and synchronic systems are not enough to denote literary history, it also needs a consideration of special history in relation to general history. Here Jauss focuses on the relationship of reader with literature and truth, the horizon of expectations and readers’ understanding of the world, which successively affects his social behavior. Thus, literary history is to be related reader’s real world. Jauss says; “the task of literary history is thus only completed when literary production is not only represented synchronically and diachronically in the succession of its systems, but also seen as “special history” in its own unique relationship to general history. This relationship does not end with the fact that a typified, idealized, satiric or utopian image of social function of literature manifests itself in its 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 thereby also has an effect on his social behavior.” (Jauss, 39)

Marxism, Formalism and structuralism have failed to see how literature informed society and shaped history. The social function of literature occurs when “the literary experience of the reader enters into the horizon of expectations of his lived praxis, performs his understanding of the world, and thereby also has an effect on his social behavior. (Jauss, 39) Jauss incorporates the thought of Karl Popper’s on
productive role of negative experience in the sciences and expands the role of negative experience that found in Gadamer’s aesthetics of hermeneutics. Each supposition and reflection assumes a horizon of expectations. The dissatisfaction of these expectations is what allows the investigators to make connection with authenticity. While Jauss does not fully agree with Popper’s theory, it does not illustrate the productive meaning of negative experience. However, unlike real life, the reader does not bump into reality when his or her expectations are negated. The experience of reading creates a freedom from the constraints of daily life and has the possibility to disclose new perspectives to the reader. (www.ethesis.nottingham.ac.uk, 154) Jauss says, thus a literary work with an unfamiliar aesthetic form can break through the expectations of its readers and at the same time confront them with a question, the solution to which remains lacking for them in the religiously or officially sanctioned morals. (Jauss, 44)

Here, Jauss tries to integrate the literary, historical and sociological research into the horizon of expectations. According to Jauss synchronic studies expose the horizon of expectations at a certain period which arise from the audience’s experience with other works of art and the sociological background of everyday life. (Jauss, 41) Literary history must study the social conditions and background that affect the author’s audience’s expectations. Jauss explains; “the gap between literature and history, between aesthetic and historical knowledge, can be bridged if literary history does not simply describe the process of general history in the reflection of its works one more time, but rather when it discovers in the course of literary evolution that properly socially
formative functions that belongs to literature as it competes with other arts and social forces in the emancipation of mankind from its natural, religious and social bonds.” (Jauss, 45)

In this essay Jauss is concerned with the relationship between literary history and general history. In particular he wants to overcome the model in which the interpretation of a text is accomplished by placing the text in its proper historical context. This misses the fact that the history of a text’s interpretation is an essential element for our ability to understand it. Therefore, he had to rethink the relationship between literary and general history. His conclusion is that literary history had to include the eventful nature of the literary work as well as its constitutive historical role. The history of literature is a historical process which occurs in the experiences and interpretations of those who absorb their message, enjoy or judge them, acknowledge or refute them, select and forget them, and to such an extent form traditions, and those who finally assume an active role by answering a tradition and producing new works. (www.ethesis.nottinghum.ac.uk, 155) This last thesis deals with the integration of biblical exegesis and church history, according to Jauss; the reception of history of biblical text is related to church history through the socially formative function which literature performs. In particular, in this thesis the way in which the reception of a text can disclose new perspectives and possibilities for living in the world and thus, emancipate the church from traditional, cultural or religious bonds. (www.ethesis.nottinghum.ac.uk, 155)
Critical Perspective:

In his aesthetic of reception, Jauss considers literary history as challenging literary theory to take up once again the unresolved dispute between the Marxists i.e. Socialist and Formalist school. Formalism is literary theory which developed in Russia in the early 1920s practitioners or followers of the theory were called Formalist who emphasized on the study of poetic language or literary text as a form. Indeed the Formalist collapsed the distinction between Form and Content. Socialism were primarily concerned with Economic Political and Philosophical issues and worked out explanation of the capitalist theory and mode of production. They did not develop an aesthetic of culture or literature. The Socialist critic wrote from the definite standpoint of Marx’s philosophical ideas, and from his view of history in which the class struggle is fundamental, or in terms of socio-historical factors. They are devoted to reconstruction of the part on the basic of historical evidences in order to find out to what extent a text is truthful and accurate representation of social reality at any given time. At the very out set of his essay Jauss clears his objectives that to bridge the gap between literature and history, between historical and aesthetic approaches, begins at the point at which both school stops. Jauss say’s; *my attempt to bridge the gap between literature and history, between historical and aesthetic approaches, begins at the point at which both schools stops. Their methods understand the literary fact in terms of the circular aesthetic system of production and representation. In doing so, they deprive literature of a dimension which unalterably belongs to its aesthetic character as well as to its social function: its reception and*
impact. Reader, listener and spectator- in short, the audience- plays an extremely limited role in both literary theories......... (Jauss & Benzinger, 7) Further Jauss incorporates the statement of Walter Bulst that is “no text was ever written to be read and interpreted philologically by philologist, he adds, nor historically by historian also. (Jauss & Benzinger, 7)

In his argument Hans Robert Jauss holds the place of compromiser; he does not admire the Socialism and not take the side of Formalist view. He explains on ‘an act of reading’ instead of ‘individual reception’, according to him; reading happens in particular situation, the reader does not percept the meaning of the text as same when text was published. Jauss argues that reader uses different criteria at different periods, which he calls ‘Horizon and Expectation’, to judge the nature of literariness in text or genre to which it belongs. What appeals to our generation at given period may not interest reader at some other periods; according to him ‘no work is universal’. A literary work is not an object which stands by itself and which offers a same face to each reader in each period or its timeless essence.

According to Jauss these approaches neglect the role of reader to whom the literary work is primarily addressed, reader’s role as unalterable for aesthetics as for historical appreciation. Jauss explains the triangle relationship among a text or work of art, author reader and critic; he says that before all their reflex relationship to the literature they are all readers. He says; for the critic who judges a new work, the writer who conceives of his work in light of positive or negative norms of an
earlier work and the literary historian who classifies a work in his tradition and explains it historically are also readers before their reflex relationship to literature can become productive again. In the triangle of author, work and reading public the latter is no passive part, no chain of mere reactions, but even history making energy. The historical life of a literary work is unthinkable without the active participation of its audience. For it is only through the process of its communication that the work reaches the changing horizon of experience in a continuity in which the continual change occurs from simple reception to critical understanding, from passive to active reception, from recognized aesthetic norms to a new production which surpasses them. (Jauss & Benzinger, 8) The historicity of literature is depend upon the new relation of work audience and new work which is like a dialogue, process which is to be understood as question, answer, problem and solution. Jauss says; the circular system of production and representation within which the methodology of literary criticism has mainly moved in the past must therefore be widened to include an aesthetic of reception and impact if the problem of understanding the historical sequence of literary works as a continuity of literary history is to find a new solution. (Jauss & Benzinger, 8) The view of aesthetic of reception mediates between passive reception and active understanding and literature should be considered as the dialogue between work and public. According to Jauss; if literary history viewed in this way as a dialogue between work and public, the contrast between its aesthetic and its historical aspects is also continually mediated. Thus the thread from the past appearance to the present experience of a work, which
historicism had cut, is tied together. (Jauss & Benzinger, 8) There is a relationship between literature and reader which has aesthetic and historical value implication through which the work get determined its aesthetic value. Jauss explains that; the obvious historical implication of this is that the appreciation of the first reader will be continued and enriched through further “reception” from generation to generation; in this way the historical significance of a work will be determined and its aesthetic value revealed. In this process of the history of reception, which the literary historian can only escape at the price of ignoring his own principles of comprehension and judgment, the repossession of past work occurs simultaneously with the continual mediation of past and present art and of traditional evaluation and current literary attempts. (Jauss & Benzinger, 8, 9)

The literary history written according to history of aesthetic of reception takes on significant role in the continual integration of past art by aesthetic experience. Jauss explains it as; the merit of literary history based on an aesthetic of reception will depend upon the degree to which it can take an active part in the continual integration of past art by aesthetic experience. This demands on the one hand- in opposition to the objectivism of positivist literary history- a conscious attempt to establish canons, which, on the other hand- in opposition to the classism of the study of tradition assumes a critical review if not destruction of the traditional literary canon. The criterion for establishing such a canon and the ever necessary retelling of literary history is clearly set out by the aesthetic of reception. (Jauss & Benzinger, 9)
Jauss’ theory views literature “from the perspective of the reader or consumer” and treats literature “as a dialectical process of production and reception.” Further Jauss formulates seven theses that provide systemic aesthetic approach to rewrite literary history.

In his first thesis Jauss insists on the removal of historical objectivism from literary history because it is based on the aesthetic of production and representation. He says; *a renewal of history demands the removal of the prejudices of historical objectivism and the grounding of the traditional aesthetic of production and representation in aesthetics of reception and influence. The historicity of literature rests not on an organization of literary facts that is established post festum, but rather on the preceding experience of the literary work by its readers.* (Jauss, 20)

Jauss second thesis signifies the aesthetic of reception as it can avoid the psychological pitfalls by looking at the influence of work in the period of its appearance, from pre-understanding of genre and from themes already familiar in other works. Jauss states that; *the analysis of literary experience of the reader avoids the threatening pitfalls of psychology if it describes the reception and influence of a work within the objectifiable system of expectation 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.* (Jauss, 22)

He determines the artistic character of a work of art by its impact or effect on its reader. The text brings the change in horizons through the
negation of the familiar or opening up new perspectives and it is a result of the aesthetic distance between the text and its audience (reader) and it can be objectified through the reader’s reaction and the critic’s judgment. Jauss explains that; “reconstructed in this way, the horizon of expectations allows one to determine its artistic character by the kind and the degree of its influence on a presupposed audience. If one characterizes as aesthetic distance the disparity between the given horizon of expectations and the appearance of a new work, whose reception can result in a “change of horizon” through negation of familiar experiences or through raising newly articulated experiences to the level of consciousness, then this aesthetic distance can be objectified historically along the spectrum of the audience’s reactions and criticism’s judgment (spontaneous success, rejection or shock, scattered approval, gradual or belated understanding”. (Jauss, 25)

In the next thesis Jauss talks about the historical significance of a literary text. In order to recognize the historical significance of a text one must see the text in its position in its literary series. He says; “the theory of the aesthetics of reception not only allows one to conceive the meaning and form of a literary work in the historical unfolding of its understanding. It also demands that one insert the individual work into its “literary series” to recognize its historical position and significance in the context of the experiences of literature. In the step from a history of reception of works to an eventful history of literature, the latter manifest itself as a process in which the passive reception is on the part authors. Put another way, the next work can solve formal and moral problems left behind by the last work, and present new problems in turn.” (Jauss, 32)
In sixth thesis Jauss incorporates the advances in the field of linguistics to overcome the dominance of diachronic method used in the traditional literary history. A literary historian should not only see a literary work of art in its diachronic tradition but also in synchronic tradition which help to understand the changing aesthetic attitudes and general relationship in literature of one historical moment. Jauss says; “the achievement made in linguistics through the distinction and methodological interrelations of diachronic and synchronic analysis are the occasion for overcoming the diachronic perspective previously the only practiced- in literary history as well. If the perspective of the history of reception always bumps up against the functional connections between the understanding of new works and the significance of older ones when changes in aesthetic attitudes are considered, it must also be possible to take a synchronic cross-section of a moment in the development, to arrange the heterogeneous multiplicity of contemporaneous works in equivalent, opposing and hierarchical structure, and thereby to discover an overarching system of relationship in the literature of a historical moment. From this the principle of representation of new literary history could be developed, if further cross-sections diachronically before and after were so arranged as to articulate historically the change in literary structures in its epoch-making moments.” (Jauss, 36)

In his last thesis Jauss explains that the literary history is not as general history or mere chronological collection of fact of the past but it is a special history and it has unique relationship with the general history. Literary historian should see the literary history as special
history and its relationship to general history in order to understand the social function of literature. He explains; “task of literary history is thus only completed when literary production is not only represented synchronically and diachronically in the succession of its systems, but also seen as “special history” in its own unique relationship to general history. This relationship does not end with the fact that a typified, idealized, satiric or utopian image of social function of literature manifests itself in its 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 thereby also has an effect on his social behavior.” (Jauss, 39)

Jauss appeals that the literary historian should come out the traditional, objective, positivistic way of writing literary history where the role of reader either neglected or considered as authors role. Jauss also states that these principles can be called as bedrocks to bridge the gap between literature and history, between historical and aesthetic approach.

To sum up, it is clear that, Jauss theory is concerned with reader’s involvement and recognizes the importance of one’s horizon of expectation. Reception Theory is revolutionary approach to the role of the reader in relationship to the notions of interpretation and one of the most important contributions to the history of literature and new perspective on the literary experiences. It established a new model for writers and theorists. Although it is difficult to fully understand how powerful and revolutionary this model shift was at that time, it is easy to
see that the concepts which came out of Reception Theory are now part of how we try to understand literature, art and the world. The theory makes the work of art free from the constructed ideas like text is ‘strictly articulated form’ or ‘text is a particular entity of historical period’ and keeps it in the hands of reader and its horizon of expectations.
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