

**B.A. (Hons.) English
Semester-2
FCLMN-201
Fundamentals of Comparative Literature-1**



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Comparative Literature: Relevance, Definitions, Concepts and Historical Developments

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B.A. Hons. (English)

Semester II

FCLMN 201

Fundamentals of Comparative Literature I

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will provide

- a. The pedagogic and academic basis for the teaching, learning and practice of comparative literature through “reading” or interpretation of language.
- b. The ethical impule underlying the teaching and practise of comparative literature in a plural society like ours.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Relevance of Comparative Literature:

Comparative Literature is a subject within the Humanities, aiming to understand and engage with difference as a condition of our lives, by studying the work of language in literature and literary systems, as well as in the other arts.

Language is the medium of our intersubjectivity. Subjectivity is the perception or experience of reality from within one’s own perspective and necessarily limited by the boundary or horizon of one’s own worldview. Intersubjectivity is the interchange of thoughts and feelings between two persons or “subjects,” (e.g. two persons or entities like persons who have agency), facilitated by empathy. Language is the medium through which this interchange between two subjects occurs. Our relation to the world is also established through language, which includes the language of our senses. Thus not only verbal language, but visual, aural and sensible languages, as well as a combination of these, come within the purview of comparative practice and method. As a humanistic discipline, Comparative Literature aims to provide, in the words of Edward Said, “a useable praxis” for intellectuals and academics, by introducing the ideas and principles of critical humanism as useful principles for living with the diversity and difference that they encounter in the world in which they live. (Said 6). So, Comparative Literature has been called an ethics rather than aesthetics.

1.2 HUMANITIES, HUMANISM, AND CRITICAL HUMANISM

Humanities is the name for a certain type of content, and for a certain type of relationship to knowledge. *Humanitas* (Latin) is closely related to the Greek *paideia*, and means culture, education, civilization. In Renaissance Europe, **humanism** was a revival in the

study of classical antiquity, including grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy.

“The term *umanista* was used in fifteenth-century Italian academic slang to describe a teacher or student of classical literature and the arts associated with it, including that of rhetoric. The English equivalent ‘humanist’ makes its appearance in the late sixteenth century with a similar meaning. Only in the 19th century, however and probably for the first time in Germany in 1809, is the attribute transformed into a substantive: *humanism*, standing for devotion to the literature of ancient Greece and Rome, and the humane values that may be derived from them”

In 1878 Emil Littré defined the Humanities as "letters" ie what was taught in high school after students have been taught grammar and before they were taught philosophy. In 1883, Dilthey used the term *Geisteswissenschaft*, the science of the spirit, which was translated into French in 1942 as an introduction to the ‘Sciences Humaines’. Unlike the humanities, the "**human sciences**" are based on a distinction between object and subject of knowledge. The human being becomes an object of knowledge so that "human sciences" are opposed to "exact sciences" just as— the sciences of nature — are opposed to the sciences of the spirit. Here knowledge seems to be divided into two parts: one having natural laws as an object, the other examining the human mind. The traditional opposition between culture and science comes from the assumptions implicit in this definition.

Critical humanism questions a simple unitary view of the human, given the diversity of the human race and the conditions in which it lives. It criticises the claim that human beings can be understood ‘transcendentally’ and taken out of the contexts of time (history) and space (geography) of which they are always a part. For critical humanists, our ‘human being’ is most emphatically not a free-floating universal individual: rather ‘it’ is always stuffed full of the culture and the historical moment, always in process and changing. Human beings ‘nest’ themselves in webs of contexts, relationships. To talk otherwise is to engage in the ‘myth of the universal man’ (Franco, 2013).

In this context, we interpret Said’s idea of a “usable praxis” as comprising

- the act of comparison as an approach to or a way of reading literature, and
- situating this approach in our way of living with the difference and diversity that characterises human societies across the world, including, of course, our own.

Comparative Literature as an activity provides, through an engagement with literature and the arts, the elements of “a usable praxis” because it helps us to find ways of knowing and understanding the other, so that we can respond to the crises of understanding difference in an increasingly “inhumane” and “genocidal” world (Said, *ibid*). This is the relevance of Comparative Literature as a discipline in the Humanities. In the rest of this unit, we will discuss the concepts that help us to understand the relevance of our discipline by relating them to our teaching, learning and living our lives in the world with *others*.

1.3 THE ACT OF COMPARISON AND PHILOSOPHIES OF PLURALITY

Knowing is a mental or a cognitive act: we know and understand the world by connecting to it through our minds. But the way in which a human being understands the world is not limited to her knowing (cognition) separate from her feelings (emotion). Understanding comes from the interaction between or the integration of both these capacities of cognition and emotion. In Comparative Literature, our aim is to understand difference located in the world through our engagement with literature and the arts. Comparative literature is thus not an epistemology, i.e. a theory of knowledge but a hermeneutics, i.e. a way of understanding through interpretation.

Comparison is a particular kind of cognitive activity, in which

- the existence of difference is part of our seeing and thinking about the world.
- we look at something *in relation to* some other, different entities, persons or things

In the act of comparison, we bring two or more entities or objects together within a frame that is created by our perspective, located in our situation. In literary studies, this approach comprises

- i. “reading” or interpretation of two or more texts together, using literary or experiential categories (see 1.2 below).
- ii. locating a literary text within the structure of feeling (See Unit 2.4.1) in which it is produced, in order to understand the textual practices of writing and reading (See 1.5 below)
- iii. locating myself, as the reader, within my structure of feeling, thus making a responsible relation between reader and text, which is simultaneous with the process of reading.
- iv. also “reading”(see i and ii above) together, i.e. establishing a relation between, two or more art works in different media .

These are all practices of comparison.

❖ Check Your Progress 1

I. Choose the correct answer

1). Difference between humanism and critical humanism is

1. The former does not imagine the human as a uniform homogenous category
2. The latter thinks of the human being as situated, while the former generalises the historical situation in which the idea of the human became current.
3. Critical humanism is criticism of the idea of elevating the human to divine status.
4. Humanism favours the status quo or a return to the status quo.

Ans : 1

2). “Useable praxis” refers to the study of ----- in order to----- by-----

1. Literature, create a humane world, engaging with difference
2. Humanities, live in a humane world, reading literature
3. Ethics, read literature, engage with difference.
4. Practices, understand ethics, reading literature

Ans : 1

3). Intersubjectivity is

1. Relation between two ideas
2. Any relation through the medium of language
3. Relation between two subjects with agency
4. The relation between subject and object through language.

Ans : 3

4). Comparison is a ----- and not a ----- . Comparative Literature is not a/an----- but a/an -----, which through the study of ----- helps us to ----- .

- | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| i.Hermeneutic, | iv.understand, | vi.practice, |
| ii.theory, | v.literature, | vii.difference. |
| iii.epistemology, | | |

Ans : vi, ii, iii, i, v, iv, vii

5). Select two assumptions foundational to Comparative Literature practice

1. The universe is pluralistic
2. Truth is conditioned, ie located and hence from many perspectives.

3. There is no truth
4. The multiplicity of the universe can be reduced to a single all encompassing system.

Ans: 1 and 2

6). Comparative Literature is called an ethics because

1. It teaches us how to live a moral life
2. It shows us what is moral through literature
3. It is founded on engaging with difference and alterity
4. It teaches literary texts that give us an ethical lesson.

Ans: 3

1.3.1 Plurality and Pluralism in Belief Systems:

Plurality is the basic assumption on which the comparative approach is based. In this section we will introduce some philosophical grounds for belief in plurality and relate this belief to the practice of comparison outlined in the previous section. William James describes the universe as “pluralistic”, questioning the view that there may be a single “all-form” in which, according to him, “the substance of reality may never get totally collected”. Instead he advocates “a distributive form of reality, the *each*-form”, which he says is “logically as acceptable and empirically as probable as the all-form commonly acquiesced in as so obviously the self-evident thing” (21). This is because “There is nothing in our universe that can be considered definitive *a priori*, neither in our scientific knowledge, nor in our social bonds or identitarian relations. The pluralist suggests that reality is not a complete unity, all connected and perfect, but there is always something escaping from our knowledge: something “not yet considered.” This resonates with the ideas of location, perspective and responsibility outlined among the “practices” of comparison outlined in 1.4 above.

A pluralistic worldview is based on the assumptions that,

- a. There are many beings and entities in the world. There is more than one kind of being or entity, ie, the each form, which questions the idea of a single all-form, and establishes the uniqueness of “each” form, thereby introducing the idea of difference. Hence, the very act of comparison acknowledges plurality.
- b. Plurality also assumes difference, i.e. not only that there is more than one thing, but also that there is more than one *kind* of thing, i.e. plurality does not mean quantity only; it is also plurality of

kinds. One entity or object is different from another, and one cannot be reduced to the other. Without these assumptions, “comparison” as a cognitive act is impossible. To this idea of a pluralistic universe are added “Pragmatist anti-essentialism and humanism. These assert that the nature of the world is not pre-given ready-made and absolute. James calls for “another image of human relations where ideas don’t fall down from above, but human beings are *“real causes in nature.”* Thus human agency and responsibility are foregrounded.

1.3.2 Ethical Implications:

The ethical implications of a pluralist theory of being or ontology can be traced to the Jain philosophy of *anekantavad* *anek* (many) and *anta* (qualities, attributes or ends) - which explains the complex and multiple nature of reality, as the name suggests. This philosophy is derived from the conversations of Mahavira on the nature of *jiva* (the soul) and the *ajiva* (matter), collected in the *Bhagvati Sutra*. Though the term *anekantavad* was not used by Mahavira, these conversations show Mahavira’s belief that the simple binary of “either/or” cannot encapsulate or express the complex and multiple nature of reality. Mahavira emphasised the complex nature of truth, its qualification according to perspective, i.e. the existence of a multiplicity of perspectives rather than a dogmatic absolutism and the impossibility of expressing it completely through language.

1.1.3 Plurality in Practice and Belief:

Siddhasena Divakara introduced the term “*anekantvad*” or non-absolutism as a theory of knowledge, or epistemology, to remove the dogmatism of *ekantavad*. *Ekantika* or one-sidedness of a single perspective is established as dogmatic. The nature of reality is *anekantik*, ie plural, and the quest for this is possible only through dialogue with various standpoints and reconciliation of various points of view. If perceived from a combination of standpoints, we perceive an object as it really is. For example, *anekantvad* rejects the view that truth is either single and constant or that it is manifold and constantly changing – both these are one-sided views and hence only partially true. If these views are combined, then the truth of each point of view is preserved and enables us to understand the whole.

Nayavad and *Syadvad* are the epistemological theories, or theories of knowledge, that underlie the philosophy of *anekantavad*, which itself is the ground for *ahimsa*, the highest moral goal of Jainism. *Nayavada*, or the epistemological theory of viewpoints professes the partial expression of truth from any particular viewpoint, and enables us to understand reality part by part. According to Siddhasena, a thing becomes the subject of a *naya* when it is conceived from a particular

standpoint.. To illustrate, a gold necklace exists both as substance (gold) and as a mode of existence taken on by the substance (necklace). Each point of view expresses the truth partially – taken together, they can give us a complete account of reality. Nayavada also encourages the investigator to assume other perspectives, especially the perspective of the other as a constantly changing, yet persisting point of view which demands the same respect and bears the same right to happiness as oneself. This is seen as the root of the ethical imperative of ahimsa pronounced in Mahavira's philosophy.

The theory of viewpoints works through Syadvada, or the theory of qualified predication. The Sanskrit word "syat" means "maybe" – neither a yes, nor a no. Its use transforms a categorical statement into a conditional statement. But in the philosophy of Jainism, this conditional term has a specific purpose : to indicate the many-sided nature of a proposition. "Syat" in this usage, indicates the conditions that qualify any statement : thus the truth value of a categorical statement is determined by the conditions under which it is really the case. Syadvad thus recognises not only what is, ie being, and what is not yet, ie what will become, but also the process from one to another which is inexpressible and combines both.

James' ideas of progressive anti-essentialism and pragmatism, mentioned above, have elements of similarity with the views of the Jain philosophers. For example, Essentialism is the view that every object and entity has an "essence" or an inherent, unchangeable, already given core, without which it would lose its identity, ie it would not be what it is. Thus, it limits all objects and entities to their pre-determined essence, without scope for change. IN rejecting this, James' anti-essentialism takes the position similar to anekantavad : he rejects a dogmatic, single truth/ end /attribute which anekantavad criticised as partial and one-sided. James advocates pragmatism, which is the broad philosophical view that our knowledge of the world is never free from our agency within it – there is nothing pre-given or essential. This too can be epistemologically grounded in the theory of viewpoints Nayavad and of qualified predication, Syadvad, which also reject any essential view of reality and instead recognise the truth value of a categorical statement as determined by the conditions under which it is held.

1.3.3 Critique of Pluralist Standpoint

Is the pluralist point of view ethical and epistemological relativism ? By this we mean, does pluralism force us to accept that since all views are located or qualified, and all truths are conditional, hence, all views and all truths are equal ? This would lead to a contradiction in the Jain worldview itself – how could ahimsa be upheld as a non-negotiable

truth and an ethical standard, if himsa, according to the pluralist view espoused by anekantavad, is equally true and ethical?

Apart from moral relativism, pluralism has also been criticised as a logical impossibility, ie we cannot hold that a view of the world and another opposite view contradicting it, are both equally true, just as we cannot dispense with the idea of falsehood because pluralism teaches us to believe that all truth is conditional.

This leads to pluralism being as exclusivist as any dogmatic belief: since our views are conditioned, like all truths, our holding a particular view must exclude those who do not hold it, thereby undercutting the very idea of multi-perspectives and many views/ends/attributes as proposed by anekantavad. In the next section, we will engage with these criticisms by pointing out how the pluralist view of the world underlies the engagement and understanding of difference offered by multiple perspectives, which is the task of comparative literature.

1.3.4 Plurality, Difference and Ethics

In the preceding sections of this unit, we have elucidated different streams of philosophical thinking that provide an alternative to a dogmatic, essentialist view of the world and discussed how such pluralist views of the world and their application underlie the idea and practice of comparative literature. In this concluding section, we will connect these two aspects together to form an ethical framework for the teaching and practice of comparative literature, thus underlining its relevance both as a subject of study and scholarship within the Humanities, and as an “usable praxis”, ie a way of living in a plural, diverse society.

Among the criticisms levelled at pluralism is one of epistemological and moral relativism, which claims that the outcome of multi-perspectivalism is that all views are true and all standpoints are good. This criticism overlooks the dialogic character of anekantavad, as well as its non-absolutist character. It also ignores the anti-essentialist nature of James’ idea of a pluralistic universe. A multi-perspectival view does not absolutise or essentialise any single point of view, including the pluralist perspective. Hence, pluralism is a way to counter the mistaken dogmatic idea of a single absolute view and the violence that results from imposing that uniformity upon difference.

Pluralism has been criticised as a neutral view, ie all views are equal because they are equally good; It has also been criticised as exclusivist, ie we are bound by our own perspective alone and therefore, only our view exists for us. This exclusivist view is often

also criticised as ethnocentric, ie we are bound by the situation in a particular culture and tradition consequent upon our ethnicity.

However, both of these criticisms offer an abstract understanding of it as philosophy, whereas it is actually an ethical idea regulating our interactions with difference and with “others” who are different from us or hold other views. Pluralism insists that just as we hold our views to be rational, so must we admit that other views exist which are held as rational by others. This is the teaching of nayavad – that there are many nayas from which reality can be fully grasped only through the admitting of more than one perspective. This does not stop us from holding our views nor does it prevent us from respecting the existence of multiple perspectives and other views. Neither does it sanction us to impose our views upon the others. All views are equal not because they are all equally good or true, but because they are all qualified by the conditions in which they are held, as syadvad points out. Hence no single view or dogma has the monopoly of truth – and the ascent to truth comes through an encounter with the multiple perspectives while accepting that each is conditioned by circumstances, just as our own view is qualified by ours.

Thus, an encounter with other views and perspectives is mandated within Anekantavad – that by using the insight that every human view is conditioned and partial, it proposes that engagement with the other is the only way to get beyond nayas, or individual or partisan positions, and reach pramana, or truth. It thus mandates an encounter with the other from an ethical position which enables us to see the “other” on its own terms, rather than as merely opposed to us. In this crucial way, it reinforces the ethical impulse of comparison, which we have earlier noted is the impulse to reach across difference towards understanding alterity, or otherness.

❖ Check Your Progress 2

1. Match the words in Set A with the meanings in Set B

SET A

SET B

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| “1.monistic | i unlimited centralised authority |
| 2.dogmatic | ii unified |
| 3.all-form | iii based on pre-given rules to be followed), |
| 4.absolutism | iv. unity of origin of all things |

Ans : 1-iv 2-iii 3-ii 4-i

2. The antonym of pluralism is

1.Monism

2. Essentialism

3.Dogmatism

4.Humanism

Ans : 1

3. The Jain philosophy of anekantvad and the non-essentialist pragmatist philosophy of James share

1.Multiperspectivalism

2.Anti-essentialism

3.Belief in ahimsa

4.Belief in a single source for every being

Ans : 1 and 2

4. Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the choices below.

Nayavad and Syadvad are both -----theories; the former is theory of-----, the latter is of----- . Anekantavad uses these theories to prove the belief of -----, codified by -----that due to the -----of the universe, all views are ---- and----. It proposes that we can hold ----- views while accepting that ----may have -----views. This is the ----- basis of ahimsa, the highest -----goal of Jainism.

i.viewpoints

ii others

iii.predication

iv.Divakara

v.different

vi.epistemological

vii conditioned

viii.one-sided

ixMahavira

x.ethical

xi.multiplicity

xii. our own

xiii.moral

xiv.partial

Ans : vi, iii, i, ix, iv, xi, vii, viii, xii, ii, v, x, xiii

Match Critique with response

Set 1

1. Pluralism is relativist.
2. Anekantvad forbids us to hold any views about the truth
3. Pluralism essentialises the pluralist perspective
4. Pluralism is exclusivist, ie only our views exist for us.
5. Anekantavad holds that all views are equal because they are all true.

Set 2

6. The pluralist perspective is one amongst many perspectives in the view of the pluralist
7. Pluralism asserts that all views are conditioned by situation, including our own. and we have the freedom to decide which view we must take.
8. All views of truth come from a perspective, so my view cannot be the only view as mine is not the only perspective.
9. All views are equal because they are all conditioned by the situation
10. WE hold the view of truth from our perspective as do others; we may disagree with their view, but the existence of others' views different from ours, cannot be denied, just as the conditioned nature of our view cannot be denied.

Ans : 1- 5, 2- 9, 3- 8, 4- 10, 5-9

1.4 DIFFERENCE AND THE PRACTICE OF COMPARISON

Comparison presupposes difference, but this difference is not necessarily revealed across geographical and ethnic borders/ boundaries only. Difference may be physical or imagined or geopolitical or social. We speak of difference in empirical terms, as though it is a contrast between two things; a way in which a thing, A, is *not like* another thing, B. This requires that A and B each has its own self-contained *nature*, articulated on its own, apart from any other thing. The essentialist tradition, in contrast to this attempts to locate the identity of any given thing in some essential properties or self-contained identities. Anti-essentialism, based on difference argues that the *identity* of any given thing is constituted on the basis of the ever-changing network of relations in which it is found. So identity is a *secondary* determination, while *difference*, or the constitutive relations that make up identities, is primary.

Comparison is the act of setting up a relation between different entities and objects. To compare is to *do* something – to bring together two (or more) different entities and understand them in relation to each other, by locating each in its context .The anti-essentialist pluralist stance is inherent in comparison as an activity. Hence Dinoyz Durisin calls the practice of comparison “literary comparatistics”, and argues that “contactual relations” are the subject matter of comparative practice. Durisin limits the idea of contactual relations to the contact between two national literatures only. But it must be noted, especially from our experience of Indian literature, that

“contact” is not necessarily always between two geopolitically divided nation-states – as in the case of India, a single nation has a number of “official” languages and literatures (see 5.2 below) which have a shared history, shared sources and common “inherited texts” as Sisir Kumar Das (See U5 below) puts it.

“Difference”, whether it is across or within national borders is a concept foundational to comparative literature (See U5.2 below;). As discussed in the first part of this unit, pluralism enables us to think beyond homogenisation which limits us to a single perspective. This privileges a single, often majoritarian culture, language or worldview instead of taking cognisance of the immense diversity that characterises our world. If we reject this limited view, it will be clear that difference is a condition of our lives and negotiating that difference underlies our daily life practices. The human being’s life involves her meeting with the world. Through our daily encounters we realise that we share the world with “others” who are “different” from us. Difference makes each of us unique even while we share universal characteristics that make us human. Our relations with others depend on our ability to understand, accept and negotiate the difference that we encounter, whether it is through practical/physical or literary/imaginative contact. This is the ethical focus of the comparative approach, equipping us to understand, negotiate and appreciate difference in our relations with the world of people and things.

1.4.1 Literary Studies, Difference and Ethics:

Literature cannot be fitted into any single theoretical frame; neither can there be a single correct or sacrosanct reading of any literary text (see U1.2 below). Therefore, a *comparative reading* introduces us to difference by accepting a multiperspectival, plural view of the world as the basis of our engagement with the other. It thus opens us to the possibility of plurality, which is the condition of our existence . A comparative approach helps us to appreciate the difficulty of acknowledging and living with difference. These are the basics of a humanist approach and underlie the ethics of comparative literature as a scholarly and academic practice. This ethics informs reading and interpretation as well as the work and place of literature and art in human lives

Reading, writing and interpretation are processes of textualisation which turn the “work” into a “text” . The practice of comparative literature considers these processes in themselves. These can be studied through the literary categories of theme, genre and repertoires of signification. The timeframe of such a study may be

1. synchronic ie, using texts from different language-literatures which are extant simultaneously,
2. diachronic ie, using texts which have a chronological relation to one another, from within the same language- literary tradition or between different language literary traditions.
3. panchronic, ie a combination of both these.

The study of reading, writing and interpretation as processes of textualisation, or processes which create literature through the production of a literary text, may be termed "literariness"..

1.5 LITERARINESS

Roman Jakobson described the object of study in literary science as the "literariness" of a work, Jan Mukarovsky emphasized that literariness is a capacity of the linguistic medium, hence Russian Formalism insisted on the "form" of the literary work. Form is required to identify art – any work that is "made" has a medium. This medium has to be shaped different ways or "modes" of which according to Aristotle there are 3 – lyrics, dramatic and narrative. According to Rene Wellek, "literariness" is the focus of the study of literature as subject distinct from other activities and procedures of man. He distinguishes the literary features as "intrinsic" to literature, while the context and influence of other discourses upon literature are termed "extrinsic". Hence, he says, "we must face the problem of 'literariness,' the central issue of aesthetics, the nature of art and literature" (293).

Literature defamiliarises the familiar by "showing" us something in a different way. All literary devices, like metaphor, symbol, alliteration to name only a very few, are "ways of seeing" or showing the world around us. Viktor Shklovsky proposed this idea of art as the technique of seeing things differently. Shklovsky also insists that art should be difficult, but it is difficult to sustain this argument – it could apply to some forms of art, or to some viewers with respect to some forms of art. Hence Mukarovsky emphasises linguistic form and Viktor Shklovsky shows how to foreground the "making" or poesis by estranging or defamiliarizing, through the medium. Defamiliarisation is a process of transformation where language asserts its power to affect our perception. In literature language reconstructs the world that we perceive, and renews the readers' lost capacity for fresh sensation.

Dionyz Durisin in his *Theory of Interliterary Process* (1989), characterizes literariness as the "basic and essential quality" (21) of all literature embodying all relations within the literature, their intensity, amount, and manner of their conditionality within the framework of

various individual literatures. When this intensity, variability, mutual relations, or affinities transcend the boundaries of individual literatures, Marian Galic name this “interliterariness” : “literariness” transforms itself automatically into “interliterariness.” Thus, interliterariness is the basic and essential quality of literature in an international and inter-ethnic context and ontological determination. This determination and its framework comprise all possible relations and affinities, individual literatures, supra-ethnic, and supra-national (See Unit 2 below) entities of various kinds, and the highest embodiment of interliterariness, world literature. the most important features of interliterariness is its implied or implicit processual character, a system(at)ic series of related literary facts within the ethnic or national framework presupposing the temporal and spatial changes in the course of their literary development.

The most relevant example is Indian literature itself, which has a common literary and political history though it is written in different languages .For this reason, Amiya Dev calls Indian literature an “interliterary condition” (see U5.1, 5.2).

1.5.1 Language and Literature:

The Russian Formalists emphasised the form and the technique that distinguished poetic language from everyday language. Obviously this form was the result of a fresh construction in language by a writer- a different way of seeing. For example, metaphors make us look at a familiar thing in a totally new light. The world of prose fiction or drama is not the real world but a world made of language by a writer. It comes into existence when we read – but until then there are just marks on the page between the covers. These marks are the written/graphic signifier. The graphic refers to two things and joins them together – an object and the idea which is its name. The object and the concept/idea that refers to it together form the sign. Language attaches a concept i.e. a word, to the referent, i.e. object in the world, whether present or imaginary. The word in which the referent and the concept are united is the sign. Learning a language means that we have acquired the ability to link a concept (idea) to a referent (e.g. an object in the world) through a sign, i.e. a word. We are learning to use the conceptual resources of language.

But the referential function is not the only use of language. The concept refers to the general idea, hence even if you are thinking of a blue cup and I of a stone one, we both know without the presence of the object referred to that we both are referring to something we can drink out of. “Extra-conceptual” resources refer to the work of language beyond the referential function. It is the ability of language to bring to mind what is not there, to make us see/show us what

cannot be seen in the physical world. The unicorn for e.g. is a mythical animal- there is a word for it, but the referent itself i.e. the object or the entity, lives only in our imagination. This shows that a world can be made in and of language, without referential correspondence to the physical world. Thus, the use of language in literature does not entail a separate literary language but a unique use of language which marks literature. Literary devices are part of this literary use (see above)

As an example, a realist novel claims to present reality objectively – but it is language use and not a separate language that distinguishes it from other kinds of novels. We see a world through language. Wittgenstein introduces the concept of “language game” to mark a particular kind of language use. The rules or grammar that make language intelligible are made by convention and trial by users themselves because they have to make themselves understood to others. Sharing rules and vocabulary means sharing the same language, i.e. being able to understand each other. Every literary text is open to multiple interpretations, because as we have seen before, literature comes into being in language through the events first of writing and then of reading.

1.6 TEXTUALITY

The “frames” of textualisation that according to Barthes turns the work into a text are put in place by the reader in order to turn the marks on the page into words that require “reading” (Barthes 1989) . In a comparative reading, the frame is both *intercultural* (taking into consideration relations between cultures) and *intersubjective* (the relations between subjects/ agents). The frame enables us to locate each text we are studying in a *context* (i.e. the conjunction of language, culture specific literary conventions, time, place), and then bring two texts into contact by studying them together.

Sometimes, contact between language cultures which the texts are nested in leads to their impact upon one another. Thus the “travel” of literary texts across the confines of a geographical entity, ie across states or regions, also become a part of comparative literary studies, as do the various kinds of “travel” possible – from travel through translation to travel through movement of people, forced or voluntary. Colonisation, diaspora, exile, pilgrimage, trade, exploration are all movements of human beings that result in contact and hence encounters, between different cultures, entailing the study of difference in encounter. Thus, the practice of comparative literature leads to and is dependent upon our understanding of difference through *a relation of engagement* with *other* literary and language cultures, whether across or within territorial boundaries. This makes it

an “ethical” practice , because this act acknowledges and preserves plurality and diversity in a “globalised” world.

❖ Check Your Progress 3

1. Comparison is a-----act,in which different entities and object are brought together in----- within a----- . The-----of the reader plays a role in making the -----into a----, as the---- of the reader frames the work.

i.work

iv.location

vi.text

ii.Perspective,

v.relation

vi.framework

iii.cognitive

Ans : iii, v, vi, iv,i, vi, ii

2. Choose the correct answers from the options given

1. Extra conceptual resources of language refer to the ability of ----to attach a ----to a ----- and create a new -----

A. i.Human ii. Language

B. i. Signifier ii. Sign

C. i.referent ii. Signified

D. i. Sign ii. Signifier

Ans : Ai Bi Cii Di

2. The conceptual resources of language refer to the----relation between -----and----. The names of objects are----which include the----- characteristics of-----member of the group named by the concept.

A. i. Conventional ii.personal

B. i.signified ii.signifier iii.sign

C. i.object ii.referent iii.sign

D. i.signs ii.concepts

E. i. General ii.specific

F. i.all ii.each

Ans : Ai Bii Cii Di Ei Fi

3. The-----function of language enable us to create metaphors, while the-----function of language allow us to identify an object even when it is not present before us.

A. i.Referential ii.extra conceptual

B. i.referential ii.extra conceptual

Ans : Aii Bi

4. An interrogation of ----- means taking-----rather than----- into account.

A. i. essentialism ii. Anti-essentailism

B. i. Identity ii. Difference

C. i. Identity ii. difference

Ans : Ai Bii Ci

1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter we have understood the relevance of comparative literature in context of comparison as a hermeneutics practice. We have also seen the concept of plurality from various dimensions such as ethics, belief and practice.

1.8 KEY WORDS

Comparison:

Ethics:

1.9 BOOKS SUGGESTED

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Answers:

Check Your Progress 1

- 1 - 1
- 2 - 1
- 3 - 3
- 4 - vi, ii, iii, i, v, iv, vii
- 5 - 1 and 2
- 6 - 3

Check Your Progress 2

- 1 - 1-iv 2-iii 3-ii 4-i
- 2 - 1
- 3 - 1 and 2
- 4 - vi, iii, i, ix, iv, xi, vii, viii, xii, ii, v, x, xiii

Match Critique with response

- 1- 5, 2- 9, 3- 8, 4- 10, 5-9

Check Your Progress 3

- 1 - iii, v, vi, iv, i, vi, ii
- 2 Choose the correct answers from the options given
 - 1) Ai Bi Cii Di
 - 2) Ai Bii Cii Di Ei Fi
 - 3) Aii Bi
 - 4) Ai Bii Ci

:: STRUCTURE ::**2.0 Objectives****2.1 How to Define Comparative Literature****2.1.1 A History of Definitions: Europe****2.1.2 French School****2.1.3 Other European Schools****2.1.4 The American School****2.1.5 Schools and Hours****2.2 The Crises in Comparative Literature****2.2.1 Why Crises?****2.2.2 Locating and Negotiating Crises I****2.2.3 Locating and Negotiating Crises II****2.3 Beyond crises****2.3.1 Polysystem Theory****2.3.2 Planetarity****2.4 Introducing the Reader: Receptionaesthetik****2.4.1 Structure of Feeling****2.5 Let Us Sum Up****2.6 Key Words****2.7 Books Suggested****Answers**

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This Unit will provide,

- The understanding on how the question “what is comparative literature”, has been answered by different practitioners of this discipline across Europe, the United States and the world, not in any particular order but often acting in connection with one another .

2.1 HOW TO DEFINE COMPARATIVE LITERATURE?

The student will notice that “history” and “definitions” are taken together in this section. This is because “history”, i.e. the concerns and events of the geopolitical areas in which the theorists were located, influenced the definitions of comparative literature to a great extent. The divergences of opinion on *what* comparative literature is and *how* it must be done, relate to the difference of opinion amongst practitioners coming from varied literary traditions, political and social histories and geographical locations. Thus the different definitions of comparative literature and the different methods utilise different categories of understanding or conceptual tools in teaching and research. As we have earlier seen, the engagement with difference because of the ethical commitment to pluralism, remains constant - but the change and reorientation of both definition and practice, have made the many famous “crises” a part of the history of comparative literature. The common impulse of all the pronounced “crises” in academic practice of comparative literature is the tendency of the teaching and scholarship at a particular time and place to impose itself upon the practice of the discipline everywhere and make a pronouncement on behalf of everyone, regardless of the limitations of its context and ideology : the early crises identified by Wellek and Etiemble, foregrounded humanism and questioned Eurocentrism in the practice of the discipline (See 2.1 and 2.2 below). The crises returned to the impulse behind the discipline: *comparison as a cognitive act begins with the acceptance of plurality and is ethically grounded in identifying, locating and engaging with difference*. All comparative reading derives from this understanding, and any category we use to understand literature and arts, must take this into cognisance: it is the irreducible element in “doing” comparative literature.

2.1.1 A History of Definitions: Europe:

The different names of the discipline at the turn of the 19th century show the ideas of literature, ethics and the Humanities that the

definitions spring from 'Comparative Literatures' used by Matthew Arnold 1848. In French 'Cours de littérature comparée' or Course of Literatures Compared dated to the early 1820s-30s. But it became official nomenclature after Joseph Texte's work on cosmopolitanism; earlier than that though St. Beuve had spoken of literature comparee, the French called it "littérature étrangère." Moriz Carrier called it 'Vergleichende Literaturgeschichte' in German, in 1854. Transylvanian Hungarian Hugo Meltzl de Lomnitz', the founding editor of the first journal of Comparative Literature named it *Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum* (1877). Irish scholar H.M. Posnett named his book *Comparative Literature* (1886). These divergent views crystallised into practice in academia, and were known in pedagogy and scholarship as the French School and the American School. The schools differed in their views about scope and nature of the discipline and debated the method of its practice. Comparing these would show that both method and definition of Comparative Literature as an academic discipline are situational ie located in time and place. A situated study of definitions of the discipline therefore, helps us to understand that the comparative approach is a contextual engagement with difference. Here we will only focus on the central discussions regarding conceptualisation and understanding of difference that made each school distinct from the others. The Schools and their histories will be dealt with in detail in a separate Unit.

2.1.2 French School

Until 1945, i.e. the end of the second "world" war which involved the European powers and perforce, the areas they colonised,, comparative literature in France was known as the study of *littérature étrangère*, or foreign literature, and characterised by an empiricist and positivist, rather than pluralist approach. This was termed the "French School". Hippolyte Taine (21 April 1828 – 5 March 1893), proposed "race, milieu, moment" as the basis of study of foreign literature. These categories were taken literally as single frames by scholars like Paul Van Tieghem (1871-1959) who undertook a forensic examination, looking for evidence of "origins" and "influences" between works from different nations. This approach is termed "rapport des faits". An example of this approach is an attempt to trace how a particular literary idea or motif travelled between nations (synchronically) over time (diachronically) (See Unit 1 for synchrony and diachrony). Paul Hazard shows for example, in *La Crise de la Conscience européenne*, 1680-1715, the French world is opened to the ideas, political and artistic, of its neighbours. The circulation of ideas led to continuous comparison between England, France, Italy, Denmark, Netherlands and Russia. This signalled the appearance of a new human, with

curiosity about the exterior world and sceptical about his own. Also, according to Baldensperger, the editor of the first journal on comparative literature, the introduction of “minor” writers in the journal, signalled the dawn of a New Humanism.

2.1.3 Other European Schools

Alexander Veselovsky (1838-1906) worked in European literature in Russia, and emphasised what was known as “genetic” approach, or source study; he also studied the travel of many narrative devices and motifs from the “orient” to the west through Byzantium. He was discredited by the Communist regime, and his followers condemned for their clinging to “influences” and “kowtowing to the western bourgeois idea of society. However, his idea of “historical poetics” was dependent on erudition capable of identifying patterns and similarities across literature in different languages and across space and time. He is widely regarded as Russia’s most distinguished and influential literary theorist before the formation of Opoyaz (the “Society for the Study of Poetic Language”), whose members – Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984), Boris Eikhenbaum(1886-1959), Yuri Tynianov(1894 – 1943), Roman Jakobson (1896 – 1982), and others – developed the approach generally referred to as “Russian Formalism.” The Formalists (See Unit 1.4) were themselves divided in their idea of where literariness was to be located. Unlike Roman Jakobson, who located it at the micro-level of language alone, Viktor Shklovsky located it on the level of composition and style as well. Thus the techniques of defamiliarisation would differ in order to achieve various effects. Veselovsky’s historical poetics concurred with Shklovsky in not limiting the novel in particular, to aestheticism and psychologism though In *Theory of Prose* (1925), Veselovsky is also an object of Shklovsky’s polemic – as a representative of the “ethnographical method”.

Mikhail Bakhtin’s study *The Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel: Notes towards a Historical Poetics* (1937-8, publ. in 1975), is another testimony to Veselovsky’s influence. So is the concluding paragraph of Vladimir Propp’s pathbreaking *Morphology of the Folktale*, where according to Propp his propositions were “intuitively foreseen” . He ends his study with an extensive quote from Veselovsky’s “Poetics of plot” (Propp 115-116). These theorists though widely divergent in their final positions, form part of the “Russian” school of Comparative Literature influenced by Veselovsky.

German Comparative Literature has its origins in the late 19th century, developing in the post-war period owing to Peter Szondi (1929–1971), a Hungarian. Szondi's work in "General and

Comparative Literary Studies" included the genre of drama, lyric poetry, and hermeneutics. The application of this method to reading and interpretation have been discussed below (See 2.4).

Receptionsaesthetik or Reception Studies also developed from the basis in hermeneutics. It historicised the rapports de faits approach of Influence Studies. This approach and its application have also been discussed below (See 2.4). Here we only indicate the difference between the Reader Response theory and Reception Theory, the two major theories which introduced the reader into literary study. The proponents were Wolfgang Iser and Hans George Jauss, respectively. They were both concerned with a reconstitution of literary theory by drawing attention away from the author and the text and refocusing it on the text-reader relationship. Jauss's turn toward reception was connected with his effort to revitalize literary history, while Iser has been concerned primarily with the phenomenology of reading, which can be developed along empirical loines, (See Unit 4.7)

2.1.4 The American School

The first congress of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA) held at Venice in September 1955 had no participation from the United States (Wellek, "Comparative Literature Today", 325). The second congress of the ICLA was held at Chapel Hill, North Carolina in 1958. The practice of comparative literature in Europe came under scrutiny through René Wellek's famous 1958 lecture, "The Crisis in Comparative Literature". According to Wellek himself, his uncompromising critique of the practice of Comparative Literature in Europe, was misunderstood as a "manifesto for an American school of Comparative Literature and as an attack on the French school". Thus we see that the idea of "crisis" was closely related to the history of comparative literature and the conditions in which it was practised.

The ideas of Wellek supposed founder of the school, have been enunciated above. They formed the core of the American school, extended by Remak's definition:

"Comparative Literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country and the study of relationships between literature on one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the (fine) arts, philosophy, history, the social sciences, the sciences, religion, etc. on the other. In brief, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression (5)."

2.1.5 Schools and Hours

The practice and definition of comparative literature is *location-specific*; there is no overarching definition accepted by all practitioners, except *the general consensus that the practice is driven by the sense of plurality and the need to engage with difference through literary and language cultures*. History, definition and practice are thus interlinked. Claudio Guillen uses the formulation of “hour” rather than “school” to describe the different approaches to the discipline, indicating that these orientations towards literature are not institutionalised as “schools”, but temporally and spatially located practices, grounded in different ways of understanding and engaging with difference. Thus an “ethical” aspect of comparative literature is linked to the aesthetic by indicating the “juxtaposition” of texts, what Barthes would call a frame, which must be performed by the reader, thus making the reading a cognitive and an affective act which relates us to difference, i.e. a new/another world :

“the mutual illumination of several texts, or series of texts, considered side by side; the greater understanding we derive from juxtaposing a number of (frequently very different) works, authors and literary traditions” (Praver 144). This understanding of comparison includes the location of the inquirer (See U1)

❖ Check Your Progress 1

1. Match the following

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| A. Meltzl : | i. Theory of prose |
| B. Jakobson | ii. Genetic approach |
| C. Shklovsky | iii. OPOYAZ |
| D. Veselovsky | iv. literature etrangere |

2.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| A. Wellek : | i. planetarite |
| B. Etiemble : | ii. general literature |
| C. Van Tieghem | iii. race, milieu moment |
| D. Taine | iv. rapports de fait |

3.

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Wolfgang Iser | i. Classification of themes |
| B. H R Jauss | ii. Reader response theory |
| C. Propp | iii. dialogism |
| D. Bakhtin | iv. Reception theory |

4.Group the following ideas into the French, Russian and American schools of Comparative Literature

i. other arts, ii.influence,

iii.history of ideas,

iv.genetic approach, v.source study, vi.positivism, vii.dialogism

2.2 THE “CRISES” IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE:

Different answers to the question “what is comparative literature?”(subject matter for study), on which depends the answer to the question “How is it done?”(method of such study) are, as we have seen, quite common in the history of the discipline. This is because these questions are asked and answered in specific spatio-temporal contexts and attempt to meet the basic demand for recognising and engaging with difference in a plural world. Whenever these questions have been raised anew, scholars have described the discipline as being in “crisis”.

2.2.1 Why “Crises” ?

All scholars of the humanities share feelings of anxiety or uncertainties surrounding the issues of methodology or usable ways of doing things that can be called academic practice in their discipline. For example, what can be the larger “real-world implications” of reading novels from every corner of the world and trying to understand human nature and human lives ? Liberal Humanism would claim that there is only a single standard, the human standard, that will decide what is human – for the native of Kenyan Highlands, where homo sapiens first appeared and for a citizen of New York City, there is a single standard of right and wrong. But if we have to address the contexts of these two individuals and trace their experience of the world they inhabit, ie if we *locate* them , we will see that there are vast differences between them despite their common humanity. We have moved, therefore, from liberal to critical humanism (See Unit 1.1) which will address the plurality and difference as comparative literature is called upon to do. Then we cannot insist upon a single method or theory; neither can we pre-fix the frame of reference that we have earlier said is the basis of comparison (U1.2, 1.3). It is the necessity for such open-endedness, and the methods that might ensure it, that result in the notion of a “crisis” in the humanities. Crisis comes from the understanding that in the Humanities, there are no hypothetical answers because of the nature of the problems – they are all human experiences and specific to time and place. There is no single paradigmatic “solution” or “answer” to questions or problems raised by the plurality of experience.

2.2.2 Locating and Negotiating “Crises”- 1:

The “crises” in comparative literature diagnosed by different practitioners, in the context of their different views of the problem of what (content) and how(method), and their prescriptions for solving them. Clarification regarding the critique of method, is central to Wellek’s thesis in “The Crisis of Comparative Literature”(see 2’1 above). Wellek identifies Comparative Literature as a “mode of literary study” as early as 1942 in *Theory of Literature*; a work that he co-authored with Austin Warren (Wellek and Warren, 46). Even here, he does not identify a single approach or field of inquiry that can be definitively qualified as Comparative Literature, per se (ibid.). He enumerates the different senses in which the term has been used, ranging from the study of “folklore” and oral narratives, to the more structured approach of the French model of “rapports de fait” (ibid. 47). This is the foundation for Wellek’s criticisms of the French model in “The Crisis of Comparative Literature”. His criticisms are contextualized within a larger Western context of the state of the humanities and literary scholarship therein, at the turn of the 20th century and the onset of the First World War (Wellek, “The Crisis of Comparative Literature”, 162). Wellek ascribes the “crisis” to Comparative Literature’s failures in defining: “a distinct subject matter and a specific methodology” (162). The two problems; “subject matter” and “methodology”, for the most part, in Wellek’s understanding, are inseparable. This interrelatedness of these two questions becomes most apparent in his criticism of the French model, and the ways in which it sought to distinguish the practice of Comparative Literature, from the study of “national literatures” (163).

The next person to announce a crisis in Comparative Literature was Rene Etiemble, who wrote in 1963 “Comparison n’est pas raison : La Crise de la litteratur Comparee” literally translated as “Comparison has not reason : the crisis in comparative literature”. The crisis arose according to Etiemble, a scholar of Chinese and Japanese literature, because comparison was limited to canonical Eurocentrism and narrow nationalism and historicism in the faculty of Letters. His solution was a new internationalist idea of comparative literature which he defined as an “inoculation against language chauvinism, religious fanaticism and racist perversities”. In order to achieve this, he advocated as a professional ideal, rather than as a definitional dogma, the knowledge of languages and literatures outside western Europe, notably from the east European block of nations and what is still known as the “far” East. The solution lay in a discipline which could train the student as citizens of a human world in which “the black African, the yellow Chinese, the Spanish American and the Arab can speak to us”. Though there is a generous expansiveness,

leading to humanism and in Etiemble's words "universal literature", the centre is still Europe, interacting with a colour-coded world.

2.2.3 Locating and Negotiating the Crisis: 2:

In this section we will trace the history of the discipline with reference to the American Comparative Literature Association's decennial reports known as The State of the Discipline reports. These have been commissioned by the American Comparative Literature association since 1974, to reflect upon the state of the discipline in American academia. They are generally known by the names of the authors of the reports : Levin Report (1974), the Greene Report (1984), Bernheimer report (1994), Saussy report (2004). Details of these reports will be found in a later module of this course. The 2014 report edited by Ursula Heike was initiated at the Pennsylvania State University. Preparations for the next report began at the 2021 annual congress of the American Comparative Literature Association with a panel on the Geopolitics of Comparison.

These reports, though US centred until 2014, provide a history of the change and orientation of the idea and approach of comparative literary studies beginning from the second half of the twentieth century. They form the context for understanding what scholars based in Anglophone academia have described as crises in comparative literature, and the responses from the international community of comparative literature scholars.

In the introduction to *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism* (1995), which contains the State of the Discipline report of 1994 and responses to it, Charles Bernheimer stated "comparative literature is anxiogenic". He meant that given the located nature of both subject and method, and the ever expanding area of difference and ways of engaging with it, which we have attempted to explain above (2.1), a student or scholar was expected to satisfy multiple requirements , opening her to accusations of dilettantism because of a lack of specialization in one field. Perhaps confusing the special nature of comparative literature with other unchanging institutionalised disciplines, he felt that the student was besieged by anxiety and a sense of impending crisis and diffused uncertainty peculiar to the very field of Comparative Literature : hence the coinage "anxiogenic". In order to assuage this anxiety, Bernheimer pointed to the need for expansion of comparative literature beyond Eurocentrism and comparison between single homogenous national cultures, taking cognisance of multiculturalism and transculturality in the "global world" of the 1990s. The subject matter and the method had to be located, and inflected by the basic ideas of difference and plurality, wherever it was practised in the

world. This would again bring up the question basic to Humanities – Given the plurality of the world is there a single paradigm to understand human lives across the world, as they are manifested in literature ? The narrative of crisis in the discourse of the discipline in the west, seems to be the result of attempting to subsume difference and plurality within a single paradigm – for example Susan Bassnett’s *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*. Bassnett invokes René Wellek and Harry Levin, who according to her, call for a revisioning of the discipline by abandoning ossified modes of thinking (30). Exploring the history and practice of Comparative Literature “Beyond the Frontiers of Europe”(which for her is limited to the “American School”) she stated that “Comparative Literature, today, was in one sense dead” (46). However, “comparative *practice* is alive and well and thriving under other nomenclature” (Bassnett 138). She interprets such a death, as the demise of older modes of thinking of national literatures in comparative terms (47) and seeks a future of comparative literary studies beyond the confines of Euro-American and Western cultural models, already proposed by Etiemble in the French School. Thus she turns to the need for a comparative approach in the shared colonial experience of African societies and the subsequent marginalization of African literature (sic) through the discourses of colonization and colonial structures of literacy and education (73). However, she does not consider the many languages and cultures in the continent of Africa, which clearly contradicts the idea of a single homogenous “African literature”. The similarity she identifies to justify her categorisation of African literature in the singular, is colonisation – all the colonised nations are now “post”colonial and hence “similar” or “comparable”. Bassnett makes similar claims vis-à-vis the study of Native American Literature and Chicano Literature and the need for a comparative approach in both these contexts. But this need for comparison is not related to their internal diversities, as she takes no cognisance of the “local” pluralities. These cultures are homogenised as “postcolonial”, or “African” and their interactions with each other and with hegemonic and still homogenised “western cultures”, remain Eurocentric. Though Bassnett holds Eurocentrism responsible for the crisis in comparative literature, her solution ends up exacerbating it. Her prescription for a way out of the crisis is the folding of Comparative Literature into Translation Studies : but does getting rid of the name solve the crisis of a Eurocentric focus in the practice of the discipline ?

Another “crisis” narrative comes from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, whose Wellek Lectures are titled *Death of a Discipline* – here too, crisis is diagnosed as death. Starting by envisioning Bernheimer’s Introduction to *Comparative Literature in the Age of*

Multiculturalism, in the light of a present-day version of “the Quarrels of the Ancients and the Moderns”, Spivak locates the three major disciplines she brings together in this book, Area Studies, Comparative Literature and Post-Colonial Studies, as academic responses of Humanities to three major historical processes in the United States (Spivak 2). She locates Area Studies in the Cold War context of US paranoia over “foreign threats”. The rise of Comparative Literature in America is seen in the light of European intellectuals fleeing “totalitarian” regimes in war-torn Europe. Lastly Post-Colonial Studies is contextualized in the immigration boom in 1970s America following the immigration reforms of 1965. Based on these historical processes and their subsequent effects on scholarship, Spivak postulates: “Whatever our view of what we do, we are made by the forces of people moving about the world” (3). The scope of one’s scholarly endeavors and the comparisons one makes, are bound to be determined, at least in part, by location. The question of a uniform field of inquiry for all comparatists alike is, according to her, shortsighted. Why then is Comparative Literature, which thrives on diversity, dead ?

❖ Check Your Progress 2

Choose the correct answer.

1. The crisis in Comparative Literature is due to -----

- A. Imposition of a universal paradigm upon all literatures
- B. Eurocentrism
- C. Lack of knowledge of language and culture
- D. Lack of a universal standard for literature

Match set A with Set B

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| A. Bassnett | i. the method and the object of study must be delineated |
| B. Wolfgang Iser | ii. comparison is not rational |
| C. Remak | iii. translation studies will replace comparative literature |
| D. Etiemble | v. Phenomenology of reading |
| | |
| A. Wellek | i. comparative Literature is anxiogenic |
| B. Etiemble | ii. postcolonialism is a universal category |
| C. Bassnett | iii. crisis was due to Eurocentrism |
| D. Bernheimer | iv. Comparative literature is literary foreign trade |

2.3 BEYOND “CRISES”

We noted that these crises, though projected as systemically shared in a larger global context, are focalized through an Anglophone Euro-American perspective. Existing paradigms of comparative literature in Europe and the US have been subject to these crises, but comparatists elsewhere in the world have conceptualised their own practice in the light of their own literary cultures. In this section we turn to some interventions that expose and question this limited perspective and attempt to locate the practice of comparative literature.

2.3.1 Polysystem Theory:

Bassnett fails to address either of the two axes identified in Wellek's essay as part of the crisis of Comparative Literature. She only addresses the question of what is read and where, almost completely ignoring the textual hermeneutics, i.e. the process of reading, writing and interpretation. Her diagnosis of the death of comparative literature and its transformation into other disciplines exclusively focuses on Itamar Even-Zohar's essay on translation theory. But this ignores how Even-Zohar himself views translation within the larger context of a *systemic approach* to the study of literature and culture. He proposes that not texts or products, but dynamic cultural models determining concrete cultural projects should be the objects of study in the future. In "The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem", Even-Zohar posits that translated texts work *between* the systems of source and target literary cultures; translation is a negotiation between guest and host language-literary systems, and translated works reveal crucial aspects of the receiving culture in the logic of their selection (Even-Zohar 241). He also poses the possibility of translated literatures as possessing "a repertoire" of their own within a literary culture (241).

2.3.2 Planetarity:

Literary Research/ Recherche Littéraire, the journal of the International Comparative Literature Association/ Association Internationale de Literatur Comparee carried a forum on Spivak's book in 2004, in which Didier Coste pointed out that Spivak eschewed universal concepts as a practitioner of deconstruction, and that the hegemonic languages would undercut the principles of universalism through the modalities of globalisation. She proposed substituting planetarity (See Unit 3.2.1 for the use of the concept by Etienne) which is anchored in the reality of languages and their diversity but without a foot in alterity. Planetarity questions the existing comparativism and proposes to identify the other and include this difference as part of one's thinking. Languages and

cultures known as subaltern, a term popularised by Gramsci, are included in Spivak's scheme under the principle of planetarity. Thus they are reterritorialised, and the effects of minoritisation undone. It appears that she is proposing alternative post colonialism against Eurocentric comparative literature – however, as Coste points out, all comparative literature done according to the postcolonial model instrumentalises literature and is culturalist (See Unit 3.5.1). Literature is not logically determined by culture. It can be separated completely from its linguistic, national and cultural milieu, and yet retain the universalising name of literature. This does not reduce its diversity, its situatedness, or its relation with the context. But it extends, according to Coste, into the idea of the other as irreducibly different and hence finally untranslatable, as Emily Apter proposes. According to her, comparative literature allows the other to exist without forcing upon us the duty of understanding or translating her.

Spivak claims that disciplines or practices like Comparative Literature have become redundant, because they have failed to respond to the “forces of people moving about the world”. In the forum referred to above, Chanda wonders how Comparative Literature has survived this long, if it really is elitist, Eurocentric and divorced from the realities of the day and age, as Spivak describes it to be. Citing the plurality of Indian literatures and the necessity of the comparative approach in reading them, she claims that comparative literature is less likely to die of a crisis in epistemology, ie its “theory” and “method”, than from malnourishment, ie the inability, especially in an Anglophone postcolony, to convince academic institutions of its relevance and the necessity to keep it alive. This underlines the problematic idea of a uniform method or theory for literary reading and emphasises the relation of location to definition and practice of comparative literature. Since this critique is based in Indian literature(s), we will address it in detail in Unit 5

2.4 INTRODUCING THE READER

RECEPTIONZAESTHETIK

The scholars associated with the University of Constance and with the Poetik and Hermeneutik research group, contributed to reception theory which drew on Russian formalism, Prague structuralism, Ingarden's phenomenology, Gadamer's hermeneutics, and “the sociology of literature”. Hans Robert Jauss sought the middle ground between an interpretation of a literary text that ignores history and an interpretation which lets the text be a culmination, illustration or demonstration of historical events and social theory. Jauss criticises two extremes – Formalism which does not consider time, place or context and structuralist Marxism which treats the text as an

illustration of social theory, claiming that the literary work, like all other art, is the cultural superstructure erected on and regulated by an economic base. Jauss introduces the Reader and so contrasts radically with the New Historicists or biographical critics who argue that textual meaning will dramatically alter depending on the time and place of the *Author who* wrote the work. Drawing upon Gadamer's idea of the horizon, Jauss introduces the concept of the "horizon of expectation" which a reader living in any time or place has formed due to his socio-cultural context. Gadamer describes the "horizon" thus:

Every finite present has its limitations. We define the concept of "situation" by saying that it represents a standpoint that limits the possibility of vision. Hence essential to the concept of situation is the concept of "horizon." The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. ... A person who has no horizon is a man who does not see far enough and hence over-values what is nearest to him. On the other hand, "to have an horizon" means not being limited to what is nearby but being able to see beyond it. ... [W]orking out the hermeneutical situation means acquiring the right horizon of inquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition.

What Gadamer refers to as "tradition" can include both extrinsic and intrinsic factors (See 2.1), i.e. the world view or structure of feeling of the time as well as the literary conventions that he is aware of as a reader of literature. These together form the horizon of expectation. Giving the example of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Jauss points out that at the time it was written, it failed to answer the expectations of readers – they preferred to read romances, while Flaubert showed the effects of reading and believing "romantic" literature on the life of the protagonist. This was considered obscene in contemporary times and Flaubert was put on trial. However, as Jauss points out, the novel survived as a classic, while the popular romances of the time have fallen into obscurity. The "reception" of the text is dependent on time place and structure of feeling of the reading community, but not confined by it – literature reaches beyond these expectations, and so a pre-determined literary theory always falls short of grasping the possibilities opened by the text. Unlike the Reader Response theorists, Reception theory does not posit the text as a work (see Unit 1), to be responded to by the reader. Jauss, influenced by Gadamer's hermeneutical approach, stands against the notion of a pre-determined true meaning of the text, and holds that the activity of reading that constructs the text. This makes literature an event of meeting between the text and the reader. (See Unit 1 above) This way

of reading serves both the ethical and the aesthetic concerns of a comparative approach.

2.4.1 Structure of Feeling:

As we have seen above, the definition and practice of comparative literature arises from the views regarding literature, human relations and the world view of the time. The interaction between these factors construct what Raymond Williams calls the “structure of feeling” of a period . According to Williams, structure of feeling is

...concerned with meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt, and relations between these and formal systemic beliefs are in practice variable (including historically variable) over a range from formal assent to private dissent to the more nuanced interaction between selected and interested beliefs and acted and justified experiences.

Williams thinks experience could have been a substitute wider in scope than feelings, but uses the word feelings because experience has a clear intonation of the past, whereas Williams’ objective is to understand the present : in fact “the past tense is the most important obstacle to recognition of the area of social experience which is being defined” .

Williams includes “elements of impulse, restraint and tone” affective elements of consciousness and relationships, not feeling against thought but thought as felt, “practical consciousness of a present kind in a living and inter-relating continuity” : these are the elements of the structure of feelings. This idea can be used to understand what we have called “location”: this comprises the spatio-temporal context and the structure of feeling within which humans live their lives, in and outside literature. Williams’ concept helps us to identify the different aspects of location - everything that makes up the living environment and so draws us into a social economy, an organisation .

❖ Check Your Progress 3

1. In Spivak’s view the----of literature led to the-----of -----literatures and languages

i. marginalisation ii. subaltern iii. globalisation

2. Jauss used the idea of -----, which is a concept in ----- proposed by -----to understand the-----of the reader to the-----

i. Gadamer, ii. receptivity, iii. hermeneutics, iv. text, v. Horizon

3.The contemporary reader of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* showed the effect of----- on Emma Bovary, but this did not fit into the reader's - ----- as the ----- of the time tended to take the-----at face value.

i.Reading, ii. romance, iii.horizon of expectation, iv. structure of feeling.

4.Spivak's idea of planetarity is aimed to include----- -, instead of using-----to----- the other from consideration.

i.Alterity, ii.exclude, iii.difference,

Complete the following by choosing the correct option

4.*Madame Bovary* was not popular in its time according to Jauss because

A. IT was obscene

B. It was ahead of its time

C. It was badly written

D. It did not fulfil the contemporary reader's expectations from a romance.

5. In writing *Madame Bovary*, according to Jauss, Flaubert

A.Created a new horizon of expectation for the reader

B.Extended the existing horizon of expectation

C.Created a new genre of romance

D.Criticised the romance as a genre.

6. The Polystsem theory

A. treats literature as a system

B. treats literature as a system related to other systems that make up society

C. is a theory advocating many systems

D. is a mode of translation.

7. According to Jauss, the meaning of the text

A. is pre-determined

B. is a representation of an already existing truth

C. is made by the reader in the act of reading

D. forms a horizon

2.5 LET US SUM UP

We have understood in this unit various definitions of comparative literature and what's the history of these definitions in various schools such as French School, American School and other European Schools. The unit also incorporated the crisis in comparative literature and provide the perspective beyond the crisis.

2.6 KEY WORDS

poly system, reception study, hermeneutics

2.7 BOOKS SUGGESTED

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- H.R. Jauss, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" *Toward an Aesthetics of Reception* Minnesota Minnseosta University Press 1982
- <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/468585>>
- Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*
<https://www.uib.no/sites/w3.uib.no/files/attachments/15_williams_structures.pdf>

Answers:

❖ Check Your Progress 1

1. - A-iv, B-iii, C-i, D-ii
2. A-ii, B-i, C-iv, D-iii
3. A-ii, B-iv, C-i, D-ii
4. French School : ii, vi, iii

American School : i

Russian School : iv, vii

❖ Check Your Progress 2

Q.1 -1

Q.2

1 - A-iii B- iv C-i, D-ii

2 - A-iv B-iii C-ii D-i

❖ Check Your Progress 3

1 - iii, i, ii

2 - v, iii, i, ii, iv.

3 - i, iii, iv, ii

4 - i, iii, ii

Complete the following by choosing the correct option

4 – D

5- B

6- B

7 -C

UNIT : 3

**LITERATURE, GENERAL LITERATURE,
NATIONAL LITERATURE AND
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**

:: STRUCTURE ::

0.3 Objectives

3.1 Categories of Understanding and Frames of Reading

3.2 Comparative and General Literature

3.2.1 “Litteratures Universelles” and “Planetaire”

3.3 Comparative Literature, National Literature and World Literature

3.4 Case Study: Third world literature as national allegory

3.5 Supranation, Local and Universal

3.6 Comparative Literature and the cosmopolis

3.6.1 Humanities and Comparative Literature: Secular Criticism

3.7 Comparative Culture and/or Literature?

3.7.1 Literary Invariants

3.7.2 Comparative Poetics

3.8 The Systems Theory models

3.8.1 Empirical Study of Literature

3.8.2 Theory of Constants

3.9 Let Us Sum Up

3.10 Key Words

3.11 Books Suggested

Answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will provide

- Understanding of the historical contexts for the definitions of categories like “general”, “national” and “world” literature. These are not absolute categories for thinking about literature, but are ways of classifying the object of literary study. If we fix any of these categories by defining them according to a particular perspective, e.g. Eurocentric or Oriental we run the risk of reducing the study of literature to a system. The use of these labels is meaningful only when they are located in time and place and within larger discussions about the practice and ethics of comparative literature, as we have pointed out in Unit 2 above.

3.1 CATEGORIES OF UNDERSTANDING AND FRAMES OF READING

The attempt to understand difference through classification using a scientific paradigm is made by the German philosopher F.W. Schlegel (1772–1829). Schlegel founded the *Revue Europa* (Frankfurt, 1803) envisaging a “European literary science” presenting Occidental literature as a totality and European literature as a coherent whole in lectures in Paris (1803 and 4) and in Vienna (1812). Goethe refers to the common idea of *weltliteratur* in speaking of Europe and the universe: "If we have dared to proclaim a European literature, indeed a universal world literature, then we have hardly done so simply to point out that different nations acknowledge each other and their respective creations, for in this sense it has existed for a long time and continues more or less to flourish" (1975, 295)

Schlegel’s scientific approach to the history of literature was modelled on the comparative anatomy of George Cuvier and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach. Proceeding by comparison, systematization and historical classification, following the romanticist philosophy of Nature, Schlegel presumed a unifying principle at work in nature, in language(s), and in literature.

In contrast to this unifying principle, the study of interliterariness (See U1) often means the use of cross-cultural, supra-national (See 3.5.2 below) interpretative frames like “developing world”, “third world”, “postcolonial”, “South-South” and “global south”. But in order to qualify as conceptual tools for the practice of comparative literature, these spatial and temporal frames can be used to understand similarity and difference in colonial cultural policy, precolonial realities and anti-colonial struggles *only* by locating each in its specific region and/or language culture. They can thus help to

understand the *historical episode* of colonisation as *a particular form of cultural encounter specific to location*. What are the implications of this for literature?

This question is addressed in sections 4, 5 and 6 of this unit, where we analyse the difficulties of understanding difference in different cultural contexts by applying spatio-temporal categories for understanding literature. In Section 7 and 8, we use literary categories to understand what “interliterariness” means in situations of transcultural and intercultural contact.

3.2 COMPARATIVE AND GENERAL LITERATURE

According to Van Tieghem, the difference between “comparative” literature and “general” literature was that the former exclusively focused on the interrelations between two national literatures, while the latter was more concerned with “movements and fashions which swept through several literatures” (162). Guyard, Carré and Baldensperger, sought to include national perceptions of *other* national literatures within the scope of Comparative Literature, eg *Goethe en France: Essai de littérature comparée* (1904, Fernand Baldensperger) and *Goethe en Angleterre: Étude de littérature comparée* (1920, Jean-Marie Carré). This engagement with difference could be a threat to the status-quo: Mme de Stael’s (1766-1817) *De l’Allemagne* (1810), on German literature and thought influenced the Romantic Movement in literature across Europe in the 19th century. It was banned and destroyed by Napoleon for introducing ideas and thoughts which questioned the prevailing neoclassicism in Napoleonic France. It was reprinted in English and French in London in 1813.

It could also be an exercise in humanism. Introducing the first volume of the first journal of Comparative Literature, *Revue de littérature comparée*, in 1921, editors Paul Hazard and Fernand Baldensperger tried to broaden the scope of the discipline through a focus on “minor writers”. Baldensperger felt that this would lead to a re-evaluation of the canon and the foundation of a “Neo Humanism” providing “dislocated humanity” with “a less uncertain core of common values”.

According to Wellek (See 2.1.4) the ‘rapports de faits’ approach of the French school focuses on a historiography of verifiable literary transactions (ibid). He criticised this as literary foreign trade and felt it narrowed the humanist scope of comparative literature. To him, “general literature” meant “Poetics and literary theory”, while world literature was “obviously a translation” of Goethe’s idea of *weltliteratur*, which he illustrates with Carlyle’s 1829 dream of the benefits of “literatures of all countries harmonised into one World Literature” (Wellek 1948, See 2.1). However, “comparative literature

must be differently conceived, as the study of the totality of literature, as the synthesis of literary scholarship.” So comparative literature is “identical with what is sometimes called general literature or world literature”, but the term comparative literature is “preferable and less equivocal than its two practical alternatives” (ibid).

Despite attempting to separate world, general and comparative literature, in 1948, diagnosing the “crisis” in comparative literature in 1969, Wellek had the courage to repudiate the distinctions earlier made: “An artificial demarcation of subject matter and methodology, a mechanistic concept of sources and influences, a motivation by cultural nationalism however generous” (Wellek 1969) seemed to him to be the cause of the crisis in comparative literature.

Wellek too advocates the “science of literature” – but it cannot be a “neutral scientism, an indifferent relativism and historicism”. He claims “true objectivity” for comparative literature, distinguishing it from conventional science, because it entails a “confrontation with the objects in their essence: a dispassionate but intense contemplation which will lead to analysis and finally to judgments of value”. We see that in the idea of “literary invariants” Etiemble (See Unit 2.1.2 and 3.2.1 below) is suggesting a conceptual tool while Wellek’s emphasis is on the intention of the reader, though both are advocating a method of engaging with difference. Wellek predicts the vanishing of national vanities in the face of art and poetry when “Literary scholarship becomes an act of the imagination, like art itself, and thus a preserver and creator of the highest values of mankind.” (1969:171).

3.2.1 “Litteratures Universelles” and “Planetaire”

Throughout the 19th century, in French academia, the term used for non-French literature was la littérature étrangère, Foreign Literature sometimes in the plural but more often in the singular. The first chair of Litterature Comparee was established in 1921 at Sorbonne. Etiemble (1909-2002) also criticised the French school’s idea of comparative literature and the notion of weltliteratur coined by Goethe, proposing “general” and “universal” literature (See Unit 2).

In 1971 was published the translation of Wellek and Warren’s *Theory of Literature* (1948) where distinctions were drawn between general, national and comparative literature. Etiemble took umbrage at the limited scope of the book which confined itself to European literatures, and also demarcated national, general and comparative literature. In Etiemble’s view, the “technical quarrel” that divided the conception of literature, “played havoc with the future of humanity” (ibid 61). He asks how it is possible to have a literary theory that neglects Arabic and Indian (sic) rhetoric and the literatures of China and Japan (Etiemble 1988 61-2). He effected “openings” (ouvertures;

Etiemble 1988) of the narrow confines of literature to include the planet: *planetaire* or planetary signifies to him the entirety of the world. Etiemble's militant planetary humanism (see Unit 1), espousing truth, justice, liberty led to his proposing "litteratures universelles" to contest Goethe's idea of *weltliterature*.

Comparative Literature is to him the last chance for humanity to survive, because it can create citizens of a truly open world. (ibid 61-2) His ethical, ideological and intellectual project is a correction of Eurocentricity, enlarging the field to include other languages and cultures, synchronically and diachronically; reconfiguring it to balance the excessive importance of 'grand' Indo-European language literatures. As the literary planet is not driven by a single impulse, his idea of "general literature" does not envisage a totalising literary history or totalitarian literary movements. He suggests the construction of a theory of forms and genres that can account for literatures in all languages. To this end, he introduced the idea of the "literary invariant" which Andre Marino, takes forward. This is an example of a non-spatial or non-temporal category, a conceptual idea related to form and genre, which must be located in time, place and structure of feeling. Space and time are the context in which these formal devices may be arranged by the writer and read by us. Here, a concept applicable to the textual process, instead of geopolitical boundaries (national), larger temporal and spatial units (postcolonialism, globalisation) or supranational spatial units (South South, East-West), can be used as a counter to homogenisation or/and reduction to single paradigms or dogmas.

3.3 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE , NATIONAL LITERATURE AND WORLD LITERATURE

The relation between the nation and literature is defined by situating a language and its speakers within a geo-political entity called nation. The idea that a nation is defined by one language and a uniform culture is questioned by comparatists in practice, yet accommodated by them in theory. Especially in a state like India, most students reading this may speak one language at home, read two more in school and go to work in an area that speaks a fourth. Plurality, on which comparative literature, its ethics and aesthetic are based, characterises our understanding of Indian literature as well.

In Hans Robert Jauss' essay on reception theory, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory", the author criticises nationalist literary historiography as a *telos*, i.e. end (see 2.4 above). Such an idea makes the writing of literary history a symbol of the formation and establishment of a nation. This is the 19th century European idea of the nation, formed through unification and synthesis of the cultures of

the people speaking one language, though politically from individual principalities and baronetcies. As Indian readers, we know that speaking the same language is not the sole criterion for a “nation” – a fact that we will address in detail in the next section. Here, the challenge of a different idea of nation must be noted, in which there exists more than a single language and a uniform culture or religion. An untenable end-driven or teleological view of literature or history reach their peak with the formation of a nation, and a literature in the language identified with it. Goethe’s and Tagore’s formulations of “world” literature as opposed to “national” literature are discussed in U 4 and 5.

❖ Check Your Progress 1

Q.1 Match Set A with Set B

SET- A	Set B
1. Conceptual tool to study universal literature	a. literary foreign trade
2. Wellek’s critique of the French School	b. rapports de faits
3. Etiemble’s critique of the French School	c. literary invariants
4. The focus of the French School	d. Eurocentrism

Q2.According to Etiemble, general literature was

- A.The inclusion of all literatures in the world
- B.Totalising all literary movements
- C.Including Japanese and Chinese literature

Q3.According to Baldensperger, a new humanism would be introduced through

- A.Rapports de faits
- B.Introduction of minor literatures
- C. Introduction of Asian literature

Q4. The crisis according to both Wellek and Etiemble involved

- A.Inadequate clarity about method and subject
- B.Eurocentrism
- C.distinction between studying literature and literature itself

Q.5.Choose the correct answer

1. Baldensperger defined comparative literature as the interrelations between national literatures. This definition assumes
 - A. Literature is a national good
 - B. Nations are homogenous

- C. Every nation has a single language and culture
- D. Literature is an exportable good.

2. The science of literature was an idea proposed by -----

- A.Goethe
- B.Tagore
- C.Taine
- D.Schlegel

3. Scientism implies

- A. Everything can be proved with scientific experiments
- B. The methods of natural science can be applied to all branches of knowledge
- C. Only science can give knowledge
- D. All knowledge is subjective

Q.6 Fill in the gaps.

i.----- takes the ii----- stance from Positivism because the iii----- argues that experience is quantifiable while the iv -----holds that v --- --- methods cannot be used for understanding history.

- A. scientific
- B. latter
- C. former
- D. historicism
- E. opposite

Q.7. Give a single word for

- A. Making history the single and final explanation for literature
 - B. An object exists, independent of an individual's ability to perceive it
 - C. We cannot know anything beyond our experience
 - D. Our perception is perspectival
- i. subjectivity
- ii.objectivity
- iii.historicism
- iv.empiricism

3.4. CASE STUDY : THIRD WORLD LITERATURE AS NATIONAL ALLEGORY

The following case is cited here as an example of the application of a “comparative method”, which uses all the literary categories popular in comparative practice – nation, “third world”, “postcolonialism” – but remains trapped in reduction and homogenisation of the field of literature.

In “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism,” Fredric Jameson states, “Third-World texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic — necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: *the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society*” (1986, 69; italics in original). Jameson had earlier identified national allegory in his *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, or, the Modernist as Fascist* (1979) through his project of “cognitive mapping”. In his view this is the political vocation of postmodern art (“Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,”), associated also with realism in *The Political Unconscious*. To him, narrative is a means by which individual experience and a broader social totality may be somehow represented and reconciled, if only through a kind of figuration. Hence, realist narrative is “traditionally in one form or another the central model of Marxist aesthetics as a narrative discourse which unites the experience of daily life with a properly cognitive, mapping, or well-nigh ‘scientific’ perspective” (Jameson 1981, 104). . That a white, male, privileged American critic would be making such categorical statements about the “Third World” was itself considered odious and dismissed by scholars of postcolonial studies like Arif Dirlik and Aijaz Ahmad. The problem with this “method” which seems sufficiently comparative, is objected to on two principal grounds (Ahmad 1987) : the universalism of Jameson’s assertion is disputed, since any hypothesis which claims to encompass *all* “Third-World texts” necessarily overlooks the specificity of languages and cultures. There is no single “third world” discourse : using Etienne’s concept, “third world” cannot be a literary invariant, because it is a geographical and temporal marker, not a literary one. Besides, Jameson’s label “Third World” is essentialist, “.. polemical..., with no theoretical status whatsoever,”(Ahmad, *ibid*) and, by extension, so is the idea of a cognizable “First World” - “there is no such thing as a ‘Third World Literature’ which can be constructed as an internally coherent object of theoretical knowledge” (1992, 96–97).

So here “third world” or “postcolonial” are generalised spatio-temporal categories, into which literary forms must fit – for example, all fiction written in the “third world” is a “national allegory”. Instead, the comparative approach of locating the texts may be used to deconstruct such essentialisms, showing how plurality and difference characterise “world” literatures, the diversity of which cannot be reduced to pre-fixed paradigms.

3.5 SUPRANATION, LOCAL AND UNIVERSAL

Claudio Guillén in *The Challenge of Comparative Literature*, defines the discipline as “a branch of literary investigation that involves the systematic study of *supranational assemblages*” (Guillén 3) : “the point of departure” represented by Comparative Literature as a discipline is realized **neither** “in national literatures, **nor** in the interrelations between them” (3). Stressing the “dynamic or contentious aspect” of comparative literature, he too points to a “process of determination”. A “systematic study” is advocated. Treating literature as a system means to relate different aspects of literature in human society as human endeavour; these are all contingent on time and place, on history as it is mediated by the text and constructed by the reader. Comparative literature makes it necessary for us to see that the world about and in which the enquiry is based, is not defined by the inquirer’s position or the writer’s position alone (3), because the event of literature involves an interaction between them through the textual practice of reading. Guillén calls this a “process of determination”, which is located in time and place, not a final or absolute determination of meaning. So, the comparative approach is the “awareness of certain tensions between the “local and the universal”. “Local” means:

“... locale, place and not nation – nationality, country, region, city – because...these conceptual extremes ...encompass a series of general opposites applicable to different situations: between the specific circumstance and the world, between the present and the absent, the experience and its sense, that I and whatever is alien to it, the perceived and the longed for, what is an what should be, what exists today and what is eternal” (6)

Both work and reading are “located”, i.e. locating the text is a part of the reading or interpretation process. In a similar way, we can trace the use of concepts that help to understand the idea of difference and plurality, connected to the idea of “world literature”, required for a comparative reading.

3.6 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND THE COSMOPOLIS

Universal and world literature is connected to the ideas of 'cosmopolis' and the 'international'. Didier Coste, Nicoletta Pireddu et al point out that all kinds of cosmopolitanism are basically concerned with cross-cultural human relationships rather than with the mere temporary or permanent occupation of a natural space. Cosmopolitanism does not necessarily describe a condition of mobility, rootlessness or hybridity; it is a way of inhabiting the world that entails constant self-interrogation, creative interaction with other peoples, cultures, and languages, and a political sense of a justice always to come. It is not only a utopian drive, but rather the sense of responsibility for the expansion of democracy, for a new inclusionary politics embracing minority claims, be they ethnic, racial, social, sexual or gender-related. are as firmly directed towards the respect of non-European cultures and against the destruction of indigenous people. It is a struggle for a universal human citizenship of the Earth – as a concept it participates in the ethical impulse of comparative literature, but is not a literary category to interpret textual practices.

3.6.1 Humanities and Comparative Literature: Secular Criticism

In the book *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, Edward Said critiques the Eurocentric Humanities (See U 1) practised and taught in the American academy, by envisioning the possibility of a "different kind" of "cosmopolitan" humanism. Said rejects humanism that is limited to "extolling patriotically the virtues of our culture, our language, our monuments". Humanism demands inclusive structures and apparatuses of scholarship and for an opening up of the canon of "humanist study and practice" (28-29). How are these standards to be applied to understand and engage with the existing and ever increasing ethnic, racial and linguistic diversity in the citizenry of a nation? Said's understanding of the cosmopolitan is not inclusion of a distant or absentee foreign other. Citizenship, citizen's rights and territoriality are directly linked to the ethos of time place, culture and history, in the way a plural society engages with difference and the way its polity includes difference in the allocation of power and resources. In the quest for understanding difference that makes for linguistic and cultural diversity, he advocates close reading, philology and a *secular criticism*, ie the kind of literary scholarship that does not set up any gods of theory. In other words he proposes the same "open itinerary" as Guillen for comparative literature. This openness to difference makes comparative literature a cosmopolitan practice, not housed in the narrow confines of a "national" literature but located "*supranationally*". This argument can also be posed against the idea

of a “world literature” struggling to identify itself through content (what is and is not world literature) and circulation (what gets translated and published).

Returning to philology is the academic path suggested by Auerbach, in different circumstances, and taken up by Said in American academia. Said (2004) championed in the last years of his life a revitalization of the most militant aspects of the discipline, which have always existed beyond its purely academic outlines : convinced that scholarly humanism had to add a noticeable presence as an "ongoing practice" to its status as a "theoretical territory" (ibid 6), he proposed that comparatists insist on contributing to "a different kind of humanism that was cosmopolitan and text-and-language-bound in ways that absorbed the great lessons of the past" (ibid 11). He advocates "the return to philology" as a necessary route for the strengthening the "idea of humanistic culture as coexistence and sharing" (xvi). Hence, as Etiemble had claimed, translation as a cultural practice is both indispensable and an object of research for comparatists . Also, “reading for meaning” (70) remains fundamental and it can be learned and taught. The ethical impulse is the source of comparison: how do we see difference in the contact between cultures ? How do we engage with the other? According to Villaneuva, in the present moment, Said reminds us of “an unrenounceable humanist engagement to which comparative literature has much to contribute: teaching how to read well, which in our times means being a member of one's own literary tradition while remaining an eager visitor to the culture of the Other.”

❖ Check Your Progress 2

1. Identify the error in the claim that Third World literature is national allegory

- A. Postcolonial literature is a homogenous category
- B. Every comparatist must know 10 designated languages
- C. Literature is an objective science
- D. Nations are literary communities

2. Choose the correct words from the options given to complete the following

The nation is a (i)-----category while language and literature travel across (ii)-----and hence the unit of study for comparative literature is a/an (iii)----- . The (iv) ----- and (v) ----- are markers of place, and despite being opposite each other, connect the (vi) -----and the particular.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Supranational assemblage | 4. geopolitical |
| 2. Global | 5. general |
| 3. Local | 6. Boundaries |

3. Cosmopolitanism

- A. Means rootlessness and hybridity
- B. Means responsibility for the other
- C. Is the result of exile
- D. Implies that the person is more than the citizen of a single state

4. By "secular criticism" Said means

- A. There is no place for religion in criticism
- B. Literature cannot be religious
- C. The meaning of a literary text cannot be predetermined by theory
- D. The critic cannot bring his religious ideas to literature.

Ans : C

5. Match Set A with Set B

SET A	SET B
1. Said	i. locale
2. Auerbach	ii. General literature
3. Guillen	iii. contrapuntal reading
4. Etienne	iv. return to philology

3.7 COMPARATIVE CULTURE AND/OR LITERATURE ?

In "Comparative Literature and the Crisis of the Humanities ", Guillén shows his concern for the politicization of the humanities and the increased impact of cultural studies and postcolonial studies which have acquired prominence to the detriment of literary studies. Guillen's complaint is that Cultural Studies blurs the distinction between the popular and the refined or between the high manifestations of human creativity and other expressions less illustrious on an aesthetic scale valued for millennia. So he falls into the high/low literature trap, which is actually the discomfort with adjusting one's ideas of art with the change in medium, and the introduction of virtuality in the nineties. Guillen comments: "We live in plural worlds and our great enemy is simplification. No vision has complete hegemony on the space it considers. No culture is monolithic. None of us are only one thing" (Guillen 23).

Said (2004) held the position that postcolonialism, cultural studies, and other similar fields ended up side-tracking "the humanities from

its rightful concern with the critical investigation of values, history, and freedom, turning it, it would seem, into a whole factory of word-spinning and insouciant specialities, many of them identity-based, that in their jargon and special pleading address only like-minded people, acolytes, and other academics" (14). Additionally, he was convinced that "those varieties of deconstructive Derridean readings" end "in undecidability and uncertainty" (66). We should not be surprised, therefore, by the only solution Said proposes, namely "a return to a philological-interpretative model that is older and more widely based than the one that has prevailed in America since the introduction of humanistic study in the American university 150 years ago" (34; see also Holquist). To this end, he introduces "contrapuntal" reading, that focuses on the event character of literature:

a musical form... employing numerous voices in usually strict imitation of each other, a form, in other words, expressing motion, playfulness, discovery, and, in the rhetorical sense, invention. Viewed this way, the texts of the canonical humanities, far from being a rigid tablet of fixed rules and monuments bullying us from the past... will always remain open to changing combinations of sense and signification; every reading and interpretation of a canonical works re-animates it in the present, furnishes an occasion for rereading broad historical field whose usefulness is that it shows us history as an agonistic process still being made, rather than finished and settled once and for all. (ibid 25).

3.7.1 Literary Invariants:

If the object of literary study is literariness, then the phenomenon and the event of literature must be the subject of reflection. And if spatio-temporal categories are suspect, what will be the literary categories that will study literature, without limiting it by conceptualising it through time and space ?

The theoretical assumption underlying comparison in the 19th century is the horizontal comparison between equals, but some literatures, categorized as primitive, receive less value than others, which are considered to be of universal importance. This inequity is rooted in Herder's idea of the "soul of the people" (Volksgeist), intended to promote equality and mutual respect among nations. Herder believed that there is only one class in the nation, the "volk" or people characterised by the "people's spirit", representing nations as embodiments of unique sets of cultural characteristics in explicit opposition to attempts to define nations politically. Underlying this spirit are emotions and ideas go beyond the historical accident and vicissitude and are founded in a common humanity. Herder intended also to grade civilisations according to their maturity – from the

innocence of the ancients, to the corruption of decadence, that Herder saw as the result of the changing economic order. However, we are arguing that comparative literature is a literary activity and the categories we use to understand and practice it will have to be literary

Etiemble's (1963) solution to the crisis in comparative literature was to propose general characteristics that were universal to literature – this was his rejoinder to “world” literature (See Unit 2). These general characteristics were according to him “invariants”. Thus, Etiemble moves from the *rapports de faits* approach, and the spatial and temporal categorisation of literature, ie the “national/world” approach, to a new type of comparatism, where cultural contact or even contextualization of any kind yield to “what we might call synthetic, synchronic-typological and theoretical” (Etiemble 1963 56) relations.

Đurišin replaced the French School's insistence on influence with techniques as diverse as reminiscence, impulse, filiation, literary correspondence, and so on (158-62) as elements that could travel across space, time and language. This does not exclude contact with the opposite, and is not limited to it. In this context, intertextuality was theorised by Julia Kristeva as both a criticism of and a solution to the strict genetic causality sought by influence studies and *rapports de fait*. In her view, the notion of intertextuality replaces the notion of intersubjectivity when we realize that meaning is not transferred directly from writer to reader but instead is mediated through, or filtered by, “codes” imparted to the writer and reader by other texts. Even the concordance, a concept proposed in 1968 by theorist Paul Cornea to integrate the reception context within the comparison, without hierarchical systematization, involves the analogy between at least two given cultural contexts, considered in *praesentia*. (Ursa 2014: 155)

3.7.2 Comparative Poetics

Comparative poetics is an application of the double approach of Etiemble (1963) which combines typology with theory, advancing “towards an objective definition of literature”, by moving from particular to general. The final result is a general theory where literature as an entirety has been assimilated. Etiemble calls this “literature without any adjective” (ibid 61), ie not limited by or thought through, spatial or temporal boundaries.

The Romanian comparatist Adrian Marino answers Wellek's criticism of the French School, by claiming that comparative literature has a precise and autonomous object, and a specific method (Marino, 1982: 5). Before Đurišin theorised world literature as interliterary processes, Marino advocated a transnational perspective to overcome the ‘crisis’

of comparative literature in mid-20th century. At this time, emphasis on scientificity, following the positivist model of Van Tieghem, often led to the overestimation of specific methods and concepts. Seeking to precisely define comparative literature as a perfectly legitimate scientific discipline with exclusive authority over a methodological field, Marino overestimates the value of methodological generalization in conceiving comparative literature as a comparative poetics and makes great efforts to outline the differences between the practitioner of comparative poetics and the mere poetician (who he feels is not qualified to operate beyond close reading). Marino attempts to configure a domain that is specific to comparative literature and also realised from a fundamental character of literature, i.e. literariness. He follows Etienne in the assertion that literature is universal, and studying or reading it means engaging with contextualised difference. Thus a “literary invariant” can be used to understand literary changes and reception across time and place.

Later theorists of comparative poetics like James Liu and Earl Miner were not caught up in the “literary science” paradigm and saw poetics as an investigation of the distinct and autonomous nature of literature as manifested in literary works. Poiesis is the art of making something that did not exist before, and what is made, is poetry – the art of making poetry, is the object of study of Poetics. According to Liu, “comparisons of what writers and critics belonging to different cultural traditions have thought about literature may reveal what critical conceptions are universal, what cultural concepts are confined to some cultural traditions and what conceptions are unique to a particular tradition”(ibid). The idea of the general literary characteristics being universal, traced back to Etienne, is here applied and qualified, as is Etienne’s idea of the literary invariant, which is shown to be identifiable, but varied in expression across time and place.

❖ Check Your Progress 3

1. Contrapuntal reading requires

A. Conflicts between ancient and modern literatures

B. Acknowledging that difference is a condition in our existence

C. Bringing unlike entities together

D. Monolithic culture.

2. Culture Studies and postcolonial theory both (i)----- literature; according to Guillen, the former makes no (ii)----- between (iii)----- and (iv)----- literature, and in the words of Coste and Pireddu, they (v) ----- literature to a (vi) ----- document

- 1. reduce 4. low
- 2. high 5. social
- 3. distinction 6. instrumentalise

3. Literary invariants as a concept

- A. Helps to understand literary change
- B. Helps to discern similarities both synchronically and diachronically
- C. Enhances literary foreign trade
- D. helps to understand universal literature

4. Intertextuality

- A. Helps to map literary change
- B. Shows the exchanges between contemporary and inherited texts
- C. Is a tool to understand literary influence
- D. Questions the idea that there is strict genetic causality in literature

5. Etiemble's double approach of typology plus theory is a conceptual tool for comparison because

- A. it does not refer to personal readings
- B. it does not depend on subjective readings
- C. it refers to the phenomenon of literature and not to a token event
- D. it arrives at a general statement about literariness through the located reading of relations between specific texts

6. Match Set A with Set B

Set A

Set B

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Comparative poetics | a. Susan Bassnett |
| 2. Universal literature | b. Durisin |
| 3. Interliterary process | c. Etiemble |
| 4. d. Marino | |

3.8 THE SYSTEMS THEORY MODELS

In this section we look at what Villaneuva (2011) calls “the contextual frameworks” of interpretation, like Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, Juri Lotman's semiotics of culture, Pierre Bourdieu's *champ littéraire*, Niklas Luhmann's notion of social systems, Durisin's concept of the interliterary process, used for the "empirical," study of literature. Villaneuva defends this empiricism as a concept that is not positivist or neo-positivist, the objectives being theoricity, and applicability.

3.8.1 Empirical Study of Literature

In Schmidt's *Empirische Literaturwissenschaft* literature is considered in the context of communicative and thus social actions, which include the production of texts and their mediation texts undergo in distribution, their reception by the reading public or theater or film audience, and finally, also the transformative reading that is carried out in the form of criticism and scholarship, interpretation, commentary, parody, summary, adaptation, paraphrase, film, theater or television versions, etc.

The Empirical study of literature practised and theorised by Schmidt, and Steven Totosy de Zepetnek, attempted to raise the interest of literary scholars in empirical questions, dissociate empiricity from materialism and positivism and enter the research domain which traditionally had been outsourced to literary sociology and psychology as a marginal aspect, separate from interpretation, the core of literary studies. This task required a concept of empirical research centered on the notion of methodical constructions of facts distinguished from data. The empirical study of literature was simultaneous with deconstruction in the United States universities. In Europe the foundations of thinking about literature were based in a broad theoretical tradition that included the Marxist sociology of literature, the Frankfurt School, as well as the semiology of Tartu School, the Konstanz School, and the functionalism of the Prague School. The empirical school stressed interdisciplinarity and plurality of critical theories and methods, combining the author's perspective, the text's perspective, and the reader's perspective as outlined in Totosy's "The Systemic and Empirical Approach to Literature and Culture."

3.8.2 Theory of Constants

The Systems and Empirical approaches attempt to address much of the criticism levelled against liberal humanist ideas of

universalism and the confusions created by spatio-temporal categories of understanding literature. The theory of constants, an application of the systems approach to the literary invariants, was proposed by Munteanu (1957 and 1967). He affirms the importance of a systematic study of the “reality of constants” in the dialectical, synthetic and heuristic sense. in *Constantes en littérature et en histoire dialectiques*. Here the stress is on the relation between self and world – nothing exists in itself but as a contradiction, antinomy, tension etc. Synthesis evolves through the dialectic, all products like literature and arts are the result of contacts and exchanges between the Hegelian thesis and antithesis, so they display a series of structural dialectical constants. Munteanu defines two types of invariants, which he calls “dialectic constants”: structural ones, which are fixed and ahistorical, and “variable constants, at the same time fixed and supple” – *Constantes* 131). He designs a grid of constants, accounting for their oscillation and dialectical transformations over a given duration, in which they are subjected to certain developments. He defends theoretical systems, and explains that “any synthesis manages to create a system or more, not only rigid but also provisional and therefore theoretical. This is its reward and coronation.” (24) Marino¹ criticises his “entirely historicist prudence” that makes Munteanu a partisan of the history of ideas (*Comparatisme* 71), while the goal should be – in Marino’s view – to surpass all historicism.

❖ Check Your Progress 4

1. Systems theories of literature treat literature as

- A. a sociological document
- B. an event
- C. a means of communication
- D. an instrument

2. A systems approach means

- A. Integrating literature with social systems
- B. Treating the literary system as one which regulates human life
- C. treating literature as a system related to the other systems that regulate human life
- D. a scientific study of literature

3. An empirical study of literature according to its practitioners is
- A. Positivistic because it is neutral
 - B. Cannot be positivistic because it is based on experience
 - C. A model of communication
 - D. Cannot be a theory because experience cannot be generalised
4. The theory of constants applies
- A. The empirical approach to literature
 - B. The systems approach to literary theory
 - C. The concept of literary invariants to social phenomena
 - D. The positivist approach to social theory
5. Though Munteanu's theory is of 'constants', his approach is
- A. Literary
 - B. Universal
 - C. Dialectical
 - D. historical
6. Munteanu identifies a pair of constants : the (A) ----- constants are fixed and the (B)----- are (C)----- and responsive to context.
- A. i. Structural, ii. dialectical, iii. variable
 - B. i. Dialectical, ii. structural, iii. variable
 - C. i. Variable, ii. dialectical, iii. Structural

3.9 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter we have understood various categories such as general literature, national literature, world literature in context of comparative literature. We have also tried to relocate the concepts such as comparative literature and /or culture etc. We also studied the theory models towards the ending of the chapter.

3.10 KEY WORDS

Culture Metaphorically, a cultivation (*agri-cultura*); the cultivation of values; by extension, a body of values cultivated, See Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (1959) and *The Long Revolution* (1961). More recently, sociologists and anthropologists have employed the term to denote the totality of customs and institutions of a human group.

Comparative Literature Comparative literature aims to enhance awareness of the qualities of one work by using the products of another linguistic culture as an illuminating context; or studying some broad topic or theme as it is realized (transformed) in the literatures of different languages.

3.11 BOOKS SUGGESTED

- Arif Dirlik "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism." *Critical Inquiry* 20.2 (Winter 1994): 328-56
- Cesar Dominguez "Dionyz Durisin and a Systemic Theory of World literature"
<https://www.academia.edu/1146429/Dion%C3%BDz_%C4%8Eu ri%C5%A1in_and_a_Systemic_Theory_of_World_Literature>
- Rene Etiemble "Should we revise our idea of World Literature ?" in *World Literature Reader* eds Theo D'Haen, Cesar Dominguez, et al 2012 p93-102 Translation available at
<https://www.academia.edu/1137839/World_Literature_Reader>
- Claudio Guillen *The Challenge of Comparative Literature* Harvard Stuides in Comparative Literature 1993
- Fredric Jameson, "Third World literature in the Era of Multinational capitalism" *Social Text* No. 15 (Autumn, 1986), pp. 65-88; Duke University Press
- Marko Juvan, "Towards a History of Intertextuality in Literary and Culture Studies." *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 10.3 (2008).
- <<http://dx.doi.org/10.7771/1481-4374.1370>>
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- Edward Said, *The World the Text and the Critic* Camb Mass., Harvard University Press, 1983. Available at
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- Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 1993
- S.J. Schmidt "Empirical Studies in Literature : Introductory Remarks" *Poetics*, Volume 10, Issue 4-5, 1981
- Tally, Jr., Robert T. November 9, 2017. "Fredric Jameson and the Controversy over Third-World Literature in the Era of

Multinational Capitalism." *Global South Studies: A Collective Publication with The Global South*. see Tally 2014).

- Mihaela Ursa ,”Universality as Invariability in Comparative Literature” *Primerjalna književnost* (Ljubljana) 37.3 (2014)
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- Tötösy de Zepetnek, Steven and Sywenky, Irene. "The Systemic and Empirical Approach to Literature and Culture as Theory and Application." *Library Series, CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* (2010):
<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweblibrary/empiricalstudyofliterature>

ANSWERS:

❖ Check Your Progress 1

Q.1 - 1 c 2 a 3 d 4 b

Q.2 – A

Q.3 – B

Q.4 – B

Q.5 -1 – C, 2 –D, 3- B,

Q.6 I D ii E iii B iv C v A

Q.7 A iii B ii C iv D i

❖ Check Your Progress 2

1 – A

2 - i 4 ii 6 iii 1 iv 2 v 3 vi 5

3 – D

4 – C

5 - 1 iii 2 iv 3 i 4. Ii

❖ Check Your Progress 3

1 – B

2 - i-6 ii-3 iii- 2 iv- 4 v-1 vi-5

3 – B

4 – D

5 – D

6 – 1-d 2-c 3-b 4-a

❖ Check Your Progress 4

1 – C

2 – C

3 – B

4 – B

5 – C

6 - A-i B-i C-i

:: STRUCTURE ::**4.0 Objective****4.1 The Relation Between World Literature and
Comparative Literature****4.2 A Literary pre-history of “World Literature”****4.3 Cultural Difference****4.4 About World Literature****4.4.1 World Literature as Discipline : Auerbach and
philology****4.4.2 Humanism and Universal Literature****4.5 World Literature as Curriculum****4.5.1 Distant Reading****4.5.2 Literary Space and the World Republic of Letters****4.6 The “future” of “world” Literature****4.7 Let Us Sum Up****4.8 Books Suggested****Answers**

4.0 OBJECTIVE

This unit will attempt to understand the academic and philosophical roots of the category World Literature by taking a comparative perspective, through a located reading of statements, research and pedagogic practices. We relate the ideas of World Literature to changing academic practices, especially in the US and a changing view of difference, to analyse the implications of this line of thinking by comparative literature scholars .

4.1 THE RELATION BETWEEN WORLD LITERATURE AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

The Relation Between World Literature and Comparative Literature

In the terminological history of “comparative literature” Merian-Genast (4) lists three different meanings of the concept of world literature :

- the “cosmopolitan” understanding as in Goethe’s concept of supranational literature (described as *Weltliteratur*).
- the canonical understanding, referring to those works whose effect last beyond their time or place of origin, realizing what Boileau calls “universal consent”.
- the sum of all poetic products of humankind.

Durisin also proposes a “trinomial” perspective (Gálik 2), where three different meanings of the concept function alternatively: 1) literature of the entire world (or literary history categorized according to national history and language of circulation),

2) a selection of the best creations (classical literature, the world canon) and

3) product of all individual literatures. Just as we have seen for the definitions of comparative literature, here too we understand that the meaning of this concept is not free of history and divorced from the world view of whoever uses the term.

4.2 A LITERARY PRE-HISTORY OF “WORLD LITERATURE”

Although literary works in our globalized world should be conflated neither with literature-universal, nor with a kind of geographic cohesion of literatures, in today's context, globalization partially explains the revival of the notion of world literature. In the time it was conceptualised, *weltliteratur* was in opposition to the *rapports de faits* approach . According to Jean Bessiere for the former, a literature can be the distinct counterpart of another literature, whatever relations connect these two literatures. For the latter, the other literature, translated, displaced, is simultaneously a surprise and what can be inserted in his own world and literature, then augmented, modified; this alliance of the Same and the Other is the first condition for the development of *Weltliteratur*. This early opposition between Ampère and Goethe together with the difference between comparative literature as a way of reading and world literature claimed to be a set of texts, leads to a fundamental question: can we bring to any large

unification of literatures the same kind of understanding brought to bear on the acts and works of individuals—writers, readers—or limited writers' or readers' groups, or broader ensembles—nations and, eventually, regions? It remains as we have seen earlier, a question of categories. Is world literature an adequate category to read literature produced and consumed in situations marked by plurality, which is certainly a fundamental characteristic of the “world” ?

Goethe pointed out that world literature was emerging presently, that is, contemporaneous to him. From 1827 on Goethe asserts that "such a world literature will soon come into being, as is inevitable given the ever-increasing rapidity of human interaction" (WA I, 42.2, 502]; similarly in a letter to Adolph Friedrich Carl Streckfuß, 27 January 1827 [WA IV, 42, 28] and in *Maximen und Reflexionen* [WA I, 42.2, 202]), he compares his situation to that of the sorcerer's apprentice, with the advancing world literature "streaming towards him as if to engulf him (Goethe to Carl Friedrich Zelter, 21 May 1828 [WA IV, 44, 101]). This earlier and more famous imperative that the process of world literature be accelerated is distinct from the globalist dimensions of Marx's famous proclamation in the 1848 *Communist Manifesto*. Goethe envisioned world literature mainly as a dialogue of national literatures, not as competition, nor as foreign trade. He states "like all things of supreme value, [art] belongs to the whole world and can only be promoted by a free and general interaction among contemporaries" (WA I, 48, 23). Naturally, a discourse of this kind must "always remain attentive to what has been inherited from the past," as we read in the famous stanza from the *West-Eastern Divan*: "He who cannot be farsighted / Nor three thousand years assay, / Inexperienced stays benighted / Let him live from day to day (1994, 59).

Goethe represents just the opposite of the now- normative concept of world literature in the famous conversation with Eckermann on 31 January 1827, where he proclaims the "epoch of world literature" with the following observation: "I see increasingly that poetry is a common property of mankind and that it emerges in all places and at all times from many hundreds of people. Some are a little better at it than others and stay on top a little longer, that is all there is to it ... everyone must realize that the gift of poetry is not so rare a thing, and that nobody has reason to let it go to his head if he produces a good poem" . Speaking of specificity of location, he says, "We must view everything else historically and, as far as possible, learn from the good in it" (Eckermann 198).

Goethe questioned both the supremacy of literary nationalism and asserted the universality of literature through the idea of “weltliterature”. Etienne questioned the idea on the basis of counter-proposals to the Eurocentric reading-lists that make up the “world” – though Goethe never once implied in word or deed that he was limited by Europe. Etienne however has a list of choices which he designates as literature. Instead of looking to define classics and canons, Goethe talks of literature, what people read -- as “world literature”. For Goethe, this is the phenomenon of literature, across the world: “If such a world literature will soon come into being, as is inevitable given the ever increasing rapidity of human interaction, then we may not expect anything more or different from [this literature] than what it can and does achieve ... whatever pleases the masses will expand without limit and, as we are already witnessing, find approval in all areas and regions”. He calls for “advancing world literature ... even if the general cause suffers” (Goethe to Zelter, 4 March 1829 [WA IV, 45, 187]; see also Auerbach 303-04] for “those who have devoted themselves to higher things, to what is fruitful on a higher level, will get to know each other all the more quickly and closely” to “resist the everyday deluge” and work together toward a world literature that would promote the “true progress of mankind” (WA I, 42.2, 503).

4.3 CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

Goethe’s idea of “world” literature was against establishing and worshipping of uniform culture and language within territorial boundaries secured by the hegemonic ruling class. If we fought over literary nationality as we fight over borders, literature will always defeat theorisation. Hence Goethe posits world literature against uniformity and in favour of difference, in his contemporary milieu.

Marx proclaimed in the 1848 Communist manifesto that “The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature” In the later 19th century and up to the end of the second great war, Europe's nations withdrew into a sort of solipsistic intellectual isolation, breeding political xenophobia and cultural chauvinism. In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels imagined a new international system, which would break this cultural chauvinism by bringing to birth the international culture of the working class. In their view, world literature would emerge as transcending the national boundaries and moving towards an internationalism. With Marx, world literature enters the realm of

political capital and no longer remains literary phenomena, which the writers Goethe and Tagore, were trying to preserve it as .

When Tagore was asked in 1905 by the National Council of Education of Calcutta to speak about Comparative Literature, he titled his lecture "World Literature", saying that literature was too large to be contained by the notions of "his field and my field", ie territorial boundaries. As a subject of the British empire, Tagore was a bitter critic of the homogenous single-religion nation of 19th century Europe. As an Indian, Tagore understood *desh* in opposition to nation, and believed the former as a marker of diversity and plurality

Goethe proposes a globalised culture in which the arts and literature were human in the literal sense of the word, and transcended spatial and temporal boundaries. Gadamer claims "normative significance" ("normativer Sinn") for "world literature" (167), but Goethe is not creating a canon or making prescriptions. Rather, he is talking about relations between people. We have noted the context in which "nation" as opposed to "world" or "universe" emerges – "nation" is a spatio-temporal idea while "world" implies that humanity is universal but includes the difference and uniqueness of the individual. One of Goethe's last essays, entitled "Epochs of Social Education" ("Epochen geselliger Bildung"), leads one to the conclusion that Goethe directed his hopes away from the seclusion and intimacy of life in what he called the "idyllic epoch," to its gradual convergence and fusion, and finally to the point where it is wholly united with the "universal epoch." There are four stages of literary education ("Bildung") in Goethe's thinking : in the first, one sings only of the beloved and "prefers to head toward one's mother tongue" ; in the second and third, "one does not resist the influence of foreign languages"; and in the fourth, one is "convinced of the necessity of informing oneself about the present course of world events, in their real as well as ideal sense. All foreign literatures, together with our native literature, become part of the same phenomenon, and we are not left behind by world events....the people think, act and feel almost exactly as we do" (Eckermann 196). So, Goethe does not propose the submergence of the particular in "humanity in general" , but to "mediation and mutual recognition" . According to Goethe, "One must get to know the peculiarities of each nation to then see past them and establish a relationship with the nation; for the characteristics of a nation are like its language and its coins, they facilitate dealings with it, in fact they make such dealings possible in the first place" (ibid) . This view of world literature as pointed out earlier, is based on a relation between the different literatures and cultures across the world, in other words, a relation between people, rather than on a spatio-temporal categories.

But in the 20th century, this model is in question after the wars that have involved not only Europe but its colonies across the world. As Auerbach notes, in exile in Turkey during the second great war, the process of cultural "conciliation" ("Ausgleichsprozeß") that Goethe regards with some optimism is increasingly eroding every distinctive tradition, with the result that ultimately, "in a uniformly organized world, only one single literary culture -- indeed, in a relatively short time, only a few literary languages, soon perhaps only one -- will remain alive. And with this, the idea of world literature would be at once realized and destroyed". And in a similar sense T.S. Eliot proposes "that a world culture which was simply a uniform culture would be no culture at all. We should have a humanity de-humanised. It would be a nightmare. But on the other hand, we cannot resign the idea of world-culture altogether" (62) while Lévi-Strauss suggests that "It is cultural difference that makes our encounters fruitful". He talks of the gradual abolishment of certain cultural traits because of uniformisation, and then entropy and "melange" or mixing. This loss of identity disturbs Etienne as well, when he says, "It is at the precise moment when World Literature becomes possible, that it becomes at once, impossible"

❖ Check Your Progress

1. Match the idea with the assumptions

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| A. Canon | i cosmopolitanism |
| B. common poetic | ii World is an additive concept |
| C. literatures of the entire world | iii selective principle to define world literature |
| D. literature not bounded by nation | iv human expression shares common elements |

Ans : Aiii Biv Cii Di

2. Goethe and Marx both believed that world literature

- A. will give everyone equal power
- B. It will open the markets
- C. It will destroy national narrow-mindedness
- D. It will enhance the feeling of common humanity

Ans : C

3. According to Goethe, world literature is

- A. a set of canonical works
- B. a very rare phenomenon, difficult to find
- C. a process, emerging in the contemporary
- D. the sum total of all literary works in the world

Ans : C

4. According to Goethe, there are four stages of “bildung” ranging from
- A. Inclination towards world literature to appreciation of one’s own literature
 - B. Mediation and mutual recognition to singing of the beloved
 - C. Appreciation of one’s own literature to submergence in the general
 - D. Appreciation of one’s own literature to mediation and mutual recognition of the literatures of others

Ans : D

5. According to Auerbach, world literature would be realised when
- A. There was one dominant literature across the world
 - B. When all the literatures were in conciliation
 - C. The great war ended
 - D. One or two literatures survived the war

Ans : A

6. Auerbach’s proclamation that world literature would be created and destroyed at once means

- A. A single dominant literature would destroy all other literatures
- B. Cultural conciliation would make all literatures uniform
- C. There would be no world literature if all literatures were considered uniform
- D. Cultural conciliation would result in a diverse “world” being replaced by a uniform one.

Ans : D

7. Both Auerbach and Etienne feared that
- A. The concept of World literature would reduce diversity to uniformity
 - B. At the moment when perfect universality was achieved, diversity would die
 - C. World literature as a concept promoted diversity
 - D. World literature as a concept promoted unity.

Ans : B

4.4 ABOUT WORLD LITERATURE

4.4.1 World Literature as Discipline : Auerbach and philology

Erich Auerbach's idea of world literature rests on humanity and human relationships rather than canons and classics : "'World literature' refers not simply to what is common and human as such, but rather to this as the mutual fertilisation of the manifold. It presupposes the *felix culpa* of mankind's division into a whole host of cultures".

Auerbach wrote during the disintegration of colonial empires, the accompanying expansion of the global system of nation-state, in the wake of the war in Europe and elsewhere, and the aftermath of the Holocaust. Another thinker, writing in a different language, discipline, and sensibility – namely, Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques*, makes the postcolonial postwar European subject, ie himself, the investigator of mankind's difference. As ethnographer, and critic of Western ethnocentrism, Levi Strauss takes a position opposite to Auerbach's role of philological humanist, a critic of the narrowness of attachments to the viewpoint of "national" language and literature. In both texts, we might say, the question is how to refashion the western subject to look outside Europe for knowledge, when it is obvious that the globe is connected by markets and cultural difference exists. Clifford (1988) calls this the new "predicament of culture" : the rejection of the centrality of Europe and Europeans. This transformed field of culture, considered in "Philology and Weltliteratur" consists of three main sections. One locates the text, outlining the difference between the Goethean idea of weltliteratur and the changed conditions in which Auerbach is writing. The second examines the "practical" problems and difficulties raised by this new conception. And the third offers synthesis as a possible approach to these methodological questions. As Said clarifies in the introduction to Auerbach's "Philology and Weltliteratur," the task of philology is to "study of all, or most, of human verbal activity" (1), but not for eternal truths, but for "contingent, historical truths at their basic level: it conceives of man dialectically, not statically" (2). Although both philosophy and philology engage with the "truth," philological "truth" is more subject to historical change. Based on Vico's conception of philology, however, Auerbach asserts that this philological truth — that which Vico calls 'certum' (the certain or established) — is not inseparable from philosophical truth — what Vico calls 'verum' — in that the latter is actualized in every historical moment, and the philosophical truth can be known "only through a knowledge of history as a whole" (Said, "Introduction" 16). Therefore, for Auerbach it is philology that

makes it possible to have access to philosophical "truth" whose wholeness is impossible to achieve by just looking at an individual historical period. Although philology investigates what people believed truthfully at each cultural age and the "truth" might be a product of their limited perspective, philology makes it possible to know the systematic context of human history and this "philological philosophy or philosophical philology is concerned with only one thing — mankind" ("Introduction" 16). In other words, philology tries to discover "truth" in the totality of historical facts, but its task entails not just the overt discovery of materials and the development of methods of research, but "beyond that their penetration and evaluation so that an inner history of mankind—which thereby created a conception of man unified in his multiplicity — could be written" (Auerbach, "Philology" 4).

4.4.2 Humanism and Universal Literature

For Goethe, literature and culture in general cannot be considered pure and hermetic entities : the forms and ideas circulate endlessly since always all within a cultural universe without any obvious connection between them, and that circulation is creative; in which there is also the contrary sense; he has here shown how the sterile poetics and aesthetics of symbolism made for new thrills in Chinese and Japanese literature, like oriental forms like haiku and pantomime inspired the Europeans though they had very erroneous ideas of it. He felt the grand category of poetics were not limited by national boundaries, and needed an approach as much universal as possible .

Etiemble wrote in "Comparison n'est pas raison" : In 1950, it is true that this discipline was affirmed as a literary science rather than as a form of literary criticism. The passage from one ambition to the next shows the movement from the first part of the 20th century to the second, opening a tomorrow which is as yet uncertain . In 1964, questioned Goethe's idea of Weltliteratur – asking that the notion be revised, he proposed thereafter, universal literature which expresses "humanitat" : which is literature's ultimate purpose – the concert of literatures linking man to man.

4.5 WORLD LITERATURE AS CURRICULUM

Thus, the rise of "world literature" as a course of study within comparative literature, answered present-day pedagogical requirements for a "culturally diverse" education in the "1st world". The fulfilling of such requirements by comparative literature makes for a strong case for existence and fiscal support within western

university systems. And therefore, the skills one acquires through a training in Comparative Literature certainly provide a competitive edge in teaching generalist curricula like "World Literature." In Tagore's and Goethe's ideas of "world literature", the emphasis is not on literature that is accessible to the world, as Damrosch defines it (Damrosch 2003), not on a canon or a discrete or infinite collection of works, but literature as a universal mode of relating to the world through language, despite the difference in language cultures, literary conventions time and place. This literariness (see U 1) is emphasised by both the writers in their own contexts and in their own languages.

One route suggested by Edward Said, is inspired by Auerbach's call to return to philology. Said describes philology as the "detailed, patient scrutiny of and a lifelong attentiveness to the words and rhetoric by which language is used by human beings who exist in history" (2004: 61), he is arguing for the restoration of the integrity of scholarship through fidelity to human history . For Said, philology connects readers of a certain text with an author and the historical world in which both the author and the text are situated thus making it possible for readers to encounter the text's resistance to reality: "fundamentally an act of perhaps modest human emancipation and enlightenment that changes and enhances one's knowledge for purposes other than reductiveness, cynicism, or fruitless standing aside" (ibid 66). In this sense, philological "truth" is always historical and humanist and Auerbach's "historical humanism" (ibid 4) and the seemingly impossible task of studying every human verbal activity is founded on the belief that history is the one which makes us advance to a consciousness of the human condition and to the realization of humankind's potential.

James Clifford's (1988) comments that Said is "the anthropologist as outsider and participant-observer (existential shorthand for the hermeneutical circle) is a familiar modern topos" (263-64). Clifford's remark highlights what an anthropological vision can actualize: an awareness of a simultaneous dimension, or an awareness, in Said's words, of the "contrapuntal" (186). As Clifford notices, Said's emphasis on the anthropological participant-observer's immersion in distant cultures is the logical result of his literary reflection. I believe that what attracted Said was the possibility of achieving originality of vision by seeing the entire world as a "foreign" land and hence the importance of exiles for whom the plurality of vision is given as the condition of their existence. I argue that Said criticized the narrowness of a vision limited to the nation. Impressed by Adorno who once argued that everything one says or thinks, as well as every object one possesses, is ultimately a mere commodity, Said considered it our intellectual mission to extricate ourselves from this state of affairs. A

life of exile is the manifestation of this outlook, a "life led outside habitual order" (Said 186).

There is a movement among comparativists to re-focus the discipline away from the nation-based approach with which it has previously been associated towards a cross-cultural approach that pays no heed to national borders. Works of this nature include Alamgir Hashmi's *The Commonwealth, Comparative Literature and the World*, David Damrosch's *What is World Literature?*, and Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters*. IN his essay on third world literature (See 3 above) , Jameson advocates the reinvention of Culture Studies in the context of third world literatures, placing what Goethe called "world literature" in a new context, as according to him any engagement with world literature demands engagement with third world literature.

David Damrosch examines the object World Literature along three principle axes, namely circulation, translation and production, citing in his introduction the conversations between Goethe and Eckermann, wherein the doyen of Weimar Classicism had expounded on his ideas on *Weltliteratur* . However, Goethe's vision seems somewhat at cross-purposes with Damrosch's contextualizing the impetus for *Weltliteratur* in "the dramatic acceleration of globalization" (Damrosch 4). Damrosch extends Guillén's reading of Goethe's idea of World Literature as the "sum total of all national literatures", to mean "all literary works that circulate beyond their culture of origin, either in translation or in their original language" (4.). He sums up his endeavour thus:

"My claim is that world literature is not an infinite, ungraspable canon of works but rather a

mode of circulation and of reading, a mode that is as applicable to individual works as to bodies of material, available for reading established classics and new discoveries alike. This book is intended to explore this mode of circulation and to clarify the ways in which works of world literature can be best read. It is important from the onset to realize that just as there has never been a single set canon of world literature, so too no single way of reading can be appropriate to all texts, or to any one text at all times." (5)

This has been contested, as Damrosch himself admits in a lecture titled; "What isn't World Literature", delivered in 2016 at the sixth meeting of Institute for World Literature at Harvard University. Here he addresses the major responses to and criticisms of his postulations and practices of world literature since the publication of "What is World Literature?" in 2003. He divides his responses in line with the

three sources of criticisms he recognizes from within the scholarly academic community; namely national philologies or national literature scholarship, Comparative Literature Departments and Postcolonial Studies. All the concerns that Damrosch lists such as, a lack of grounding in language and historio-cultural context, the seeming absence of a “theoretical” rigor and the lack of a political edge, are all legitimate concerns that he himself acknowledges need to be addressed.

4.5.1 Distant Reading

We turn now to conceptual tools suggested by different scholars, which they claim will help us to read “world” literature.

Distant Reading

Franco Moretti in *Conjectures on World Literature* proposed a mode of reading which included works outside of established literary canons, which he variously termed "the great unread" and, elsewhere, "the Slaughterhouse of Literature". He questioned the idea of close reading, which he said limited us to a few canonical works on which to base our ideas about literature. Instead, he turned to quantitative methods and empirical studies, employed samples, statistics, paratexts, and other features not often considered within the ambit of literary analysis. In this context, his idea of “distant reading” is required in order to establish a deep contextual field. Moretti’s extreme prediction is : "[literary history] will become 'second-hand': a patchwork of other people's research, without a single direct textual reading". Since it is possible thanks to computers, to work with a large data base, Distant reading often shares with the Annales school a focus on the analysis of long-term histories and trends through 'operationalizing' which Moretti says is "absolutely central to the new field of computational criticism"[8] that includes distant reading. Operationalisation for Moretti, consists of "building a bridge from concepts to measurement, and then to the world" (104) thus introducing computational analysis of primary literary sources. The cancellation of reading as an event and the reduction of the singularity of the text to a set of structural elements, characteristic of this method has been criticised by scholars like Gayatri Spivak and Stanley Fish.

4.5.2 Literary Space and the World Republic of Letters

Literary space and the World Republic of Letters

Pascale Casanova conceptualises literature as a “world” raising three questions :

Is it possible to re-establish the lost bond between literature, history and the world, while still maintaining a full sense of the irreducible singularity of literary texts? Second, can literature itself be conceived as a world? And if so, might an exploration of its territory help us to answer question number one? (ibid 70)

Distinguishing between world literature and the international literary space, she poses the World Republic of Letters. It is not an attempt to describe the total international literary space nor to develop a new corpus or to enlarge the problematic of comparative literature, but to add another dimension to the fabric, creating another world, “whose divisions and frontiers are relatively independent of political and linguistic borders. And with its own laws, its own history, its specific revolts and revolutions; a market where non-market values are traded, within a non-economic economy; and measured, as we shall see, by an aesthetic scale of time. This World of Letters functions invisibly for the most part, save to those most distant from its great centres or most deprived of its resources, who can see more clearly than others the forms of violence and domination that operate within it. “ (ibid 72). She identifies “a set of interconnected positions, which must be thought and described in relational terms. At stake are not the modalities of analysing literature on a world scale, but the conceptual means for thinking literature as a world”. Her conceptual tool is space. These forms , colours, patterns, variations, relations all reveal themselves only from a distance, like the pattern of a Persian carpet. Casanova says that “world literary space is not a sphere that is set above all the others, reserved exclusively for international writers, editors, critics—for literary actors manoeuvring in a supposedly de-nationalized world. It is not the sole preserve of great novelists, hugely successful authors, editorial produce devised for global sales. It is formed by all the inhabitants of the Republic of Letters, each of them differentially situated within their own national literary space. At the same time, each writer’s position must necessarily be a double one, twice defined: each writer is situated once according to the position he or she occupies in a national space, and then once again according to the place that this occupies within the world space” (ibid).

4.6 THE “FUTURE” OF “WORLD” LITERATURE

What is the result of introducing comparative approach to the idea of world literature ?

In *Rethinking Comparativism* Spivak (2009) equates reading and translating as textual and political practices. Spivak emphasises on “the irreducibility of idiom” which contributes to the special nature of translation “as an active rather than a prosthetic practice”, an “intimate act of reading”. However, though comparatists “are prepared to undertake a serious and continuous undoing of nationalist or national language-based reading”, this does not move us too far from the regionalist impulse of the initial vision of European Comparative Literature. Spivak solves this problem by insisting on comparison as an act, just as translation and reading are conscious acts. She names this the performativity of comparativism, and gives the reader/scholar /comparatist “the task of undoing historical injustice toward languages associated with peoples who were not successfully competitive within capitalism—with the added proviso that these languages attempt to establish an interconnection among themselves through our disciplinary and institutional help”.

World Literature as conceptualised by Damrosch however has been extended into several research programs, in which the “world” is made more inclusive and the interrogation of a “common humanity” by political exigencies of stratification are addressed.

1. The theory of Uneven Development (proposed by the Warwick Research Collective) traces Marx’s relation of “world” literature to “world market”, and indicates that literature is a commodity. The uneven development of markets influence the circulation of commodities, literature being no exception.

2. Francesca Orsini’s research program acknowledges that World Literature would look different in different parts of the world, addressing the problem of an insularity of vision, and decentring the Eurocentric nature of “world” in Damrosch’s formulation. She begins by questioning “the geographical categories used to underpin current theoretical and methodological approaches to “world literature,” which end up making nine-tenths of the world, and of literature produced in the world, drop off the world map or appear “peripheral” but her program remains limited to an additive and distant view of multilingualism, rather than an enquiry into pluralism as a category of understanding.

3. In Damrosch's² more recent configurations of "Minor and "Ultra-minor" literatures, presented at the 21st congress of the ICLA held at the University of Vienna in the summer of 2016, are in the final analysis based on the earlier discussed logic of "circulation" : a person who is a very popular writer in one region of India and well known in other regions, is a very minor writer if judged by the non-Indian readers' acquaintance with him. This may tell us about the translation, printing and circulation of literary works, even extended to the world of digital publishing. The thinkers who proposed the idea of world literature were striking against the commodification of literature as propaganda material for the nation-state. The concerns of scholars of World Literature at present are a different kind of world, and perhaps not literature but books as commodities.

How do we create a workable concept of "world "literature in the time of globalisation ? We must reconsider the idea that the minimum unit in which we imagine the world is the monocultural, monolingual "nation" .This questions Damrosch's assumptions in crafting the idea of "world" based on national entities as in most postcolonial nations, and now with the movement of labour across the world, in most "developed" nations as well, a monolingual, monocultural nation is no longer a reality.

This reality is the context for our own practice of engaging with literary cultures and their relation to the arts, in Indian universities. As we have argued above, this needs a different conceptualisation of both world and literature within the frames of difference, relation and plurality, leading to the discourse of Comparative Literature in India.

❖ Check Your Progress

1. Etienne and Wellek's theories of comparative literature were aspects of

- A. the "predicament of culture"
- B. Positivism
- C. Rapports de faits
- D. Influence studies

Ans : A

2. the predicament of culture was manifested in

- A. Rejection of Eurocentrism
- B. Interest in alien cultures
- C. Rejection of rapports de faits
- D. Interest in the other arts

Ans : A

3.Said's claim that philology enables us to consider man "dialectically, not statically" is a

- A. Positivist view
- B relational view
- C. Crosscultural view
- D. subjective view

Ans : B

4. Auerbach and Said emphasise philology as a method for studying world literature : this means

- A. the study of literatures in their original languages
- B. knowledge of languages
- C. a study of human verbal activity which entails a knowledge of language which is the medium of such activity
- D. a knowledge of linguistics

Ans : C

5.For Etienne , universal literature was

- A. An additive whole consisting of national literatures as hermetic units
- B. A harmonious whole as if created by many instruments in concert
- C. A synthesis of many hermetic units
- D. An unity of diverse entities

Ans : B

6.In Damrosch's conceptualisation, world literature is

- A all literatures written everywhere in the world
- B. a set of canonical texts
- C. a mode of circulation
- D. a set of translated texts from all literatures in the world

Ans : C

7.Distant reading is

- A.Placing the text in a historical context
- B.Taking into account the deep structure
- C.Measuring the occurrence of concepts
- D.Computing the frequency of the occurrence of certain concepts

Ans : A

8. According to Moretti, Computing the occurrence of literary sources or concepts across texts, and using the frequency or absence of certain concepts to construct a world view of the time is called

- A. Distant reading
- B. Operationalisation
- C. Computational criticism
- D. Empirical literature

Ans : B

9. For Damrosch, world literature is ----- of canonical and non-canonical texts, while Moretti proposes that ----- will be abolished in favour of ----- if world literature is to be studied

- A. close reading, distant reading, a way of reading
- B. Distant reading, a way of reading, textual reading
- C. Textual reading, operationalisation, a way of reading
- D. A way of reading, close reading, distant reading.

Ans : D

10. Match challenges to world literature by the theorist who identified them:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A. Rabindranath Tagore | i. nationalist philologies |
| B. Franco Moretti | ii. homogenisation of culture |
| C. David Damrosch | iii. the great unread |
| D. Eric Auerbach | iv. territorial nationalism |

Ans : A-iv, B-iii, C-i, D- ii

11. The World Republic of Letters identified by Pascale Casanova

- A. is not bound by linguistic or political boundaries
- B. is a conceptual category for thinking about literature
- C. is inhabited by cosmopolitan citizens
- D. Is a method of literary history

Ans : A and B

12. By “each writer is doubly situated”, Casanova means

- A. a writer is situated in time and space
- B. a writer is situated in her local milieu and in the global milieu
- C. the writer is both a writer and a reader
- D. the writer is a citizen of the physical and the literary world

Ans : B

13. By insisting on the performativity of translation and reading, Spivak emphasises

A. That comparative literature is a theory

B. That comparative literature is an activity

C. That comparativism comprises intimate or close reading

D. That comparative literature requires the knowledge of languages

Ans : B and D

4.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have studied the concept of world literature in detail. We have also learnt the relationship between world literature and comparative literature.

4.8 BOOKS SUGGESTED

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:: STRUCTURE ::**5.0 Objectives****5.1 The Comparative Approach To Indian Literature****5.2 Vishwa Sahitya : Pre-History of Comparative Literature
In India****5.3 “Indian” Languages****5.4 Formation of Modern Indian Languages****5.5 Common Elements In Formation of Modern Indian
Languages****5.6 Colonialism and Language Policy****5.7 Pluralism and Indian Literature****5.8 References**

5.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, our objective is to demonstrate how the comparative approach can be used to study and understand Indian language literatures, regardless of the language in question. We are proposing the comparative approach as a general way of approaching Indian language literatures, and as discussed in the other courses in this program, creative work in other mediums of expression.

**5.1 THE COMPARATIVE APPROACH TO INDIAN
LITERATURE**

Our idea of India is that it is a plural society and a plural nation. To understand and analyse this plural entity it is required that

- we conceptualise it as a dynamic network of many interacting language-cultures
- we fashion categories of literary understanding that help us to grasp the formation of individual Indian language literatures as part of these interactions.

Why do we propose the comparative approach for this purpose ?

As we saw in Unit 1 comparison is a particular kind of cognitive activity, in which

- the existence of difference is part of our seeing and thinking about the world.
- we look at something *in relation to* other, different entities, persons or things

Both these ideas, difference and relationality, are necessary to understand India as a plural entity. Hence, in Humanities education, the comparative approach, conceptually, practically and ethically, helps us understand plurality that characterises the very idea of India, so we can reflect upon practices and means to preserve it. The history of comparative literature as a discipline in India are discussed in detail in another course in this program. Our objective here is to answer the philosophical and the practical questions asked above : why do we propose a comparative approach to understand Indian language literatures and other forms of creative expression ? Our answer is, the comparative approach provides an ethics and a “useful praxis” in our plurilingual, pluricultural secular nation. This unit will outline how that claim is concretised in the scholarship and pedagogy of literature in Indian languages.

5.2 VISHWA SAHITYA : PRE-HISTORY OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN INDIA

Tagore was asked by the National Council of Education to speak about Comparative Literature as early as 1907, nearly five decades before the first department of comparative literature was officially established in the country. This perhaps indicates that the nationalists and anti-imperialists in India at the time saw some value or potential in this field as a means to undercut the sovereignty of British literature and culture over the young Western-educated minds of colonial India. Tagore himself advocated *vishwa sahitya*, world literature, as a counter to the narrowness of national literature (See Unit 3.4.1).

The discipline was introduced at Jadavpur University in 1956. Writing about the state of the discipline in India for the 1959 issue of the *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, Buddhadeva Bose (1908–1974), founder of the first comparative literature department in India, and a poet, novelist, literary theorist and translator, acknowledged an indebtedness to Tagore’s idea of *Vishwa Sahitya*. Bose harks back to Tagore’s lecture at the NCE, wherein Tagore hailed “Literature” as a shared universal expression of all humankind, and stated therefore that any contemplation of the literary would only be complete through a contemplation of “World Literature” (Bose 3).

Such a call to recognise the universality of the human spirit becomes the context of a definition of comparative literature in India.

Tagore's lecture was given in the backdrop of the first partition of Bengal along overly communal lines into East and West Bengal, the former predominantly populated by Muslims and the latter predominantly Hindu. The partition came into effect on the 16th of October 1905 under Viceroy Curzon, exacerbating communal tensions in Bengal and elsewhere. Against this backdrop of identity based violence, at several points in his lecture on *Viswa Sahitya* (World Literature), Tagore urged his audience to think beyond the immediate, the individual and the local (ibid.). He was addressing the very real and immediate crisis of growing communal disharmony in the country, countering it with the realization of harmony in the expression of the universal human spirit and rejecting disputes between individual interest groups and local discords by relating them to the parochial idea of nation reduced to "territorial sovereignty". This harmony could begin in a contemplation of the "World" in the literary (ibid.). Tagore compares literature to an ongoing work, a construction in which every great builder from all over the world makes his contribution: some parts are built anew by each age, while some parts survive. Bose reads into Tagore's vision of a "World Literature" a philosophy and an aesthetic comparable to Goethe's call for *Weltliteratur* (2), juxtaposing differences with the unifying quality of humanity.

In his 1959 report Bose stated that Comparative Literature in India responded to a "very real need" (4), using the comparison to Goethe as relatable point of reference to the rise of Comparative Literature in Europe and America. He saw it as the only means of counteracting the "virtually exclusive" esteem that English literature continued to be held in within the Indian academy (4). Bose quotes Tagore as identifying the dawn of the modern era in India as a "world-hunger" (10), and submits that this is a call to broaden the Indian literary horizon, serving as a means to counteract the hegemony of a colonial Anglo-centric modernity (ibid. 5). Bringing the world, and particularly other modern European literatures, to the Indian literary consciousness, Bose emphasized that there was more to Europe than one could access through British culture, as evidenced by his translations of Baudelaire, Rilke and Hölderlin in Bengali (ibid.). This set the stage for the inception in India of the discipline of Comparative Literature.

❖ Check Your Progress

1. India is a plural entity. This means

- A. There are many languages and cultures
- B. Each language has its associated culture
- C. Each language and associated culture shares some common elements with at least one other, whether neighbouring or remote
- D. No language or associated culture forms a whole.

Ans : C

2. Tagore replaced the term Comparative Literature with World Literature because

- A. He wanted to show that comparative literature was non-existent
- B. He wanted the idea of comparison to be replaced by an idea of universality
- C. He interpreted comparative literature to mean literature not confined to national or other territorial boundaries.
- D. He felt that national literature should be superseded by world literature.

Ans : C

3. For Tagore and Goethe, the idea of world literature was

- A. An addition of all national literatures
- B. A canon of great works
- C. A way to transcend the parochialism of national literatures
- D. A way to use literature in the service of humanity

Ans : C

4. Which of the following characterise a plurilingual society

- A. A single national language
- B. Firm boundaries between languages
- C. Exchange between languages is easy
- D. Every language is a fixed and complete whole

Ans : C

5. The difference between a plurilingual society and a multilingual society is

- A. In the former a set of languages are inter-related while in the latter each language exists independently
- B. In the latter a person can know more than one language while in the former no one knows any single language.
- C. In the former there are no boundaries between languages while in the latter each language exists independently

D. In the latter each language exists independently while in the former there is no single language

Ans : A

5.3 “INDIAN” LANGUAGES

In this section, we will see how the idea of “Indian” literature emerged, by understanding both linguistic and juridical aspects of the history of the formation of “modern Indian” languages. For this we will use the conceptual tools comprising the comparative approach to understand the plural culture of “Indian” society in which Indian language literatures are located. Though coming from a completely different structure of feeling than Tagore’s, Raymond Williams’ ideas of “residual, emergent and dominant”, (See Unit 6) , or Etiemble’s “literary invariants”, or Jauss’ idea of the “horizon of expectation” provide a frame for understanding these “survivals” and “changes” across literatures, regardless of national boundaries.

To call India a *plural* entity has the following implications for Indian language literatures:

1. the historical formation and common usages of each language-culture are intricately linked to those of other neighbouring language-cultures – sometimes, to remote ones as well.
2. As a single geopolitical entity, all parts of the country with their diversities great or small, are accessible to all. Ongoing cultural contact and exchange between languages and cultures can easily occur without crossing ‘national’ boundaries.
3. Indian literature, as Amiya Dev points out, is an “interliterary condition” : Understanding Indian language literatures from a plural perspective means to take account of the interrelations between the different languages and cultures both historically and in their present interactions.

From this we may conclude that the concepts and categories used to study “national” literatures only have a reductive effect of covering differences when applied to a plural society like India. Linguistically, plurality is the result of both synchronic and diachronic contact. (See Unit 1 and Unit 6) between languages, ie people, in diverse circumstances, ranging from trade to marriage. Every “modern” Indian language, has been influenced by certain factors coming from cultures other than the one in which the language has been formed.

Hence, the comparative approach which takes into account difference, relationality and the ethics of engagement with difference, is an

adequate approach to study Indian language literatures. The history of the formation of “modern” Indian languages will show the different kinds of contact and exchange between people across the country. Such contacts influence their languages, customs and beliefs, leading to the formation of a plural culture. In the rest of this unit, we will consider the different aspects and implications of the idea of a plural nation, for the study, understanding and enjoyment of literature and the other arts, with India as the example.

5.3.1 India as a “linguistic region”

M.B. Emeneau characterized the Indian sub-continent as a “Sprachbund” or linguistic area, a term for a geographically contiguous area, which is characterized by the existence of common linguistic features shared by genetically non-related language. Hence a Linguistic Area is marked by the “convergence” of linguistic features of various languages spoken in a particular region, regardless of the fact that these languages may belong to different families. Hence, “languages belonging to more than one family show traits in common which do not belong to the other members of (at least) one of the families”. Emeneau calls the process “Indianization” of the Indo-European (IE) component in the Indic linguistic scene (1956: 7). The mechanism which creates these shared features is extensive bilingualism, resulting from the interaction and intermarriage between communities indigenous and migrant. This means borrowing of certain lexemic, phonological and structural elements between pre-existent and incoming languages.

In Emeneau’s definition of Sprachbund with respect to South Asia, the common traits belong to the Indo-Aryan languages (OI, MI, New Indo-Aryan), Munda and Dravidian but are not shared by Indo-Aryan’s closest cousin, Iranian (**Emeneau 1978**). India represents a classic example of linguistic area. The languages of mainland India belong to four different language families i.e. India represents five language families altogether, all very distinct from one another. These are: 1) Indo-Aryan 2) Dravidian 3) Tibeto-Burman 4) Austro-Asiatic 5) Andamanese.

Emeneau also proposed the term “Areal Linguistics”, not as a substitute but complementary to historical linguistics, to explain what is not explainable by “genetic” historical linguistics. It is the “diffusion” that constitutes the body of the study to explain linguistic similarities across distinct language families.

❖ **Check Your Progress:1**

1.The interliterary condition means

- A.Literature in any language does not exist in isolation
- B.Literature is influenced by contact between people
- C.Literature is an event of reading within a context
- D.Literature exists along with other systems

Ans : A

2.Indian literature is an interliterary condition. This means

- A.Indian languages are inter-related
- B.Indian languages share an overlapping history of formation and literatures written in it share a common history by being part of “india”.
- C.Indian literatures are connected by contact
- D.There is no “Indian” literature

Ans : B

3.A linguistic region is one in which

- A.A single language is spoken
- B.The region is demarcated by the languages spoken there
- C.All the languages belong to the same language family
- D.The features of different languages of the region converge, even if they belong to different language families

Ans : D

4.Indian language literature is best studied through a comparative method because

- A.It is multilingual
- B.The histories of language formation and usage are linked
- C.There is constant contact between languages
- D.There are no boundaries between languages.

Ans : B

5.4 FORMATION OF MODERN INDIAN LANGUAGES

The formation of modern Indian Languages is the synthesis of two aspects – the language policies of the state and the history of language use across the area designated as India. The histories of modern Indian languages are inextricably linked, and this is a feature of the plurilinguistic situation in which Indian literature is described as an interliterary condition, rather than a substantive category, ie an approach to literary studies, a way of reading, rather set of texts.

Applying the idea of organic plurality of languages (See Unit 1 and 6), we can discern the common elements in all modern Indian languages. Historically, the idea of India entails recognition of diversity and the refusal to either give in to majoritarianism or to splinter into separate bodies, ie the desire to stay together as a geopolitical singularity in a federation in order to maintain linguistic and cultural plurality. The secular state attempts to ensure equality of difference especially focusing on the interrelated nature of the literatures and cultures. Legislation in post independence or modern India espoused this plurality at least in name and in policy. Hence, state policy regarding plurilinguality and multilinguality are factors in the literary discourse of modern Indian language literatures – and the discussion is centred around the policy failures as well as the borrowing of categories of understanding alien to Indian reality – like the idea of a monocultural nation, for example.

Hence, the comparative approach to Indian literature would be to trace the genesis of this p[lurality that is the ground for all modern Indian language literatures, and formulate the categories of thought that will help us understand it.

5.4.1 Language Planning

In India, language status planning occurred through “officialization” ie recognition as a scheduled language, in a special section of the Constitution, the 8th Schedule . At the time the Constitution was adopted, inclusion in this list meant that the language was entitled to representation on the Official Language Commission. The list has since acquired further significance. The Government of India is now under an obligation to take measures for the development of these languages, such that “they grow rapidly in richness and become effective means of communicating modern knowledge”, ie the states will foster and support state run educational institutions, and all India public services examinations can be taken in that language. As per the 2011 census, there are a total of 121 languages and 270 mother tongues. The 23 languages included in the Eighth Schedule account for the mother tongue of 96.72 percent Indians as per the 2011 census.

The condition of socio-linguistic and cultural plurality is the culmination of the co-existence of many cultures and languages in relation with one another . Indian languages share literary , semantic, syntactic and pragmatic influences from many sources like Sanskrit, classical Tamil, the local Prakrits (see Section 5.6 below), Persian or Arabic, English and some other European languages, like Portuguese. The formation of every “modern” Indian language, has undergone many similar stages, but not simultaneously. The idea of early and late formations, prophane and metaphane respectively, theorised by

Sisir Kumar Das (see Unit 6 below), is useful to study such developments. This is mentioned here to show that plurality is the fundamental characteristic of “India” as a linguistic entity as well as a geopolitical entity. The existence of a multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual entity like India questions the very idea of a monocultural, monolingual nation where everyone has the same culture, religion and language. The conceptual framework that may be used to study the literatures and cultures of such a nation will not be adequate to study the plural culture of India.

5.4.2 State Policies on Language

Here we consider some of the important policies of the colonial and the national governments to manage plurilinguality, to show that these policies had their effect upon the literatures of modern Indian languages. These are included here to demonstrate the link between policy, language and life and literacy in a plural society.

The emphasis on vernacular education dates to the 1840's, when the General Committee of Public Instruction (GCPI) at Calcutta began to review its policy of diffusing English education among the Indians. On 25th April 1840, the secretary to the Education Committee forwarded the minutes of this meeting advocating vernacular education, to all the local committees. The response was a demand for English education from among Indians like Raja Ram Mohun Roy, especially in the sciences.

The States Reorganisation Commission was preceded by the Linguistic Provinces Commission (aka Dhar Commission), set up in June 1948. It rejected language as a parameter for dividing states. Later, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru appointed the States Reorganisation Commission in December 1953, with the remit to reorganise the Indian states. The States Reorganisation Commission submitted a report on September 30, 1955, with recommendations for the reorganisation of India's states, which was then debated by the Indian parliament. Subsequently, bills were passed to make changes to the constitution and to administer the reorganisation of the states

5.4.3 Minority languages

Minority languages are typically those that carry a relatively lower or marginal functional load and transparency. The concept of “functional load” in this context refers to the ability of languages to successfully function in one or more social domains. The load is considered to be higher or lower on the basis of the number of domains it covers. The higher the number of domains, the higher the functional load. For example, in India English covers almost all major public domains such as media, business, education, national and international

communication, science and technology. In contrast, the tribal languages control only one (rapidly diminishing) domain, that of home, whereas regional languages cover at least four domains: home, education, public administration and to some extent media and interstate communication.

5.4.4 Linguistic Minorities

The Indian Constitution recognizes the concept of linguistic minorities, but is silent regarding the definition of the term. Hence the judiciary had to define it for the purpose applying Article 30 of the Constitution: “A linguistic minority for the purposes of Article 30 (1) is one which must at least have a separate spoken language. It is not necessary that the language should also have distinct script for those who speak it to be a linguistic minority. There are in this country some languages which have no script of their own, but nonetheless those sections of the people who speak that language will be a linguistic minority entitled to the protection of Article 30 (1).”

This Article gives linguistic minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutes of their choice. Article 350 A requires that every state must provide primary education in a mother tongue and according to Article 350 B, appoint a ‘Special Officer’ for linguistic minorities .

5.4.5 Linguistic Surveys

The Linguistic Survey was first proposed by George Abraham Grierson, a member of the Indian Civil Service , it was approved in 1891 and formally begun only in 1894 and the survey continued for thirty years with the last of the results being published in 1928.

the People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI) under the auspices of an NGO called the Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, and with Ganesh N. Devy as Chairperson. The People’s Linguistic Survey has led to an interrogation of the categories of understanding we apply to our plurilinguality. Apart from reflecting the social hierarchies of caste, class, gender and race, the policies made for Indian languages assume the existence of stable, standardised uniform language practices within a cast-iron boundary – if at all they envisage exchange, it is between such (non-existent) entities. However, the survey findings show that for Indian languages, this is not the case. Devy criticised the idea of “closed” categories of understanding in his first book *Of Many Heroes*, where he raised the question of concepts that regulate the imagining and writing of history. This is discussed in detail in Unit 6 below. Here we cite it to indicate that for the plural society of India, the very elements of the discourse of literature must

be reimagined, because the existing categories of understanding are limited by their monolingual, monocultural fixities.

He also criticised language hegemony and the imposition of a monocultural model of development and education through languages of power. The findings of the survey make us think about the results of the language policies applied to the plurilingual societies. One of the results is logocide or the destruction of languages that are not thus standardised or given weightage and institutional patronage, but assimilated into larger groups.

5.5 COMMON ELEMENTS IN FORMATION OF MODERN INDIAN LANGUAGES

Distinct divisions between languages and cultures not only treats them in isolation, but skews the living transactions between people to a single rather than a singular perspective. The comparative approach begins with the assumption of the co-existence of and relation between more than one entity. It demands an understanding and acknowledgement of the condition of being in relation, of being in-between. The pluralist perspective emphasizes the relation between the different languages and cultures, a condition which Dev has called interliterary, rather than legislating for fixed boundaries to be maintained in the service of identity politics.

5.5.1 What makes an “Indian” language ?

The language sources and formations that contribute to most of the “modern” ie, post- 1956 Indian languages are discussed below. We briefly note the salient features of the languages which substantiate the notion of plurilinguality with respect to india. There is much material on the history and formation of these languages. Our purpose here is not to reprise this material but to indicate that multiple sources interact to form a plurilingual situation and give the reader an idea of their variety. This shared history of interaction forms the basis of the modern Indian languages.

5.5.2 Evoution of Sanskrit

Sanskrit belongs to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European languages, arising in South Asia after its predecessor languages had diffused there from the northwest. Sheldon Pollock refers to a Sanskrit cosmopolis, because Sanskrit acted as a link language in ancient and medieval South Asia, and was also the vehicle of transmission of Hindu and Buddhist culture to Southeast Asia, East Asia and Central Asia in the early medieval era, it became a language of religion and high culture. It had a lasting impact on the languages of South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia, especially in their formal

and learned vocabularies. Sanskrit was a heterogenous language, distinguished by period and use.

- The Rig Vedic hymns are composed and orally transmitted in a version of Sanskrit called Vedic Sanskrit, in which the archaic syntax and morphology of the common ancestor language Proto-Indo-European are preserved. They resemble the Avestan gathas, the most archaic poems of the Iranian and Greek language families, Homer's *Iliad*. Sanskrit has been written in various Brahmic scripts, and in the modern era in nagri. Vedic Sanskrit interacted with the pre-existing ancient languages of the subcontinent known as Prkrts, absorbing names of newly encountered plants and animals; in addition, the Dravidian languages influenced Sanskrit's phonology and syntax.
- Classical Sanskrit, codified in the Aṣṭādhyāyī ("Eight chapters") of Pāṇini, emerged as a refined and standardized grammatical form in the mid-1st millennium BCE. The Aṣṭādhyāyī is the foundation of Vyākaraṇa, one of the Vedic ancillary fields (Vedāṅgas). A distinction is made between speech forms considered to be correct or standard (referred to as *śabda*) and those that are considered incorrect or nonstandard (*apaśabda*). Forms called *śabda* are described by Pāṇini as language components that are said to be adorned or purified (*saṃskṛta*) by adhering to particular grammatical principles. Because of these purifications, and the establishment of fixed principles, Sanskrit is described as *daivī vāk* 'the speech of the gods' by Dandin (6th–7th century) in the *Kāvyādarśa*.
- Epic Sanskrit in which, the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana, were composed, comprised a range of oral registers used in northern India between 400 BCE and 300 CE, and roughly contemporary with classical Sanskrit.

5.5.3 Prakrits and the interaction with Sanskrit

Of the two major views concerning the way in which Sanskrit and Prakrit are associated as languages, one by Nami Sadhu (11th century CE) in his commentary on Rudrata's *Kāvyāṅkārā* holds that the original matter in question is the speech of the common people, unadorned by grammar, and that *prākṛta* thus refers to localised usage in contrast to the elevated register of Sanskrit usage. It is also the usual explanation accepted by Western linguists. In contrast, the view most commonly held by Prakrit grammarians is that the Prakrit languages arose from Sanskrit.

Like Sanskrit and other ancient languages Prakrit was spoken and written much before a grammar was made for it. The Vedas do not

follow the Panini's Sanskrit grammar which is now the basis for all Sanskrit grammar. Similarly, the Agamas, and texts like Satkhandagama do not follow the modern prakrit grammar. Prakrit or *prākṛta* in Sanskrit, is derived from the Sanskrit *prakṛti* 'original matter, source.' Prakrit, refers to the local language – the name of the Prakrit follows the name of the region in which it is spoken. Dandin's Kavya-darsha (c. 700) mentions four kinds of literary languages: Sanskrit, Prakrit, Apabhramsha, and mixed (Ollett 2017). For example, the Maharashtri Prakrit, was prevalent in the Maharashtra region in which poems such as *Ravana-vaho* were composed. Bhoja's Sarasvati-Kanthabharana (11th century) lists Prakrit among the few languages suitable for composition of literature.^[21] Some modern scholars include all Middle Indo-Aryan languages under the rubric of 'Prakrits', while others emphasize the independent development of these languages, often separated from the history of Sanskrit by wide divisions of caste, religion, and geography. The broadest definition uses the term "Prakrit" to describe any Middle Indo-Aryan language that deviates from Sanskrit in any manner. Ollett points out that this unsatisfactory definition makes "Prakrit" a cover term for languages that were not actually called Prakrit where they were spoken.^[21] Mirza Khan's Tuhfat al-hind (1676) names Prakrit among the three kinds of literary languages native to India, the other two being Sanskrit and the local languages. It describes Prakrit as a mixture of Sanskrit and local languages. The Ardhamagadhi (or simply Magadhi) Prakrit, which was used extensively to write the scriptures of Jainism, is often considered to be the definitive form of Prakrit, while others are considered variants of it. The types of Prakrit are also divided by area and use. The phrase "Dramatic Prakrits" often refers to three most prominent ones, Shauraseni, Magadhi Prakrit, and Maharashtri Prakrit. There was a strict structure to the use of these different Prakrits in dramas. Characters each spoke a different Prakrit based on their role and background. It is significant that Prakrits, in the plural, form the bedrock of modern Indian languages.

Apabhramsa

The Middle Indo-Aryan languages are differentiated from Old Indo-Aryan—the Classical Sanskrit used in the *Vedas*—by changes in phonology and morphology. Grammarians like Patanjali branded all such departures as *apabhramsha* ("deviance"), for instance, Prakrit words such as *gavi* and *goni* are *apabhramsha* of the Sanskrit word *go* (cow). These features show a marked departure from the synthetic nature of the Old Indo-Aryan languages, which had still been lingering in the early phases of the Middle Indo-Aryan, and paved the way for the advent of the New Indo-Aryan languages.

5.5.4 Pali

The word 'Pali' is used as a name for the language of the Theravada Buddhist canon and refers to the line of original text quoted. It was distinguished from the commentary or translation that followed it in the manuscript.^[3] K. R. Norman suggests that its emergence was based on a misunderstanding of the compound *pāli-bhāsa*, with *pāli* being interpreted as the name of a particular language.^[3] The name Pali does not appear in the canonical literature, and in commentary literature is sometimes substituted with *tanti*, meaning a string or lineage.^{[3]:1} This name seems to have emerged in Sri Lanka early in the second millennium CE during a resurgence in the use of Pali as a courtly and literary language. As recorded in chronicles like the Mahavamsa, the *Tipitaka* was first committed to writing during the first century BCE.^{[3]:5} This was a move away from the previous tradition of oral preservation. By this point in its history, scholars consider it likely that Pali had already undergone some initial assimilation with Sanskrit, such as the conversion of the Middle-Indic *bamhana* to the more familiar Sanskrit *brāhmaṇa*. Grammarians of Pali operate simply with Pali terms and do not derive these from Sanskrit. This is consonant with the Buddhistic tradition, which does not accord the Vedas and Sanskrit exalted status

5.5.5 Contact with West Asia

The Persian cosmopolis is a textually constituted entity based on the shared Persian literary system. The residual ideas (See unit 6) from the inherited texts of this tradition, like the *Shah Namah*, emerge (See Unit 6) in texts written in different “modern” Indian languages. India had long been part of the Persian cosmopolis – which is demonstrated by the similarity in the curriculum taught in the realms of the early-modern Mughals, Ottomans and Safavids largely derived from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Central Asia and Iran. The Deccan kingdoms of Bahamani and Golconda rulers, were patrons of Dakkhni, which turned the Persian poetry written around Delhi into the literary language that we know as Urdu today. The Gazette of 1865 identified Dakkhni as a “form of old Hindi speech”. Grierson, who agreed, also linked it to religion, saying that it is the form of Hindustani spoken by Muslims in the South. During the Khilji and Tughlaq excursions to the South, and the establishment of Muslim rule there, people from Delhi, took the kharhiboli they spoke with them to the Deccan. Poets of the Southern part of India wrote in a mixture of the local language and Persian ie – Dakkhni, which according to historians of Hindi provides the first examples of the confluence between three streams : local languages of south and

central India, the kharhiboli of the area around Delhi and Haryana, and Persian (Panchal 2008 p 18-19). The journey of Wali Dakhni to Delhi in 1700, in fact returned the kharhiboli mixed with Persian and local vocabulary and idiom, to the capital as a literary language patronised by the Muslim rulers of the southern kingdoms. Wali's arrival in Delhi changed the poetry there from the baroque "Sabk-i-Hindi" style of Persian to what came to be known as Urdu. Wali is hence known as the father of Urdu poetry. These interrelations between languages with fuzzy boundaries characterize the phenomenon of organic language plurality that Khubchandani has mentioned.

5.6 COLONIALISM AND LANGUAGE POLICY

The impact of colonial education led to the institutionalisation of English through the infamous Minute on Education that was composed by Macaulay (1835). Standardization occurred in the history of all Indian languages through the intervention of the colonial administration. Those sent out into the vast land to govern needed to know the language of the governed, and the Fort William College, set up in Calcutta, capital of the empire, in 1800 where they were sent to learn the languages of the ruled. Most of the first grammars of Indian languages were written in this institution for the purpose of training the administrators recruited into the Indian Civil Service. They passed into the history and the usage of the language as documents, and authoritatively organized each language into a single unified mainstream of "correct" usage. This also resulted in the division of language registers into dialects and the standard and began a process of linguistic separation that transformed into linguistic nationalism and culminated in the linguistic division of states. The reactions against Anglicisation were in favour of the local language, known as "vernacular". The establishment of a nationalist discourse also encouraged local languages as well as the access to English for furthering the study of science, acquisition of modern knowledge and expression of the nationalist spirit and philosophy to the world.

5.7 MULTICULTURALISM AND INDIAN LITERATURE

In a plurilingual pluricultural society, as DevSen argues in the case of India, regional identity co-exists with the national as a subset and the two are not necessarily viewed as conflicting (99-100). Hence Swapna Majumdar critiques the growing "fad" of multicultural studies in India around the early 2000s the borrowing of the logic of American multiculturalism lock, stock and barrel; Majumdar finds the

redoing of Comparative Literature to make it more “multicultural” as absurd as “whitewashing Makrana or Alabama marble” (Majumdar 140). In his understanding Comparative Literature, since its inception as an attempt to study literature across the boundaries of nation and/or language, has of necessity been an intercultural endeavour (140). Majumdar further goes on to differentiate between what he describes as “natural” and “forced” multiculturalisms (142). The latter for Majumdar has to do with how multiculturalism is adapted to the discourse of globalization (142). Multiculturalism in its present avatar, argues Majumdar, is no more than a diversity management strategy that functions to serve the interests of Global and Multinational capital (142) – much like world literature (See U 4 above).

A parallel can be seen in *Otherwise Occupied* (Figueira 22), where Stanley Fish’s distinction between “boutique multiculturalism” and “strong multiculturalism” is used to delineate the conceptual incoherence in the study of multiculturalism in the US academy. Neither addresses the issue of difference, though their failures are, as Figueira states, “asymmetrical” (22). While the former preaches tolerance on the most superficial level, the latter, in according “deep respect” to difference, but by refusing to dialogue with difference, inevitably ends up suppressing it (23).

Likewise, the foundational flaw in “the salad bowl” or the “melting pot” theories of multiculturalism are based on the assumptions of an essential and shared core of “cultural values” that bind a diverse citizenry into a united or unified nation and national character (Figueira 19). Therefore, the discourse of American multiculturalism while recognizing difference and its significance, still continues to operate on the assimilationist notion of a “common culture” that unites diverse populations as American—albeit hyphenated (19).

This makes it different from the Indian nation, which, we have been demonstrating, is predicated on plurality and the engagement with difference, rather than reducing the nation to a single identity or culture. And to return to Majumdar’s thesis, Comparative Literature is perforce and naturally multicultural in its ability to negotiate pluralities (Majumdar 140-141). Pluralities and dialogue across pluralities, might be, as Majumdar states, radically alien for those who have spent their academic lives (and careers) in the service of monolingual and monoliterary studies of homogenous “national” or “regional” literatures, but not for those who seek to assert their relevance in the dawn of a new epoch of the plural (141). Comparative Literature is an intercultural enterprise, because from its inception it strove to work beyond the narrow confines of the

categories of nation, language and the hegemonic discourses of high vs. low culture. The impulse to study literary phenomena across the imagined boundaries of languages and cultures, whether national or regional is, therefore, foundational to the practice of this discipline. Ethics involves understanding that these boundaries are hierarchised by humans, and sometimes, as in the case of majoritarian, monocultural nationalism, imposed by some humans to manipulate others. “Literature” in these circumstances, as Tagore or Goethe would opine, breaks these narrow confines of identity by pointing to our common humanity.

5.8 PLURALISM AND INDIAN LITERATURE

But this is only one part of the story and it represents the conflation of “world” literature with “comparative” literature, a substantive with an adjective that describes an activity. The relevance of comparative literature in India is based upon the fact that it is an activity that begins with an ethics of difference. In a plural situation, a willingness to enter into conversation appears to be the adequate mode for understanding one’s existence in relation to others. Instead of dialogue, and in a plurilingual situation, a conversation, Conflict would lead to destruction; submission to oppression, neither of which would be practical or ethical. This simple rationale is drawn from the history of “India” as an idea that we have here discussed, through the formation, institutional and substantive, of modern Indian languages, because our object of study are Indian language literatures. We have discussed above the ideas of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism which posit a particular relation, albeit of equality, between difference. We have also indicated that the comparative approach by allowing the material at hand to dictate the categorisation, rather than approaching it with already decided categories or “closed concepts”(Devy 1983) is what Amiya Dev calls “comparative literature from below”. This is echoed by Said’s call for “secular criticism”, which does not make a religion of any given theory. Pluralism as an ethos and as a category of understanding characterises the comparative approach.

❖ Check Your Progress

- 1.A factor in the formation of modern Indian languages was
 - A. Contact between people using different languages
 - B. The linguistic reorganisation of states
 - C. Standardisation by the colonisers
 - D. Language policy of the central government

Ans : A

2.Match the sections of the Constitution with its substance

- | | | |
|-------------------|------|---|
| A. VIII Schedule | i. | Protection of linguistic minorities |
| B. Article 30 (1) | ii. | ii.Providing for primary education in the mother tongue |
| C. Article 350 A | iii. | Appointing a linguistic officer for minority languages |
| D. Article 350 B | iv. | Listing the recognised languages |

3.Match the dates with the events

- | | |
|--|----------|
| A.Macaulay's Minute on Education | i.1840 |
| B.First linguistic survey of India | ii. 1948 |
| C.Setting up of the Linguistic Provinces Commission | iii.1894 |
| D.General Committee of public Education Minute advocating vernacular education | iv.1835 |

A-iv B-iii C-ii D-i

4.Logocide means ----- and its victims are -----

- A.Birth of a language, minority languages
- B.Death of a language, languages with a low functional load
- C.Development of a language, marginalised languages
- D.Death of a language, languages that are dead.

Ans : B

5.Sanskrit is called "daivi vak" by ----- in -----because it is -----

- A. Patanjali, Ashtadhyayi, a language of the gods
- B. Panini, Mahabhashya, the language of the Vedas
- C.Dandin, Kavyadarsa, purified by adhering to certain grammatical principles laid down by grammarians
- D. Rudrata, Kavyalankara, not a living language

Ans : C

6.According to Dandin the literary languages are

- A. Magadhi, Sanskrit, Pisachi, Sauraseni
- B. Prakrit, Sanskrit, "mixed" , Apabhramsa
- C. Vaidarbhi, Maharashtri, Sanskrit, Apabhramsa
- D. Jaina Prakrit, Sanskrit, "Mixed", Apabhramsa

Ans : B

7. Apabhramsa was defined by ----- as -----

- A. Patanjali, Deviation from Sanskrit
- B. Dandin, the language of Kavya
- C. Panini, derivation from Sanskrit
- D. Nami Sadhu, preceding Sanskrit

Ans : A

8. Which of these languages was used in the Sanskrit drama

- A. Ardhamagadhi
- B. Sauraseni Prakrit
- C. Persian
- D. None of the above

Ans : B

9. Match the language with the works

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| A. Ardhamagadhi | i. Tipitika |
| B. Sanskrit | ii. Shahnamah |
| C. Pali | iii. Jain scriptures |
| D. Persian | iv. Kavyalankara |

Ans : A-iii B-iv C-i D-ii

10. Dakkhini is

- A. A plural language comprising words and syntax from local Indian languages and languages from West Asia.
- B. A language of the Deccan
- C. A derivative of Urdu
- D. A language that came from Delhi to the Deccan due to the policies of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq

Ans : A

11. Match the idea with the theorist

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| A. Swapan Majumdar | i. Many periods existing simultaneously characterise "Indian" literature |
| B. Amiya Dev | ii. The natural plurality of India demands the comparative approach |
| C. Nabaneeta Dev Sen | iii. Integration is the method of writing Indian literary history |
| D. Sisir Kumar Das | iv. Literary history from below |

A-ii B-iv C-i D-iii

12. Sabk-i-Hindi was a literary style in the ----- literary system

A. Sanskrit

B. Hindustani

C. Persian

D. Prakrit

Ans : C

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:: STRUCTURE ::

- 6.0 Objectives**
- 6.1 Linguistic Plurality**
- 6.2 Studying the “interliterary” condition**
- 6.3 Comparative Approach To Literary History**
- 6.4 Field, Habitus**
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- 6.6 Repertoire of Signification**
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6.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we will

- identify and define concepts that will help us to study literature in plurilinguistic interliterary conditions . Those concepts already discussed in the rest of this course will be mentioned in a list at the end of this unit.
- We will illustrate the use of these concepts with examples from Indian language literatures (See 6.8) as we have already argued in the previous unit that the comparative approach is adequate to study these literatures. But these concepts are not themselves fixed in time and space. They can be used to frame a comparative approach to texts from any temporal and spatial location and applied to understand the experience of alterity and relations across difference.
- We must reiterate that there is no pre-given and fixed method for a comparative reading (See Unit 1) . It is a “secular” (Said 1983) approach “from below” (Dev 1987). Therefore, we provide no predetermined methodology for comparative literature. Our aim is to designate concepts that enable us to ethically engage with difference, and frame the categories of understanding in relation to our own location, and the literary and historical contextualisation of the texts.

6.1 LINGUISTIC PLURALITY

Linguistic plurality is of two types - structural and organic. Taking India as an example, Lachman Khubchandani describes organic plurality as having these characteristics :

(i) fuzziness of language boundaries; (ii) fluidity in language identity; (iii) identity claims vs language communications; and (iv) complementarity of intra-group and inter-group communications. This phenomenon is identified as a case of *organic* pluralism, in contrast with the *structural* pluralism that prevail in many multilingual countries of Europe.

According to Parekh, "Individuals in a plural society belong to different identity groups clustered around cultural, linguistic and social traits (such as nationality, religion, caste, language/dialect) and share only a core of experience crisscrossing in more than one manner, hardly coterminating within the same boundary. Each of these differences may be important in that it would operate to distinguish one group from another in all its traits" (8). Language plurality implies that neither socio-linguistic nor socio-cultural boundaries are clearly marked (ibid) . The situation in which we live can thus be described as plurilingual.

6.2 STUDYING THE "INTERLITERARY" CONDITION

The plurilingual condition of Indian languages is the reason for Amiya Dev's description of Indian literature *an "interliterary condition"* (See Galik , U1, for interliterariness). We have discussed the formation of Indian languages in detail since language is the medium of literature. The implications of this are the following :

1. A single language is difficult to define; there is a history of naming the language : the PLSI research found that people call the same language by different names. Also a single language, standardised by the writing of a formal grammar, often in the 19th century, contains vocabulary and grammatical elements from many languages , characteristic of the fuzzy boundaries between organically plural languages.
2. The contactual relations between languages are decided by the movement of human beings across time and space – languages are not confined to geopolitical or any other man-made boundaries. Hence the lives of languages, like the lives of the speakers, is dynamic. Each Indian language literature exists in relation to others, in its immediate vicinity as well as in its heritage. A literary work in composition and reception, is the inheritor of an "Indian" tradition, and located in an Indian context – these have

commonalities amongst them in various degrees, and are inflected by time and space.

By definition the interliterary condition is ephemeral – it is not carved in stone. The relations between difference, or contactual relations, influence a literary system and the discourse attributed to it. Some forms of contactual relations have been delineated by scholars, to provide conceptual tools to understand the change that elements of theme and form undergo as they move across time and space. Thus, the history of the definition of this discipline in India also varied according to the local conditions within which the practice of comparative literature flourished. The focus on Europe and the heterogeneities within European modernisms, changed into the move beyond Europe and expanded the study of Indian literatures to a focus on the heterogeneities and pluralities of modern Indian language literatures.

The labels “vernacular” and “regional” are still applied to Indian languages. This assumes a multilingual situation but within a hierarchy, ie that there is a central or mainstream “national” or “recognised” language, in respect of which the “local vernacular” and/or the “regional” language is defined. Such a distinction was instituted in colonial times, creating a hierarchy between English, the world and/or mainstream language, and the Indian languages which were vernaculars or regional languages. However, the Indian constitution recognises 24 Indian languages all of which have the status of national recognition. Hence, “Indian languages” is a more fitting term to replace both “vernacular” and “regional”.

How these factors act in our literary reading is explained in 6.3 below.

❖ Check Your Progress

1. The existence of words from one language in another is an example of
 - A. Dialects in a language
 - B. Different registers of a language
 - C. The fuzzy boundaries between languages
 - D. None of the aboveAns : C
2. The difference between structural and organic plurality is
 - A. The former conceptualises language as having fixed boundaries, the latter does not
 - B. In a condition of organic plurality, identity is fixed
 - C. In a condition of structural plurality, multilingualism exists
 - D. The latter conceptualises language as related to identity

Ans : A

3. Group the following characteristics under “organic”(B) or “structural”(A) plurality

1. Identity is not language related only
2. Contactual relations between languages decide the nature of literature
3. There are many languages but each is distinct from the other
4. Identity claims determine the language boundaries.
5. Both synchronic and diachronic relations influence the language formation
6. Language is a fixed abstract entity to which usage must conform.
7. Usage and contact with other languages and cultures forms the language.

A (Structural Plurality) : 3, 4, 6

B (Organic Plurality): 1, 2, 5, 7

4. The idea of “regional” languages assumes that
 - A. There is a national language
 - B. There are many national languages
 - C. There are many dialects of the national language
 - D. Every language is spoken in one region alone.

Ans : A

5. The “vernacular” assumes that
 - A. There is a mainstream language
 - B. The official language of the state and the language of the people is not the same
 - C. There is a hierarchy between languages
 - D. None of the above.

Ans : C

6.2.1 Conceptual Tools

‘Prophane’ and *‘metaphane’* are terms to explain the earlier or later influence of the same source on two different language-literatures, resulting from difference in the time and circumstances of contact between cultures. These words mean “early appearance” and “late appearance” respectively – *phane* being the Greek word for appearance. The terms are coined by Sisir Kumar Das and elucidated in detail by Majumdar. Das envisages them as delineating a relation – it is clear that both “early” and “late” assume other entities in relation to which the elements being considered are defined as early or late. Hence, the concepts help us to understand the changes in the horizon of expectation (See Unit 2) through contact, ie the interliterary relation, and the impact of reception upon the literature of a language as well as its literary discourse.

An example can be the encounter of a poet like Tagore with the poetry, poetics, aesthetics and philosophy of 19th century European Romanticism, especially German Idealism and English Romantic poetry. Tagore's translations, critical essays and poetry exhibited this interest. His status as a poet and as the first winner of the Nobel prize for literature from Asia, deeply influenced writers of many Indian languages. They too adopted the vocabulary and the philosophy that Tagore had imbibed from the European discourses. So in terms of Das' formulation, Tagore's reception of European Romanticism is the phenomenon that occurred first in time, ie it may be called "prophane". In contrast, we can term as "metaphane" or late appearance, the influence of European Romanticism upon the writers of other Indian languages, like Suryakant Tripathi Nirala, one of the pioneers of Chayavaad or modernism in Hindi, or Ismail, the writer of anubhuti kavita or experiential poetry in Telugu, or Subramaniam Bharati who wrote in Tamil. All these writers are credited with bringing what is known in the discourse of Indian literature as "modernism" to their language-literatures. This modernism had a different name in each language in which it appeared, but one of the causes behind its formation was the acquaintance with Tagore's work and thinking, which in turn was underpinned by Tagore's reception of European Romanticism in the context of his own philosophical and literary tradition. The concepts of synchrony, diachrony and panchrony (see Unit 1.3.1) are useful here to understand the different moments of "appearance" of the literary element across different language literatures.

6.2.1 Residual Emergent and Dominant

Raymond Williams uses these three concepts, in order to understand historical change in and through literary elements. In his view, literary elements are not constant – in this, Etienne's "literary invariants" (See unit 4) theory is upturned. Williams says that literary elements do not change or oscillate between two extremes. The change is visible in the new or emergent form – this form is the result of a synthesis between what is "residual" ie unchanged, and the changes wrought by the dominant modes of thinking and expression. The emergent is made possible by this effect of the present circumstances upon the existing form. What remains identifiable in the emergent is "residual". The forces exerting the pressure of the present are dominant and the result is the emergent. This reformulates the ideas of invariant and constant (See Unit 4) both referring to entities which are recognisable across time and space, but remain neither constant nor invariant. The act of reception, therefore is highlighted in these concepts, which together form a dynamic explanation of change.

An example is the story of Rama – elements in this story remain constant or residual in all the Rama stories in different Indian languages, but the focus often changes according to the dominant worldview or the belief of the writer. For example, in the Ramayana by Valmiki, Rama is an epic hero; in the *Ramcharitmanas* and the *Kamba Ramayana*, the focus is on him as the avatar of Vishnu, as both poets are devotees of Rama as god. The heroic characteristics are given the status of divinity, even though Kampan's Ramayana is written by a court poet to signify the devotion of the Vaishnavite king and his court, while Tulsi's text takes the form of devotion itself – reading it is a devotional practice. So in each case, the residual elements of the story are shaped by the different dominant elements present at the time and place and a new text emerges. The matter of Rama is identifiable by the residual elements, but transformed by interaction with dominant elements

6.2.2 Inherited text and Contemporary text

The Rama matter, and Valmiki's Ramayana, or Vyasa's Mahabharata, are "inherited" texts for Indian languages literatures, as they are part of the histories of language formation – the first text in the "vernacular", ie in the nascent modern Indian language, is often a version of the Rama matter, inspired by Valmiki and by the other representations of Rama's story, but in the writer's own language. Writing the "inherited" texts in one's own language is an exercise that prepares the language for literary composition, while the spiritual hunger of those who cannot read the scriptures or the mahakavya in the original is fulfilled. The "inherited" texts may come from all the different language traditions that contributed to the plurilingual situation in India – Pali, Sanskrit, Tamil Persian, Arabic (see Unit 5) . They form a repository of themes and literary devices available across modern Indian languages.

❖ Check Your Progress

1. The influence of English Romantic poetry came first to the poets of Bengali, and then to those of Tamil. The first is an instance of - ----- influence and the second, -----.

- A. Metaphane, Prophane
- B. Inherited text, residual
- C. Prophane, Metaphane
- D. Residual, dominant

Ans : C

2. Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Meghnadavad Kavya* is based on the Rama matter. In this case the Ramayan is
 - A. An inherited text

- B. A metaphane influence
- C. A residual text
- D. A structure of feeling

Ans : A

3. Rama as the avatar of Vishnu is a/an ----- while the Ramayana is a/an -----

Inherited text, residual element

- A. Residual element, inherited text
- B. Prophane element, metaphane element
- C. Literary invariant, residual element
- D. Metaphane element, dominant element

Ans : A

4. For the modern Indian language literatures, the Shah Namah is
- A. A prophane influence
 - B. A metaphane influence
 - C. An inherited text
 - D. A residual element

Ans : C

6.3 COMPARATIVE APPROACH TO LITERARY HISTORY

6.3.1 Using Plurality as a conceptual frame

The comparative method is an effective way to study Indian language literatures, due to the plurality of their nature, and the plural ethos that underlies the method itself. Refiguring the Sahitya Akademi slogan “Indian literature is one though it is written in many languages”, Ayappa Panikkar Malayalee poet and critic, submitted that “Indian literature is one because it is written in many languages”. Panikkar was drawing attention to the plural nature of the singular entity named India. The challenge before the literary discourse in India – scholarship, research, polemic, pedagogy related to Indian language literatures, whether these are carried out in Indian languages or non-Indian languages – is, how to conceptualise this plurality in terms of literature, such that we are able to understand the ethos and the values that plurality brings. This is crucial to the maintenance of plurality even while living within a single unit.

How the narrative of literary history is constructed may be an example of this. Devy criticises the borrowed close ended concepts which European historians of Indian language literatures and some of their early followers in India introduced into our imagination of history, as

witnessed in the narratives constructed about Indian language literatures. He cautions against a “‘master narrative employed to construct histories” (Devy 1998 :2) of different languages. This is a well-founded fear, as the “sense of history institutionalized in modern literary historiography is mainly of western origin” (ibid :3). The “sense of history” imported from the west recognizes only a ‘national’ literary history, where a single language is identified with a single nation. The political and ideological aim of such a narrative is, as Devy says, “translating social domination to the field of aesthetic creation “(Ibid:3). A literary history that narrativises interconnections within the plural Indian literary field, cannot overlook the plurality at the source of most Indian languages. For the same reason, we have to take into account what Devy calls the “varying sociologies”(ibid) of each language contexted in the differentials of power that characterize the society of its users.

Plurality does not imply the stability of borders but locationality which eschews categories like centre and margin. A plural frame is useful to imagine a single entity as both constituting the context for and acting as the interlocutor of the other entity. The interaction between genres, themes and sign-systems forms the structure of the historical narrative of any Indian language literature. This may occur within the literature of one language across time or between different language-cultures in contact with one another.

Following our idea that India is both a multilingual and a plurilingual entity, instead of thinking of Indian literature as an additive or homogenous whole, it is more realistic to think of it as the common name given to a set of literatures drawing from a common fund of literary phenomena of various types, unfolding against the background of both a specific language culture and a within a larger ‘Indian’ culture (See examples in 6.8.) This “Indian” culture is characterized by diversity of language, religion, location and worldview, but these in turn are located in the context of the commonly held experience of history and the common inheritance of literary resources. This complex literary field can only be approached through pluralism

Different narrative strategies using various categories, literary and non-literary have been studied, and comparative approaches have been proposed for the writing of a history of “Indian” literature, which must comprise histories of many inter-related languages and literary cultures, sharing a set of inherited texts to various degrees.

6.3.2 Integrative History and the Interliterary Condition

Through the History of Indian Literature Project of the Sahitya Akademi, undertaken under his leadership Sisir Kumar Das proposed

an “integrated” history of Indian literature, keeping literature in the singular. He was pointing to the necessity for looking at the commonalities which coexist with the obvious differences between one Indian language and another, and groups of languages and neighbouring groups – and the literature composed in them . The indefinite article “A” and “An” and the singular ‘Indian literature’ which have occasioned so much debate are, as Amiya Dev (2002:117; 2003-4:8-10) suggests, the indication of a proposed method. Dev points out that by not using the definite article Das has left the discussion open to plural views, as it were. Historical narratives from different perspectives and with varying focus are made possible using the factual material regarding publication, births and deaths, meetings and addresses all related to language and literature, collected in the three volumes of *A History of Indian Literature* published by the national academy of letters under Das’ editorship. This material may be used to study movements of theme and generic conceptions in Indian language literatures, across time and space, the reception of one language in another region through translation and adaptation, the results of various kinds of contact between language cultures. (See 6.8. See also Chanda 2003; Chanda 2006)

That we will necessarily infer the plurality of Indian language literatures from this material cannot be guaranteed. But the panchronic arrangement of the material itself offers the possibility of *an integrated view* as it demarcates the outlines of *a plural literary – as distinct from linguistic - field*. Das named this literary field Indian. He conceptualised it as an interliterary condition shared by all Indian language literatures. Indian literature, in the singular, is an ethical impetus as much as a literary one : to keep India’s plurality intact, there must be a way to understand difference and live with it, within a single unit. Das’ idea of “an” Indian literature written in many languages results from the integration of the literary system of each language into the “Indian” literary field, making this field plural in nature. This integration is achieved through investigating and elucidating the interliterary connections within the larger framework of cultural contact and exchange. Interliterary relations thus form the core of the history of ‘Indian’ literature, and it is impossible to study ‘Indian’ literature without acknowledging a plurality of sources and values characteristic of the literary field.

Dev’s (2002) statement that Indian literature is an “interliterary condition” helps us conceptualise the subject of our study, namely Indian literature and answer the question : what are we writing about ? The history of Indian literature, singular or plural, is not the history of a single unified entity but the narrative of the making, and transformation of a set of relations between several entities. I identify

them in the singular because I conceptualise them as specifically literary relations , located within the literary field that we have just defined as plural.

❖ **Check Your Progress**

1. The integrated approach to Indian literary history is

- A. A spatial approach
- B. A relational approach
- C. A temporal approach
- D. A nationalist approach

Ans : B

2. The interliterary condition is

- A. Dynamic and context specific
- B. Unstable and undefinable
- C. Dependent on fixed language boundaries
- D. Dependent on language identity

Ans : A

3. The kshetra is an interliterary field. This means that it is not a ----- category, but a-----one. It places the text within a ----- which is _____

- A. Literary, spatial, field, dynamic
- B. Residual, invariant, habitus, static
- C. Spatial, residual, field, emergent
- D. Spatial, literary, habitus, relational

Ans : D

4. According to Devy, a nationalist history does not

- A. Reduce the plurality of language and the diversity of Indian society
- B. Take a single language-culture as constituting the nation
- C. Recognise the interaction and contact between language-cliteratures
- D. Divide the language landscape into centre and region.

Ans : C

5. The Indian literary field is plural. This means

- A. There are plural languages
- B. It is a result of the contact between literary languages and cultures
- C. There is more than one language in India
- D. A language and its literature are related to each other.

Ans : B

6.4 FIELD, HABITUS

The idea of “field” is attributed to Pierre Bourdieu, who understood the social world as being divided into a variety of distinct arenas or “fields” of practice like art, education, religion, law, etc., each with their own unique set of rules, knowledges, and forms of capital. The Systems Theory approaches argue along similar lines (Unit 3). *Fields* can overlap —Bourdieu sees each field as having its own set of positions and practices, and power relations operating within it. So each field is according to him relatively autonomous. However, the horizon of expectation operating in literature is not entirely exhausted by the literary field. The forces operating within a literary field cannot exclude the reader-text relation which is ultimately a personal and unique one.

Bourdieu’s larger idea of habitus, in which a field is located, seems more suited to literature, because it is a state of being in relation to the world, the dynamic state of being within a field in which forces from within and outside the field operate in varying degrees. Thus the response or experience of the recipient/audience/reader, can be seen as an active factor in the establishment of a situation of reading. As Bourdieu defines it, a habitus is

... a subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class and constituting the precondition for all objectification and apperception: and the objective coordination of practices and the sharing of a world-view could be founded on the perfect impersonality and interchangeability of singular practices and views. (Bourdieu 1972|1977: 86).

What Etiemble terms “literary invariants”(See Unit 2) or Marino calls “constants”(See Unit 3) are here taken as objective elements like singular practices and collective world views. However, Bourdieu’s theory is made to apply to sociological facts and data – in the case of a “literary” field and habitus, the objective elements form the ground for the reader’s singular experience of the text, which cannot be fixed and is necessarily subjective.

As an example we may say that modern Indian language-cultures and the literatures created in them, emerge out of a common literary tradition (habitus) with which the literature written in each language engages. It seems more realistic to take this common literary horizon as an integrative principle rather than as a given fact. This principle gives coherence to the historical narrative of formation of each Indian language literature, which we have considered in Unit 5. So, rather than look for unity or homogeneity among all Indian language

literatures which come from different geographical regions, language-cultures, religions and economic denominations, we are looking for

1. the interaction between the field of literary production in each language with the larger habitus of Indian language literatures and
2. interaction between two literary systems within the larger habitus – each of their relations with this habitus and with the other literary system within it. This may be called an “interliterary field”.

6.5 CHRONOTOPE, INTERTEXTUALITY, DIALOGISM

Mikhail Bakhtin is associated with concept of the chronotope and dialogism, and Julia Kristeva with the concept of intertextuality. These ideas show the relational, dialogic and situated nature of the literary text, deriving from the event character of literature.

Bakhtin considers “writing as reading of the anterior literary corpus” and the Text as “the absorption and response to another text”. The responsive nature of literary textual practices makes a text “dialogical”, an event of interaction between writer and context, and/or text, context and reader.

According to Julia Kristeva(1980), Bakhtin “replaces the static viewing of texts with a model where literary structure... is generated in relation to another structure.....his conception of the literary word (is) an intersection of literary surfaces rather than as a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings : that of the writer, addressee and the contemporary or earlier cultural context...”. Kristeva herself replaces Bakhtin’s term “literary word” with “text” and bringing together the horizontal axes of the subject/addressee and the vertical axes of the text/context, states “ each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read”(ibid p66).

The chronotope is similar to the literary invariant or constant, or the repertoire of signification (See 6.6) . Bakhtin(1981) uses the concept to explain how the narrative, the novel in particular, presents time and space. It is a feature of narrative, combining both time and space as a marker of a specific culture or structure of feeling. According to Bakhtin, every culture has certain textual practices to construct a chronotope ie express space and time features connected to a world view. In the literary device of the chronotope, time and space intersect – the chronotope thus “stands as a symbol of the community as forces operating to shape its members image of themselves”. AS a combination of temporal and spatial aspects symbolic of a worldview, it is part of the horizon of expectation.

6.6 REPERTOIRE OF SIGNIFICATION

Jacques Ranciere defines a regime thus :

a specific type of connection between ways of producing works of art or developing practices, forms of visibility that disclose them, and ways of conceptualizing the former and the latter.

Ranciere identifies different regimes of signification related to different periods. His aim is to reject interpretations that frame artistic practices in linear, monocausal historical narratives. These “regimes” can be seen as operating within the horizon of expectation, shaping it and thereby influencing reception.

We replace “regime” with “repertoire” in the plurilingual context. Ranciere’s interlinking of conceptualisation, execution and reception of an artwork provides a frame for reading but cannot dictate readings themselves. In a plural culture such as India’s, elements from these “regimes” are found across languages and literary cultures that have their own peculiar traditions and simultaneously interact with these received images and beliefs from the literary habitus. They are a common resource for many language-cultures, a repertoire of literary elements of form and content which are available to artists to use, unlike “regime” which is a set of rules and codes fixed by legislation and convention, and may be unchanging across time and space. In the plural literary field, the multiplicity and plurality of Indian language literatures makes it difficult to impose a “regime” upon a set of texts; hence regime can be replaced by “repertoire of signification” , implying a literary element like a metaphor shared across languages and cultures, available to the poet or artist within the literary system.

As an example we may take the interweaving of concepts, forms and images that create the world of Bhakti in various Indian language literatures across time and space, including the pre-colonial contact between the languages and cultures of the subcontinent and the traders, saints and rulers from the world of Islam. The plurality of sources create different harmonies out of the contact between these different cultures and belief systems. Every modern Indian language came into being through the oral and written compositions of Bhakt, Sant and Sufi poets and thinkers, mixing the idiom and poetics of two or more cultures and languages. Commonalities of theme and repetition of images arose from the shared belief in the equality of all before god, and the availability of god’s grace or mercy or love for all his creatures, regardless of class, caste, religion or language. The concepts outlined (6.5 and 6.6) help us to study relational and plural nature of Bhakti literature, in different languages.

6.7 GENERIC MARKERS

Generic markers are elements of form and content that can be used to identify a genre. To give an example, the generic markers of the epic may be an invocation at the start, the intervention of the divine in the action, and the length of the text. If we come across all three characteristics in any literary mode, we may recognise the text as an epic. But they will not be identical, for each marker will be used according to the structure of feeling of the time. To use the idea of “literary invariant” (Etiemble), these are universal to the epic – they are invariant as categories, but their concrete realisation by the writer is situational. The invocation in Homer’s *Odyssey* and *Iliad* point to a society different from the one of Virgil’s *Aeneid*; in the latter it is “arms and the man” that is invoked, while in the former, the Muses are the subject of the invocation. Virgil has a specific purpose – to signal the death of the Greek civilisation symbolised by the fall of Troy and the establishment of Rome by Aeneas who rescues from the war and takes with him the gods of Troy, his father, symbolising the past and his son, symbolising the future.

6.8 LITERARY SPACE AND LITERARY PERIOD

In this section, we give examples of the a relational rather than an absolute periodization of Indian language literature based upon the historical fact of plurality and the phenomenon of contact .

Sisir Kumar Das forged conceptual tools for a relational, comparative periodization of literary phenomena in Indian language literatures by proposing the concepts of Prophane and Metaphane, and Inherited and Contemporary texts. Nabaneeta DevSen’s essay “The Concept of Indian Literature: Today” chastises non-western comparatists for adopting “western” practices of Comparative Literature (DevSen 98) and raises questions of nomenclature and categories of understanding : are the ideas prevalent to understand monocultural European nations, applicable to plural societies ? Identifying the difficulty of transposing a comparative methodology originating in Europe to the study of modern Indian language literatures, DevSen outlines in her essay, the commonly held misconception of a structural similarity in the relation between the various Indian language literatures and cultures in India and the national literatures and cultures of Europe (100). Such an assumed parallelism is primarily unviable, because of the interculturality or plurality (See Unit 5 and 6.1 above) of India, which she defines in terms of the simultaneous or contemporaneous existence of multiple temporal and spatial locations simultaneously available and interacting with each other (101):

“In India we have 12 modern literatures no less than 500 years old and 6 aged over a thousand years. Where are we to place ourselves? What does ‘today’ mean in India? It is an incredible timespan within which the modern Indian consciousness functions. We live with the ancient, medieval and the ultra-modern all within the reach of one another. Value-wise, in an urban middle-class ordinary family, often the English medium educated father belongs to the 19th century, the uneducated mother and the domestic help to the medieval world, and the Hollywood-educated son is a twenty-first century specimen. Amidst such contradictory forces all working at once, where the formidable time-lag is not of generations but of centuries, it may not seem easy to find a common denominator in literature. But what miracles can the ardent comparatist not achieve? ...Only ‘the context of criticism’ in this case must be interliterary as well as interdisciplinary.” (101)

DevSen’s essay marks the shift in the practice of Comparative Literature in India. She turns the gaze inward to explore the study of Comparative Literature as scholarship on a diverse body of literatures and oratures contained within the Indian sub-continent. Borrowing from Remak’s comment on Comparative Literature providing a “viable international perspective” in understanding national constructions of literature and culture, DevSen proposes an extension of such an approach to studying Indian language literatures under a national and international lens (ibid. 99).

6.8.1 Interliterary Field : Reception and “Plural” Language

IN this section, we use the concepts outlined above to understand literary phenomena that characterise a plural literary field. Here we take the example of Hindustani as a plural language, and see how the interliterary condition is composed of interactions with other texts diachronically and synchronically within a larger habitus.

Given the plurilingual habitus of Indian language literatures, Khubchandani (1996) proposes the *kshetra* which he translates as region, in place of the nation as a category of literary or linguistic analysis. However, we have already seen the difficulty in thinking of Indian languages and their literatures as “regional”. Thus, we redefine *Kshetra* eschewing territorial or spatial reference of any and define it as an interliterary field. We may illustrate this from Indian literature. Using the chronological lists in Das’ histories, we can construct the context of literary events, whether within a single language-literature field or across language-cultures. Whether we are writing the history of a movement or a period, the Indian language literatures are situated within a common plural habitus, and the interliterary condition thus created both directs the writing of a literary history and

plays a role in it. The plural conception of the interliterary field gives rise to repertoires of signification (See 6.6 above) and a shared fund of literary conventions and generic markers across languages and cultures, perhaps as residual elements from inherited texts or through contact with other literary systems through translation or literary reception.

WE take the example of Hindustani : it is not a language with fixed boundaries, but a set of characteristics resulting from the overlaps in semantic, syntactic and morphological elements shared by languages that stretch across the central part of India, including the Deccan. Any language that belongs to the broad category Hindustani, is composed of the following elements : presence of elements of “kharhiboli” of Northern India mixed with the local language and idiom, Persian literary discourse and idiom, Sanskrit poetics, Vaishnav and Sufi aesthetics and philosophy of love. These languages for example Purvi, Awadhi, Braj, Gujri, Dakkhni were formed through the movement of people and troops and religious mendicants across the breadth of the country. Between the 16th and 18th centuries, poetic conventions from Sanskrit, are in dialogue with the conventions and idioms of the oral compositions in local languages and the Perso-Arabic tradition.ⁱ What Khusrau wrote in the 13th century about Northern India we find remains extant until the 19th as well in the words of Azad -

Look at the nature of Bhasha--what a friendly temperament it has, for mixing with every single language! Cast your eye attentively over its poetry and prose. It not only cleared out a space for its guest among the words, but also adopted many words and thoughts that were specific to the native lands of Arabic and Persian. Thus it gave the realm of heroism to [the Persian *Shāhnāmāh* heroes] Rustam and Sām, although here it belonged to [the *Mahābhārat* heroes] Bhīm and Arjun.ⁱⁱ

As far as vocabulary is concerned, Bhikharidas, in the early 18th century, records, in the ritigranth *Kavyanirṇay* that the pleasing (ruchira) language, Brajbhasha, is made of a mixture of Sanskrit and “paarasayu”, Persian, where each is “pragat” or clear, in its own right (See Busch in Orsini 2010, p86) As Busch (2010) has pointed out, Muslim rulers in all parts of India were connected to the Persian cosmopolis, and were simultaneously also patrons of the local languages. The Persian influence encompassed idiom and vocabulary, regardless of a poet’s own religion. In the lines by Nagaridas quoted above, the words “mazhab” (faith), “ilm” (knowledge) and “ishk” (love) are part of the idiom of Brajbhasha poetry as much as “swad”, taste, which evokes the fundamental premise of “rasa” poetics derived

from Bharata's *Natyashastra* . The confluence of cultures is thus visible in the poetry of Hindu and Muslim poets alike :these conventions are followed by Rasleen, who praises the creator of the universe, in an idiom borrowed from the worship of an incarnation of god in human form , to whom the devotee could relate as to a human being. His *Ras Prabodh* begins with an invocation to Allah

The name of Allah conjures up an image in the mind of those without shelter and protection,

Displayed there resplendent like the crown on the forehead of a king.

❖ Check Your Progress

1. Match the theorist with the concept

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| A. Julia Kristeva | i. kshetra |
| B. Jacques Ranciere | ii. dialogism |
| C. Mikhail Bakhtin | iii. regime of signification |
| D. Lachman Khubchandani | iv. intertextuality |

ANS: A-iv B-iii C-ii D-i

2. A chronotope is

- A. A feature of narrative
- B. A combination of time and place symbolic of a world view
- C. Rules for representation of time and place
- D. An element of theme

Ans : B

3. Intertextuality is

- A. The relation between text, author and reader
- B. The relation between texts
- C. Meaning of one literary structure in relation to another
- D. The difference between texts

Ans : C

4. A literary field

- A. Comprises textual practices and the situations within which they operate
- B. Is a set of positions and practices, and power relations operating within it
- C. An autonomous space with rules, forms and conventions
- D. None of the above

Ans : A

5. A habitus is
- A. An intersection of fields
 - B. A set of conventions
 - C. A set of objective conventions and rules and the located subjective use of them
 - D. A literary tradition

Ans : C

Dialogism is

The relation between texts within a particular field

Reading traces of one text in another.

A conversation with anterior literary texts

The production and reception of texts within a context

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B.A. Hons. (English)

Semester II

FCLMN 201

Fundamentals of Comparative Literature I

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1.1 OBJECTIVES

- a. To make students familiar with Comparative Literature
- b. To make students acquainted with various Schools of Comparative Literature in Europe.
- c. To make them aware of how French School was an important School among all European Schools.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Comparative literature is characterized by its fluid, dynamic and non-congealed substance and is interested in the interaction of dialectic history and literary expression with the ever changing scenario of socio-political and economic changes in the world. Cultural context is very important as far as reception and understanding of a comparative perspective goes and since literature is plural there is more than one influence that works on it.

1.3 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN GERMANY

The history of German Comparative Literature can be traced back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With comparative methods,

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) discussed the European dramas in his masterpiece, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) was a key figure in German Comparative Literature. In a series of works on literary aesthetics, he explicitly put forward, for the first time, the literary concepts of historicism and totalitarianism. He compiled *On the Influence of Poetry on the Customs of People* (1778), which collected the folk songs from other ethnic groups including the German, the British, the French, the Spanish, the Italian, the Greek, the Danish, the Icelandic, the Swedish, and the Polish, and was the first anthology of "World Literature." The cosmopolitanism dealt with national literature equally, which, in a way, gave birth to Goethe's vision on "world literature."

The contribution of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) to Comparative Literature is of great significance. In his conversation with Johann Peter Eckermann, he made a number of comparative studies. Referring to a legendary Chinese novel, *Hao Kiou Chooan*, or *The Pleasing History*, he held that the Chinese people thought, acted, and felt almost exactly the same way as Europeans did; and Europeans would -soon find that they were perfectly like the Chinese, except that the Chinese actions were more clear, more pure, and more decorous than theirs [3]. More importantly, in 1827, Goethe proposed accordingly the concept of "Weltliteratur," which pointed out that literature would have the dual nature of global and national identity; when the national literature became part of the world literature, the national literature would be the spiritual wealth enjoyed by all mankind. The concept of "world literature" expressed that Goethe's hope that all the national literatures would be open to each other and exchange ideas from each other, which illustrated his vision: One day, all the national literatures could be combined into a unified and interconnected whole, which inspired the early research of Comparative Literature and was of great significance to the study of Comparative Literature all over the world.

Before 1887, the German scholars' efforts in the study of Comparative Literature did not generate any important outcome, until Marx Koch (1855-1931) founded the periodical "*Zeitschrift für die Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft*," which not only marked the official beginning of Comparative Literature in Germany but also marked the beginning of the disciplinary history of European Comparative Literature. The Preface, written by Koch for the periodical, marked the turning point in Comparative Literature studies in Germany and revealed two goals of the periodical: The first is to discuss briefly the criticism of

German Comparative Literature and its history, and the second is to specialize German Comparative Literature so as to shake off the fact that the study of Comparative Literature was always regarded as a tributary of the study of the literary history. These two goals were also the basic program of "Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte" (1887-1910) and its sister scholarly series "Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte" (1901-1909) which Koch summed up into six aspects: art of translation; the history of the literary forms and themes and literary impacts across national boundaries; the history of thoughts; the relationships between the political history and the literary history, the links between literature and arts, and philosophy and literary development, etc.; and the folklore which has been always been neglected in the past and now finally has been paid due attention. These perspectives not only were related to influence studies and parallel studies of Comparative Literature but touched upon interdisciplinary research, which, therefore, opened up a broad field for the study of Comparative Literature. These two periodicals ceased publication respectively in 1909 and in 1910. Thereafter, German Comparative Literature gradually came to stagnation. Especially in the Third Reich period, the Germanistic became an impressive academic discipline, so the status of the Comparative Literature became less important.

1.4 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN ITALY

Strictly speaking, Italian Comparative Literature began in 1861, when Francesco Sanctis (1817-1883) held a lecture on the history of Comparative Literature at the University of Naples. The lecture marked the beginning of Comparative Literature as a university course and promoted the development of Comparative Literature throughout Europe. Therefore, the laurel of the father of Comparative Literature in Italy usually went to Sanctis. Unfortunately, Sanctis understanding of Comparative Literature was extremely narrow, because he limited the "comparison" of literature within one country and believed by doing so we could have a unified standard. For him, the comparison made sense only when it was applied within the tradition of one country, for example, the comparison between Dante and Boccaccio, because only in this way could we have a common background. Therefore, he must be against the study similar to the parallel studies that we are familiar with, out of his belief that "the comparison of either the themes or the characters, both should be conducted within a single literature in one country instead of the international field".

After Sanctis, there was another figure in the society of Italian Comparative Literature, who, instead of giving a further push, actually brought the development of Italian Comparative Literature to a halt. This giant is Benedetto Croce (1866-1952). Croce thought that comparison is a simple method for historical research with the aim of using "parallelism" and "similarity" to establish an independent research system, but the basis of it is more general. Croce issued an essay "Comparison of Literature in the first volume of the bimonthly journal "La Critica," which he himself founded in 1903. In this essay, he maintained that the comparison, as employed in the study of Comparative Literature, was a basic research method, which could not define a specific research field. Instead he believed that "comparison" was a convenient, common, and indispensable method when the specific literary works were put into the historical context of world literature; therefore, it could not by itself constitute an independent and systematic discipline. In the early twentieth century, the challenge of Croce on comparative Literature resulted in the direct consequences that the development of the discipline in the rest of twentieth century. After Sanctis, was hindered in Italy and did not flourish up till now. However. Croce's massive and far-reaching challenges towards Comparative Literature have been proved wrong by the fact that the discipline is justifiable and sustainable and continues to develop with boundless vitality.

With the echo of Croce's challenges from time to time, scholars of the discipline need to be always introspective and self-critical so as to ensure the vitality of the study. It is assumed that if Croce had not attacked the weakness of Comparative Literature, it might not have achieved its wonderful success nowadays. Therefore, Croce's theoretical challenge to some extent actually fuelled the development of the discipline, which was in a sense Croce's contribution to it.

1.5 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN RUSSIA

In Russia, Comparative Literature, as a normative term, is called "comparative literary theory," also known as comparative poetics, and was founded in the late nineteenth century when some scholars began to establish the course of the history of general literature, among whom the most prominent representative was Alexander N. Veselovsky, known as the "Father of Russian Comparative Literature." Veselovsky borrowed and developed the theories and methods of the Western European comparatists and built up the Russian historical comparative literary theory with his masterpiece *Historical Poetics* (Труды по исторической поэтике). With regard to Comparative Literature, he had two particularly important

arguments: first, he advocated finding the similarities through literary comparison; and second, he emphasized that the development of literature was under the restraint of the development of social history.

From 1917 to the end of the 1920s, Viktor M. Zhirmunsky succeeded Veselovsky with acceptance of his theoretical perspectives and became the representative in the mainstream of Russian Comparative Literature. Zhirmunsky inherited and developed the useful historical comparative literary theory of Veselovsky and applied the Historical Materialism of Marxism to the study of Comparative Literature. As a result, he became the founder of the Historical Comparative Literature of Russia, which was a new school different in methodology from the Western Comparative Literature. In 1935, he proposed, for the first time in his report, entitled "Comparative Literary Theory and the Problem of Literary Influence," that the similarity of the process of the literary history is determined by the common human social history. The purpose and task of Comparative Literature in the USSR was to establish "general literature" (seco6mas reparypa) based on the Marxist view of the historical development of the world. This report marked that Zhirmunsky, after long-term explorations, finally applied Historical Materialism of Marxism to the historical comparison of the Russian tradition, which played a groundbreaking role in the further development of USSR historical literary theory and was therefore regarded by the modern USSR scholars as a milestone in the history of USSR Comparative Literature.

In 1946, the CPSU Central Committee decided to eliminate the pernicious influence of the bourgeois literature and art. Comparative Literature has been listed as a key target of the criticism, and Veselovsky's theory was completely denied. Consequently, the USSR Comparative Literature study had become a forbidden zone where no one dared to set foot. This situation continued until the mid-to-late 1950s. During the mid-1950s, the Soviet literary society began to "thaw," the study of Comparative Literature began to recover, and many scholars and writers took active part in the boom of the comparative literary study once again. After several decades' efforts, the basic theoretical system of USSR historical comparative literary theory has gradually come into being, and the Russian school of Comparative Literature had been formed, competing with the French school and the American school.

1.6 THE FRENCH SCHOOL

From the moment when Comparative Literature began to emerge in European academy, France became the centre for its further

development. Comparative Literature as a discipline was first established in France in the second half of the 19th century. As the earliest school of Comparative Literature, French scholars established the first phase of disciplinary theory and exerted great influence. These scholars established Comparative Literature as an independent subject and set up systematic theories. The French School came into being at a time when French literature flourished and had a great impact on that of other countries with the prevalence of scientism and positivism. Through standardized research of objects, scientism tended to seek universal laws and rules which led people to know the world. French school was also under the influence of positivism represented by Comte which advocated the study of specific facts and phenomena and the external links phenomena. Comte denied the study of essence behind the phenomena and held that the essence of the world was beyond the reach of human beings. Scientism influenced people to adopt methods of natural science to study the literature of difference and originality, while positivism led people to the so-called truth through facts. It was under this double influence that the French scholars embarked on a new attempt.

1.6.1 The Shaping of the French School:

The lectures and courses offered by those pioneers such as Abel-Francois Villemain and Jean Jacques Ampere popularized the new term 'Comparative Literature' and made a great contribution to the formation of a discipline. Texte's monograph *J.-J. Rousseau et Les Origines du Cosmopolitisme Littéraire* paved the way for the further development of Comparative Literature as a discipline and for its becoming a university course. This period was the beginning stage of the French school with creative thinking and writing of individuals and without clear awareness of academic orientation.

In the programmatic article introducing the first number of "*Revue de Littérature Comparée*" (1921), Baldensperger critically summarized the academic opinions and promoted that scholars should systematically apply empiricism to the research of the relations between foreign literatures and French literature. Since then, the French school took shape and colored its study with positivism.

Paul Van Tieghem's classical work *La littérature comparée* further elaborated the ideas of the French school including the definition of the term. He held the view that the word "comparative" should avoid its aesthetic value to get a scientific one. Therefore, Comparative Literature essentially studied the relationship of different literatures, mainly including Latin and Greek literature, the relationship of

modern literature and ancient literature, and the relationship of national literature in modern times, among which the last was the most important. So he regarded the object of research as emitter and intermediaries' transmitter and recipient; thus, the main methodology of the French school study started to form.

Jean-Marie Carré (1887-1958), the chief editor of "Revue de Littérature Comparée," claimed that Comparative Literature was not the comparison of literatures but the study of the factual relationship of literatures in his masterpiece *La littérature comparée*. The concepts of Guyard's *La littérature comparée* are similar to those of Paul Van Tieghem who held that the essence of Comparative Literature was the study of the history of the relationship of international literatures. This period marks the further development of the French school. A group of scholars set up a relatively complete theoretical system from different angles. Above all they set up scientific methods to establish Comparative Literature as an independent discipline. In 1954, the formation of the Comparative Literature Association in France marked the official establishment of the French school.

1.6.2 The Birth of Comparative Literature as an Independent Discipline and the Formation of Theories of Comparative Literature

The French school had to confront natural scientism from the very beginning owing to the double influence of scientism and positivism. At first some people outside of the academic circle of Comparative Literature questioned the rationality of the discipline, among whom the well-known Italian scholar Croce was the most prominent.

He held that any discipline can make use of the method of comparison which was only a simple and universal way for historic study. Moreover, the way itself was the necessary tool for literary study, so it was impracticable to regard comparison as the foundation of this discipline. Under this pressure, French scholars attempted to orient Comparative Literature into a scientific orbit and legalize it. They used "relationship" instead of "comparison" criticized by people so that the study scope of Comparative Literature, which focused on the factual relationship and impact between the national literatures, was greatly narrowed to research on "relationship." In their view, the name of the discipline was not accurate because they believed that "Comparative Literature is not comparison of literatures." Guyard once said, "Comparative Literature is not comparison of literatures. It is in fact a scientific method misunderstood.... It is vain to try to make a clear definition of its feature" [5]. The French school argued that

Comparative Literature was "the history of international literary relationships" instead of comparison between two literatures: "The object of Comparative Literature is to thoroughly research on the relationship of literary works of various nations" [6]. Comparison without paying attention to relationship was not acceptable.

Van Tieghem held the view that this kind of comparison was in fact the selection of similar characters, scenes, articles, and books from different literatures and the simple juxtaposition of their similarities and differences, which merely was a kind of satisfaction of curiosity and aesthetics and results in a judgment based on personal preference. Other than these, the comparison had no other significance because it cannot promote the deeper understanding of the literary history with its own strength.

Another important theorist of the French school, Guyard, also repeatedly emphasized this point that the object of Comparative Literature was to essentially research the relationship between national literatures. If those objects have no contacts, they do not belong to the sphere of Comparative Literature. Thus, the real foothold of the discipline was "relationship" rather than "comparison." This emphasis not only laid a foundation for the definition and theory of the French school but also became a prominent and distinct feature of it.

In other words, the French school was against the analogy study. It merely admitted "relationship of literatures" as orthodox on which basis they set up the systematic theory and methodology: from "Doxologie" (start) to "Mesologie" (media) to "Crenologie" (ending). Its major method was "influence study," which stressed the relationship of facts and explored the borrowing, accepting, and impact of some factors such as subject matters, themes, styles, motifs, and concepts. In this sense, the French school laid a solid foundation for the formation and development of Comparative Literature with a set of theories, methods, and modes.

In addition, the reflection and the pursuit of the French comparatists also contributed to the generation of the theory of the discipline. Being definite and scientific is essential for the establishment of any discipline; the French scholars have been thinking about how to establish Comparative Literature as a closely knit, scientific discipline. After careful consideration, the four representative figures of the French school, Baldensperger, Van Tieghem, Carré, and Guyard, ultimately clearly advocated the following points: First, positivism must be emphasized and arbitrariness must be removed;

secondly, the history of literary relationship should be focused, while the analogy study without factual contact should be overlooked; thirdly, a clear scientism instead of uncertain aesthetic values should be obtained.

For the first point, in his *Littérature comparée: Le Mot et la chose*, Baldensperger wrote, "No explicatory clarity results from comparisons restricting themselves to a glance cast simultaneously at two different objects, to that recollection, conditioned by the play of memories and impressions of similarities which may well be erratic points" [7]. To get clear argumentation and an independent method of comparison, Comparative Literature must put great emphasis on positivism and scientism and completely remove the subjective and arbitrary aspect.

For the second point, in his Foreword to Guyard's *La Littérature Comparée*, Jean-Marie Carré maintained that random comparison regardless of the specific time, space, and other issues did not work because the concept of Comparative Literature must be further specified. He called Comparative Literature "a branch of literary history; it is the study of spiritual international relations, of factual contacts which took place between Byron and Pushkin, Goethe and Carlyle, Walter Scott and Vigny, between the works, the inspirations, and even the lives of writers belonging to several literatures" [1]. After undergoing violent attacks from the American school, Guyard still held the standpoint of his teacher, Carré, and is still adhered to the understanding of Comparative Literature as "the history of international literary relations," strongly opposing the parallel comparison, as well as the general literature and the world literature.

For the third point, Van Tieghem believed that "the characteristic of Comparative Literature, as the nature of the historical science, is to embrace a great number of possible facts of different origins, then explain each of them, then enlarge the basis of knowledge as to discover the causes of most effects. In brief, the word 'comparative' should avoid its aesthetic value to get a scientific one." Quite obviously, the scholars of the French school expected that they could establish a set of unique systems with scientific and empirical methods.

1.6.3 The Characteristics of Theories of the French School: Positivism of International Literary Relations

The disciplinary theory of the French school represents a major achievement in the first stage of Comparative Literature. The phrase "La Littérature Comparée" (Comparative Literature), in French, refers to the comparative study of literature. At the same time, it indicates the significant interrelationship and interaction of literature in different nations. So, in this sense, it may be subordinate to the history of international literary relationship. Besides the study on the ties of international literatures, with the employment of the empirical research methods, the study of the French school also covers the study of typology, thematology, and Imagology as well. So, to some extent, it focuses on the exchange of literatures in different nations and other interdisciplinary studies instead of on the inner aesthetic values of the literary work itself with positivism as its feature.

In the nineteenth century, France was known as the Kingdom of History, which has witnessed a bloom of the early scholars who were engaged in the study of Comparative Literature. Most of them have the background of literary history or literary criticism, such as Abel-Francois Villemain (1790-1870), Jean-Jacques Ampère (1800-1864), Fernand Baldensperger (1871-1958), and Gustave Lanson (1857-1934). The rigid empirical methodology has been applied during that period of time on the study of the literary history. As Voltaire once claimed, the historians, when elaborating history, should primarily collect materials based on the principle of eliminating the false while retaining the true and cautiously objectively state the historical facts without any personal bias; meanwhile, the study on those programs, from which reliable historical data could be easily obtained, should receive much emphasis [10]. In his *Histoire de la littérature*, Gustave Lanson, one of the well-known scholars on literary history and Comparative Literature, suggested scholars "hold an objective spirit for pursuing knowledge" and "a stance of serving the facts" [11].

Influenced by the contemporary academic atmosphere, French scholars of Comparative Literature strongly emphasized the literary "history," during the formative process of the discipline. Paul Van Tieghem (1871-1948) once argued the ultimate goal of Comparative Literature actually is to study the interrelationship between different literatures and a clear notion of Comparative Literature mainly means an explicit concept of literature, while Comparative Literature actually is a branch of literary history [12]. And "the aim of comparative study of literature mainly should research the interactions of distinct literatures." In this sense, according to him, "comparative study" may

also be interpreted as "collecting, making a parallel comparison among similar literary works, typical characters, plot, as well as stories from different cultures, and demonstrating their similarities and divergences, the only aim of which is to meet the curiosity of an aesthetic enjoyment and to satisfy the need of critics, and then rank those works according to one's various tastes and standards." And "by doing this, it may be helpful in developing one's patterns of thoughts and cultivating one's excellent taste towards literature. Nevertheless, that is to say, it is of no historical significance owing to the fact that it doesn't make any contribution to the development of the study of literary history" [13]. In the preface of *La Littérature Comparée*, written by his student, Jean Marie Carré (1887-1958). Marius-Francois Guyard also stressed the notion that Comparative Literature is one of the branches of literary history. In his book, Guyard argued, "Comparative Literature is usually misunderstood as the comparison among different literatures from one nation to another. The scope of the study should be narrowed down to only focus on the history of international literary relations, in other words, to concentrate on the communication among literatures of different nations " [1].

The theoretical basis of the French school leads to the philosophy of positivism, which was founded by Auguste Comte (1798-1857), a French philosopher, who put forward this principle and built up the methodology. There are six aspects of his positivism, namely, positivism as truth, practicability, sureness, accuracy, optimism, and relativity as well [14]. Comte once addressed, in his *Système de politique positive*, sociology should be set up as one empirical science with the method of observation, experiments, and comparison [15]. Under his influence, France witnessed a strong trend of empirical thought after the second half of the nineteenth century. At the same time, the concept and methodology of positivism have a significant impact on the disciplinary formation of Comparative Literature and have become the basic premise of the French school and its major research methodology. Under this background, the French school has stressed the study on the influence of literature in different nations. To be more specific, they tend to observe the interrelationship among literary works by their origin, metonymy, imitation, and adaptation, trying to prove, with concrete materials, that those kinds of relations once surely existed.

The French school discarded the analogy of the large scale and concentrated on the empirical study on the relationship among literatures in the international community instead of random research. Moreover, Paul Van Tieghem (1871-1948) induced a scientific notion of the discipline by avoiding the stress on aesthetics. The historical

nature and the empirical methodology, in this sense, are a consequence of the accurate processing of the research field and method of the discipline and also constitute an intelligent response to the challenges proposed by a number of scholars from other fields, led by Benedetto Croce (1866-1952). Just owing to such a scientific and systematic processing of the discipline, which made the research successfully break through various doubts, the study of Comparative Literature could be found and developed afterwards. While on the other hand, narrowing down in the discipline to the embarrassment of being more in name than in reality. Just as the proverb goes “either success or failure boils to the same person.”

Comparative Literature is seen by the French critics as a historical and positivist discipline concerned with the study of Influence or Reception. French school doesn't designate itself to a particular nationality or language for the discourse it presents but rather it is a general orientation that is given to the subject matter. The focus is on solid research before interpretations are made and also a chronological and systematic approach. What time and again has crept into the study in literature is the study of influences or what influences a work of art. At first it was cause and effect that was taken up by Paul Van Tieghem and later in the works of Lagos Katona the emphasis is on the study of sources and later shifts to originality. However, in the French School the term 'influence' has been gradually replaced by 'reception'. It is not the emitter that is now focused on but the receptor, from author centric to reader centric.

1.7 LET'S SUM UP

The French School sets conditions on both the studied literary texts on one hand as well as on the relationship of influence between them on the other hand. It is also obsessed with terminology and makes distinction between influence, reception, borrowing and imitation. Comparatists of the French School also distinguish between direct/indirect influence, literary/non-literary influence, positive/negative influence. All the conditions set by the French School have led the discipline of comparative literature to a dead end. Because it obsessed itself with the link of causality, more investigations were made outside the texts instead of dealing with the texts themselves. The discipline lost its track and failed to meet the purposes it has set for itself at the beginning mainly when it comes to defeating nationalism. Instead of eliminating it, it has accentuated it.

The areas of study in French School:

❖ Check Your Progress

Short Questions:

1. What did Positivism advocate?

2. What is Influence Studies?

3. What is Reception Studies?

❖ Answers

Ans.1 Positivism advocated the study of specific facts and phenomena and the external links phenomena. Comte denied the study of essence behind the phenomena and held that the essence of the world was beyond the reach of human beings.

Ans.2 Influence Studies is the study of influences in a work of literature. It also studies what influences the work and how.

Ans.3 Reception Studies focuses on reaction, critique, opinion, reading and orientation on the literary text by the reader. It also deals with also deals with the transformation of a text like its translation and adaptation as well as the internal aesthetic codes of literary systems that are unconsciously linked with the prevalent ideology..

1.9 GLOSSARY

1. Influence- impact of one author on the other
2. Reception- the way a literary text is received or interpreted by the reader
3. Equitable- fair and reasonable, treating everyone equal
4. Ideology- set of ideas which form the basis of a political or economic system
5. Methodology- a way of doing something based on particular principles and methods

UNIT : 2**THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OF
COMPARATIVE LITERATURE****:: STRUCTURE ::****2.0 Objectives****2.1 Introduction****2.3 American School of Comparative Literature****2.3.1 The 'Parallelism' Theory****2.3.2 The 'Intertextuality' Theory****2.4 Comparison between American School and French School****2.5 Let's Sum Up****2.6 Key Words****❖ Check Your Progress**

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To make student aware of a major school of Comparative Literature.
- To make them understand the basic difference between the American and French Schools.
- To give a general idea of the development of Comparative Literature.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

America is called a nation of immigrants in the words of Francois Jost. It is a land of free and mixed culture. It is of many races but the Americans feel attached to their homeland along with their current

American culture. In America comparative literature was encouraged as an academic discipline in universities and institutions of higher learning. The Academic freedom given to the teachers promoted the multiplicity of literary responses and theories. A healthy tolerance in the field of literary appreciation was developed, and the scope of comparative literature was widened.

2.3 AMERICAN SCHOOL OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

The founding father of this school, which appeared in the second half of the twentieth century, Henry Remak, states that "comparative literature should not be regarded as a discipline on its own but rather as a connecting link between subjects or 'subject areas.' A comparison thus can be made between two or more different literatures and between literature and other fields of cognition (music, painting, sculpture, architecture, philosophy, sociology, psychology, religion, chemistry, mathematics, physics, etc)." (46) In this Remak leaves it all to the comparatist to lay the grounds for his or her study, which should not be involved in the problem of 'nationalism.' It is the 'depoliticization' of comparative study then which makes the American perspective on comparative literature different from the French one.

Though some critics claim that it is an offshoot of modernist literary criticism, the American perspective is actually a formulation of earlier definitions of the subject. In the 1890s Charles Mills tried to draw a distinctive line of American comparative literature (not differing much from the line drawn by Matthew Arnold, H. Macaulay Posnett and Arthur Marsh) by assuming that the subject "should be seen as 'nothing more or less' than literature philology..., by insisting on the importance of 39 psychology, anthropology, linguistics, social science, religion and art in the study of literature."

Putting aside all the distinctions used by the French School, the American comparatists fastened their attention on constructing a model of an 'interdisciplinary work.' The sole aim beyond this model is to do away with chauvinistic nationalism, mainly brought about by considering literature in the light of linguistic or 'political boundaries.' Despite difference in language and culture, all nations have certain things in common. Hence, as Bassnett sums it up, "the American perspective on comparative literature was based from the start on ideas of interdisciplinarity and universalism." Furthermore, this perspective threw over another basic principle of the French School,

namely binary study, in regarding that the study of affinities and differences between two international literatures was just one angle of the subject, and that, as Gayley proposed, "the study of a single literature may be just as scientifically comparative literature if it seeks the reason and law of the literature in the psychology of the race or of humanity."

The attitude of early scholars towards comparative literature was quintessentially humanistic. Posnett, Galey's contemporary, linked the subject to "the social evolution, individual evolution, and the influence of the environment on the social and individual life of man." In this way, the influences between international literatures are ignored and an emphasis is placed on humanity's collective achievements through time and place and across disciplinary lines - a view which seems to break down the barriers drawn by the French School between the interrelated elements of one single subject, which is literature. Arthur Richmond Marsh's definition of the subject was distinctive in relating it to pure literary criticism rather than to history.

Paying no attention to the influence principle in comparative literature and relating literature to science and art creates new fields of study different from those of the French School. Most significant among these are 'parallelism' and 'intertextuality.'

2.3.1 The 'Parallelism' Theory

The Egyptian-born American critic Ihab Hassan has severely criticized the comparative literary study based on the principle of 'influence,' believing it to be inaccurate and ambiguous. He maintains that the impact of Rousseau or Byron, for instance, on the various Romantic attitudes in late 19th century Europe is in fact not based on the presumed idea of literary influence or imitation, but rather on more than one factor. Above all, the circumstances surrounding both the 'influencing' and 'influenced' writers were similar. In the second, there was an urgent need in different parts of the world for revolutionary reactions against the rigid, restrictive rules of Classicism in literature. There would be no room therefore for Goethe's story *Die Liden des Jungen Werthers* or Fitzgerald's translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, as examples, in foreign countries, if people were not prepared (mentally or culturally) for absorbing all these works' ideas, philosophies or concepts. These factors have prompted Ihab Hassan, and other American critics, to suggest 'parallelism' as an alternative to the theory of 'influence' in comparative literature.

The 'Parallel' theory has been adopted by many comparatists in America and Eastern Europe. Konrad, a Russian comparatist, sees that this theory is derived from the idea of similarities in humanity's social and historical evolution, which means harmony in the process of literary development. Any study of parallelism claims that there are affinities between the literatures of different peoples whose social evolution is similar, regardless of whether or not there is any mutual influence or direct relation between them. To give an example, political and social relations during the feudal period resulted in similar patterns of thought, art and literature in different parts of the world. Beyond study, the comparatist seeks to determine the bases and premises which underline common features between literatures and writers, or the affiliation of a phenomenon with a specific pattern. Although this theory is opposed by some critics, on the account that literatures differ according to their discovering national and historical backgrounds, it is significant in the common properties of literary phenomena, whether related or not, and the national and historical attributes of each phenomenon.

2.3.2 The 'Intertextuality' Theory

'Intertextuality' simply means the reference of a text to another. But the term has been elaborated upon at length. M. Enani defines it as the relation between two or more texts at a level which affects the way or ways of reading the new text (the 'intertext,' allowing into its own contexture implications, echoes or influences of other texts). A deeper analysis shows the phenomenon to be a melting-pot into which designated components of the influencing text (or 'hypotext,' as Genette calls it) are intermixed with the content of the influenced text (hypertext). This involves the phenomenon with what is so called 'trans-textuality' across textuality. Roland Barthes takes the same position in looking upon the text as a 'network'. In interpreting the text the author is no longer 'the great originator' or 'the creative genius,' but as someone whose task is to put together in a certain literary form and structural pattern 'linguistic raw materials.' Literature in this way is no more or less than a reworking of frequently-dealt-with materials, with a certain amount of change. The story of Oedipus, the quest for the Holy Grail, King Solomon's Mines, The Waste Land, Heart of Darkness, Don Quixote, and several other stories and themes, are all indicative of "the ways in which a particular story or myth can be repeated in different ways." This view may be adopted from the idea that "a writing surface [is like] a wax tablet on which the original has been partially or wholly reworked, written over success-fully."

As critical appraisals of any phenomenon are (in)famous for yielding variant views, 'intertextuality,' too, is made to imply further meanings. Without referring directly to the phenomenon, Bakhtin has hinted at the overlapping of textual forms in the novel upon which both Julia Kristeva (who originated the term) and R. Barthes have relied in their approaches to 'intertextuality'. In the preamble of his book *Desire in Language* (trans. by Kristeva) Leon S. Roudiez refutes the idea of 'influence' between two writers and the sources of a literary work, and takes 'intertextuality' to be "a mutual exchange of the sign system between texts," which means the use of one stylistic system in lieu of another.

Despite variation, the approaches to the phenomenon may meet at an essential point, namely that all the literary ingredients ("Bits of codes, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages, etc.") drawn from other familiar works into a text are modulated in different ways to serve the writer's literary goal beyond it. A writer may try to blend another text into his own, yet the alignment between the two texts can never be entirely broken: there is always another text that strives to exist under the 'hypertext.' Noticing this, Enani urges "the reader or the writer (or both)... to refer strongly to the other text for an understanding of the new one ..." But this is exemplified at length: "Eliot published a set of explanatory notes with *The Waste Land* which locate it in frames of reference external to the text of the poem;" many critical discourses about Joyce's *Ulysses* have related the novel to the narrative works of which certain aspects are mixed with its content; and Anne Muller's "*Flaubert's Salammbô: Exotic Text and Inter Text*" is a study which reveals the exotic morphemes used in *Salammbô* to stand as variants for familiar ones in *Madame Bovary*. For example, the use of 'Zaimph' (an out of use word meaning 'gown') in the place of these frequent signifiers: 'voile,' 'manteau,' 'vêtement' or 'robe' "generates a description in two codes, sacred and vestmentary, motivated respectively by its metonymic relationship with the goddess – therefore sacred object – and its capacity as article of clothing."

The ways of reading or interpreting the literary text expand the province of 'intertextuality': each critic or individual reader takes a certain position, which is of course associated with his or her culture, language and experience, from the text. Since literary forms and human experience are known for their recurring change throughout history, the text then becomes susceptible to various interpretations or readings. This is stressed in Antony Easthope's view that "the text has an identity, but that identity is always relational." In one sense, the text is traversed again and again by various readers or critics across

time and place. Evidence of this is the innumerable different approaches to Shakespeare's Hamlet, from the moment it appeared till now.

Enani, as a well-versed translator of many English works into Arabic and vice versa, gives room for 'intertextuality' in the process of translation. In translating a text the translator is often tempted to refer the idioms and expressions of the original text to their equivalents in the target culture. Inasmuch as this may 'violate' the original, it gives rise to a new text, still related to the original. Enani creates a professed case of 'intertextuality' in his Comparative Moments through a comparison between Shakespeare's Anthony and Cleopatra and Romeo and Juliet and Eliot's The Waste Land (by quoting certain parts from each one) and their literary translations by Lewis Awad. Nabil Raghib and M. S. Farid. Though Eliot's poem has a dynamic intertextuality with Shakespeare's plays (as Eliot uses, for example, 'chair' in the place of 'barge' and 'marble' instead of 'water,' with regard to the connotation of words, to convey his idea of the loss of the glorious past and of love), Awad's translation of these two texts from English into Arabic creates a case of 'intertextuality' as well. Awad's choice of (الكُرسي) al-kursi) and (الشراة) al-shira') for both 'chair' and 'barge' and (الوضاء العرش) al-arsh el-wadda') for 'a burnished throne' (an image maintained in both the Qurān and the Bible) gives.

The phenomenon becomes more complex as literary texts come to refer to arts (music, painting, sculpture), applied sciences (mathematics, engineering), natural sciences (physics, chemistry), religion, cinema, and so on. Michael Holquist asserts that comparative literature's development as a discipline in the twentieth century has affected other academic disciplines in most of Europe. Literature, in a sense, resembles a body of water on whose surface are reflected various forms of knowledge. Michelle E. Bloom's dissertation hypothesizes that "the physical properties of wax constitute a useful conceptual framework for reading wax fictions and other texts." (67) The definition of 'wax fiction' centers on the idea of "dissolution," with regard to "several figurative senses, especially psychological (insanity) and discursive (narrative incoherence)." (68) As 'wax' can be turned into solid and liquid, this process is suggested as a 'paradigm' for literary movements in fact of their rise and decline. Bloom shows that Shaw's Pygmalion (based on Ovid's myth of making a female creature out of a statue) is a paradigm of many modern wax fictions such as: Champfleury's "L' Homme aux Figures de Cire," Balzac's "Le Chef-d'oeuvre Inconnu," E.T. Hoffmann's "Der Sandmann" and many such narratives in which statues assume life. This wax case is also used in the cinema, such as in the "Hollywood

horror films" of the 1930s. (69) The dissertation ends with stating that though the progress of technology in the last few decades has caused, for instance, 'robots' to supplant wax figures, the wax museums are still relied upon in substantiating "human desires and fantasies." (70) Zola's *Le Docteur Pascal* is argued to be related to Darwin's "theory of heredity" and H. James' *The Turn of the Screw* to "the stream of consciousness (experimental psychology)." (71) On the contrary, Viviane Casimir (in "Savoir as a New Space of Communication: Emile Zola and Henry James," a Ph. D. dissertation) challenges the view of the impact of science upon literature, rendering it to just a "cultural receptacle," by proposing that the two fields communicate in sharing "common modes of thinking" ('Savoir') to create particular models, themes or paradigms. (72) This turns intertextuality between science and literature to "interdiscursivity." It is on this ground that *Le Docteur Pascal* (which "problematizes the "living" through the question of similarity)" is put in relation to "natural history/biology," while *The Turn of the Screw* (questioning "the truth as a process of seeing)" is related to "pragmatism." (73)

Comparative literature reached the shores of America much later, in the wake of German scholars who left Hitler's Germany. The American critics see comparative literature as an aesthetic discipline concerned with the study of ANALOGIES or PARALLELS in literature, beyond the confines of one particular country. Reacting to the French School, they sought to return the field to matters more directly concerned with literary criticism, de-emphasising the detective work and detailed historical research that the French School had demanded. The American School was more closely aligned with the original internationalist visions of Goethe and Posnett (arguably reflecting the post-war desire for international cooperation), looking for examples of universal human "truths" based on the literary archetypes that appeared throughout literatures from all times and places.

2.4 COMPARISON BETWEEN AMERICAN SCHOOL AND FRENCH SCHOOL

The French and the American schools differ in many aspects. The French prefer a narrow positivist attitude and the American form a very broad approach to comparative literature. The French scholars created comparative literature as a branch of literary history and a study of international relations as seen in the study of Byron and Pushkin or Goethe and Carlyle. The French comparatists are primarily concerned with the study of influence of or reception to an author or

authors abroad, i.e. with the study contractual relation between authors, e.g. Shelley and Bharathi. To the Americans, it is an aesthetic discipline concerned with the study of Analogies or Parallels in literature beyond the confines of a particular country. It is also a study of the relationship between literature and other arts or other areas of knowledge. Though the American approach is broad based and uninhibited, there is a possibility that it may encourage a kind of spurious scholarship unless one is very well versed in two different areas of knowledge. Scholars like Ulrich Weisstein favour a more constructive approach. The French analogy studies are favoured by the American comparatists. Comparatists like Van Tiegham are not against such studies provided the point to common trends. Another distinguished scholar, Rene Etiemble has given his support to analogy studies and has also demonstrated how well they can be done. He also called for a comparative study of such aspects like metrics, stylistics, etc., He is for a cautious approach to parallel studies recommended by the American comparatists, Remak and Rene Wellek. He is for a parallel study of two writers belonging to the same civilization of different literatures.

2.5 LET'S SUM UP

In conclusion, the American School of comparative literature, though largely welcomed in different parts of the world, has not escaped criticism. To start with, it confuses 'comparative' with 'general' literature on the ground that both are involved with studying one subject (literature). The determination of comparative literature's boundaries is marked by 'duality' in relating literature to other arts and sciences - a duality which makes the subject's province too vast to investigate and come up with accurate conclusions. The final and most serious fault is the failure of the American comparatists to avoid the problem of rabid othey have shown in considering literature superior to all others.

2.6 KEY WORDS

Analogy	a comparative between two thing for the purpose of clarification
Parallel	exact matches
Aesthetics	a branch that deals with the question of beauty and artistic taste
Universal	relating to all people and things in the world

❖ Check Your Progress

- Short Questions:

1. What is the basic difference between American and French Schools?

2. Name the important American comparatists.

3. Which year marks the flourishing of American School?

4. What is the significant contribution of American School to Comparative Literature?

Answers:

Ans.1 American School is concerned with the study of Analogies and Parallels whereas French School is interested in the study of Influences.

Ans.2 Rene Wellek, Austia Warren, Harry Lavin, H.H. Henry Remak, Paul Warner Fredrich and Owen Alridge.

Ans.3 Year 1958.

Ans.4 Broadness of view, aesthetic evaluation and universal sensibility.

:: STRUCTURE ::**3.0 Objectives****3.1 Introduction****3.2 Latin American School of Comparative Literature****3.3 Comparative Literature's US-Eurocentrism****3.4 The Cultural Colonization of Latin America****3.5 The Problem of Language****3.6 The Problem of Approach****3.7 Cultural Heritage****3.8 Translation Studies****3.9 A Challenge to Exceptionalism****3.10 The Interdisciplinary Approach****3.11 Let's Sum Up****3.12 Key Words****❖ Check Your Progress**

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- To familiarize students with the Latin American School of Comparative Literature.
- To make them aware of the significant contribution of this School in the development of Comparative Literature.

- To introduce them to the methods employed by the Latin American Comparatists.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Despite these exciting developments, it remains the case that Latin America has historically been marginalized in comparative literary studies and dialogue between the fields has been minimal. Even though scholarship on Latin American literature has steadily risen since the 1960s, articles treating the region rarely appear in the most respected, traditional journals of comparative literary study. For instance, a five-year sample of the comparative literature issue of *MLN* yielded only one article on a Latin American author. Surveys of well-respected comparative literature journals, such as *Comparative Literature* and *Comparative Literature Studies*, from the same time frame also produced few examples of comparative literary approaches to Latin American texts. Alternatively, students of Latin American literature and culture in Ph.D. programs are routinely expected to be familiar with the literary production of, at minimum, eight nations and many programs require students to study both Spain and Latin America, yet these students are rarely, if ever, expected to be familiar with comparative methods. As I will explain shortly, the lack of familiarity with comparative methods, especially those that treat the intersections between national cultural developments and those that cross national borders, weakens graduate student preparation and scholarship in Latin American literary/cultural studies. So, just as traditional comparative literature has often ignored Latin American culture, comparative methods and approaches have been virtually absent from curricular requirements in Latin American literature programs.

Susan Bassnett states that "comparative literature in one sense is dead", Roberto González Echevarría asks whether "Comparative Literature as a discipline has survived" and Steven Tötösy calls directly for comparative literature to move towards comparative cultural studies. Clearly, the comparative literature programs of the 1960s and 1970s have undergone significant revision and transformation. These changes were formally recognized in "The Bernheimer Report on Professional Standards" written for the ACLA in 1993, which called for a move away from Eurocentrism and an exclusive focus on the literary. In the introduction to the report Charles Bernheimer and his colleagues provide a brief evolution of the discipline in the US and they outline the major arguments of the two previous ACLA reports on standards: The Levin Report and the Greene Report. One of their key observations is that there has long

been a disconnection between certain elitist notions of comparative literature and the actual practice of the discipline: "The anxieties about change articulated in the Greene report suggest that, already in 1976, the field was coming to look disturbingly foreign to some of its eminent authorities". In the introduction to Bernheimer's edited volume published in hard copy, which includes his report and a number of responses to it, Bernheimer suggests that comparative literature has been plagued perennially by anxiety over change, over defining comparison, over finding a common methodology, over selecting objects of study, etc. These "anxieties of comparison" make it extremely difficult to define the theory and practice of comparative literature. In fact, many have argued that the one defining characteristic of comparative literature is that it escapes definition. Notwithstanding, the scholarly positions taken in the volume, according to Bernheimer, clearly present two main camps. On the one side are those scholars who worry about the departure from the literary and are troubled by too much attention to historical and cultural context: "These critics argue that the work of comparison involves first and foremost a reflection on the aesthetic phenomenon of literariness in a cross-national context". On the other side are those critics who support the arguments of the Bernheimer report, which calls for a multicultural studies perspective and a rejection of the discipline's historic Eurocentrism. Those who hold the latter position also accept the inherent "messiness" or "disorder" of comparison and contrast those scholars who are incessantly concerned with defining and containing the practice of comparative work. Clearly, the Bernheimer report was and still is quite polemical. What is most significant for those of us who engage in comparative study of culture from Latin America is that the Bernheimer report, appearing as the ACLA Report on Professional Standards, signifies an official articulation of a new phase of comparative studies. This new era, the "age of multiculturalism", where work is more global in perspective and more contextual in method, is, as I will argue, not new for many Latin Americanists. What is new, though, is the fact that the former margins now occupy a more visibly central space in the field.

As the study of comparative literature moves towards the study of culture in all of its forms as it appears all across the globe, it coincides with a similar trend in Latin Americanism. Scholars of the region have also shifted focus from the "great books" to culture and they increasingly consider Latin America in a global context. John Beverley argues in favor of the subaltern studies approach to Latin American culture, since such an approach allows us to understand relations of power and how they are represented. In order to do this, though, we have to take a global perspective: "This critique cannot

itself be contained within the territorial space the idea of Latin America designates". His earlier book, *Against Literature*, specifically pointed to the need to abandon the "high" literature of Latin America and replace it with cultural texts produced from the margins. Such practices, perhaps best exemplified by scholarly interest in the testimonial, highlight a move from literary to cultural study. Graduate reading lists include, now more than ever, previously excluded literary and cultural forms -- like the testimonial, women's writing and film -- uneasily balanced with the traditional "canon." De la Campa suggests that, in addition to our attention to new cultural forms, new methods are also necessary. Referring to the attention paid to the testimonial, he states: "What is still missing from the debate, in my view, is a comparative analysis, with perhaps some empirical work on reader reception, of how Rigoberta Menchú is read in different parts of Latin America itself". As a further example, Neil Larsen's *Reading North by South* considers the ways that Latin American texts have been read and consumed by the US Academy. Alberto Moreiras's *The Exhaustion of Difference* argues for a radical deconstruction of Latin American studies by pointing to the epistemic systems and global developments that have shaped the field. Our attention is increasingly drawn to the ways that Latin American culture is affected by globalization and transnationalism. Latin Americanists have a long history of considering global relations of power as they play out on cultural terrain. Colonialism and neocolonialism, exile and immigration, national sovereignty and foreign intervention have frequently been at the center of debates about Latin American cultural developments. Even so, subaltern and post-colonial studies as well as calls for comparative studies of globalization point to new critical epistemologies that have been used to frame extra-territorial considerations of Latin American culture.

3.2 LATIN AMERICAN SCHOOL OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Comparative Literature and Latin American Studies From Disarticulation to Dialogue In considering the interactions between Latin American studies and comparative literature, it is worth noting that the field of comparative literature is especially vibrant in Latin America. Long-standing programs, such as the Program in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature or ABRALIC: Brazil Comparative Literature Association are now accompanied by newer programs like the Association of Comparative Literature in Argentina established in 1992. Sandra Nitrini provides a history of comparative literature in Brazil in her article "Teoria literária e literatura

comparada". In Mexico, the Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM) has had a graduate program in comparative literature dating back to 1989 . Bassnett explains that, simultaneous to a crisis of comparative literature in the West, the field has witnessed significant growth and development outside of Europe and the United States. These programs tend to approach the study of comparative literature from a position that links questions of national identity and those of cultural value. Such post-colonial approaches stress "the politicization of literature and the formalist approach completely". The affinities between this approach and the position of the Bernheimer Report should be obvious. Bassnett explains that Comparative Literature as it is practiced outside of its traditional center is a "political activity, part of a process of reconstructing and reasserting cultural and national identity in the post-colonial period". Even though her comments here refer to the work of the Indian Comparative Literature Association, I believe that they are also applicable to comparative literature in Latin America. Zulma Palermo argues in her survey of comparativism in Argentina that comparative literature as it is presently practiced in Latin America can enable a reconsideration of a number of institutional paradigms which have affected the way that the region "conceives itself in these times of economic and commercial globalization, times when the peripheral societies return to a problematization of their autonomy and identity from an 'alternative' theoretical position". Lisa Block de Behar recounts the history of comparative literature in Uruguay and she emphasizes the ways that Uruguayan literary study, beginning with the work of Carlos Real de Azúa at the end of the nineteenth century, has always depended on comparative methods. After many years of hard work, she was able in 1988 to host a Latin American comparative literature seminar, which led to the founding of AULICO: Uruguayan Association of Comparative Literature. The work of these Latin American scholars in comparative literature and the proliferation of programs, associations, and seminars dedicated to the topic adds a key dimension to our consideration of the connections between Latin America and comparative cultural study.

The strength of comparative approaches in Latin America, however, does not necessarily translate into the practice of Latin Americanism in the US. The exchange and interaction between Latin American scholars of Latin America and those in the US has a history of conflict and tension, as well as collaboration and dialogue. Moreiras attended the 1996 ABRALIC conference and he relates that the conference was fraught with divisions between advocates of literary studies and cultural studies, where cultural studies was considered to be a hegemonic approach imposed from an imperial center. Consequently,

the growth of these programs should be read in the context of their complex intellectual terrain.

It seems clear, then, that these fields are in an important transition phase and that this is a moment of heightened critical intersection between them. And greater interaction will strengthen the scholarship and training of Latin Americanists and comparatists provided that we are mindful of the historical marginalization of Latin America from comparative literature. Even though comparative study is in a process of change, many comparatists, especially Latin Americanists, are wary of associating themselves with the field because of its traditional legacy. This isolation was highlighted in the Bernheimer Report: "In this unstable and rapidly evolving socio-cultural environment, many of the scholars involved in rethinking the field of comparison have an increasingly uneasy relation to the practices called 'Comparative Literature.' They feel alienated because of the continued association of these practices, intellectually and institutionally, with standards that construct a discipline almost unrecognizable in the light of their actual methods and interests". Such alienation and disaffection has led many scholars to pointedly deny any affiliation with comparative literature, despite the fact that their work often bears key identifying characteristics of comparative methods. For instance, a number of scholars I contacted in relation to this current project and whose work I considered exemplary patently rejected the idea that they worked in comparative literature and the following analysis outlines the well-founded skepticism towards comparative literature held by a number of Latin Americanists. After explaining briefly some of the central reasons why some Latin Americanists disregard comparative literature, I focus on a number of key areas where greater dialogue would benefit scholars working in these fields.

3.3 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE'S US

EUROCENTRISM

The US-Eurocentric history of comparative literature is well known and well documented. From C.L. Wrenn's statement in 1967 that the "only proper object of study for comparatists ... is 'European languages medieval or modern'" to Henry Gifford's comment in 1969 that "whole continents are becoming articulate -- South America yesterday, Africa today", comparative literature has a long history of dismissing the culture of the "peripheries" as unworthy of study. When we combine the traditional Eurocentrism of comparative literature with its early emphasis on major authors, great books and universal literature, i.e., the highest of high culture, we find the

combination of elitism and cultural imperialism that has contributed to the stereotype of comparative literature as fundamentally incompatible with the study of post-colonial cultures, such as that of Latin America. It is worth considering the extent to which such problems over the privileging of US and European culture are more about comparative practices than comparative methods. As early as 1969 Owen Aldridge registered the critique of comparative literature's equation of World Literature with Western Literature: "These objections are valid, but they should be applied only to inadequate applications of the theory of world literature rather than the principle itself". Certainly, Aldridge is raising a contentious point, since many scholars specifically consider the study of European literature to be at the heart of comparative methods. For Latin Americanists, Eurocentrism is not a problem limited to primary sources. Not only do we note the bias against "peripheral literatures" as objects of study, but we also object to the imprudent use of European/US theory as the sole critical base for understanding Latin American culture. Traditional comparative literature studies texts from Europe and the US and it has historically taught methods and theories that emanate solely from these areas as well.

3.4 THE CULTURAL COLONIZATION OF LATIN AMERICA

Comparative Literature has been repeatedly associated with cultural colonization. Arguments about universal literature, literary value, great books, master writers, etc., all serve to create cultural hierarchies, where texts from the US and Europe inevitably rise to the top. Bassnett explains that the question of universal value, at the heart of much work in comparative literature, reveals the colonialist viewpoint of many early comparatists. In this sense, the quest for literary universals and the desire to define World Literature are gestures that only serve to reinforce cultural hegemony when the criteria for assessment always derive from a US-Eurocentric center. This critique of comparative literature moves beyond the issue of practice to method, since the comparative method of seeking compatible objects of study often implies assumptions about cultural value.

As a consequence, canonized writers from the "peripheries" are often read in ways that either strip them of their cultural context or that consider their cultural context as a marker of lesser literary value. Such practices reveal the cultural colonialism of traditional comparative literature. Bassnett argues that: "Cultural colonialism was

also a form of comparative literature, in that writers were imported by the colonizing group and native writers were evaluated negatively in comparison". This practice, perhaps best termed "the poor imitation syndrome", explains the transference of literary movements onto the non-USEuropean "other" as a futile exercise that exposes the desire of the margins to be like the center. Such thinking is not limited to scholars and writers working in cultural "centers" but is found among writers working from the "peripheries" as well. Robert J. Clements, in *Comparative Literature as Academic Discipline*, refers to José Donoso's personal history of the Boom when he argues that only with the Boom are "Hispanicamerican writers no longer influenced by American and French authors". Clements rests his analysis on a "native informant" who ratifies his argument that Latin American writing prior to the Boom was merely "poor imitation". Those authors that do produce a body of work that merits inclusion into the comparative literature canon, like Jorge Luis Borges, are often read with no regard for their cultural context. In contrast, Latin Americanists are more inclined to be familiar with the complexity of Borges's relationship to Argentine national culture, especially as it is expressed in his essay "The Argentine Writer and Tradition." A further problem with the inclusion of "newcomers" to the traditional canon, according to Rey Chow, is that in many contemporary cases the traditional Eurocentric canon is replaced with simply another set of texts that repeat the same hegemonic practices of seeking masterpieces and master narratives in accordance with a European privileging of the nation-state. A new practice of comparative literature "must question the very assumption that nation-states with national languages are the only possible cultural formations that produce 'literature' that is worth examining". A progressive program of comparative cultural study will have to question not only problems of practice, but also problems of method, particularly those methods that are attached to questions of cultural value. As we consider the conservatism and colonialist impulses of traditional Comparative Literature we should bear in mind that Latin American Studies, especially as it has been practiced in the US, has a similar history of cultural hegemony. The Latin American Studies Association and the American Comparative Literature Association reveal parallel moments in US academic developments after World War II. Latin American Studies has historically been dominated by the social sciences and has frequently been associated with conservative political agendas. Walter D. Mignolo connects the rise of Latin American Studies with the increased global power of the US during the Cold War. Richard Morse, writing in 1964, suggested that many US Latin Americanists were unconscious of their own colonialist attitudes towards the region, and he claimed that their work often revealed a

"subconscious hostility" towards their object of study. Mark T. Berger's *Under Northern Eyes* provides a history of Latin American studies in the US; he argues that: "The professional study of Latin America is embedded in a long tradition of viewing Latin America through northern eyes" where "most Latin American specialists, like US policy-makers, are estranged from Latin America". Mignolo, Morse and Berger point out that Latin American Studies, like any academic practice in the US, reflects prevailing discourses of power. Moreiras also describes this tendency in Latinamericanism: "Latinamericanist knowledge aspires to a particular form of disciplinary power that it inherits from the imperial state apparatus". This conservative, reactionary form of area studies is concerned with containing and controlling the flow of information about Latin America. Moreiras, however, also points to a second tendency where "Latinamericanism works primarily not as a machine of epistemic homogenization but potentially against it as a disruptive force". In this version, Latinamericanism challenges traditional knowledge structures and homogenizing cultural forces. Like the progressive side of comparative literature described by Bernheimer, Latin American Studies also has a long history of politically oppositional practice of which Moreiras's "antirepresentational Latinamericanism" is a recent example. Larsen calls attention to the Marxist politics of Latin American Studies in the 1980s and he underscores the leftist approaches which ground many studies of Latin America.

In short, regardless of our training, in comparative literature or Latin American Studies or both, we cannot overlook the colonialist history of these disciplines. Any reassessment of our scholarship will have to address the unequal relations of power between the US, Europe and Latin America, in political, economic, cultural and academic terms. Gabriel García Márquez, in his 1982 acceptance speech for the Nobel, condemns the colonial impulse implicit in much foreign scholarship of Latin America: "The interpretation of our reality through patterns not our own, serves only to make us ever more unknown, ever less free, ever more solitary"

3.5 THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE

When comparative literature originated in the nineteenth century at the peak of European nationalism, language and nation were tied together as important markers of culture. François Jost writes, in his very influential *Introduction to Comparative Literature*, that in Europe since the seventeenth century the political and linguistic borders have tended to fuse and that language has been central to nation-building. Comparative literature served a strange dual impulse: On the one

hand, it highlighted the existence of national culture, and on the other hand, it demonstrated that literature was transnational, thereby emphasizing the existence of what Goethe referred to as *Weltliteratur*, but which was actually European literature. Yet, in post-colonial contexts, language often serves not as a mark of national autonomy, but rather as a constant reminder of its troubled past. In fact, in 1492, as Christopher Columbus was setting off on his first voyage to the New World, Antonio de Nebrija presented the first grammar of the Spanish language to Queen Isabel. In his prologue he explains that creating order and structure for the language will help in Empire building: "una cosa háлло y: sáco por conclusión mui cierta: que siempre la lengua fue compañera del imperio" (one thing I find leads me to a certain conclusion: that language was always the companion of Empire; . The history of the Spanish language in Latin America is intricately tied to the history of Spanish rule. Richard Morse explains that: "In the New World the language-national genius equation was problematical ... This was particularly so in Spanish America, where nearly a score of countries shared the same mother tongue"). According to Morse, in post-Independence Spanish America, nation-building required an intellectual tradition detached from Spain that frustrated the question of national language: "Understandably, the intelligentsia of the new countries often preferred the term 'national language' to 'Spanish' or 'Castilian'". Struggles to find linguistic autonomy in Spanish America return again and again to the problematic legacy of Spanish. Consequently, the disavowal of comparative work that treats Spanish-language literature from two Latin American nations as not meeting the requirements of "authentic" comparative literature merely serves to perpetuate colonialist epistemologies. Latin Americanists who practice comparative methods might regularly work on five or six different Spanish-speaking nations, but their work is less likely to be considered "officially" comparative than a scholar who studies Germany and France. The assumption that one must work across two languages in order to do comparative work not only belies the legacy of colonialist thinking that plagues comparative literature, but also holds particular consequences for Latin Americanists. Unlike Africa, Asia and the Middle East where literature is published in multiple languages, only in Latin America do we find twenty nations producing culture in the "same" language. Additionally, Spanish, unlike French, has been marginalized as an imperial language as well. Walter Mignolo explains that: "Spanish language, in Latin America, was twice subaltern: it was no longer the Spanish of Spain, which itself became marginal to European modernity beginning in the seventeenth century".

Most traditional textbooks of comparative literature do not actually require that students work across two languages. Instead, they call for work across two nations, which they often assume will mean two languages. Nevertheless, as Yves Chevrel points out: "The notions of literature, language, and culture are not identical or totally coincidental". Chow agrees with Chevrel in her response to the Bernheimer report: "we could also, within comparative literature, teach students how to be comparative within 'single' languages". Such a proposal is no small task when the language is used to produce culture across a broad variety of geographical locales, as in the case of Spanish. Any comparative approach to Latin America will need to move beyond the reductive connections between nation and language and will need to reassess the problems of linguistic hegemony.

3.6 THE PROBLEM OF APPROACH

A fourth reason for the lack of dialogue between comparative literature and Latin American studies is a problem of critical approach and cultural theory. Comparative literature's affinities with positivism and its theoretical dominance in US institutions by formalism and New Criticism are incompatible with the dominant critical paradigms for the study of Latin America, which favor study of culture in political, economic, and historical context. Bassnett points out that the ahistoricism and formalism of comparative literature was a gradual process that eventually led comparatists, through the example of René Wellek, to eschew any socio-economic or political aspects of literature. She maintains that "the crisis of comparative literature derives from a legacy of nineteenth-century Eurocentric positivism and from a refusal to consider the political implications of intercultural transfer, which are fundamental to any comparative activity". Bernheimer also points to the legacy of formalist approaches in the practice of comparative literature. It is interesting to note, however, that there is also a long history of comparatists who have insisted that attention to socio-historical context is essential for comparative work and that this tradition lives on. Jan Brandt Corstius wrote in 1968 that a foundation of comparative literature was the study of literature in its political, social, economic, cultural, and formal context and more recently Steven Tötösy proposed the theory and method of the systemic and empirical approach where the notion of the systemic includes the historical, economic, cultural, political, etc., dimensions of a literature or of a text. Although much of the history of comparative literature is fraught with over-determined questions of cultural value, US-Eurocentrism, and the persistence of imperialistic knowledge structures, there are aspects of the

comparative approach that help illuminate the cultural history of Latin America. Moreover, because Latin Americanists have not considered their work as inherently comparative, they have not fully utilized comparative methods. I would like briefly to point to five research areas that are strengthened by a combination of Latin American studies and a progressive revision of comparative literature that move toward comparative cultural studies.

3.7 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Comparative methods can provide useful critical approaches to the complex cultural heritage of the region. Latin America does not present us with one unified cultural history. Instead, we find a combination of indigenous, African, European and US influences, not to mention a variety of immigrant communities. Latin America has a rich and diverse indigenous culture with many regional variations. Spanish and Portuguese colonization, followed by US neo-colonization, coupled with the cultural imperialism of Europe, especially France and England, has meant that Latin American culture has been influenced in intricate ways by Europe and the US. Moreover, these influences have not been unidirectional; Latin American culture has also had an impact on the cultures of Europe and the US. Not only do cultural influences flow between the US/Europe and Latin America, but foreign culture is often manipulated, transformed and hybridized upon arrival in Latin America. Ángel Rama argues that Latin America does not simply passively absorb foreign cultural intervention. Unpacking these relationships requires careful attention to comparative approaches of understanding cultural influence. Referring to the legacy of the European literary tradition Kadir explains that "Spanish America's literary culture engages most often and most virulently with its ancestral other". In addition, we must factor in the cultural effects of slavery, migration, immigration and exile. Comparative methods expose how these different cultural sources intersect, at times in conflict and at others in cooperation, within Latin America. One possibility is that comparative methods, inspired by anthropology and sociology -- such as that found in the work of Néstor García Canclini, Pratt, Fernando Ortiz, and Rama -- can be used to trace cultural influences and to identify cultural assimilation, dissimilation and transculturation. The strength of the comparative method in understanding Latin America's cultural heritage lies in the premise that cultural influences and movements track differently in different contexts. The comparative method of studying analogies, trends and influences provides useful tools for understanding the way a particular

cultural form undergoes regional variations and displays a hybrid of cultural markers. Such an approach, informed by post-colonial studies and comparative cultural studies, would yield more sophisticated readings of cultural hybridity in the region. For example using such a conceptual framework might help explain how the testimonial reveals a combination of complex narrative strategies. Doris Sommer's *Proceed with Caution* exemplifies this type of comparative work, as she argues for attention to the "rhetoric of particularism" that she tracks across a number of "minority" texts. Kadir's *The Other Writing* also provides a similar comparative model as he analyzes the tension between a number of "peripheral" texts that represent multifarious confrontations with the "mainstream."

3.8 TRANSLATION STUDIES

A particularly strong point of recent comparative literary studies is in the area of translation studies. According to Chevrel, "One of the problems to which comparatists should devote more space in their studies is how to read or study a literary text in translation". The Bernheimer Report recommends more use of translated texts in comparative literature classes in contrast with the Levin and Greene reports' condemnation of the practice: "While the necessity and unique benefits of a deep knowledge of foreign languages must continue to be stressed, the old hostilities toward translation should be mitigated. In fact, translation can well be seen as a paradigm for larger problems of understanding and interpretation across different discursive traditions". As we know, the issue of whether to encourage or dissuade the use of translations in classrooms has been a hot point of contention for comparatists. Yet, the Bernheimer Report moves the issue beyond the question of whether translation will hinder the language acquisition of students: "Comparative Literature, it could be said, aims to explain both what is lost and what is gained in translations between the distinct value systems of different cultures, media, disciplines, and institutions". In this sense, comparatists have increasingly recognized that their training enables them to study the practice of translation and its theoretical and cultural implications for understanding the development and dissemination of literatures. A leading example is found in the work of Itamar Even-Zohar who points to the complexities of translation as a cultural practice and the ways that translation is also about discursive and cultural power.

Most Latin Americanists agree that translation has been a powerful force in shaping the Latin American canon. It is well known that Rabassa's extraordinary translating skills had much to do with the literary importance of the Latin American Boom. We are all well

versed in the story of La Malinche, the region's first translator and the lover of Hernán Cortés, who embodied the inseparable cultural markers of language and identity. Bassnett explains that Malinche "is a figure that represents the Janus-face of translation" since she is depicted as both victim and traitor. Given that translation has marked Latin American cultural identity since the moment of the conquest, translation studies is an area where greater collaboration between comparatists and Latin Americanists would be especially productive. Latin Americanists have repeatedly noted that once a text is translated into English and well-reviewed in English-language newspapers, there is heightened interest in the text in its home country. Arguably, Latin Americanists cannot avoid the issue of translation and the effects that it has on cultural discourse. The connections between translation and book culture, an area of study for progressive comparatists, are also of significance for Latin Americanists. Scholars who work on US Latino culture are well aware of the ways that language, translation and book culture have all worked together to influence the development of the field. For example, Arte Público Press, affiliated with the University of Houston, was founded in 1979 in order to address the virtual absence of published Latino writers. Their program "Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage" is dedicated to publishing important Latino works in editions for the US mainstream. A further example of the intersections between translation studies, the culture of the book, and Latin American literature can be found in the work of Ariel Dorfman. Since Dorfman is often a co-translator of his works, I have found that on occasion he changes elements of the text in the process of translation. These changes, especially noteworthy in his first novel, *Moros en la costa* translated as *Hard Rain*, reflect Dorfman's newly imagined audience for the translated text as well as the shift in historical and cultural context between the original and the translation. Despite the rich potential for scholarship on these issues, we still find reluctance to consider translation as a serious area of research. Bassnett explains that comparative literature historically dismissed the study of the practice of translation. Nevertheless, the field is growing in both comparative literature and Latin American cultural studies. There is no question that dialogue and exchange between researchers in these fields would not only be useful, but necessary.

3.9 A CHALLENGE TO EXCEPTIONALISM

The exceptional quality of dominant Western culture can be challenged by the culture of the margins by showing that, in fact, the value placed on US-European culture is predicated on an illusion that all culture originates in the US or Europe. For instance José Carlos

Mariátegui has been referred to as the Antonio Gramsci of the Americas. Yet both authors wrote at roughly the same time. Why is Gramsci not considered the Mariátegui of Europe? Progressive comparative methods can be used to explain and challenge this disparity. A founding principle of comparative literature holds that through the comparison of texts one can avoid reductive assumptions about cultural exceptionalism. And yet, comparative literature in its traditional practice was very exceptionalist, keeping careful guard of which texts and which authors were considered valuable enough to study. As Neil Larsen suggests, the inclusion of literature from the non-Western and post-colonial world upsets the hegemony of US-Eurocentric literature and theory. In this way, the arguments I have made about why comparative methods strengthen scholarship on Latin America and vice versa could be translated into similar arguments about Asian, African or Middle Eastern Studies. Similarly, comparative approaches strengthen research in Latin American Studies and enable scholars to avoid unfounded claims of Latin American exceptionalism. Richard Slatta argues that "international comparisons serve as an antidote to exceptionalism, nationalism and xenophobia". A comparative approach that analyzes more than one cultural example across more than one context helps scholars to point out cultural specificities and also illuminates cross-cultural trends. In the case of Latin America, comparative approaches help identify regional particularities as well as point out trans-regional cultural elements. As mentioned above, the practice of comparative literature in the post-colonial world has often served to reconstruct and reassert cultural and national identity. Consequently, as evidenced by the work of Palermo and Block de Behar, we note that comparative methods may facilitate claims that "peripheral" literatures and cultures are valuable contributions to "world" literature through their unique dialectics between universalism and local specificity.

3.10 THE INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Both Latin American studies and comparative literature are grounded in a belief that interdisciplinarity strengthens scholarship. In 1974, Jost described the interdisciplinary study of literature in relation to other cultural domains as one of the four main areas of research in comparative literature. Latin American scholars, like Rama, working in roughly the same time frame, have also argued for the need to study literature in historical and political context. Rama finds it troubling that two currents of literary study put the context of the literary text at odds with its formal study. He argues that the literary text must be studied with its social-cultural context and also within its literary

intertext. While interdisciplinarity in comparative literature has often meant the comparison of literature with philosophy or other art forms, for scholars of literature working in Latin American Studies interdisciplinary work has increasingly meant the study of literature in terms of critical theory and historical-political contexts. Latin American interdisciplinary research, like that found in cultural studies, could serve to challenge the formalist, textualist and positivist tendencies in comparative literature. Dialogue across both fields, with added insight from cultural studies, would serve to create better methods of interdisciplinary research. In fact, the premise behind interdisciplinarity is that fields like comparative literature, cultural studies, and Latin American studies, which ostensibly, in and of themselves, constitute interdisciplinary approaches to research, are improved by greater scholarly engagement, collaboration, critique and intellectual challenge. As many have noted, successful research in such broad fields of study requires collaboration, such as research teams. Not only should we make greater efforts to be aware of developments in each field, but we should also begin to break down the tradition of individual scholarly research. According to Pratt, "Facing the crisis of accountability and expertise will have the overwhelmingly positive consequence, one hopes, of clarifying the need for collaborative work in literary studies. Developing global perspectives cannot mean that each person must try -- or claim -- to know the whole globe". Instead of begging off the need for global awareness by arguing that such scope is beyond one's capabilities, scholars should relinquish their single-author mentality. Certainly the Oxford volume edited by Kadir and Valdés makes an important move in this direction.

3.11 LET'S SUM UP

Much Latin American studies scholarship is comparative. Arguably, because most Latin Americanists work across national boundaries their work is constantly considered within a comparative framework. Yet for some Latin Americanists comparative literature may appear so steeped in its conservative, imperialistic past that it is unable to be of much use. Nevertheless, the transformation of comparative literature away from traditional cultural practice and its growth as a field of study in areas like Latin America suggest that it has moved beyond its conservative past. Drawing on the comparative methods used in comparative literature as well as in other disciplines allows us to avoid what we might call a comparative subconscious, where scholarship displays elements of comparative analysis without direct attention to comparative methods. Alternatively, comparative

literature has yet to fully embrace cultural works produced outside of the "mainstream," and this has crippled the applicability of research in comparative literature in a global context. Despite common concerns over nation, history, politics and cultural identity and common sources of critical theory Latin American studies and comparative literature remain largely epiphenomenal. While these fields will continue to produce valuable research separately, I hope to have suggested a number of productive areas for collaboration. I do not wish to suggest, however, that these fields merge into one totalizing machine of cultural analysis. Rather, I hope to have argued that mutual awareness and recognition of intellectual developments in these fields would help us to avoid insularity and mistaken claims of exceptionalism. Moreover, despite a lack of interaction and dialogue, the fields have developed in strikingly parallel ways and they have often been influenced by similar trends in criticism. Perhaps increased interaction would enable sophisticated reflection on our research goals and the methods we use to attain them.

3.12 KEY WORDS

Exceptionalism	the theory that the peaceful capitalism of the US constitutes an exception to the general economic laws governing national historic development
Interdisciplinarity	a combination of two or more academic disciplines into one activity
Eurocentrism	a cultural phenomenon that views the histories and cultures of non-Western societies from European or Western perspective
Cultural Colonization	systematic subordination of one cultural identity over the others
Transculturation	a process of cultural transformation marked by the influx of new culture elements the loss or alteration of the existing ones

❖ Check Your Progress

- Short Question

1.What are the main reasons behind lack of dialogue between Comparative Literature and Latin American Studies?.

2. Discuss interdisciplinary approach.

3. What has been a powerful force in shaping the Latin American canon?

4. How can the cultures of margin be a challenge to Exceptionalism?

5. How can Comparative methods provide useful critical approaches to the complex cultural heritage of Latin America?

Answers:

Ans.1 : US-Eurocentrism, cultural colonization of Latin America, struggle to find linguistic autonomy of the Latin American Spanish language and incompatibility of Western critical theories with the dominant paradigms for the study of Latin America are the main reasons behind lack of dialogue between Latin American studies and comparative literature.

Ans.2 : Both Latin American studies and comparative literature are grounded in a belief that interdisciplinarity strengthens scholarship. While interdisciplinarity in comparative literature has often meant the comparison of literature with philosophy or other art forms, for

scholars of literature working in Latin American Studies interdisciplinary work has increasingly meant the study of literature in terms of critical theory and historical-political contexts. Latin American interdisciplinary research, like that found in cultural studies, could serve to challenge the formalist, textualist and positivist tendencies in comparative literature. Dialogue across both fields, with added insight from cultural studies, would serve to create better methods of interdisciplinary research.

Ans.3 : Translation studies has been a powerful force in shaping Latin American canons.

Ans.4 : Marginalized cultures can challenge Exceptionalism by showing that, in fact, the value placed on US-European culture is predicated on an illusion that all culture originates in the US or Europe.

Ans.5 : Latin America has a rich and diverse indigenous culture with many regional variations. Spanish and Portuguese colonization, followed by US neo-colonization, coupled with the cultural imperialism of Europe, especially France and England, has meant that Latin American culture has been influenced in intricate ways by Europe and the US. Comparative methods expose how these different cultural sources intersect, at times in conflict and at others in cooperation, within Latin America. One possibility is that comparative methods, inspired by anthropology and sociology can be used to trace cultural influences and to identify cultural assimilation, dissimilation and transculturation. The strength of the comparative method in understanding Latin America's cultural heritage lies in the premise that cultural influences and movements track differently in different contexts.

:: STRUCTURE ::**4.0 Objectives****4.1 Introduction****4.2 The Chinese School****4.3 Let's Sum Up****4.4 Key Words****❖ Check Your Progress**

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- To make students aware of the methodology of Chinese School of Comparative Literature.
- To acquaint students with Chinese notion of Comparative Literature.
- To make students understand how Chinese School differs from other Schools of Comparative Literature.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

If the French School is characterized by the Influence Study and the American School by the Parallel study, the Chinese School then might be regarded as one typical of Cross- Cultural study. First, let us take a look at the theoretical fundamentals of the Chinese School- Cross-Cultural study. Neither the French School nor the American School faces the great challenge that claims for the transcendence over the differences between heterogeneous cultures, for they were both originated in the European culture evolved from the ancient Greece and Rome, and neither of them has ever been confronted with such cultural conflicts between China and the West, not to say a responsibility to save a culture and make it survive. As representatives of the world's cultural centre in the late modern period, they have not

paid enough attention to the peripheral culture of the developing countries or the sense of crisis and responsibility resulting from the Sino - Western collision that confronts the Chinese scholars. Prof. Wai-lim Yip points out, "In fact, as Ulrich Weisstein says, comparative literature in Europe and America is rooted in one single cultural system. "t Therefore, the problems of cultural patterns and trans-culture "were seldom studied in comparative literature at earlier times, which, on the contrary, centred on the European and American literature". Owing to this, it is unlikely and impossible for the French School and the American School to make marked achievements in literary comparison that transcends the heterogeneous cultures as represented by the East and the West respectively, not to say the establishment of a theoretical system of comparative literature on cross-cultural grounds.

4.2 THE CHINESE SCHOOL

The notion of "Chinese comparative literature" was proposed initially by Tianhong Gu and Huihua Chen in their 1976 book 比较文学之垦拓在台湾 (Comparative Literature in Taiwan). The notion was adopted in Hong Kong by John Deeney in 1977 (see also Peng-hsiang Chen's 1992 From Thematics to the "Chinese School" of Comparative Literature). In the 1980s the notion began to be adopted by scholars in Mainland China and by the 1990s it has been established. However, there are scholars who do not endorse the notion. For example, in their 1984 book 比较文学导论 (Introduction to Comparative Literature), Kanghua Lu and Jingyao Sun introduce the term of "Chinese school," but claim that it is not yet the right time to establish such a school since there are no systematic theories and methodologies and in 2004 Hyung-Jun Jeon criticizes the idea of a "Chinese school" suggesting that it is based on Sinocentrism. In 2005 Daiyun Yue took a hesitant attitude and suggested that a "Chinese school" embodies just one of the various theoretical claims in comparative literature. According to Yue, the term might trap Chinese comparatists in a narrow field because a school of thought is formed naturally in history and thus for example the French school or the American school of comparative literature evolved "naturally". In 2006 in their article "Western Literary Theories in China" Dan Shen and Xiaoyi Zhou even warn that "The founding of a 'Chinese School' of literary criticism and theory may be nothing more than an inverted form of 'aphasia'". And as recently as in 2013 Xiaoyi Zhou and Q.S. Tong wrote that "A careful examination of ... a Chinese school of comparative literature shows a lack of substance, as well as impracticality... What underscores this proposal is a politics of

recognition that aims to establish Chinese comparative literature as an equal partner on the international stage of comparative literature" and also in 2013 Xiaolu Wang and Yan Liu wrote that the "Chinese school" puts too much emphasis on "Chineseness" and hence it may hamper the pursuit of the study of literature in a general context: "Such so-called 'Chineseness' in comparative poetics makes no sense because, in our view, the importance and relevance of the humanities— and especially of comparative poetics—is to study and explore different cultures and literatures, thus maintaining and transferring knowledge".

We begin our argumentation for a Chinese school of comparative literature with a brief excursion about the notions of "school" and "discipline." In principle, while a school of thought can be across disciplines, a discipline is defined by a more or less closed environment whereby institutional administrative aspects are important. However, there can of course exist schools of thought within disciplines. Hence with regard to comparative literature it is a "discipline" and within it there are French, American, Russian, East European, etc., schools of comparative literature. While comparative literature as an approach within the study of literature started in European scholarship in the early nineteenth century, it was after World War II when comparative literature became a discipline. For example, in 1951 Marius-François Guyard claimed that the "French school" is not an issue of nationality and that comparative literature should not be viewed as something to do with one's "passport" because some American comparatists could be grouped into the "French school" and some French comparatists would, because of the approach they employ in their work, could be considered with the American school. And in 1960 Henry H.H. Remak used the term "French school" in an attempt to give a definition for comparative literature and gave the term currency. In fact, the two schools have more or less absorbed each other's principles and methods and the same is the case with other schools of comparative literature while at the same time each has distinct and specific characteristics. Thus, a school of thought is not derived from self-advocacy and self-assertion, but as a necessary part of the development of a discipline.

With regard to a Chinese school of comparative literature, we submit that the same way as we posit above, it is not monolithic and hence we caution against the suggestion that it represents a "centric" composition and content ideologically or otherwise. From the first proposal by Taiwan scholars to its echoes in the Mainland and to the general recognition by Chinese comparatists in recent decades, the term has been experiencing changes. In 1976 Gu and Chen wrote that

"We might as well declare that the methodology of studying Chinese literature by borrowing, testing, and revising Western literary theories and methodologies can be called 'the Chinese School of Comparative Literature'".

In the 1970s Taiwan witnessed an upsurge of the idea of "returning to China" characterized by identification with traditional Chinese culture. It happened under such circumstances that the Taiwan Comparative Literature Association was founded in 1973. Since then Taiwan comparatists were known for their preference and promotion of Chinese literature (of note is that in Taiwan scholarship since the 1990s cultural studies appears to sideline comparative literature). At the same time, it is important to note that because Taiwan has been an ally of the West while Mainland China experienced the restrictions of the Cultural Revolution, Taiwan scholars were able to access scholarship in Western languages including and of course mainly such in English. One downside of this has been and remains the case is that in Taiwan comparative literature scholarship there is a strong reliance on Western comparative literature (and literary theory altogether) and less attention to Chinese thought on literature and its history including theory and methodology. Deeney admitted in his influential 1977 "manifesto" that "As a matter of fact, 'Chinese' school is still in the process of construction and has not yet produced much influence ... It is much more a manifestation of goal and strategy or an interim manifesto than a declaration formed through literary practices and verified by history". Despite this, Deeney constructed a roadmap for the development of a "Chinese school" by which he meant to seek for "Chineseness" within national literature, to propel literary movements within a region (such as East Asia), to be the spokesperson for non-Western nations, to produce new theoretical thought so as to challenge Western frameworks and thus to arrive at a true cosmopolitan comparative literature. Unfortunately, the blueprint for such a notion of comparative literature has never been carried out satisfactorily. Similar to Taiwan comparatists, also early Mainland Chinese comparatists and practitioners adopted Western theoretical frameworks and methods and hence the early Chinese school was criticized for its overemphasis of the "universality" of Western theory. However, since 1980s comparative literature has been reinvigorated in Mainland Chinese scholarship. Interestingly, different from the Western practice where comparative literature—particularly so in the U.S.—is usually a separate institutional and administrative unit, in Mainland China comparative literature is located in Chinese and only in very few cases is the discipline located in foreign language departments. An important milestone was the founding of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association in 1985 and the first journal of

comparative literature (*Comparative Literature in China*) was inaugurated in 1984. It is notable that from the 1980s Chinese comparatists expressed a strong awareness of the disciplinary frameworks of comparative literature in Chinese (hence the discipline's location in Chinese). The inaugural issue of the journal *Comparative Literature in China*, for instance, includes a number of studies on the Chinese school of comparative literature thus suggesting that Chinese comparative literature ought be based on a Chinese literary context instead of Western contexts thus enabling work against Eurocentrism (which remains the case with Western conceptions of comparative literature including American comparative literature. As said above, by the 1990s Mainland Chinese scholarship adopted and practiced a Chinese school of comparative literature and many comparatists worked based on theoretical thought, methods, and approaches located in Chinese literary history. For instance, in 1995 Shunqing Cao conceived the notion of the "cross-cultural study" of literature and summarized several distinctive approaches: "elucidation studies," "contrast and comparison," "cultural-model-seeking," "dialogue studies," and "synthesis" and Jingyao Sun proposed the "holistic method," etc. Again, the importance of this is that Cao's approach is based on thought in Chinese scholarship and not on Western scholarship. Thus, theoretical and methodological frameworks drawn from Chinese thought mark the comparative literature as practiced in Chinese scholarship. However, how do we explain those doubts and even indifferences in recent years towards Chinese school of comparative literature? Zhou and Tong, for instance, hold that the pursuit of "literariness" in Chinese scholarship is delicate and that it represents a pursuit of national identity. According to them, this pursuit merely reinforces "national pride, while the call for establishing a Chinese school of comparative literature is just a reflection of such national pride, behind which, they believe, there is a binary mode of thinking such as traditional/modern, Eastern/Western, less developed/advanced, etc., which is in fact a repetition of the way the West has been constructing the world. Therefore, Zhou and Tong call upon comparatists to go beyond literariness and reach into a much wider domain of social politics. This view is shared by some scholars who view the advocacy of Chinese school as the pursuit of "Chineseness". In our opinion above understandings including the critical view of a Chinese school of comparative literature—are based similar to the situation in Taiwan comparative literature on the influx of the field of cultural studies popular in the U.S. and in the West in general and thus said dissent underscores the often claim in the West that comparative literature is "dead" (e.g., Bassnett; Spivak). This trend manifests that in a wider context of humanities, the status of literary studies is becoming more

and more compromised, and disciplinary borders more ambiguous. As a result, the object of literary research is prone to deviate from literature proper. Research paradigms characterized by being interdisciplinary, anti-elitist, and anti-hierarchical can easily bear the mark of "political correctness" in the age of globalization, and will definitely exert great impact or even new crisis on literary study. This is why Susan Bassnett declared in 1993 that "comparative literature as a discipline has had its day" (161) and ten years later Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak announced the "death" of the discipline of comparative literature and described it as "the last gasp of a dying discipline". But another ten years later, comparative literature still exists in different parts of the world, although it is often renamed as "cultural studies," "comparative literature and cultural studies," or "world literature" as advocated in recent years. Importantly, while it may be the case that comparative literature is more and more constricted in the West including the U.S., in other parts of the world it remains important and vibrant. As a crystallization of basic methodologies and approaches of a discipline, textbooks/books can reflect the general situation of the development of comparative literature in China. According to degrees of attention and statistics of academic conferences and publications, comparative literature in Asia, especially in China, is noticeable. Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Louise O. Vasvári presented a survey of the publication of books in comparative literature worldwide and based on the statistics of books published across languages it is clear that the publication of books in comparative literature in the Western "center" has decreased. Compared with Europe and the America, the publication of books in Asia is more outstanding. Particularly, in the period of 1980-2012, the number of book publications in Chinese, Indian, and Arabic languages is remarkable. In addition, there is an obvious increase of textbooks of comparative literature published in Chinese in the past ten years. Further, according to Miao-miao Wang's survey, there are at least thirty-five important books and collections in comparative literature published in Chinese from 2000 to 2013. Further, according to statistics compiled by Jianqing Tang and Yuelan Zhan in their book *中国比较文学百年书目* (The Booklist of Comparative Literature in China in the Twentieth Century), there are more than 1000 books on comparative literature by Chinese scholars (including Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau). Most of the books are studies from the vantage point of Chinese-Western comparison, but that reflects Chinese comparatists' preference of doing comparative literature studies from their own historical and cultural contexts. The interest by Chinese comparatists to construct a "school" is not simply concluded as a compulsion to emulate Western comparative literature

or to suggest the "superiority" of Chinese culture. Rather, the reason is that scholarship should not be divorced from its native background because then in many ways—as practiced often for example in Taiwan—scholarship turns out yet another form of Western imperialism and a "colonialism of knowledge." A scholar's theoretical vision and intellectual depth are contingent upon one's individual experience, but are bound to be influenced by cultural heritage and historical conditions. This is why, for example the French school in its initial period inclined to focus on literary relations between nations (mostly European nations) while American comparatists were willing to push the frontier of comparative literature across different disciplines, but neglected to include the literatures of the East. However, when examining theoretical constructions of the Chinese school of comparative literature, we should not overlook the fact that Western culture will exert greater impact on "Third World" cultures and literary studies in the context of globalization rather than vice versa. And this can explain partially why scholars subscribing to the Chinese school of comparative literature are most likely to study Chinese literary works with Western theory. On the reverse, by focusing on their own historical and cultural context and drawing on their own resources, comparatists extend the boundaries and thus enrich comparative literature. For instance, Indian comparatists, from the vantage point of realities they are experiencing, believe that under the circumstance of multilingualism in India, the tool of Western comparative literature is not qualified enough for comparative literature study in India. With an aim to set up a new direction for Indian comparative literature, they appeal to establish "comparative Indian literature" and propose an Indian school of comparative literature. From this standpoint, comparative literature in India has made accomplishments in such domains as Indian and Western comparative poetics, Sanskrit criticism, postcolonial theory, etc. Taking the example of the Indian school of comparative literature—which has not been criticized as "centrist"—we argue that the criticism of a Chinese school of comparative literature is misguided. Comparatists, be it Indian, French or American, have their own preferred research methods and fields and hence Chinese comparatists also play an indispensable role for the development of comparative literature. It remains another issue when comparative literature insists on the paradigm of nation and this we too object to: instead, what we propose is that a Chinese school of comparative literature based on Chinese literary history and its sources of theory and methodology ought to be performed in conjunction with theoretical frameworks and methods wherever such are useful, but so without what European comparative literature insists on, namely the national paradigm. In 2005 Yue proposed that the development of comparative literature can

be delineated as the phases of Europe, the U.S., and Asia, with each phase seeing the boom of comparative literature in a specific area. The Asian phase of comparative literature does not mean comparative literature currently exists only in Asia and the current status quo of comparative literature can tell us that even when the attention has been shifted to cultural studies, interdisciplinary studies, and the notion of world literature, comparative literature studies is still in progress particularly outside of Europe and the U.S. as for example Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek and Louise O. Vasvári argue in 2013 in the volume *Companion to Comparative Literature, World Literatures, and Comparative Cultural Studies*. It is true that since the wide institutionalization of comparative literature after World War II some Western scholars have given much consideration and recognition of the literatures of the East. As early as in 1963 René Etiemble called for a widening of comparative literature to take in all of the world's literatures and particularly such major literary traditions as the Arabic, Indian, Japanese and Chinese, and suggested that the future of comparative literature and world literature might well lie with Chinese (on this, see D'haen 168). Or, while Ulrich Weisstein did not mention a single word about the literatures of the East in his 1973 *Comparative Literature and Literary Theory*, by 1986 he showed awareness of Chinese literary traditions in terms of literary genres and terminologies and suggested that Western literatures are lacking such variety and pointed out that hence Western comparative literature would benefit by studying Chinese literature. The 1995 Report of the American Comparative Literature Association suggested that abandoning Eurocentrism and conducting literary studies on a global scale can provide important insights into cultural differences and similarities, in 1998 François Jullien took Chinese philosophy as the ideal tool to save Western philosophy from prejudices by using what he calls a strategy of "detour", Sand in 2011 Douwe Fokkema promoted the value of Chinese literature and wrote that "by accepting the different appearance of utopian fiction in China and the West, the pitfall of Eurocentrism could be avoided". Important texts published in China include Shunqing Cao's 1988 *中西比较诗学* (Comparative Poetics: China and the West), which is the first book titled "comparative poetics" in Mainland Chinese scholarship. By comparing literary categories, Cao aimed to transcend the "illustrative method" (his term to describe interpreting Chinese literature with Western theory) by early Chinese comparatists and to find critical discourses more appropriate for Chinese literature. In 1991 Yaomian Huang and Qingbing Tong published *中西比较诗学体系* (A System in Chinese-Western Comparative Poetics), another ambitious work whose authors aimed to establish a theoretical platform for an equal

dialogue between Chinese and Western poetics. In 1992, Longxi Zhang published *The Dao and the Logos*, in which he discusses hermeneutics from the perspective of Chinese-Western comparative poetics. Shunqing Cao 1999 Hong Yu published *中国文论与西方诗学* (Chinese Literary Theory and Western Poetics) which reminds us of the fact that classical Chinese literary theory and Western poetics are compatible and that they can benefit each other and above scholars anticipate a new orientation in theoretical explorations and practices towards a Chinese school of comparative literature. Their scholarship suggests that Chinese comparatists have become more sensitive to the heterogeneity of different cultures. At the same time, they urge us to be conscious of the negative impact of Western theory on Chinese literary studies and call for the "localization" of Western theory when applied in Chinese scholarship and suggest an awareness of heterogeneity in doing comparative studies. Inspired by pioneering works such as those by Guowei Wang (1877-1927), Zhongshu Qian (1910-1998), and Xianlin Ji (1911-2009), the notion of a Chinese school of comparative literature is relevant because both early and contemporary works can result in the "modernization" of ancient Chinese literary theories, that is, to discover the value of literary notions and categories contained in Chinese classics for modern readers and literary practitioners. The other relevant aspect is "appropriation" in order to use them because thus transformation can be achieved through borrowing and modifying literary theories and notions from Western scholarship. The methods and perspectives adopted by the Chinese school have also been used in exploring the "travelling" (Said) of Chinese literature and its study in foreign countries. For example, the study of translation and research of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world is a current research project many scholars in Mainland China engage in. For example, at Sichuan University several doctoral dissertations have been and are currently being written on the reception of Chinese literature in the English-speaking world (although the majority of such is with regard to the U.S.). Of course, there is more interest in Chinese scholarship to study Chinese literature's and scholarship's "travel" than American scholars in studying the reception of English-language literature in China. We submit that this situation ought not be perceived as a reflection "Chinacentrism"; rather, the study of the reception of Chinese literature in English manifests an effort to seek for perspectives of the "Other" which can be viewed as practices from the vantage point of the cross-heterogeneous-cultural vision of the Chinese school.

4.3 LET'S SUM UP

In conclusion, we discuss briefly the recent (i.e., since the 1990s and mostly in American scholarship) development of the notion of "world literature(s)" and we argue that with regard to said developments of the notion John Deeney's blueprint of thirty-odd years ago seems still relevant today. Importantly, the current notion of the field of world literature(s) suggests a wider scope for the discipline of comparative literature and thus suggests to rethink the relation between the national literary tradition and a new world literature(s), the relation between East and West, and the Chinese school as a part and comparative literature as a whole (all without the national paradigm): "The study of world literature might be the study of the way in which cultures recognize themselves through their projections of 'otherness'" (Bhabha 12). In this sense, with the shift of attention to cultural heterogeneity and variations in literary exchanges and dialogues, to cross-civilization literary comparison between the East and the West, comparative literature as a discipline and practice worldwide should become more open to and compatible with the Chinese school of comparative literature.

4.4 KEY WORDS

Heterogeneity	the quality of being diverse in character or in content
Discipline	a branch of knowledge
Perspective	a point of view
Transcend	surpass, to go beyond the limit
Poetics	written in verse rather than prose

❖ Check Your Progress

- Short Question

1. Who was the propounder of the notion of "Chinese Comparative Literature"?

2.What is the difference between a school and a discipline?

3. When was Chinese Comparative Literature Association founded?

Answers:

Ans.1 Tianhong Gu and Huihua Chen are the propounders of Chinese Comparative Literature.

Ans.2 A school of thought can be across disciplines, a discipline is defined by a more or less closed environment whereby institutional administrative aspects are important.

Ans.3 In 1985.

:: STRUCTURE ::**5.0 Introduction****5.1 Indian Literature: Its Unity in Diversity****5.2 Comparative Literature in India****5.3 Let's Sum Up****5.4 Key Words****❖ Check Your Progress****❖ Answers**

5.0 INTRODUCTION

India is known for diversity and unity, a country of immense linguistic diversity and, thus, a country of many literatures. Based on history, ideology, and often on politics, scholars of literature argue either for a unity of Indian literature or for a diversity and distinctness of the literatures of India. Instead of this binary approach, we can take a particular view of the discipline of comparative literature, because it can be argued that in the case of India the study of literature should involve the notion of the inter-literary process and a dialectical view of literary interaction.

5.1 INDIAN LITERATURE: ITS UNITY IN DIVERSITY

By looking at the account of linguistic diversity we find that previous censuses in 1961 and 1971 recorded a total of 1,652 languages while in the last census of 1981 some 221 spoken languages were recorded excluding languages of speakers totaling less than 10,000. Many of the 221 language groups are small, of course, and it is only the eighteen listed in the Indian Constitution as major languages which

comprise the bulk of the population's speakers. In addition to the eighteen languages listed in the Constitution, four more are recognized by the Sahitya Akademi (National Academy of Letters) for reasons of their significance in literature (Assamese, Bengali, Dogri, Indian English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kankani, Kashmiri, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Panjabi, Rajasthani, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu). However, this total of twenty-two major languages and literatures is deceiving because secondary school and university curricula include further languages spoken in the area of the particular educational institution. This diversity in languages and literatures, however, is not reflected in either the general social discourse or in literary scholarship. In general, the perspective of India as a hegemonious language and literature area is ubiquitous. We are all aware that the so-called major Indian literatures are ancient -- two of them (Sanskrit and Tamil) ancient in the sense of Antiquity while the rest of an average age of eight to nine hundred years -- except one recent arrival in the nineteenth century as an outcome of the colonial Western impact (Indian English). We also know that although some of these literatures are more substantial than others and contain greater complexities, no further gradation into major and minor ones is usually made. A writer in any one is counted as much Indian by the Sahitya Akademi as a writer in any other and no distinction is made between one literature prize and another. Thus, while we have a plurality of so-called major literatures in India, we are confronted by a particular problematic: Is Indian literature, in the singular, a valid category, or are we rather to speak of Indian literatures in the plural? Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western Indologists were not interested in this question, for Indian literature to them was mainly Sanskrit, extended at most to Pâli and Prakrit. For example, with all his admiration for *Sakuntala*, William Jones was oblivious of literatures in modern Indian languages. Non-Indian Indianists today, too, are more often than not uninterested in the question. Although they do not consider Sanskrit-Pâli-Prakrit as "the" only literature of India, these scholars are still single literature specialists. Similarly, literary histories written in India by Indian scholars also focused and still focus on a single literature. This single-focus perspective is a result of both a colonial and a post-colonial perspective, the latter found in the motto of the Sahitya Akademi: "Indian literature is one though written in many languages".

However, this perspective was opposed by scholars who argued that a country where so many languages coexist should be understood as a country with literatures (in the plural). The argument was formal and without any serious political overtones, only insisting that instead of

Indian literature, singular, we should speak of Indian literatures, plural. Presently, a different kind of resistance has emerged to the unity thesis in the form of what may be called "hegemonic apprehensions". This perspective includes the argumentation that the designation "Indian literature" will eventually be equated with one of the major literatures of India, perhaps or likely with the largest single spoken language and literature. What speaks against this argument is that, for example, the literature of one of the smallest spoken languages -- of a non-Indian origin too -- is sometimes claimed to be the only truly Indian literature because of its freedom from regional ties. In brief, arguments of unity in diversity are suspect, for they encroach upon the individualities of the diverse literatures. In other words, a cultural relativist analogy is implied here, difference is underlined and corroborated by the fact that both writers and readers of particular and individual literatures are overwhelmingly concerned with their own literature and own literature only. It is from this perspective that to the Akademi's motto "Indian literature is one though written in many languages," the retort is "Indian literature is one because it is written in many languages."

5.2 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN INDIA

The above briefly outlined problem of unity in diversity and its perspectives are the bases of Comparative Literature as a discipline in India. Let us first mention Gurbhagat Singh who has been discussing the notion of "differential multilogue". He does not accept the idea of Indian literature as such but opts for the designation of literatures produced in India. Further, he rejects the notion of Indian literature because the notion as such includes and promotes a nationalist identity. As a relativist, Singh accords literatures not only linguistic but also cultural singularities. With regard to the history of comparative literature as a discipline, he rejects both the French and the American schools as well as the idea of Goethe's *Weltliteratur*. Instead, he argues for a celebration of difference and has anticipated Charles Bernheimer's much discussed Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism. For Singh, comparative literature is thus an exercise in differential multilogue. His insistence on the plurality of logoi is particularly interesting because it takes us beyond the notion of dialogue, a notion that comparative literature is still confined to. Singh's proposal of differential multilogue as a program will perhaps enable us to understand Indian diversity without sacrificing the individualities of the particulars. Singh's notion of differential multilogue reflects a poststructuralist trend in Indian discourse today, a trend that manifests itself among others by a suspicion of the

designation of Indian literatures as one. One of the reasons for this suspicion is that the key to the notion is held centrally, whether by an institution or a synod of experts leading to an accumulation of power. If we agree that power is the most ubiquitous social evil then the more decentralization the better. Decentralization minimizes the aggression from above as well as impels grass-roots movements from below. In such a situation, the matter of difference is thus thoroughly contextualized. In literature, difference does not deny the possibility of inter-literary spaces but, on the contrary, welcomes them provided they do not come as a program of action organized from above. The notion of difference and inter-literary processes has, in fact, recently engaged Indian scholars with regard to the problematics of inter-Indian translation particularly in the day-to-day interaction of different languages (for a full-fledged theoretical framework of the inter-literary process. If difference is understood and enacted as self-containment and concomitant self-complacency, then there is a problem with regard to the concept of mutuality. However, post-structuralism understands difference as a notion of inclusion, that is, mutuality. Thus, it cannot accept the single-focus category "Indian" without deconstructing its accompanying politics. In other words, if the deconstruction of politics involves the weeding out of things excessively local or peripheral, it is appropriate because all value-loading is suspect. If, on the other hand, "Indian" is a mere description, a general signifier, then there is no need for the act of deconstruction. Post-structuralism is by no means purist; what matters more than anything else is the historical perspective that upholds difference. In turn, if we deconstruct this predilection for difference, we will see that our predilection is not so much a matter of *Weltanschauung* but rather a reaction to the possibility of power accumulation in the name of "Indian literature." If Indian literature had not been so heavily publicized and hammered down, as it were, into our national psyche, if our individual literatures had been left alone and not asked to pay their dues to "Indian literature," there would be no resistance to the notion of unity in diversity. And it cannot be denied that in the pursuit of "Indian literature" some of us have shown negative discrimination towards texts produced in "less important" and "different" literatures. The poststructuralist stance is particularly wary of rhetoric in the name of integration and a call to emotion in the name of nation runs against its basic principles. Nationalism and fundamentalism of any type are built on regimentation and exclusion. Yet, there are some problems with post-structuralism in Indian scholarly discourse and that is the prominence of theory to the detriment or non-existence of application. Instead of fitting theory to the experience of literature, the latter is fit to theory, thus resulting in an over- abundance of meta-theory. Ironically, Indian

post-structuralism inflicts upon itself a sameness with difference-speaking elsewhere and does not seem to recognize that difference-speaking in India may be different from difference-speaking elsewhere. At the same time, this post-structuralism does not seem to recognize that given all the differences pertaining to the Indian experience, underlying it and tying together the different entities, there may be a commonality, a *sensus communis* of a broadly cultural kind. Jaidev, criticising the fad of existentialist aestheticism in some contemporary Indian fiction, develops an argument for this cultural differential approach. However, and importantly, Jaidev's notion of an Indian *sensus communis* is not that routine Indianness which we often encounter from our cultural ambassadors or in the West, that is, those instances of "national" and racial image formations which suggest homogeneity and result in cultural stereotyping.

The concept of an Indian *sensus communis* in the context of Singh's differential multilogue or Jaidev's differential approach brings me to the question of *situs* and theory. That is, the "site" or "location" of theory and the theorist are important factors here. I am convinced that *situs* is as important as theorization, particularly in a country where the decolonization process is still incomplete and where a neo-colonial situation is in the making. A wrong theory is bad, but a right theory from a wrong *situs* is equally bad. It is *situs* that Tagore spoke of in many of his prose texts and it is *situs* that Gandhi so consistently practised. And in Indian Marxism, too, the question of *situs* has again and again appeared as a particular problematic. Now, if *situs* means cultural and linguistic rootedness then the notion of commonality is applicable, although we cannot ignore the danger of commonality turning itself into self-referentiality or even nationalism or racism. At this point of potential danger, the enactment of a dialectic may be the solution. Let the Indian theorist have his/her *situs* right by heeding to commonality, but let him/her also stand guard against commonality turning self-referential. In other words, the theorist must make sure that commonality will not be turned into an ideological and political commodity. But under no circumstances should the theorist deny commonality because of expediency or fear and neither should he/she take refuge in suggesting a superior and detached intellect. That way lies alienation, and alienation is a further aspect that the Indian theorist must resolutely resist. Commonality and the oneness I am suggesting here as a primary *situs* of the Indian theorist and theory is not exactly the cultural commonality Jaidev had in mind in his critique of cultural pastiche, however. Jaidev's concept of oneness provides an ambience for particular concerns with regard to cultural and artistic expression such as the case of language overlaps, the bi- and multi-linguality of authors and their readership, openness to

different genres, the sharing of themes based in similar social and historical experiences, emphasis on the oral and performing modes of cultural and artistic transmission, and the ease of inter-translatability. On the other hand, these characteristics of Indian cultural commonalities Jaidev suggests in turn are rooted in a situs of the premodern age of Indian literatures (that is, in periods prior to the advent of print). Where Jaidev's structure is applicable, instead, is our contemporary literatures in India because it is here that the danger of a oneness construction -- the process of nation-state construction -- looms. Another example where nation-state orientation and nation-state cultural and literary identity construction is discussed in detail is Aijaz Ahmad's *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. Ahmad describes the construct of a "syndicated" Indian literature that suggests an aggregate and unsatisfactory categorization of Indian literature. Ahmad also rules out the often argued analogy of Indian literature with that of European literature by arguing that the notion of "European literature" is at best an umbrella designation and at worst a pedagogical imposition while Indian literature is classifiable and categorizable. Further, he argues that while European and African literatures have some historical signifiers in addition to their geographical designation, these are recent concepts whereas Indian homogeneity has the weight of tradition behind it. In Ahmad's argumentation, the problem is that in the "Indian" archive of literature, Indianness ultimately proves limited when compared with the differential literature comprised in each of the twenty-two literatures recognized by the Sahitya Akademi. While it is evident that in each of these languages and literatures there is material taken from the others or another, their totality does not constitute one archive. Rather, they constitute twenty-two different archives. An "Indian" archive of literature as represented by an "English" archive -- while non-hegemonious on the one hand by removal from a differential archive but hegemonizing by a latent colonial attitude on the other -- also reflects the official language policy of the government: English, while not included in the Indian Constitution, is still recognized as a *lingua franca* of government, education, etc. For example, until recently the government sponsored the National Book Trust, an entity entrusted with the task of inter-Indian translation by a process of a first translation into English followed by translation from that into the other languages. The notion of an "English" archive of Indian literature came about two decades ago by the suggestion of V.K. Gokak and Sujit Mukherjee who were speaking of an Indo-English corpus of literature that was created out of English translations of major texts from major Indian languages (see Mukherjee).

Thus, the idea of Indian literature was authenticated and not only that, a history too was proposed for it with forms and techniques varying from age to age. Further, Gokak and Mukherjee suggested the canonization of their proposal by inserting the Indo-English corpus into university curricula. It was along these lines of ideology and political economy that a decade ago recommendations were made by a government committee to institute a Master's program in Indian literature following an undergraduate degree in any single Indian literature ("University Grants Commission Circular Letter"). Ahmad's concern is with the hegemony of English, although he does not suggest its abolition in a way which would be close to Ngugi's arguments. On the other hand, Gokak, Mukherjee, and Motilal Jotwani suggested to implement English as a function, owing to the ever-growing corpus of translations from the various Indian literatures into English, thus making this new corpus of Indo-English literature available to all. In turn, this new corpus would suggest an Indian communality resulting in a more or less homogeneous Indian literature. In addition to the argument against this construction of a national literature advanced by Ahmad, there are other problems with the notion and its implementation. It is true that the ideal of one language in India has been made real by now by ideological and political mechanisms. The official national language is Hindi and if literary texts from the other languages could be in toto translated into Hindi, we could possibly arrive at a national Indian literature. However, in this case we would again arrive at a hegemonizing situation. On the other hand, it is clear that in the realm of education, English is the largest single language program in our colleges and universities. Indian literature is not an entity but an inter-literary condition in the widest possible sense of the concept which is related to Goethe's original idea of *Weltliteratur* and its use by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*. The inter-literary condition of India, we should remember, reaches back much farther than its manuscript or print culture. For instance, *bhakti* -- a popular religious movement as both theme and social issue (stretching from the eighth to the eighteenth century) had a variety of textual manifestations in various Indian languages. There are many other similar literary and cultural textualities in India whose nature, while manifest in different other systems of a similar nature are based primarily on themes or genres, forms and structures observable in historiography. It is possible, in other words, to think of a series of such sub-systems in which the individual literatures of India have been interrelated with one another over the ages. For example, Swapan Majumdar takes this systemic approach in his 1985 book, *Comparative Literature: Indian Dimensions*, where Indian literature is neither a simple unity as hegemonists of the nation-state persuasion would like it to be, nor a

simple diversity as relativists or poststructuralists would like it to be. That is, Majumdar suggests that Indian literature is neither "one" nor "many" but rather a systemic whole where many sub-systems interact towards one in a continuous and never-ending dialectic. Such a systemic view of Indian literature predicates that we take all Indian literatures together, age by age, and view them comparatively. And this is the route of literary history Sisir Kumar Das has taken with his planned ten-volume project, *A History of Indian Literature*, whose first volume, 1800-1910: Western Impact / Indian Response, appeared in 1991.

The underlying and most important finding of Das's approach is a pattern of commonality in nineteenth-century Indian literatures. Das's work on the literatures of the nineteenth century in India does not designate this Indian literature a category by itself. Rather, the work suggests a rationale for the proposed research, the objective being to establish whether a pattern can be found through the ages. One age's pattern may not be the same as another age's and this obviously pre-empts any given unity of Indian literature. Thus, Das's method and results to date show that Indian literature is neither a unity nor is it a total differential. Interestingly, although Das does not call himself a comparatist and does not locate the project in that discipline, his work is comparatist. In many ways, Das's work is similar to K.M. George's two-volume *Comparative Indian Literature* of 1984-85 that was researched and published under the auspices of Kerala Sahitya Akademi. George's work was not as comprehensive as Das's: it only dealt with fifteen literatures and that too in a limited way. It had a generic bias, that is, it approached the literatures in terms of a few given genres. George's genealogy too is by and large given and not arrived at from the literatures themselves. In my view, George's work also demonstrates Western hegemony. Poetry, for instance, was discussed in terms of "traditional" and "modern" but as if traditional was exclusively Indian and modern the result of a Western impact. Another problem of George's two volumes was that although they were titled *Comparative Indian Literature*, there was no comparison built into the findings and the fifteen individual literatures were placed simply side by side. Thus, comparison was only suggested, that is, the reader was required to make whatever comparison was necessary or appropriate. With regard to the inherently and implicitly advantageous discipline of comparative literature it is interesting that the Gujarati poet Umashankar Joshi -- a supporter of the unity approach -- was the first president of the Indian National Comparative Literature Association, while the Kannada writer U.R. Anantha Murthy is the current president of the Comparative Literature Association of India in addition to being the president of Sahitya

Akademi. The discipline of comparative literature, that is, its institutional manifestation as in the national association of comparatists reflects the binary approach to the question of Indian literature explained above. However, the Association also reflects a move towards dialectic. This is manifest in the fact that Murthy's approach concerns a subtle move away from the routine unity approach and towards aspects of inter-Indian reading. In other words, the method of Comparative Literature allows for a view of Indian literature in the context of unity and diversity in a dialectical inter-literary process and situation.

5.3 LET'S SUM UP

We are located in our own languages -- whether with an active or passive bilinguality -- where we have access to one or two other languages. Through inter-Indian translation we also have access to texts from a fourth and more languages. Now, as readers, consciously or subconsciously we place the texts in additional languages beside our original and first text. Or, one may say that alternatively these other language texts impel us to do so. Inter-Indian reception presupposes that our situs is in our first text, that is, first language literature. This is crucial for there is no no-man's land or neutral territory between Indian literatures.

5.4 KEY WORDS

Differential Multilogue	Inter-literary dialogue caused by plurality in Indian literature
Situs	the place where something exists or originates
Logoi	the rational principle that governs and develops the universe
Manifestation	a sign that something is happening
Dialectic	the art of investigating or discussing the truth of opinions

❖ Check Your Progress

Short Question

1. Why is Indian literature one though written in many languages?

2. What is base of Indian Comparative Literature?

3. What is “hegemonic apprehension”?

4. What is the finding of Sisir Kumar Das’s approach?

5. Discuss Gurbhagat Singh’s idea of “Differential Multilogue”.

❖ Answers

Ans.1 It is because there are many literatures in India but the writers and readers of the particular and individual literatures are overwhelmingly concerned with their own literature and their literature only. That is the reason we can say that Indian literature is one though written in many languages.

Ans.2 Unity though diversity in Indian literatures is the base of Indian Comparative Literature.

Ans.3 This perspective includes the argumentation that the designation "Indian literature" the largest single spoken language and literature.

Ans.4 The finding of Das's approach is a pattern of commonality in nineteenth-century Indian literatures. Das's work on the literatures of the nineteenth century in India does not designate this Indian literature a category by itself. Rather, the work suggests a rationale for the proposed research, the objective being to establish whether a pattern can be found through the ages.

Ans.5 For Singh, comparative literature in India is an exercise in differential multilogue. His insistence on the plurality of logoi is particularly interesting because it takes us beyond the notion of dialogue, a notion that comparative literature is still confined to. Singh's proposal of differential multilogue as a program will perhaps enable us to understand Indian diversity without sacrificing the individualities of the particulars. Singh's notion of differential multilogue reflects a poststructuralist trend in Indian discourse today, a trend that manifests itself among others by a suspicion of the designation of Indian literatures as one.

:: STRUCTURE ::**6.0 Objectives****6.1 Introduction****6.2 Question of defining and establishing Comparative
Literature as a discipline****6.3 Comparative Literature in India****6.4 Present and Future of Comparative Literature****6.5 Let's Sum Up****6.6 Key Words****❖ Check Your Progress**

6.0 OBJECTIVES

- To familiarize students with how Comparative Literature attained its current status.
- To make them aware of the recent trends in Comparative Literature.
- To help them anticipate future of Comparative Literature.
- To make the learners recognize the contribution of major comparatists who gave shape to the discipline.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Comparative Literature has fully developed as a discipline and is developing with the changing times. Some critics opine that Comparative Literature is dead, others reject such opinion and prove the success of Comparative Literature. To understand its present state, we need to have an overview of how it came to its current shape.

Globalization has affected the progress of Comparative Literature, it has many challenges to face. We shall try to understand its recent status and also would try to anticipate its future.

6.2 QUESTION OF DEFINING AND ESTABLISHING COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AS A DISCIPLINE

Among the questions of Comparative literature, Benedetto Croce in 1903 questioned Comparative Literature, as a separate discipline and dismissed it as a non-subject. He rejected the definition of Comparative Literature as the exploration of the vicissitudes, alterations, developments and reciprocal differences of themes and literary ideas across literatures, and added that there is no study more arid than the researches of this sort. He classified the kind of work done under the rubric of Comparative Literature, "in the category of erudition pure and simple".

Croce found no substance in Comparative Literature, for the term was obfuscatory on the ground that the true object of study was literary history, and he did not see any distinction between pure and simple Literary History and Comparative Literary History.

In the 1920s Lane Cooper called the term Comparative Literature, a "bogus term", one that makes "neither sense nor syntax" and added, "You might as well permit yourself to say 'Comparative potatoes' or 'Comparative husks.'" Comparative Literature further suffered between the two World Wars because of the ascendancy of New Criticism that proposed autonomy of text and autotelic nature of its 'close' study in isolation. New Criticism takes no note of the existence of other texts. If a text is autonomous with no relationship with other texts, the very possibility of existence of comparison is ruled out, for comparison needs at least two texts. Among New Critics, T.S. Eliot was a major exception as he, through his concept of tradition, proposed continuity of tradition in his essay entitled "Tradition and the Individual Talent", for the function of tradition is to compare and contrast and find out the ways and works in which tradition operates.

After the New Critics, Northrop Frye in the second half of the 1940s and later in the 1950s saw continuity of literature in terms of 'myth' as an epicentral structure. He saw literature not as a heap of works but inter-connected by the structural principle of the myths of Quest and Hero that appear in divergent forms in different works in different periods. Frye's myth criticism that might be called quasi-structuralism departed radically from New Criticism, and in a way loosened the

monistic rigidity of Textual Criticism and thereby gave a new impetus, though theoretically, to comparative pursuits. However, with the rise of Structuralism and Post Structuralism and its offshoots in the form of feminism, post-colonialism, deconstruction, psychoanalysis and the sweep of theory as separate discipline shifted attention from comparison of texts to critical and theoretical formulations, though in the third quarter there has been a spurt in comparing activities. During this period there was greater emphasis on discussion of the theoretical aspects of Comparative Literature, though there were questions raised against its methodology.

René Wellek, writing in *Comparative Literature*, criticized the prevailing comparative literature research and spoke against an artificial demarcation of subject matter and methodology a mechanistic concept of sources and influences a motivation of cultural nationalism, however generous". Later in an article "Comparative Literature Today", he discussed the development of Comparative Literature as a discipline in Europe and the U.S.A. since the 1920s. He brought out the importance of the literary approach to literature and of the combination of history and criticism Paul Van Tieghem's distinction between 'Comparative' literature, 'General literature and World' literature did not convince René Wellek, and he stated:

It is impossible to draw a line between Comparative Literature and General Literature, between say, the influence of Walter Scott in France and the rise of the historical novel. Besides, the term General Literature lends itself to confusion; it has been understood to mean literary theory poetics, and the principles of literature.

He further stated that Comparative Literature in the restricted sense of the binary relations cannot make a meaningful discipline because it would involve dealing with fragments and could have no methodology of its own. In *Theory of Literature*, written along with Warren Austin, stressed the point made earlier by Wellek, and stated that one of the results of the narrow binary approach has been a decline in interest in Comparative Literature. In his talk entitled "The Crisis of Comparative Literature" delivered in 1959, he further questioned the obsolete and partisan methodology. He added that Comparative Literature had not established itself properly as a subject on any serious basis. He further complained that Comparative Literature was trying to grapple with the issues that had become redundant, and blamed the French School of Comparative Literature for the problems in "The Crisis of Comparative Literature":

All these floundering are only possible because Van Tiegham, his precursors and followers conceive of literary study in terms of nineteenth century positivistic influences. They have accumulated an enormous mass of parallels, similarities and sometimes identities, but they have rarely asked what these relationships are supposed to show except possibly the fact of one writer's knowledge and reading of another writer.

Other debates on ancillary aspects also continued between comparatists of different nationalities as Simon Jeune considered "influence" study as the core of Comparative Literature. On the other hand, Wellek debunked the study of literary relations and influences as tainted by "an unreflecting positivism. The surfeit of discussion on the theoretical aspects of Comparative Literature led to ignorance of practice of Comparative Literature, the most essential practice to such an extent that a critic like Harry Levin complained in 1969: "We spend far too much of our energy talking... about Comparative Literature and not enough of it comparing the literature" .

The words of Levin still hold good for the future of Comparative Literature, for the practice, not mere talk about it, would sustain and lead to the prosperity of Comparative Literature whatever its form might be.

By considering the development of Comparative Literature in terms of its schools, it is possible not only to comprehend its past but also to anticipate its future on the basis of the developments in the past.

Influence/reception, analogy, thematology, genology 'placing,' historiography and translation have been some of the main concerns of Comparative Literature. These concerns have defined the character of various schools. Almost by the end of the 19th century the central concern of the German school was thematics with stress on zeitgeist and on racial and ethnic roots. The French school focused on influence/reception with its basis on positivism. The English School specialized in 'placing in which 'placing' of texts leads to mutual Domination of texts. The American School of Comparative Literature questioned the dominance of the French school and its principal practice in the post-World War II period with focus on interdisciplinary approach. It opened the scope of comparative literature through Henry Remak and René Wellek. Remak in his essay summed up the trends and practices of comparatists in the United States of America, and in the process provided the manifesto of the American School:

Comparative Literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country, and the study of the relationships between literature on the one hand, and other areas of knowledge and beliefs, such as the arts, philosophy, history, the social sciences, the sciences, religion, etc, on the other. In brief, it is the comparison of one literature with another or others, and the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression.

H. Renak founded the American School of Comparative Literature and also of its distinction from the French school. While the French school concerned itself with 'product,' the American School emphasized on the process of the product coming into existence. Moreover, it opened up the frontiers of Comparative Literature and transgressed the boundaries of the discipline. He presented an alternative model of Comparative Literature by criticizing what he termed "unimaginative positivistic approach" and stated

In a good many influence studies, the location of sources has been given too much attraction, rather than such questions as what was retained and what was rejected, and why, and how was material absorbed and integrated, and with what success? If conducted in this fashion, influence studies contribute not only to our knowledge of literary history but to our understanding of the creative process and of the literary work of art.

Another contribution that Renak made was 'depoliticization of Comparative Literature by clearing free from the controversy pertaining to the issue of nationalism. Instead of nation he uses a relatively neutral term country, for the former is ideological and the latter, geographical. This was in consonance with the tradition already existing in the American endeavours in the declining decades of the 19th century. For instance, Charles Mills Gayley, who in the 1890 founded Comparative Literature at Berkeley, sowed the early seeds of the American school. He considered Comparative Literature nothing more or less than literary philology and stressed the significance of psychology, anthropology, linguistics, social sciences, religion and art in literary study. By considering literature as a network related subjects, a way be paved the path for inter-disciplinary in the of Comparative Literature.

The European Western model of Comparative Literature emphasizes similarities than dissimilarities, though the binary model Comparative Literature considers different literatures European or Western Comparative Literature as different on geographical linguistic, historic, cultural aesthetic lines. Here to be borne mind that

geographical and psychological distances the perception of category like the European Literature the Indian Comparative Literature, thrust under the umbrella term of the non-European model Comparative Literature, likely to have different would prefer similarities/ analogy based Comparative Literature binary Comparative Literature. brief discussion of the schools Comparative Literature: offers lessons (1) Comparative Literature in state evolution, its orientations changed with different schools. While American school reacting against French school freed limitations of positivism and excessive insistence on influence/reception and introduced interdisciplinarity, it brought historicity; (2) it is time for us to reject homogenizing categories the non-European model or Third world model of Comparative Literature with insistence on the study of identity or specificity -cultural identity, literary canons, periodization, literary history and cultural influence; and, (3) there is a need to understand the changes that time location and attitudes bring about in our perception of different schools of Comparative Literature.

A fresh whiff of air wafted into Comparative Literature by the non-Western comparative literary scholars particularly from Afrika. For instance, they questioned the term 'universal, so dear to Western comparatists. Chinua Achebe, the Nigerian and novelist and critic, pronounced that the term was used "a synonym for the narrow, self-serving parochialism of Europe". Following the example Achebe, Chidi Amuta questioned the Western comparatists study of European "influence' on African writers. He considers the 'quest' for influences at "one of ruses In the trick bag " of those critics who see European culture as having had a civilizing impact on 'primitive' African writing .

6.3 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE IN INDIA

Indian literature had always multilingual multi-literary and, so, comparative without having any definite methodology. The Comparative Indian literature after the western school has been the model for the Indian scholars like Sisir Kumar Das, Amiya Dev and Swapan Majumdar. In fact, for reasons, no strong need an Indian School or even methodology had been felt. For reasons typically Indian, there has been an Indian Comparative Literature Association, but there has been no concentrated speculation or execution in the direction of proposing and establishing an Indian school of Comparative Literature or Indian Comparative Literature - sometimes apologetically, and sometimes with the optimism that the practice and pursuits of Indian comparatists would lead to the establishment of an Indian School of Comparative Literature. Whatever be the reasons for

it, the fact is that even after almost five decades of existence of the Jadavpur School of Comparative Literature, save the establishment of Chairs in different Universities and stray efforts of amateur and professional comparatists, there is no unambiguous Indian School of Comparative Literature. Admittedly, the proposition of an Indian School of Comparative Literature should not be directed merely at satisfying the ego with the anxiety of identity. A school needs a group of scholars with broad agreement on the agenda and manifesto with adherence and subscription to its basic tenets for a considerable period of time by a sizeable number of followers. Moreover, it demands consistent and diverse practice. However; endeavours in the direction of seeking a school help in knowing the basic tenets and weaknesses of one's own practices.

The pursuits of Indian comparatists contain in them the outlines of Indian Comparative Literature. For instance, Sisir Kumar Das in his *History of Indian Literature* forwards a model of Indian literary historiography. He stresses the significance of tradition as the core concern of literary pursuits in India, and thereby suggested that its study should form an integral part of comparative pursuits in India. Moreover, he not only insisted but also showed with his work. 'A History of Indian Literature' that literary history of Indian literature should be written by following Indian models. His younger contemporary Swapana Majumdar speaks of the specificity of national literatures in the non-European/American Comparative Literature from the Third World: "It is because of this predilection for National Literature that Comparative Literature has struck roots in the Third World nations and India in particular". By stating this Majumdar gives a new Indian dimension to national literature. He adds a new and radical perspective to Comparative Literature that can be put in the Indian School of Comparative Literature, though it might be put in the larger category of the Third World Comparative Literature.

The basic purpose behind discussing these traits of Indian Comparative Literature is to aim at finding the essential attributes that form the foundation of Indian literature on which the potential Indian Comparative Literature can be based. Moreover, the future of comparative literature would to a good extent depend on the recognition and study of various literatures other than major literatures, different schools, like Indian Comparative Literature, their literary and cultural traditions, ethos and specificities in different parts of the world. Moreover, the future of Comparative Literature would to a good measure be dependant on the relationship between these

literatures/schools and its ability to respond to developments in other disciplines.

6.4 PRESENT AND FUTURE OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

The future of Comparative Literature is to be seen in the light of social and contextual norms intrinsic to it. Comparative Literature, though it might appear as a tall claim, has to adapt itself to the demands and challenges of humanity, literature, human/literary values, and changes attendant on them. It originated out of the impending alienation between different insulating units of humanity, i.e., nations with one race, religion, region, language and literature. One of the basic functions of literature is to delineate society, whereas 'national literature alienated one part of humanity from the other and thereby frustrated the basic purpose of literature. Hence, various terms used in relation to Comparative Literature such as 'General Literature', 'World Literature', 'National Literature', however, vague they might still be, tried to address the issue of fighting the alienating effect of National Literature since the last decade of the 18th century onwards.

In the twentieth century, Comparative Literature witnessed an enlargement in the scope of Comparative Literature primarily through Henry Remak in its first half, later the questioning of its methodology by René Wellek, as discussed earlier, and of its very existence in the wake of a spree of translation activities in terms of theory and practice though Susan Bassnett who announced the "death of comparative literature", which was in one sense fortunate for the practitioners of Comparative Literature, oneself included. With the emergence of cultural studies and multiculturalism in the wake of globalization and the shrinking of the globe in a village in the 1960s, Comparative Literature had to adapt to new demands made on it. Three Reports-the Levin Report, 1965, the Green Report, 1975, and the Bemheimer Reports, 1993, submitted to the American Comparative Literature Association took note of these developments and the way in which Comparative Literature can respond to them.

Mary Louise Pratt in "Comparative Literature and Global Citizenship" sees merit in multilingual discipline in an age of globalization and asks comparatists to desist from thinking of non-English languages as "foreign" languages. In a way, she suggests a non-Anglo-centric model of Comparative Literature but there is nothing new in her insistence on multilingualism and multiculturalism, for

multilingualism and multiculturalism are inter-related and multilingualism has always been an integral constitutive element of Comparative Literature. However, there is a difference between multiculturalism and Comparative Literature in their attitudes towards texts. According to Tobin Siebers, "Multiculturalism is, of course, more text bound than Comparative Literature as prerequisites to its study, it requires only that kind of texts that exert a symbolic presence in the classroom, which means that it enjoys a more accessible pedagogy. But access and openness are what both dreams value."

As regards the relation of Comparative Literature with 'Cultural Studies', it has to be noted that, on the surface, both of them seem to have no major problems, for if multiculturalism is a constitutive factor of Comparative Literature, cultural studies should be a part of Comparative Literature. However, comparatists accuse cultural studies offending to be empiricist and monolingual, something that comparatists try to confront and get rid of.'

The Bernheimer Report notes that Comparative Literature is still conscious and ambitious of its ethical role. In the process it would be able to produce what Mary Louise Pratt calls bicultural and 'multilingual people in the age in which multiculturalism is a slogan. The advocates of this vision of Comparative Literature speak of new kinds of citizens of a new world order as Pratt's 'global citizens, the Levin and Bernheimer Reports' 'cultural pluralists', the Levin and Green Reports 'internationalists', and the Green Report's 'cosmopolitans.' Terming Comparative Literature as a symbolic United Nations', Siebers states that "...Comparative Literature as a discipline is dying. The irony is that it is being wrecked by its own success, and this is a difficult irony to understand. The Levin and Bernheimer Reports see lack of resources as the reason for the inability of Comparative Literature to realize its vision. Hence, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Comparative Literature to compete with multiculturalism:

...Comparative Literature was an early advocate of a world-view that has found a new and more popular correlation in multiculturalism. In the cola wars between Comparative Literature and multiculturalism, the old brand cannot stand up to the new one, no matter how similar they are, because multiculturalism has found a marketing strategy that makes it available to more people. Comparatists are using their identity in the university because everyone is becoming comparatists of a kind.

6.5 LET'S SUM UP

There is the future of a particular kind of Comparative Literature and arriving at certain goals fixed by it in response to challenges faced by it from time to time, posed by developments from within and in allied disciplines. To conclude, let us take recourse to Walter Benjamin. While speaking of a typology of literature, he remarked that literature is of two types-the directive and the touching. Marcel Proust is an instance of the first, and Charles Peguy, the French poet and publicist, of the second. The former points to, explains, analyses things with depth, or rather intensity, always on his side, never on that of his partner. The latter is interested in moving closer to readers, getting together, converting or collaborating with readers. Benjamin remarks:

There has never been anyone else with Proust's ability to show us things; Proust's pointing finger is unequalled. But there is another gesture in amicable togetherness in conversations physical contact. To no one is this gesture more alien than to Proust. He cannot touch his reader either, he could not do so for anything in the world. If one wanted to group literature around these poles, dividing it into the directive and the touching kind, the core of the former would be the work of Proust, the core of the latter, the work of Peguy.

By using Benjamin's terms in the domain of Comparative Literature, for our present purpose, it can be argued that the aim of one kind of Comparative Literature is to exemplify, and embody some kind of comparative literary activity without striving to produce the impact of doctrines. The other kind is the touching mode in which Comparative Literature seeks sense and identification with it. Such a pursuit can be put in the category of systematic/systematizing Comparative Literature. The practitioners of Comparative Literature of this kind are codifiers, though the quality may vary according to period, practitioner and situation. Such practitioners of Comparative Literature are 'touchers'. It is notable here that the most eminent systematizers of Comparative Literature have been touchers. They study literature comparatively and see the abstract structures operating in texts, and by systematizing them they want to access literature in a certain way, that is, the way they have to offer. The future of Comparative Literature would depend on the combined endeavours of both kinds of pursues of literatures-those who can show and those who can touch' in the traditional areas and also the new ones such as translation, multiculturalism, cultural studies, inter-cultural studies, folklore and oral literary studies, all of which have drawn the attention of interdisciplinary comparatists in the Euro-American and different non-European schools of Comparative Literature. The future of

Comparative Literature to a considerable extent depends upon its ability to become the 'true' United Nations of the literatures of the world and different disciplines of knowledge, without discrimination among its members as permanent members with veto power and ordinary non-permanent members who are at the mercy of these super powers.

6.6 KEY WORDS

Multiculturalism	the view that cultures, races and ethnicities particularly those of minority groups deserve special acknowledgement of their differences within a dominant political culture.
Multilingualism	use of more than one languages either by an individual speaker or a group of speakers.
Cultural Studies	an interdisciplinary field that examines political dynamics of contemporary culture and its historical foundations.
Contextual	relating to the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement or idea.
Bicultural	combining the cultural attitudes of two Nations, peoples or groups.

Short Question

1.What are some of the main concerns of Comparative Literature?

2.Discuss Sisir Kumar Das's contribution.

3.What are the present challenges for Comparative Literature?

4.What is Remak's contribution in the development of Comparative Literature?

❖ **Answers**

Ans.1 Influence/reception, analogy, thematology, genology 'placing,' historiography and translation have been some of the main concerns of Comparative Literature.

Ans.2 Sisir Kumar Das, tradition is very significant and he suggests that it should be an integral part in comparative pursuits of India.

Ans.3 With the emergence of multilingualism and multiculturalism, Comparative Literature has to be more adaptive to the changes caused by this. Cultural Studies which has been one of the constitutive factors of Comparative Literature actually should be a part of Comparative Literature. Some critics believe that Comparative Literature is dead or dying. But the fact is it is getting more successful and will continue developing.

Ans.4 Unlike French School, Remak, the founder of American School, emphasized on Process rather than the Product and thus, opened up new frontiers for Comparative Literature. His another contribution was 'depoliticization' of Comparative Literature by clearing free from the controversy pertaining to the issue of nationalism.

BLOCK 3 Approaches to Comparative Literature: Theme

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B.A. Hons. (English)

Semester II FCLMN 201

Fundamentals of Comparative Literature-I

BLOCK 3

Approaches to Comparative Literature: Theme

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UNIT : 1**DEFINITION OF THEME, STOFF,
ROHSTOFF, MOTIF****:: STRUCTURE ::****1.0 Objective****1.1 Introduction****1.2 Comparative literature****1.3 Three schools of comparative literature****1.4 What is Theme?****1.5 Motif, Stoff, Rohstoff****1.6 Terminology****1.7 Key Words****1.8 Let us sum up****❖ Check Your Progress****❖ References**

1.0 OBJECTIVE

In this unit we shall

- Discuss approaches to comparative literature
- Definitions of themes and its significance in comparative literature
- Learn about Stoff ,Rohstoff and Motif

On Completing this Unit you should be able to

- Understand various approaches to literature
- Significance of theme in Comparative literature
- Understand the concept of Stoff, Rohstoff and Motif

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As discussed in the introduction to the course and the Block, the thrust of this course is to make you understand the Approaches of Comparative literature. The important thing, for us is to understand that Why is studying literature and culture important? What is comparative literature? What approaches have been prominent in literary and cultural studies and how can we continue to draw from them today? In this Block you will explore the different aspects of Comparative studies. Before we undertake a detailed discussion on the approaches of literature it would be appropriate here to first explain the word approach; in simple terms it means a way of dealing with something but when it deals with literature the connotation differs and here approach deals with the literal level (subject matter) ,The affective values (emotional, mood, atmosphere, tone attitudes, empathy) ,The ideational values (themes, visions, universal truths, character) Technical Values (plot, structure, scene, language, point of view, imagery, figure, metrics, etc.

1.2 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Comparative literature is an academic field dealing with the study of literature and cultural expression across linguistic, national, geographic, and disciplinary boundaries. Comparative literature "performs a role similar to that of the study of international relations, but works with languages and artistic traditions, so as to understand cultures 'from the inside'". While most frequently practised with works of different languages, comparative literature may also be performed on works of the same language if the works originate from different nations or cultures among which that language is spoken.

The characteristically intercultural and transnational field of comparative literature concerns itself with the relation between literature, broadly defined, and other spheres of human activity, including history, politics, philosophy, art, and science. Unlike other forms of literary study, comparative literature places its emphasis on the interdisciplinary analysis of social and cultural production within the "economy, political dynamics, cultural movements, historical shifts, religious differences, the urban environment, international relations, public policy, and the sciences".

❖ Check Your Progress

Choose the correct option:

1. Comparative literature may also be performed on works of the same language.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above
2. Comparative literature does not place its emphasis on the interdisciplinary analysis of social and cultural production.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above
3. The characteristically intercultural and transnational field of comparative literature concerns does not itself with the relation between literature and other spheres of human activity.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above
4. The study of Comparative literature is frequently practised with works of different languages.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above

1.3 THREE SCHOOLS OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

French school

From the early part of the 20th century until World War II, the field was characterised by a notably empiricist and positivist approach, termed the "French School", in which scholars like Paul Van Tiegham examined works forensically, looking for evidence of "origins" and "influences" between works from different nations often termed "rapport des faits". Thus a scholar might attempt to trace how a particular literary idea or motif travelled between nations over time. In the French School of Comparative Literature, the study of influences

and mentalities dominates. Today, the French School practices the nation-state approach of the discipline although it also promotes the approach of a "European Comparative Literature".

German school

Like the French School, German Comparative Literature has its origins in the late 19th century. After World War II, the discipline developed to a large extent owing to one scholar in particular, Peter Szondi (1929–1971), a Hungarian who taught at the Free University Berlin. Szondi's work in *Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft* (German for "General and Comparative Literary Studies") included the genre of drama, lyric (in particular hermetic) poetry, and hermeneutics: "Szondi's vision of *Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft* became evident in both his policy of inviting international guest speakers to Berlin and his introductions to their talks. Szondi welcomed, among others, Jacques Derrida (before he attained worldwide recognition), Pierre Bourdieu and Lucien Goldman from France, Paul de Man from Zürich, Gershom Sholem from Jerusalem, Theodor W. Adorno from Frankfurt, Hans Robert Jauss from the then young University of Konstanz, and from the US René Wellek, Geoffrey Hartman and Peter Demetz (all at Yale), along with the liberal publicist Lionel Trilling. The names of these visiting scholars, who form a programmatic network and a methodological canon, epitomise Szondi's conception of comparative literature. German comparatists working in East Germany, however, were not invited, nor were recognised colleagues from France or the Netherlands. Yet while he was oriented towards the West and the new allies of West Germany and paid little attention to comparatists in Eastern Europe, his conception of a transnational (and transatlantic) comparative literature was very much influenced by East European literary theorists of the Russian and Prague schools of structuralism, from whose works René Wellek, too, derived many of his concepts, concepts that continue to have profound implications for comparative literary theory today"

American (US) school

Reacting to the French School, post-war scholars, collectively termed the "American School", sought to return the field to matters more directly concerned with literary criticism, de-emphasising the detective work and detailed historical research that the French School had demanded. The American School was more closely aligned with the original internationalist visions of Goethe and Posnett (arguably reflecting the post-war desire for international cooperation), looking

for examples of universal human "truths" based on the literary archetypes that appeared throughout literatures from all times and places.

Prior to the advent of the American School, the scope of comparative literature in the West was typically limited to the literatures of Western Europe and Anglo-America, predominantly literature in English, German and French literature, with occasional forays into Italian literature (primarily for Dante) and Spanish literature (primarily for Miguel de Cervantes). One monument to the approach of this period is Erich Auerbach's book *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, a survey of techniques of realism in texts whose origins span several continents and three thousand years.

The approach of the American School would be familiar to current practitioners of cultural studies and is even claimed by some to be the forerunner of the Cultural Studies boom in universities during the 1970s and 1980s. The field today is highly diverse: for example, comparatists routinely study Chinese literature, Arabic literature and the literatures of most other major world languages and regions as well as English and continental European literatures.

❖ Check Your Progress

Choose the correct option:

1. In the French School of Comparative Literature, the study of influences and mentalities does not dominate.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above
2. The field of Comparative Literature was characterised by a notably empiricist and positivist approach termed as
 - a. French school
 - b. German school
 - c. American school
 - d. None of the above
3. Today, the French School do not practice the nation-state approach of the discipline although it also promotes the approach of a "European Comparative Literature".
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above

4. Paul Van Tiegham is a scholar of _____ School.
 - a. America
 - b. Germany
 - c. France
 - d. Hungry
5. Peter Szondi is a scholar of _____ School.
 - a. America
 - b. Germany
 - c. France
 - d. Hungry
6. German comparatists working in East Germany were not invited, nor were recognised colleagues from France or the Netherlands by Szondi.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above
7. Peter Szondi was from _____.
 - a. France
 - b. Germany
 - c. America
 - d. Hungry
8. The "**American School**" _____ sought to return the field to matters more directly concerned with literary criticism, de-emphasising the detective work and detailed historical research.
 - a. French school
 - b. German school
 - c. American school
 - d. None of the above
9. Chinese literature, Arabic literature are routinely studied at _____.
 - a. French school
 - b. German school
 - c. American school
 - d. None of the above
10. Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature was a book written by
 - a. René Wellek
 - b. Paul Van Tiegham
 - c. Peter Szondi
 - d. Erich Auerbach

1.4 WHAT IS THEME?

Theme OR Thematology

It is the contrastive study of themes in different literary texts. As a subfield in comparative literature according to the French school, thematology is a comparative study of literary works as they relate to other literary works beyond their national borders as far as the themes are concerned. It is a more specific and limited investigation in the field of comparism.

A literary text has two main components i.e. form and content. The form is about the language and the structure. It is how the content is presented. A specific form may help putting a specific content into value. For instance, Alice Walker's *The Colour purple* is a novel about an oppressed and silenced girl. Walker used the epistolary form (letter novel). Celie addresses letters to God. It is more likely for a silenced girl to write letters for their private and discrete nature instead of being a traditional narrator protagonist in a novel. Also because Celie is almost illiterate, her letters are written in the dialect of blacks in the south instead of standard English and the epistolary form meets the purpose of that informal situation.

After reading a work sensibly or listening a story or watching movie, with mind and spirit full open to activities, events, people, places, times, sounds, images, words and patterns, a reader or engrossed listener might feel overwhelmed. This thing triggered a question why does this happen? What is the point? What am I supposed to get from this? What is the lesson here? What is the author trying to say? And ultimately what is this all about? These are the questions often come insistently to us, giving us the sense that even though the work evoked a definite response, something has been left undiscovered. The **theme** becomes an answer for all the questions.

There are many explanations about theme. Theme is the vital unifying element of the story which links together all of the other elements of fiction such as plot, character, setting, point of view, which is used by the author while writing. Blaze O. Bonazza, Emil Roy and Sandra Roy in their book entitled *Studies in Fiction* say that:

The theme of a story is the generalization about human life that can be drawn from the outcome of the conflict and from the support provided by tone, attitude, atmosphere, setting and symbolism or allegory.

It means that the theme of the story is an idea that can be broadly applied both to the story itself and to real life situations outside the story.

The theme of a story may be definite very briefly or at great length, but in stating the theme, one must pick the significant insight, the one that explains the greatest number of elements in the story and relates them to each other. All stories have theme as purpose, no matter how artfully the author chooses to present it. The task of discovery and stating theme is often considered as an easy but at once a difficult thing to do, sometimes we feel that we understand the theme of a story but we find it difficult to express it into words. In order to identify a theme of a story, one must know the whole story. The ability to recognize a theme is important because it allows readers to understand the author's purpose in writing the book.

John Gardner in his book *The Art of Fiction* says that:

Every fiction must have a theme as fundament of an intention. The writer will describe the characters in the novel by using that fundament.

It means that it is writer's insight and the fundamental thing that makes the work sublime and on that ground the artistic endeavor is progressing to mould the characters which reflect the theme. It means that theme is a very important element beside others, and another literary author K.L Knickerbocker in his book interpreting says that:

Every good story is shaped by controlling theme or idea. This controlling theme selects and arranges everything which goes into the story the characters, the action, the resolution of the conflict and anything else, using by the writers to dramatize his total meaning.

According to him a theme is a monitoring idea, it means that the function of the theme here is as a control of the idea in a novel. It will control the characters, the action of the characters and even resolve the conflict in the novel.

In this way every literary work conveys the Theme. It depends on how writer convey that and reader grasp that. Whether or not there is something to be learned depends on what the reader discovers in the work and how those findings interact with what the readers already know, think and feel about the subject of the work. Sometimes it reinforces what we already believe, adding new details to support our

current beliefs and emotions, sometimes we encounter a work whose main idea offends or angers us.

Finally, the value of thematic ideas in a story can be considered only in their relation to the entire work. Regardless of how true, universal, or appealing an idea may seem or not seem, the primary concern of a reader should be with how well the ideas is exemplified and brought to life in the story. What matters is how artistically, how concretely and how compellingly the author gives shape and substance to a guiding principle apart from the readers' appraisal of the validity, intellectual worth, or originality of the idea embodied.

❖ Check Your Progress

Choose the correct answer:

1. It is the _____ study of themes in different literary texts.
 - a. Contrastive
 - b. Similarities
 - c. Both of these
 - d. None of these
2. A literary text has _____ main components.
 - a. One
 - b. Two
 - c. Three
 - d. Four
3. "Every good story is shaped by controlling theme or idea" is stated by
 - a. K.L Knickerboecker
 - b. The book Studies in Fiction
 - c. John Gardner
 - d. Alice Walker
4. "Every fiction must have a theme as fundament of an intention" is said by
 - a. K.L Knickerboecker
 - b. The book Studies in Fiction
 - c. John Gardner
 - d. Alice Walker
5. "The theme of a story is the generalization about human life that can be drawn from the outcome of the conflict and from the support provided by tone, attitude, atmosphere, setting and symbolism or allegory." Is stated by
 - a. K.L Knickerboecker
 - b. the book Studies in Fiction

- c. John Gardner
 - d. Alice Walker
6. The name of Alice Walker's novel is
 - a. The Colour Red
 - b. The Colour Yellow
 - c. The Colour Green
 - d. The Colour Purple
 7. Whether or not there is something to be learned depends on
 - a. The novel
 - b. The writer
 - c. The reader
 - d. None of the above
 8. The Theme controls the characters, the action of the characters but does not resolves the conflict in the novel.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above
 9. The value of thematic ideas in a story can be considered only in their relation to the entire work.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above
 10. The theme is not a specific and limited investigation in the field of comparism.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above

1.5 MOTIF, STOFF, ROHSTOFF

Motif is one of the literary elements. It has a close relationship with theme. So that it is sometimes used interchangeably with theme. The writer tries to find some definition of motif.

Martin Gray, A Dictionary of Literary Term defines motif as “some aspects of literature (a type of character, theme or image) which recurs frequently.” And Morris William in his book The Heritage Illustrated Dictionary of the English says that motif is; “a recurring thematic element used in the development of an artistic or literary work,” through this definition William states that motif is a kind of element on literary work.

H. L. Yelland in *A Handbook of Literary Terms* defines motif as a recurring theme or basic idea while theme is the central thought in a literary work. There is a certain tendency that shows that theme is abstract while motif is concrete. A. F. Scott in *Current Literary Terms* he states:

“Motif is a particular idea or dominant element running through a literary work, forming part of the main theme.”

We can see the phrase ‘dominant element’ and ‘forming part’. The words inform us that motif is an element, which is dominant throughout a literary work, and the function of the element is a part to form a main theme. On the other word we can say that theme is larger than motif and a theme consists of several motifs.

The term ‘theme’ is usually employed to describe a topic or problem which is found in the action and which seems both authentic and significant in our experience with the world of reality.

Motif may also be meant the important incidents or the dominant description of human feeling or emotion. To state the theme of a story is to generalize upon the particulars of the narrative, to place upon the fiction characters in their fictional situations. When we describe the theme of a novel, we tend to suggest that it involves problems and situations which we have. It is certainly useful to recognize the important problems, familiar situations and universal human traits are represented in a work of fiction. Theme has something to do with the intention or purpose of a literary work. The interference of moral judgment, it causes theme to be identical with morality, intention and meaning.

Motif and theme actually has become the subject of scholarly studies in the beginning of nineteenth century in **German criticism**. They called the two terms as the thematological systems which consist of all three parts, rohstoff, stoff and motive.

Rohstoff is raw material, also known as a feedstock, unprocessed material, or primary commodity. It is a basic material that is used to produce goods, finished products, energy, or intermediate materials that are feedstock for future finished products. It is the raw material in literary matters. Stoff is motif while motive is theme. Rohstoff consists of all three parts of discourse, of words designating objects, qualities, action, and ideas.

Stoff is explained as motif and associated with the concrete. Stoff is logically or chronologically organized by rohstoff. Stoff is necessarily

expressed in specific characters, places and times. Motive is structure by stoff and associated with the abstract.

The three basic themalogical elements are put together to make coherent story. Basically, theme in a story and it is illustrated with the aid of stoff by using rohstoff. It is noticed that theme can be found in most literary works, implicitly expressed. The motif itself is the incarnation of theme and theme will be manifested by motif. Theme emerges in and through the dialogue, development of character, setting and plot. Finally from some definitions above the writer can get the answer that motif and theme have their own definition and moreover we have known that motif is concrete while theme is abstract. That is why the two terms are not similar.

If we talk about the relationship between motif and theme, they cannot be separated from each other because they always occur together, since motif is a particular idea of dominant element which has a function to form the main theme. In other word we can not decided the theme of a story without finding out the motifs.

❖ Check Your Progress

Choose the correct answer:

1. _____ is sometimes used interchangeably with theme.
 - a. Theme
 - b. Motif
 - c. Stoff
 - d. Rohstoff
2. _____ is explained as motif and associated with the concrete.
 - a. Theme
 - b. Motif
 - c. Stoff
 - d. Rohstoff
3. The _____ basic themalogical elements are put together to make coherent story.
 - a. One
 - b. Two
 - c. Three
 - d. Four
4. Motif and theme actually has become the subject of scholarly studies in the beginning of nineteenth century in...
 - a. German criticism
 - b. French criticism
 - c. Both of these

- d. None of these
- 5. _____ is concrete while _____ is abstract.
 - a. Theme and motif
 - b. Motif and theme
 - c. Stoff and rohstoff
 - d. Rohstoff and stoff
- 6. _____ consists of all three parts of discourse.
 - a. Theme
 - b. Motif
 - c. Stoff
 - d. Rohstoff
- 7. It is used for future finished products.
 - a. Theme
 - b. Motif
 - c. Stoff
 - d. Rohstoff
- 8. _____ as a recurring theme or basic idea while _____ is the central thought in a literary work.
 - a. Motif and theme
 - b. Theme and motif
 - c. Stoff and rohstoff
 - d. Rohstoff and stoff
- 9. _____ is a particular idea or dominant element running through a literary work.
 - a. Theme
 - b. Motif
 - c. Stoff
 - d. Rohstoff
- 10. The Heritage Illustrated Dictionary of the English is written by
 - a. Martin Gray
 - b. A. F. Scot
 - c. H. L Yelland
 - d. Morris William

1.6 TERMINOLOGY

Theme vs Subject matter: The subject matter is larger and wider in scope in comparison to the theme. The theme is more specific. For instance, "love" is the subject matter in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. The theme is more precise. It is love in the age of materialism.

Motif vs Theme: The theme is the central idea or message where as the motif constitutes the unit from which the theme is built. The motif could be an image, a sound, an action, an object, a character, a literary

device, a word, a phrase... with a symbolic significance that helps constructing and consolidating the central idea or the theme. It contributes towards the development of the theme. A motif is a recurrent idea or symbol or image that develops and explains the theme.

The theme of "the corruption of the American dream" in *The Great Gatsby* is built up and consolidated by the succession of certain motifs like the green light at the end of Daisy's Dock. Green the colour of the American shores as first perceived by the Dutch sailors who came to America to fulfil their dreams is also the colour of dollars (materialism). Another motif is the movement east instead of west. Most characters moved east to fulfil their dreams as young people. It is the opposite direction of the American dream. This explains why the narrator Nick Caraway decided to return to the Midwest at the end of the novel. the dichotomy east/west is a recurrent motif in the novel that serves the purpose of consolidating the theme of "the corruption of the American dream"

Symbol vs Motif: There is a difference between a symbol and a motif in that the symbol is an image, idea, sound, or words that represent something else and help understanding a given idea or a thing where as a motif is an image, idea, sound, or word that help understand the central idea in the literary work. Another difference is that the motif is recurrent where as the symbol may appear once or twice in a literary work.

Leitmotif vs Motif: the literal translation of leitmotif (a German word) is leading or guiding motif. However the real meaning of the concept is different. A leitmotif is more easily noticeable in opera and cinema where a specific melody is associated to character or a given situation or a given setting. Examples from literature: In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, thunder and lightning are associated with the supernatural world of the witches. In Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*, water imagery is always associated with Mugo. In *The Great Gatsby*, white is always associated with Daisy or again the word "voice".

❖ Check Your Progress

Choose the correct option:

1. Leitmotif is a leading or guiding motif.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above

2. Leitmotif is difficultly noticed in opera and cinema where a specific melody is associated to character or a given situation or a given setting.
 - a. True
 - b. False
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above
3. _____ helps to understand the central idea of a literary work.
 - a. Motif
 - b. Theme
 - c. Rohstuff
 - d. None of the above
4. _____ is the central idea or message of a literary work.
 - a. Motif
 - b. Theme
 - c. Rohstuff
 - d. None of the above
5. The theme of "the corruption of the American dream" is _____.
 - a. The Great Gatsby
 - b. Macbeth
 - c. A Grain of Wheat
 - d. None of the above
6. In Shakespeare's Macbeth, thunder and lightning are associated with the...
 - a. Supernatural world of fairies
 - b. Supernatural world of demons
 - c. Supernatural world of witches
 - d. None of the above
7. The _____ is larger and wider in scope in comparison to the theme.
 - a. Theme
 - b. Motif
 - c. Subject matter
 - d. None of the above
8. Motif is _____.
 - a. Once or twice
 - b. Recurrent
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above
9. The symbol may appear _____ in a literary work.
 - a. Once or twice
 - b. Recurrent
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above

10. _____ is the theme of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.
- a. Love
 - b. Love in the age of materialism
 - c. Both the above
 - d. None of the above

1.7 KEY WORDS

Dominant	more powerful, important or noticeable aspect when compared to others
Approach	a way of dealing with something, in literature it is used to understand why a work is constructed and what are its social and cultural implications
Forays	make or go; a sudden attack or incursion into enemy territory, especially to obtain something; a raid
Comparatists	one who compares
Friction	stories or novels which describe events and people that are not real
Human traits	a distinguishing quality
Scope	the chance or opportunity to do/ use something; the variety of subjects that are being discussed or considered
Age of materialism	the age of materialism (1832-1914) explains how the philosophers who dominated the new age in Germany were materialist where their predecessors had been idealist, and socially autonomous where their predecessors had been dependent.
Dichotomy	the separation that exists between two groups or things that are completely opposite to and different from each other
Consolidate	to join together into one; to make your position of power firmer or stronger so that it is likely to continue
Concept	an idea or a basic principle

❖ Check Your Progress

Short Question

1. What is comparative literature? Answer in your own words.

2. Write a short note on the three schools of comparative literature.

3. Write a short note on motif, stoff and rohstoff.

4. What is theme?

5. What is the importance of theme?

6. Write a short note on terminologies.

7. What is the difference between theme and subject matter?

8. What is the difference between motif and theme?

9. What is the difference between symbol and motif?

10. What is the difference between motif and leitmotif?

1.8 LET US SUM UP

Here in this unit you have learnt about:

- Comparative literature
- Three different schools of comparative literature
- Theme, motif, shoff and rohstoff
- Difference between theme, motif, shoff and rohstoff
- Terminologies and their differences.

Answers

3. Answers of Check Your Progress

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. A

4. Answers of Check Your Progress

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. C
5. B
6. A
7. D
8. C
9. C
10. D

5. Answers of Check Your Progress

1. A
2. B
3. A
4. C
5. B
6. D
7. C
8. B
9. A
10. B

6. Answers of Check Your Progress

1. B
2. C
3. C
4. A
5. B
6. D
7. D
8. A
9. B

10. D

7. Answers of Check Your Progress

1. A
2. B
3. A
4. B
5. A
6. C
7. C
8. B
9. A
10. B

:: STRUCTURE ::**2.0 Objectives****2.1 Introduction****2.2 Meaning and Origin of Myths****❖ Check Your Progress I****2.3 Important Myths of India****2.4 Greek and other Important Myths of the World****❖ Check Your Progress II****2.5 Functions of Myths****❖ Check Your Progress III****2.6 Rewriting Mythology****2.7 Retelling of Myths from Feministic Perspective****❖ Check Your Progress IV****2.8 Let's Sum Up****❖ References**

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we shall

- Discuss what are myths and their types and some important Indian and global myths
- And also the retelling of myths, their need, and importance.

On completing the unit you will be able to

- Comprehend the importance and function of myths
- Different kinds of myths
- Important myths of different cultures
- The retelling of myths from different perspectives.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Stories are ever dynamic and create a connection between the characters and the readers in an unassuming way. Some stories are told and retold according to the changing tastes of the people. But, some remain constant, do not change with time, and are popular. These stories are used to keep the moral fabric of the society intact and give us through their characters qualities that should be practiced to love a simple and highly moral life.

The characters categorized into good and evil give us the reason why certain characteristics are important to living a celestial life. These stories are often about figures and subjects which are central to the culture of those societies. Some of these stories function as explanations of how the world was created or how society functioned. These cannot be termed as history as most of the time there is no evidence of the things narrated in them. These stories are what are called myths. The Greeks used the word *mythos* about any story, but now scientists often use the term “myth” for stories that existed in “historical” consciousness which often were the subject for religious cults.

2.2 MEANING AND ORIGIN OF MYTHS

According to the Cambridge dictionary the meaning of myth is “an ancient story or set of stories, especially explaining the early history of a group of people or about natural events and facts”

Myth can be described as a story told orally about heroes and gods. Mythology is the knowledge about these myths and the collections of them, often belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition – such as ancient Greece –or as a set of stories or beliefs about a particular person or situation, often exaggerated or fictitious (Lothe, Refsum & Solberg, 2015, p. 147 – 148).

According to Mann “Myth is the foundation of life; it is the timeless pattern, the religious formula to which life shapes itself...” (Mann 1936). According to Claude Levi Strauss, myths are the building blocks or governing thought structure of collective human existence. (Mikics, 2007,p 197). Roland Barthes in his path-breaking book *Mythologies* (1972) says that myths are the ideological forms that organize and direct social life and studies myth as a vehicle for perpetuating ideological schemes and exercising power. He considers myth as a type of speech a second-order semiological system of communication that is a special preconditioned form of language with a message. (p107)

The word myth comes from the Greek word ‘mythos, which means a word or a story. Myth, according to some, is derived from the Greek word ‘muthos’, which means anything uttered by word of mouth. Homer used ‘muthos’, to mean a narration or conversation, but not fiction. Later the Greeks used ‘muthos’ to mean fiction. To Plato, ‘muthos’ denotes, “Something not wholly lacking truth but for the most part fictitious” (Cuddon 71).

According to Devdutt Pattanaik, ancient Hindu seers thought of myths as *mithya*. He thinks that *Mithya* gave a narrow and biased view of reality. Myth is a misconception that can be corrected or improved. Myth is a social construct, a common understanding of the world that binds individuals and communities together. The understanding can be religious or secular. Myths make sense to some groups and not to everyone. They cannot be rationalized beyond a point. It has two important characteristics: significance and staying power. Significance means the myth's content is about something important and staying power means they last for a long time, maybe a million or more years. Mythology simply put is the study of myths. It also means an explanation or the analytical study of myths.(xv, xvi). Richard Chase explains that ‘myth is clearly a value term’. “Myth,” he writes, “is only art” (11). Theodore Reik says the myth is, “not a story told as history but history told as a story. . . . In other words it is a narrative of a real experience in the past. What we call myth today is not an imaginary tale but a real-life experience of the primordial society” (9). According to Burke, “Myth is ultimately the expression of non-temporal truths ... the expression of them in story form ...story is still what makes myth myth” (qtd. in Segal 85). Myths present the norms for how to behave. Myths are perennial

The word myth is a continuous source of knowledge that can be used to solve problems during war and peace, life and death, truth and falsehood, good and evil.

The myths, unlike folklore or legends, deal with the creation of the world and so most often the myths are religious or quasi-religious and the characters in them are mostly Gods and Goddesses. But, there might be myths that do not deal with gods and talk about superheroes or at times there could be myths in which there are no superheroes. We still categorize them as myths because they have the staying power as from ages they are being told and retold. Myths are connected to a certain time, place, and people and can produce new myths. They are different from fairytales as their only purpose is not only entertainment but also to provide inspiration, motivation, morals, and the way of life of a particular time. Myths were revered in ancient Greece as they were about gods and goddesses and conveyed significant information about how to lead life. Simply put myths can be seen as “traditional tales relevant to society.”

Many people like Plato consider myths as lies or fallacies that cannot be believed, but he divides the myths into the myths that talk about gods as far away from reality, devoid of truth, and the myths related to philosophy as factual. Myth can be seen as history as it talks about events of the past. They are also connected to religious and its documents as it was inspired by gods and their qualities. Myth can also be considered as literature. But before historians, or theologians, or literary critics, can successfully study mythology they must ascertain which discipline the myth belongs to. Myths do not have any authors as we get the oral version passed from one person to the other, we inherit them. Myth helps us in creating an image of the universe in accordance of the time the myth belongs to. Myth helps us in validating and maintaining some specific social order.

Myth also helps us in explaining a particular custom, its origin and also its explanation. There is “no attempt to fix the myth into a coherent chronology related to the present day, though myths or a cycle of myths may have their own internal chronology” (Web). The stories explained in the myths are eternal and symbolic rather than the way they occurred.

The myths have the following characteristics: a) a myth is a narration of events b) the narration is sacred c) the sacred communication is made in symbolic form which means that the events described may not exist but in the myth itself d) the narrative is dramatic. The narrative distinguishes a myth from a general idea. The sacred quality that pervades a myth makes it different from a legend or folklore. It is different from history as it describes and narrates characters and objects unknown in the realm of reality. Myths are associated with

many branches of knowledge like Anthropology, History, Language, Sociology, Science, Psychology,, and mothers.

There are many different kinds of myths and many theories on myths. But to make it simple we discuss three types of myths a) Aetiological myths b) Historical myths c) Psychological myths

Aetiological Myths: The word aetiological is a Greek word that means purpose or description. These myths explain the reason why something is the way it is. These explanations are not based on scientific reason makes it more meaningful to us humans. These myths can be divided into two parts: An **etymological aetiological myth** explains the origin of a word. (Etymology is the study of word origins.) For example, Parvati got her name as she was the daughter of the mountain king, Himavan and thus it means daughter of the mountain. A **religious aetiological myth** explains the origin of a religious ritual. For example, the performing of Yagna, which means sacrifice or offering started in the Vedic times, to please God Agni and it was believed that he would in return give benedictions. Till today during auspicious occasions yagna is performed in Hindu households.

Historical myths as the name suggests are about a historical event. Through these myths, the memory of the important events is kept alive. E.g. The Adam's bridge between India and Srilanka, commonly known as Ram Setu connects Pamban Island near Rameshwaram in India and Mannar Island in Sri Lanka. According to the Hindu epic, Ramayana, this bridge was constructed by Vanara to cross the huge ocean and help Rama in the attempt to rescue Sita.

Psychological myths try to explain why we feel and act the way we do. In a psychological myth, the emotion itself is seen as a divine force, coming from the outside that can directly influence a person's emotions. For example, Kam dev is seen as the god of erotic love. When someone is blinded by love people say they are overpowered by the Kama.

❖ Check Your Progress I

What is the etymology of the word myth?

What are the different kinds of myths?

2.3 IMPORTANT MYTHS OF INDIA

Indian mythology consists of its Vedas, Puranas, and Upanishads which date back to the creation of the most ancient Veda Rig Veda. (2000 1000 BC), which contains the hymns on Vedic Gods. The Vedas consist of the perceptions of the universe and the meaning of various natural phenomena personified by about 3000 gods and goddesses. Ideas about the struggle between the good (suras) and the evil (asuras) were reflected in most of these renderings which created a path to be followed by the followers of the religion. The evolution of the earth by Lord Brahma with his egg (brahmand) who hence is called the creator is one of the myths related to cosmology. There are hundreds of other stories on various deities like Indira, the tridev; Brahma, Vishnu & Mahesh, their families, and their struggles to keep heaven in their control and to make the people on earth moral constitute the stories. The most famous are the myths about Vishnu and his various forms (avatars) on the earth in the form of human incarnation to destroy the evil force. Myths about Rama and Krishna are also widespread which constitutes the famous mythology The Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Concepts of the reincarnation of souls (samsara) and requital (karma) played an important role in Brahman mythology. There are many myths about the rishi (wise men). Rishi Vyasa was believed to be the author of the Vedas, the Mahabharata, and the Puranas, as well as an enlightener of humanity.

Buddhist myths are also associated with India which talk about the Buddha and bodhisattva deities. Jainism myths relate principally to the feats of Mahavira and the 23 “founders of faith” (Tirthankara) who preceded him. Indian mythology has a profound impact on the literature and life of the people in India and the neighbouring countries.

2.4 GREEK AND OTHER IMPORTANT MYTHS OF THE WORLD

Every country and region of the world for e.g. Africa, America, Japan, East Asia, and Central Asia has its famous mythologies. But, the most famous mythology in the world is Greek Mythology. There are a lot of similarities between Greek and Indian mythologies. The mythologies can also be divided according to religion and age i.e. the period. The Greek mythologies are ancient and are mostly about the Greek Gods and Goddesses and their heroes. It has thirteen main gods known as the Twelve Olympians plus Hades, the brother of Zeus. The twelve Gods were Zeus, Poseidon, Hera, Hephaestus, Dionysus, Athena, Artemis, Apollo, Ares, Demeter, Aphrodite and Hermes. There are many stories related to each one of them that are famous.

2.4.1 Japanese Mythology:

Japanese mythology includes Shinto and Buddhist traditions. The Shinto religion alone has many kami (Gods & Spirits). Japanese myths are based on the Kojiki, Nihonshoki, and some other books. The Kojiki which is the 'Record of Ancient Things' is the oldest known book of myths, legends, and history of Japan. The Shintoshu explains the origins of Japanese gods and goddesses from a Buddhist point of view while the Hotsuma Tsutae has a very different version of mythology. This mythology is different from all other mythologies in a way that it also deals with the origin of the Royal family of Japan and assigns them divinity. Tenno (emperor in Japanese) means 'heavenly emperor'.

2.4.2 Chinese Mythology:

Chinese mythology is believed to have originated in the twelfth century BC. Chinese mythology is very interesting as it talks about adventurous people with magical powers and astounding settings. This mythology is most of its part a factual recording of history. The teachings of Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism are connected to this mythology. Many Chinese myths are about cosmology and the creation of the universe. Some are related to prehistoric times where a hero taught people to cook, build houses or write. This hero is mostly from a dynastic family. Shui Jing Zhu and Shan Hai Jing are the two books that tell us widely about Chinese myths.

2.4.3 Australian Mythology:

Dreamtime(refer to a religion-cultural worldview attributed to Australian Aboriginal beliefs) that dates back to 65000 years back is supposed to be the beginning of Australian mythology which is the aboriginal belief system. The aboriginals believed that the Earth was created by spiritual beings and everything created in this natural world

is the result of these metaphysical beings. The mythology consists of dance, stories, and art. Bunyip, Drop Bear, and Yowie are some famous mythical creatures of this mythology.

Check Your Progress II

What is the number of main Gods in Greek Mythology?

What are some famous Greek and Australian Myths?

2.5 FUNCTIONS OF MYTHS

After understanding the basic concepts of mythology and myths let's look into what are the functions of mythology. Mythology serves several functions. The first function of mythology is to bring to the readers the history of a certain time when the myth took place. Though at times it might be distorted or everything said in the myth might not be true. E.g. There might have been a Trojan War and it becomes certain when Heinrich Schliemann found Troy, but the war of that scale happened because of a woman is not a certainty.

Mythology can provide historians with motivation and can encourage them to find out the different cities and the reality of the characters being present at that period of time.

The second function mythology serves in society is to teach the youth of the societal social norms and expectations as well as the consequences of actions. E.g. The story of the demon Bhasmasur who after getting a boon from Lord Shiva that anyone whom he touches would be incinerated, tried to incinerate Lord Shiva himself. As a punishment, he was incinerated.

The third function is to tell why a certain culture did something. E.g. Swami Mahavir Jain broke his one-year fasting and prayers with sugarcane juice. Since then whoever fasts for a year break their fast with sugarcane juice. One of the functions of the myth is also to answer the question of creation. For E.g. Creation from chaos myths talks about how the world was created by bringing order from the disorder and it also is believed and at some point, the world will again go into an abyss or disorder.

To answer questions on what happens when we die is also the function of myths. The story of God Yama, the God of death is in many stories like the famous story of Savitri. The Lord Yama with his black clothes and buffalo comes with a long rope to take the deceased.

The last function of myth is Entertainment. There are many who do not believe in the truth of the stories but still enjoy reading the stories as fiction.

2.5.1 Problems in Studying Myths

There could be many problems in studying myths, some of them are given below:

- a) Deciding on the discipline of the myth is one of the most difficult parts while studying them. Myths are part of History, Literature, or Theology.
- b) There are many versions of myths and it becomes difficult to decide which version is the first and which version is the most accurate as many myths are changed according to the audience and the listener.
- c) The period when the actual event took place and the time when it was recorded might be different that could lead to some discrepancies. E.g the gap between the Iliad taking place and the time it was recorded by Homer was about some five hundred years and this gap must have led to many gaps.
- d) Another problem that arises in the study of mythology is the problem of modernization, which is changing the story to reflect current social ideals or to address current political problems. Using myths to show current societal problems is a common practice but in this, the original myth is often distorted.

❖ Check Your Progress III

1) Mention any three problems in studying myths.

2) What are the functions of myths?

2.6 REWRITING OF MYTHS

Myths have stayed with us for more than centuries. They do not become stale as they are recycled in newer forms to keep the interest in reading them. Moreover, everyone is not familiar with mythology, especially the newer generations as they do not form the part of any syllabus at school. The myths have lasted long and it's important to preserve them by telling them to the present generation in a way that interests them. With globalization, the sharing of myths of every region and culture and analysing them for their similarities and differences also adds an interesting aspect. There are many ways in which the myths can be retold or rewritten. The common ones that attract attention are poems, novels, cartoons, blogs, soaps, and serials. Each medium attracts and interests a certain audience. By retelling the myths we can preserve a large part of our history too.

Myths are being retold and rewritten for centuries. The Indian myth The Ramayana has been told and retold and rewritten in multiple ways. India has the culture of orally retelling the myths for e.g Ramlila is one such way where the epic is retold almost in every street of the country in different ways to suit the taste and needs of the audience. In South India, the Haridas tell the story of Ramayana in his own style to attract the audience. There are many rewritten forms of Ramayana as it is rewritten in almost all the languages both Indian and foreign. In his well-known essay, "Three Hundred Ramayanas", A.K. Ramanujan points out that the Rama story is found in at least twenty two different languages (Indian and South East Asian) with some of these languages hosting more than one telling (Sanskrit alone accounting for more than twenty five). "If we add plays, dance-

dramas, and other performances, in both the classical and folk traditions” and forms of spatial arts like paintings and sculpture, the total number may easily be three hundred! (Ramanujan 133-34).

A myth changes and takes a newer form with the change in the writer, the basic tale may remain constant but its cultural details get added or changed according to the times. The rewriting of myths take a new aesthetic, cultural, moral form.

2.7 RETELLING FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

The retelling of myths from a feministic point of view is taking the mythological world by storm. Most of the myths be they of any geographical region or religion were mostly told from a masculine perspective mostly told by or written by men. The men cast the women in supporting roles and the mythologies often reflect the expectations of a patriarchal society. The mythologies are narrated to the younger generation as bedtime stories and have very set ideas of good and evil, purity, and also a definition of an ideal woman (pativrata stree). Now, when they are being rewritten and are being telecast in different forms it is important to broaden the horizons of the narrow narratives and retell the stories from a feminine perspective. Creating awareness about topics like inclusivity, diversity, casteism, gender through these writings also will make the younger generation more open to accepting these ideas. The Ramayana is full of women characters like Urmila, Kakeiyee, Sumitra, Ahalya, Shabri, Mandodari, Surpanakha, and many more. There could be many interesting facets that could open if we look at these from the perspective of these women. The injustice meted out to these women by either cursing them or testing their chastity through different tests is being questioned by these women characters in the rewritten versions. In the book by Volga ‘Liberation of Sita’ (an author) now translated into English, the Ramayana is narrated from the perspective of these women, where Surpankha questions the apathy shown by Lakshmana and Ahalya is a happy single woman, enjoying the bliss of singlehood and thinks that the loss is of the rishi who debarred her not hers. A powerful subversion of India’s most popular tale of morality, choice, and sacrifice, *The Liberation of Sita* opens up new spaces within the old discourse, enabling women to review their lives and experiences afresh. Authors like Amish Tripathi, Devdutt Patnaik are remodeling the women in a new avatar which fits the narrative of this century. Similarly, the character of Draupadi, which is destined to marry five men and also face the humiliation of the Kauravas is looked at from a feministic lens by authors like Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni in her book ‘Palace of

Illusions', where Draupadi, when summoned to the Kauras court for disrobing her, says "I'm a queen. Daughter of Drupada, sister of Dhristadyumna. Mistress of the greatest palace on earth. I can't be gambled away like a bag of coins, or summoned to court like a dancing girl." According to Linda Hess in her work 'Rejecting Sita: Indian Responses to the Ideal Man's Cruel Treatment of his Ideal Wife' the retelling does not show Sita proving her chastity instead they show Sita and Ram living happily ushering in the golden age of Ayodhya. Kavita Kane is one of the authors who builds her stories around the women characters in the famous Mahabharata and The Ramayana. E.g 'Karna's Wife: The Outcast's Queen' (2014), which told the story of Karna through his (fictional) wife, Uruvi, and starts the narrative of two important issues: women and casteism. In her other two books named 'Sita's Sister' and 'Menaka's Choice' she brings forth two characters who are very minor but retells the story from their point of view. Saiswaroop Iyer's book 'Abhaya' retells the story of the myth of Narakasura and Krishna. Iyer refashioned Satyabhama's character as Abhaya – which literally means the fearless one. Utkarsh Patel's debut novel 'Shakuntala: The Woman Wronged' positioned its heroine as one who dared to love, accepted the consequences, but kept her pride intact. Geetha Hariharan in her first novel 'The Thousand Faces of Night' links the dilemma of her three female characters Devi and Sita with the legendary female characters of Indian mythology.

Indian society has a long way to go towards the fair treatment of women and other genders, but retelling mythology from a feministic lens can bring the change quickly.

Greek mythology is also written from the patriarchal point of view. The women characters are endowed with negative emotions like anger, jealousy, promiscuity, and male subversion. They are now being rewritten from the perspective of women. 'The Memoirs of Helen of Troy' written by Amanda Elyot gives a voice to Helen which was missing in the original work. It transforms into a fascinating novel about love, passion, sacrifice, and revenge that explores the events from a woman's perspective. Madeline Miller in her book 'Galatea' gives a feminist retelling of the Pygmalion myth from the perspective of the statue who, after given the gift of life is forced to live one she didn't choose, this captivating short story changes how one sees the original myth. 'Xo Orpheus: Fifty New Myths' edited by Kate Bernheimer retells fifty famous mythological stories from women's point of view.

2.7.1 Mythology in Different Genre:

Mythology is being rewritten in different genres. At times the whole mythology is written with a newer twist or a character's story is given a new analysis. Myth has always given a creative impetus to the producers of the content all over. The stories and tales are so magnificent that the authors can display arrays of dynamic and divergent attitudes revolving around the characters and portray them in various lights. This reworking of mythological subject matter through new modes of expression has proved to be an effective strategy that connects one to the cultural past on the one hand and helps to assert the present cultural and socio-political identity on the other. (Nivargi, 2014)

Movies: There are a number of movies that take the crux of every mythology which is good versus bad. The plot moves around the theme that the protagonist or the good may face a lot of problems but in the end wins over the evil, the antagonist. The characters of the Ramayana like Ram, Sita, Laxman, Bharat, Hanuman, and Ravana are being represented in the movies in different ways. There are movies that tell the story directly of these mythological characters and there are some which weave the plot indirectly around the narrative of a well-known character. There are a number of movies where the theme of the mythologies is represented in some or another way. 'Ravan' directed by Maniratnam shows the antagonist as Ravan who kidnaps the wife of Ram, the protagonist. The same way the epic story of bonding between the brothers in Ramayana is shown in movies like 'Kalyug' directed by Shyam Benegal. Rachel Dwyer in her book on religion in Indian cinema, *Filming the Gods* says: 'in the social, mythological stories are brought into the everyday world, where they are retold as part of daily life until the division between religion and the mundane is blurred' (Dwyer 2005, 145–6).

Greek mythology, because of its grandeur and magnificence has been attracting filmmakers at large. Many stories of the lore are retold in a very interesting way. 'Clash of Titans' (1981, 2010) tells the story of the Greek myth of Perseus and the sequel 'Wrath of Titans' shows Perseus and his rescuing Zeus to save the world. 'The First King: Birth of an Empire' is an Italian historical drama film based on the famous Romulus and Remus myth, the story of two shepherd brothers, one of whom was raised by a wolf. The Legend of Hercules (2014) the origin story of the Greek demigod Hercules (which is actually the Roman name for Heracles), son of the god Zeus and the mortal Queen Alcmene (Roxanne McKee).

Cartoons and Animations:

The retelling of mythology is also being done in the form of cartoons and animations which is a newer form and attractive to the younger generation. The animated films have no visual limitations and this advantage is being fully exploited by the stories on mythology. The liberal dose of imagination added by these animations makes the kids believe the mythology and suck the virtues of the mythological characters into their own lives. When the oral tradition of passing the mythologies to the next generation ceased, as the younger generations did not feel captivated and believe in the mythologies, the newer way of retelling the mythologies through animation brought interest in them. The example of 'Chota Bheem' is a classic one where the children in the younger generation got attracted to it and then followed the trend of retelling the tales through cartoons and animations that aroused the interest in mythologies once again and the side effect of this trend was that they started exploring their culture and took pride in it. Many animated movies or serials followed each other in recent times that struck a chord with the younger generation like Hanuman, Ganesha and Luv Kush. Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama (1992) is a notable animation film. A child's mind is crucial in grasping and imitating anything they are exposed to which is also interesting to them. Therefore children are found to be following the religious views and practices of the popular 'Chhota Bheem' irrespective of their own religion and practices (Maqsood & Amer, n.d).

In 1997 Disney started to retell Greek mythology through the story of 'Hercules' (1997). This film introduced the basic themes and characters of Greek mythology to children through an entertaining comedy. Ulysses 31(1981-82) is a French Japan anime series that talks about the character Odysseus and Telemachus and their adventures. Mythic Warriors: Guardians of the Legend (1998-2000) is an animated series that showed various Greek myths in an interesting way to the children and was released by the country Canada. Metamorphoses (1978) is an 80 minute animated show released in Japanese and English.

As we note that there are many forms of even cartoons right from Manga, Anime to animated versions of Greek mythology available to attract the young generations and retell them the myths to satiate their need for adventure, entertainment, and above all give them a peek into the glorious past. Along with entertainment they also provide knowledge of the culture and people of the past times. This helps them to stay rooted in their culture and traditions.

Though most of the time the mythologies retold have very little connection with the real mythologies but they at least make the characters likable to these generations. Many like Devdutt Patnaik feel that the retold stories are too simple and they fail to catch the essence and the complexities of the mythologies and also establish some prejudices like the fat and the ugly are evil.

Mythology in Literature:

Myths and literature are interdependent and it's difficult for one to stay without the other. Literature offers the myths in a beautiful tapestry sometimes as expansions, sometimes as modifications, and yet at times as rewritten forms. There are many examples of mythology in literature.

Raja Rao's 'Kanthapura' is a great example of mythical adaptation. In this rustic novel, Rao frames the Gandhian revolution in terms of Ram leading his army to rescue Seeta. The British are symbolized as the evil-spirited villain Ravana. Kanthapura signified Ayodhya, Gandhi as an epitome of divine Ram. The mythical story of Rama's victory over Ravana is symbolically presented as the victory of Indians over Britishers. Raja Rao skillfully blended mythical figures in his writings to convey patriotic messages. Besides the mythical setting, the novel also portrays socio-economic division, superstitions, and caste system of the pre-independent south India.

Another prolific writer, R.K. Narayan wrote various versions of Ramayana and Mahabharata. He creates a rustic town Malgudi with real-life but situations and the characters have the imprint of Indian mythology. The myth of 'Bhasmasur', the famous story of the self-destructive asura is used very creatively in 'Man Eater of Malgudi'. Shashi Tharoor's 'The Great Indian Novel' is a perfect concoction of fiction and myth where he used Mahabharata to showcase the emergency situation during the reign of Indira Gandhi.

Contemporary Indian writer, Amish Tripathy wrote the Rama Chandra series titled Scion of Ikshvaku, and the Shiva trilogy rests on the ideals of Ram Rajya where myth, history, and fiction are blended to tell the story of Shiva who tries to unite India. Mythologist, Devdutt Pattanaik has written over thirty books on Indian myths. His works include 'Sita: An illustrated retelling of the Ramayana', 'Seven secrets of Shiva', 'The book of Ram', 'Seven secrets of Vishnu', 'Jaya: An illustrated retelling of Mahabharat', 'Shikhandi: and the other tales they don't tell you', 'My Gita', etc. All these literary works are based on Indian myths. For these writers myth served as an extended metaphor in terms of presenting modern life stories. In

‘Where Shall We Go this Summer Anita Desai creates the tale of a patient and bearing Sita who mirrors the image of Sita in Ramayana. Sashi Deshpande has given voice to such mythological characters and made an attempt to relive mythology through Amba in ‘The Inner Rooms’, Kunti in ‘Hear me Sanjaya’, and Sita in ‘The Day of the Golden Deer’. ‘Hear me Sanjaya’ is a mythological story based on the life of Kunti.

Poetry also lends itself to extend and recreate the magic of myths. ‘Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol’ is an epic poem in blank verse by Sri Aurobindo, based upon the theology from the Mahabharata. Keki Daruwala a prominent poet also picturizes myths in many of his poems like ‘Shiva: At Timarsian’ where he shows the ancient place and Shiva’s concept with the use of vivid imagery. In his other poem ‘Dialogues with a Third Voice’, we can see glimpses of myths in the form of dramatic mythic monologues. ‘Apparition in April’ is a collection of poems that show mythology and philosophy on a large scale. Here he throws light on two legendary tragic figures from the Indian epic Mahabharata, Karna and Carvak.

Shakespeare in his narrative poem Venus and Adonis recreates the mythology of the love Goddess Venus. His other poem ‘Orpheus with lute made trees’ also talks about the mythology of Orpheus. Alfred Tennyson in his lesser-known poems ‘Tithonus’ (in Greek mythology, Tithonus was a handsome mortal who fell in love with Eos, the goddess of the dawn). T.S Elliot in ‘The Wasteland’ puts many mystical characters like Tiresias, the seer from numerous Greek myths. Sylvia Plath in her acclaimed poem ‘Medusa’ writes about the myth of Medusa and Perseus. Carol Duff’s ‘Mrs. Midas’ from her poetry collection ‘The World’s Wife’ mingles mythology with a touch of modern perspective.

Check Your Progress IV

1) Name some of the movies where mythology is recreated.

2) Who is Perseus, in Greek mythology?

3) Name some other novels where the characters resemble mythological characters.

2.8 LET'S SUM UP

As we have seen the myths are given myriad colours through different genres and made it interesting for the younger generations to read and understand from a modern perspective. Many Indian writers used mythological stories to evoke the feelings of nationalism and evoke spiritual, moral, and creative pursuits in their readers. There are also works that are used as a satire against the prevalent social norms. Whatever is the form and the function, the rewriting of myths has certainly enriched the modern world and has kept us closely rooted in the glorious past. Let's conclude with the explanation given by Banker on mythology- "Mythology is the foundation of culture, memory, self-awareness, and identity. It's like the original Facebook of cultural identity connecting us all, directly and indirectly. These are our shared memories — sometimes hazy, perhaps unreliable but still powerful and alive."

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❖ **Answers**

Check Your Progress I

- 1) The word myth has come from the word mythos that means stories or according to some from the word Muthos which means from the mouth. According to Pattanaik, the word myth originates from the word mithya.
- 2) The different kinds of myths are Aetiological Myths, Historical Myths, and Psychological Myths.

Check Your Progress II

- 1) There are thirteen main Gods in Greek mythology. Some of them are Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Hephaestus, Aphrodite, Hermes, and either Hestia or Dionysus
- 2) Some famous Greek mythologies are Heracles and the 12 Labors, Prometheus and the Theft of Fire, Narcissus and Echo, Sisyphus' Punishment, Perseus' Slaying of Medusa, Orpheus', Theseus and the Labyrinth, Icarus' Flight. Some famous Australian mythologies are: Baijini – Unknown race mentioned in Yolngu folklore, Bora – Sacred Aboriginal initiation ceremony, Bunyip – According to legend, they are

said to lurk in swamps, billabongs, creeks, riverbeds, and waterholes

Check Your Progress III

1) Problems in studying mythology are a) understanding which disciplines it belongs to b) Modernisation of myths distorts it c) to understand out of many written which one is the correct one.

2) a) to entertain b) to lead the youth and tell them the norms of life c) to connect with the glory of the past d) to tell why a certain culture did something.

Check Your Progress IV

- 1) Indian: A short movie Ahilya, Rajneeti, My Friend Ganesha, English: Black Orpheus, The Trojan Women, Thor.
- 2) In Greek mythology, Perseus is the legendary founder of Mycenae and of the Perseid dynasty. He beheaded the Gorgon Medusa for Polydectes and saved Andromeda from the sea monster Cetus.
- 3) Shivaji Savant- Mrityunjaya, Iravati Karve-Yuganta, and MT Vasudevan Nair- Randamoozham, Udayshankar-Aryavarta Chronicles.

(Study of Theme in History – Partition Literature)

:: STRUCTURE ::

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Two-Nation Theory

3.3 Artistic Depictions of the Partition of India

3.4 Fictions

3.5 Plays

3.6 Let Us Sum Up

3.7 Key Words

❖ Check Your Progress

❖ Answers

3.0 OBJECTIVES

Here in this unit, you will learn about:

- The two-nation theory and the impact of partition on literature.
- You will learn about various fictions and plays based on the partition of India and Pakistan.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Partition of India was the division of British India into two independent Dominions: India and Pakistan. The two states have since gone through further reorganization: the Dominion of India is today the Republic of India (since 1950); while the Dominion of Pakistan

was composed of what is known today as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (since 1956) and the People's Republic of Bangladesh (since 1971). The partition involved the division of two provinces, Bengal and Punjab, based on district-wide non-Muslim or Muslim majorities. The partition also saw the division of the British Indian Army, the Royal Indian Navy, the Indian Civil Service, the railways, and the central treasury. The partition was outlined in the Indian Independence Act 1947 and resulted in the dissolution of the British Raj, i.e., Crown rule in India. The two self-governing independent Dominions of India and Pakistan legally came into existence at midnight on 15 August 1947.

3.2 TWO-NATION THEORY

The two-nation theory is the basis of the creation of Pakistan. The two-nation theory in its simplest way means that cultural, political, religious, economic and social dissimilarities between the two major communities, Hindus and Muslims of the Subcontinent. These differences of outlook, in fact, were greatly instrumental in giving rise to two distinct political ideologies which were responsible for the partition of the sub-continent into two independent states. The two-nation theory was a founding principle of the Pakistan Movement (i.e., the ideology of Pakistan as a Muslim nation-state in South Asia), and the partition of India in 1947. This leads to "Mental trauma". It is not to be confused with head trauma.

Psychological trauma is damage to a person's mind as a result of one or more events that cause overwhelming amounts of stress that exceed the person's ability to cope or integrate the emotions involved, eventually leading to serious, long-term negative consequences. Trauma is not the same as mental distress.

Check Your Progress

State whether the statement is true or false:

1. Psychological trauma is caused due to excess amount of stress.
2. The two-nation theory is not the basis of the creation of Pakistan.
3. The two-nation theory was a founding principle of the partition of India in 1947.
4. Physical and psychological trauma are same.

3.3 ARTISTIC DEPICTIONS OF THE PARTITION OF INDIA

The partition of India and the associated bloody riots inspired many creative minds in India and Pakistan to create literary/cinematic depictions of this event. While some creations depicted the massacres during the refugee migration, others concentrated on the aftermath of the partition in terms of difficulties faced by the refugees in both side of the border. Even now, more than 60 years after the partition, works of fiction and films are made that relate to the events of partition.

Source-<http://ijllc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/THE-PARTITION-OF-INDIA-AND-PAKISTAN-IN-THE-NOVELS-OF-SELECTED-WRITERS-IN-SOUTH-ASIAN-COUNTRIES.pdf>

Literature describing the human cost of independence and partition comprises Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956), several short stories such as *Toba Tek Singh* (1955) by Saadat Hassan Manto, Urdu poems such as *Subh-e-Azadi* (*Freedom's Dawn*, 1947) by Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* (1974), Manohar Malgonkar's *A Bend in the Ganges* (1965), and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* (1988), among others. Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* (1980), which won the Booker Prize and the Booker of Bookers, weaved its narrative based on the children born with magical abilities on midnight of 14 August 1947. *Freedom at Midnight* (1975) is a non-fiction work by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre that chronicled the events surrounding the first Independence Day celebrations in 1947. There is a paucity of films related to the independence and partition. Early films relating to the circumstances of the independence, partition and the aftermath include Nemai Ghosh's *Chinnamul* (1950), Dharmputra (1961), Ritwik Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), Komal Gandhar (1961), Subarna Rekha (1962); later films include *Garm Hava* (1973) and *Tamas* (1987). From the late 1990s onwards, more films on this theme were made, including several mainstream films, such as *Earth* (1998), *Train to Pakistan* (1998) (based on the aforementioned book), *Hey Ram* (2000), *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* (2001), *Pinjar* (2003), *Partition* (2007) and *Madrasapattinam* (2010). The biopics *Gandhi* (1982), *Jinnah* (1998) and *Sardar* (1993) also feature independence and partition as significant events in their screenplay.

Some of the books and films are discussed here. However, the list is far from being exhaustive.

❖ Check Your Progress

Choose the correct answer:

From the late _____ onwards, more films on the theme of partition were made, including several mainstream films.

- a) 1990
 - b) 1991
 - c) 1992
 - d) None of the above
1. The release date of *Gadar: EkPrem Katha* is:
 - a) 2000
 - b) 2001
 - c) 2002
 - d) None of the above
 2. _____ is a film by Ritwik Ghatak is:
 - a) Tamas
 - b) Meghe Dhaka Tara
 - c) Jinnah
 - d) None of the above
 3. _____ won the Booker Prize and the Booker of Bookers, weaved its narrative based on the children born with magical abilities on midnight of 14 August 1947.^a
 - a) *Midnight's Children*
 - b) *Meghe Dhaka Tara*
 - c) *Tamas*
 - d) None of the above

3.4 FICTIONS

1. *Hyder, Qurratulain, AagKa Darya (River of Fire) (1959).*

It was translated into English by the author in 1998 and Reprinted in 2019 by New Directions. "River of Fire" tells a completist and syncretistic version of 2,500 years of history in modern-day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Beginning with the Nanda Dynasty on the brink of defeat by the founder of the Mauryan Empire (323 to 185 BCE), and ending in post-Partition despair."

2. *This is Not That Dawn (Jhootha Sach)*

Jhootha Sach is arguably the most outstanding piece of Hindi literature written about the Partition. Reviving life in Lahore as it was before 1947. The book opens on a nostalgic note with vivid descriptions of the people that lived in the city's streets and lanes like Bhola Pandhe Ki Gali; Tara, who wanted an education above marriage; Puri, whose ideology and principles often came in the way

of his impoverished circumstances; Asad, who was ready to sacrifice his love for the sake of communal harmony. Their lives and those of other memorable characters are forever altered as the carnage that ensues on the eve of Independence shatters the beauty and peace of the land, killing millions of Hindus and Muslims and forcing others to leave their homes forever. Published in English translation for the first time, Yashpal's controversial novel is a politically charged and powerful tale of human suffering.

3. Khaak aur Khoon

Khak aur Khoon is a historical novel by Naseem Hijazi that describes the sacrifices of Muslims of the sub-continent during the time of partition in 1947.

When a portion of the Muslims from the various regions of India were trying to get to Pakistan, some faced attacks from Hindu and Sikh groups during their journeys that involved snatching of money, and jewellery of their wives and daughters.

4. The Weary Generations

The Weary Generations is an Urdu novel by Abdullah Hussein. It tracks the prehistory of the partition through the experiences of the main character, Naeem, a veteran of the First World War who faces up to the futility and meaninglessness of the partition.

5. Basti

Basti by Intizar Hussain is an Urdu novel that focuses on the partition as memory, through the lens of protagonist Zakir, a historian who seeks to come to terms with this memory in the context of the happenings in 1971 in Pakistan leading up to the formation of Bangladesh.

6. Sunlight on a Broken Column

Sunlight on a Broken Column is a novel by Attia Hosain which depicts the experiences of the protagonist, Laila, a young woman from a taluqdari family of Oudh, in the years leading up to the partition.

7. Pinjar

Pinjar is a Punjabi novel written by Amrita Pritam. It is a story of a Hindu Girl who was kidnapped by a Muslim young man who married her later. At the time of partition that girl again got chance to go to her family and re-unite which she refuses as she starts loving her husband.

It was a film based on the novel that released in 2003 while the TV series adapted from the novel was broadcasted on TVOne Pakistan in 2018.

8. *Bano*

Bano is an Urdu novel by Razia Butt. It is the story of a Muslim family in Ludhyiana (located in undivided Punjab) and two lovers Hassan and Bano who got separated during partition. The heart breaking story of the partition of India further continues after the independence of Pakistan. Later, the novel was also adapted into a TV series which broadcasted on Hum TV (Pakistan) in 2010.

9. *Kingdom's End and Other Stories*

Kingdom's End and Other Stories (1987) is a collection of stories written by Saadat Hasan Manto, published by Penguin Books India (ISBN 0-14-011774-1). The majority of stories by this Urdu writer from Punjab revolve around the end of the Raj, Partition and communalism. His stories include Thanda Gosht, Khol Do, Toba Tek Singh, Iss Manjdhar Mein, Mozalle, Babu GopiNath etc. Some of his characters became legendary. An online translation of Toba Tek Singh is available.

10. *Sacred Games*

While Vikram Chandra's 2006 novel Sacred Games is not about partition, it does contain a long and graphic chapter describing the main character's mother's flight as a young Sikh girl from what would become Pakistani Punjab, during which her beloved older sister was abducted.

11. *Train to Pakistan*

This saga by Khushwant Singh was first published in 1956. Singh's version of the Partition is a social one, providing human accounts in a diverse, detailed character base where each person has unique points of view, pointing out that everyone is equally at fault and that placing blame was irrelevant. Interwoven with this point are the subtle questions of morality which Singh asks through his characters, such as whether or not the bad needs to be recognized to promote the good, and what constitutes a good deed. It was adapted into a Hindi film by the same name by Pamela Rooks in 1998.

It's probably the best fictitious work on the partition of two countries. Khushwant Singh himself is no more, yet his legacy is! Train to Pakistan may be in the fiction genre, yet it's an ultimate read. Singh

employs the usage of a fictional village called Mano Majra in it. Now this village is located on the border of India and Pakistan. Both Muslims and Sikhs live together in it. Yet they become susceptible to certain viewpoints and stereotypes. Muslims think Sikhs will murder them. Sikhs think the vice versa. Thus, Khushwant has shown human predicament during trying times beautifully. Critics say he hasn't described politics much in the book. That's true because he tried highlighting human elements more. While reading the book, you will also encounter protagonists like Iqbal and Juggut Singh.

12. *Tamas*

Penned by Bhisham Sahni and the winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1975, *Tamas* depicted riots in a small Indian town. The novel was later adapted into a TV series by the same name for Doordarshan, and later a one-off four-hour feature film. *Tamas* – RajkamalPrakashanPvt.Ltd..

This is a very lucid book showing glimpses of Hindu Muslim riots. The story is woven yet it's somehow true. Bhisham himself saw the riots that happened in the book, in Rawalpindi. It basically follows the trajectory of a person Nathu. He is Hindu and is bribed by a Muslim politician. He thus kills a pig, which is later found near a mosque. Thus the tensions increase and riots erupt. In them, so many people of different faiths get killed. Muslims kill Hindus, while Hindus go about killing Muslims.

Although the riots are controlled, yet they leave an indelible impression. That's how Bhisham explains about the partition woes. It's a very emotional and pricking account.

13. *Midnight's Children*

Salman Rushdie wrote this famous surrealistic fiction full of satirical references to the event of partition and independence. The "midnight" alluded to in the title is the moment at which partition and independence became official. It was later adapted into a film by the same name by Deepa Mehta.

Salman Rushdie is probably the most controversial writer of the World. Yet his art is worth all the awards and recognition. That's the reason that "Midnight's Children" won the Booker Prize. The story is told right from colonialism to Partition and post Independence. The plot is definitely very complex, yet interesting. The protagonist of the novel is Saleem Sinai. He is born exactly the date when India got independent. Thus, he was born on the midnight of 15th August 1947.

Soon, Saleem realizes he has got Telepathic powers. He discovers that all children born between 12 and 1 on that day got miraculous powers. So, they together convene a conference that is called “Midnight’s Children Conference’. So, the conference discusses problems that independent India faces or it faced before. The idea behind the book is excellent. Rushdie has carefully depicted reality in fiction form. It’s truly a wonderful piece!

14. *Purbo-Paschim*

Purbo-Paschim (East and the West) is an epic Bengali saga by Sunil Gangopadhyay. The narrative deals with a particular family that had to migrate from East Pakistan to West Bengal, and their fight against the tide. The story stretches from a pre-independence period to early 1980s and reflects the socio-economical changes that this region went through during this long period of time.

15. *The Shadow Lines*

The Shadow Lines is a novel by Amitav Ghosh. It is a non-linear narrative that covers several crucial periods in the history of India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. It explored the themes of violence, memory, loss, and of the 'grand narratives' propagated by those in power, as opposed to the more individual and personal 'little narratives' seen through its central characters, Thamma, Tridib, and the unnamed narrator.

16. *Aangan*

Aangan is a Urdu-language award winning novel by Khadija Mastoor. Aangan means Courtyard, thus as the name represents it deals with the events of life inside the house walls at the time of partition and depicts the stories of its characters Chammi, Aaliya, Tehmina and Salma from Aaliya's perspective. The novel was also adapted into a TV series with the same name by Hum TV (Pakistan).

17. *The Great Partition by Yasmin Khan*

Yasmin Khan is a British writer and historian. This book by her is definitely the most famous partition literature work. She is currently a professor at the University of Oxford.

In this book, she has described it all. Beginning from the execution of partition to the aftermath. She explains how the partition was a carefully devised plan. Later, she explains the recklessness with which it was implemented. Woven in the book are local stories too. She narrates tales of common people. Then these tales are interlinked to

the larger politics that was behind partition. Many critics have also said that her work talks about obliviousness of the partition. She talks about how the partition as a moralistic plan was oblivious about its repercussions. Thus, it's a great read!

18. *Clear Light of Day* by Anita Desai

This book was published in 1980. It is written by one of the most brilliant Indian writers – Anita Desai. She has been nominated 3 times for the Booker Prize.

It basically talks about tensions in a family post the partition era. The setting is in Old Delhi. The story is divided into 4 parts, usually following the age group line. It ends with the adulthood part. It centers around the Das family. The family breaks away during the adulthood period. The protagonists of the novel are Tara, Bakul, Bimla, Raja and the Misras. In the second part of the book, the partition era is discussed. While in the last part, modern India is depicted. Finally, the climax ends with Tara adoring their neighbour Misras. They stand as an epitome of love and understanding, as opposed to their own family. Thus, it's a really touching book!

19. *India Divided* by Rajendra Prasad

There's no doubt in it that he was a person who had closely watched everything. Right from Colonialism to Nationalism and then Partition. Although this book is now largely available only in fragments, efforts have been made to bind it all together. The book was published before Partition in January 1946. Most part of it was written in prison. It talks about Prasad's views on how Hindus and Muslims are two nations. And in this, it's proposed that a secular state be made for them with cultural autonomy. The book brings to light other such issues too. This includes the history of the two-nation theory. It also traces the chronology of the Hindu- Muslim conflict.

20. *The Broken Mirror* by Krishna Baldev Vaid

The Broken Mirror, a Hindi novel by Krishna Baldev Vaid, portrays the psychological and sociological transformations in a West Punjabi village in the phase leading up to the Partition, with emphasis on communal taboos and hardened community boundaries.

"The Broken Mirror" is again a fictitious piece of literature. Probably, very few people may have read it. Yet this story is simply subtle and sober. It brings out ethos that was related to the Partition times. The protagonist of the story is Beero- a village boy in Western Punjab. He

has a whole gang of friends. They all are basically quite insane and crazy. Yet when partition arrives, some critics say that they transform into mature individuals. There are instances in the book which show Hindu-Muslim strife. Devi, Beero's sister throws herself into the well. Yet the Hindus don't allow Muslim guys to get her out. Moreover, one sees dreadful incidents of rape and looting all around in the book as partition nears. It is definitely a strong metaphorical book, with the title being carefully chosen. The broken Mirror has a lot to say.

21. *Ice Candy Man* by Bapsi Sidhwa

Now the title of this book looks quite weird and incongruous. There's hardly anything related to partition in it. Isn't it? But still, it's about the Partition era. But the writer encompasses other topics too like women objectification and child sexuality. Bapsi is a Pakistani author and writer. She is currently based in Texas, USA. The story is told from the point of view of a little girl. It's a touching account of Hindu-Muslim tensions, communal riots, child rape, and massacres. The main protagonist is a girl named Lenny Sethi. She is a Parsee. She is just 4 years when she narrates the story and dies four years later. There are other colorful actors like Ayah, Sikh Zoo attendant, etc in the story too. It is through them that she explains various sentiments associated with Partition. The narrative is brilliant. At times it's emotional, but funny also.

22. *Mottled Dawn* by Saadat Hasan Manto

Saadat Hasan Manto is the most famous Colonial Indian writer and playwright. He was born in Ludhiana, Punjab. Though originally, he is a Pakistani writer. Yet his book is simply scintillating. This book is not a single chain narrative. It is rather made up of many short stories together. These stories are real and not wholly superficial. Though some have a tinge of fiction, yet they aren't entirely untrue. Some stories are extremely short in length. Yet the context of stories is in pre and post-partition times. Manto traces how pre-partition Bombay and Amritsar looked like. Thus through myriad characters, he portrays the partition quite vividly. Obviously, it doesn't follow a storyline, yet the account is vivid. Also, the main stories were in Urdu.

23. *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition* by Nisid Hajari

This book is written by an Indian-American writer. Rather than taking up the repeated narrative, it has something fresh to offer. It not only discusses the communal conflicts. It rather showcases how decisions by leaders and others were responsible for the Partition. It looks at

new and fresh historical resources. Nisid is said to have conducted a good research before writing it. That's how he manages to write a masterpiece. It is a narrative that contains emotions and details both. It does talk about trains with carcasses, deaths, rapes, etc. However, he adds additional details to them. He goes into the depth of this topic to find reasons and problems

❖ Check Your Progress

Choose the correct answer:

1. The train to Pakistan is written by:
 - a) Saadat Hasan Manto
 - b) Baldev Vaid
 - c) Khushwant Singh
 - d) None of the above
2. The book *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition* by Nisid Hajari deals with:
 - a) Child abuse
 - b) Mental conflicts
 - c) Communal conflicts
 - d) None of the above
3. Bapsi is a/an _____ writer.
 - a) Indian
 - b) Pakistani
 - c) Bangladeshi
 - d) None of the above
4. *Mottled dawn* is written by:
 - a) Saadat Hasan Manto
 - b) Baldev Vaid
 - c) Khushwant Singh
 - d) None of the above

3.5 PLAYS

Meghe Dhaka Tara (The Cloud-Capped Star)

Directed by Ritwik Ghatak, *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (1960), never explicitly mentions the Partition, but takes place in a refugee camp in the outskirts of Calcutta, and concerns an impoverished genteel Hindu bhadralok family and the problems they face because of Partition.

Dharmputra

It was first Hindi film to depict the partition of India, and Hindu fundamentalism, *Dharmputra* (1961) directed by Yash Chopra, two

years after he made his debut with *DhoolKaPhool* (1959), steeped in Nehruvian secularism, wherein a Muslim brings up an 'illegitimate' Hindu child and featured classic song, *Tu Hindu baneganaMusalmanbanega, insaankiaulaadhai, insaanbanega*, the theme was reverse in this film as herein a Hindu family brings an illegitimate Muslim child, who grows up to become a Hindu fundamentalist. The film was critically acclaimed, and won the 9th National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi., however its release saw near riots at the theatre, discouraging other Hindi film directors from approaching the theme for another decade, although subtly.

Earth

Directed by Deepa Mehta, *Earth* (1998), an India/Canada co-production, is a thoughtful examination of a circle of friends and acquaintances affected by the Partition. A scoundrel uses communal violence as an excuse for retaliation against a romantic rival. The film is based on BapsiSidhwa's *Cracking India*; Sidhwa co-wrote the screenplay with Mehta. Contains brutal scenes of communal carnage.

Hey Ram

Kamal Haasan wrote, directed, and starred in *Hey Ram* (2000) film about the Partition and the assassination of Gandhi. The story follows the life of a south Indian Brahmin man caught up in the madness surrounding the direct action day in Calcutta and the subsequent events culminating in the assassination of Gandhi. It portrays the greatness of M.K. Gandhi in a telling way and also shows how even educated men acted mad out of grief and rage during the partition. The screenplay is done brilliantly touching many things that are common to the modern nations of India and Pakistan, starting from the Indus valley civilisation.

Gadar: EkPrem Katha

Directed by Anil Sharma, *Gadar: EkPrem Katha* (2001), is an Indian movie about the Partition; notable for shocking scenes of riot and massacre of Hindus and Sikhs being killed in the famous scene of train full of dead bodies of Hindu and Sikh people escaping from Pakistan. The train was marked by Pakistani mobs by writing "*AjadiKaTohfa*," that translates as "Gift of Independence" on it. In the movie the trains that came from Pakistan had another sentence written on them, which translates as "Indians! learn cutting from us." It was a major hit.

KhamoshPaani (Silent Waters)

Directed by SabihaSumar, KhamoshPani (Silent Waters) (2003), depicts the partition ironically and shows the situation of Jihadis in 1979 Pakistan.

Pinjar

Pinjar was a 2003 film, adapted from the novel by same name by Amrita Pritam, and had UrmilaMatondkar in the role of the protagonist, Puro.

Partition

Directed by Vic Sarin Partition, is a Canada/UK/South Africa co-production. A retired Sikh military officer (played by Jimi Mistry) helps and falls in love with a Muslim teenaged girl (played by Kristin Kreuk).

Tamas

Based on author, BhishamSahni's acclaimed Hindi novel, Tamas (1987) depicted the makings of riots in a small Indian town, and its aftermath, first shown adapted into a TV series by GovindNihalani for Doordarshan, and later shown as a one-off four-hour feature film.

Gandhi

Richard Attenborough's film on Gandhi's life has several scenes dealing with the lead up to partition, the violence, and Gandhi's reaction. The movie won 8 Academy Awards

The Sky Below

A feature-length award-winning documentary by Sarah Singh which explores the history and current climate on both sides of the Indo-Pakistani divide (2007).

Advertisements

The 2013 Google India advertisement Reunion (about the Partition of India) has had a strong impact in both India and Pakistan, leading to hope for the easing of travel restrictions between the two countries. It went viral and was viewed more than 1.6 million times before officially debuting on television on 15 November 2013.

Check Your Progress

Choose the correct answer:

1. The 2013 Google India advertisement Reunion, about the Partition of India, went on television on _____.
 - a) 14 November 2013
 - b) 15 November 2013
 - c) 16 November 2013
 - d) None of the above
2. _____ movie won 8 Academy Awards.
 - a) Jinnah
 - b) Gandhi
 - c) Gadar
 - d) None of the above
3. _____ is a thoughtful examination of a circle of friends and acquaintances affected by the Partition.
 - a) Partition
 - b) The Sky Below
 - c) Earth
 - d) None of the above
4. It was first Hindi film to depict the partition of India.
 - a) Dharamputra
 - b) Pinjar
 - c) KhamoshPani
 - d) None of the above

Check Your Progress

Answer the following questions:

1. Discuss the two-nation theory and its effects on literature.

2. Discuss the effects of partition on literature.

3. Discuss the film Gadar and its theme in your own words.

4. Discuss the book by Bapsi Shidhwa.

5. Which is your favourite fiction or play from the above discussed list? Give reasons to support your answer.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

There are many first-hand accounts by people who actually saw the partition. There are many secondary accounts too in the form of books, letters, journals, etc. They depict moments of happiness, sadness, anger, hatred, and varied emotions. It is through these books and accounts that partition is still living in our memories. Almost 70 years have passed since that day, yet we still feel it's so vivid.

Here in this unit, you have learnt about:

- Partition and its effect on literature.
- The different themes related to the partition to create fictions and plays.
- The writers of the era.
- The famous fictions and plays.

3.7 KEY WORDS

Trauma	a deeply distressing or disturbing experience
Fiction	novels that describe imaginary events and people
Vivid	having/ producing a strong and clear picture in your mind
Viral	quickly and widely spread by means of social media
Bhadralok	gentleman
Aftermath	result/ consequences
Culminating	to reach a result

❖ **Answers**

❖ **Check Your Progress**

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. False

❖ **Check Your Progress**

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. A

❖ **Check Your Progress**

1. C
2. C
3. B
4. A

❖ **Check Your Progress**

1. B
2. B
3. C
4. A

:: STRUCTURE ::**4.0 Objectives****4.1 Introduction****4.2 Gandhiji as Communicator****4.3 Gandhiji as Multi-faceted Personality****4.4 Impact of Gandhiji on Writers****4.5 Important Themes portrayed by Gandhian Novels****4.6 Famous Novels and Characters influenced by Gandhiji****4.7 Some Works based on Gandhiji's life****❖ Check Your Progress****4.8 Let Us Sum Up****4.9 Key Words****❖ References**

4.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, you shall learn

- About various aspects of Gandhiji's life.
- About socio-political and cultural aspect of this age.
- About Gandhiji's impact on the lives of common people, society and literature.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most popularly discussed figures of Indian politics is Mahatma Gandhi. There is hardly any area in the pre or post-independence era that he had left unturned for the sake of Indian development and independence. He is such a socio-political figure who is barely possible for someone to forget or ignore. He has influenced every aspect of human consciousness and there is hardly any discipline that he has left uncommented. He is an immense source of writing himself and has influenced different disciplines and many writers from different fields like history, politics, philosophy, literature, sociology and so on, have him as their central themes.

4.2 GANDHIJI AS COMMUNICATOR

It is a very interesting fact that Gandhiji was one of the supreme communicators who could bring ignorant people out of doors; make illiterates sing one song, gather all women at a venue and make children chant his name as God, at his single call. That Gandhiji was a classic media-man, is proved by his journalistic activities and his use of journalistic writings throughout his life. He very aptly exploited the nationalist press, and his own journals, 'Young India', 'Navijivan', 'Indian Opinion' and 'Harijan', though were restricted to the literary urbans of India, yet he well knew the secret of reaching out to the hearts of the millions in the rural areas by means of 'Padayatra' or mass procession and motivating speech. He was much an advanced social worker and was well aware of the power of communication. He weighed and measured the Indian colonial situation and the existing psychological and physical state of Indians and thus concluded that the accurate means to reach them was by the folk media and group communication. He achieved identification with the masses through "Sadharanikaran" or simplification of his message, through common religious symbols, Vedas, myths, and of course making his life very simple to establish an easy identification. Whatever Gandhiji's influence may have been on political and economic spheres of the country, there is hardly any doubt that he has left a deep impression on our literatures. He is a mine of themes for writers and commentators though he himself never worked on any literary topic or genre. Dramatic reconstructions of Gandhiji's life in film and fiction range from Richard Attenborough's academy award winning film, GANDHI, in 1982 to Indian English novels like Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K Narayan. Gandhiji gave new strength and new confidence to Indian languages that suffered contempt, neglect, indifference, and disgrace for a long time. Gandhiji insisted on high

thinking and simple living which was reflected and highlighted by the literary English authors of the time, who in their novels and short stories, portrayed the real picture of the the-then society from various sides, thereby presenting the influence of Gandhi on Indian villages and towns, letting us a scope to probe how Gandhiji's ways of developmental communication created effects on human lives bringing a sea change in their thoughts, views and living. Almost all of their novels represent events, which distinctly correspond to the examples of actual incidents, and teachings that Gandhiji in real life encoded during his visits at various places. The writers working in different languages in those days either were mostly persons who had come directly under Gandhiji's influence, many had even taken part in the freedom movements, or they were highly influenced by his ideals. Their writings were immensely burdened with Gandhian idealism, lifestyle, his teachings, and anti-colonial stands. Gandhiji was so much part and form of any literary genre of that period that he made appearance in many dramas, novels, stories and in poems. In most of the cases, the Gandhian writers, especially the novelists and short story writers, made Bapu an important, guest character or they made a local Gandhi replica and presented him in the light of Mahatma. Not only did the Indians turn Gandhiji into a veritable cult but also a flesh & blood Rama or Krishna who could change the society by his single finger touch. P. Rama Moorthy in 'Gandhi's letters to the West' quotes: "For me there were only two God & Bapu, and now they have become one."

4.3 GANDHIJI AS MULTI-FACETED PERSONALITY

Gandhiji had a multi-faceted personality. He has been the only Indian after the Buddha to attain worldwide fame. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he had performed many miracles during his lifetime and his message was a source of inspiration and strength to the people for all times. Gandhiji was a psychologist in one sense and an idealist on the other as he could feel the pulse of India and its people on whom he could exert a tremendous influence and preach his Gandhian ideology. He realized that India being a religion-oriented country with a majority of half-literate and illiterate population can only be motivated and mobilized through a traditional mode of communication and in addition, Gandhian philosophy was mainly based on traditional and labour-oriented technologies. The folk or traditional arts of India have from the ancient times been used for moral, religious socio-political purposes. It is a classic communicative medium which appeals to the personal and emotional level of the people, avoiding any cross-cultural hurdles, expensive entertainment

programmes and above all, the message is dispersed in a familiar format and content in local and colloquial dialects to a homogeneous group, surpassing all literacy and socio-economic barriers. Gandhiji though not in-person but in ideologies, teaching, views, had reached the stage and in hearts of people through various forms of Tamasha, Jatra, Keertan, Nautanki, Pala, Yakshagana, Ramlila, Raslila, Puppetry, and Street Theatre, to name a few folk forms, at all corners of rural and urban India and of course the literary artists and art directors were behind to provide a firm support in popularizing Gandhiji. He was the one who could clearly mention that our India is our Sita 'maiya' (mother) and we are the Ramas who would drive the red-faced Ravana (British) away and bring back our mother. This very use of the Ramayana concept deep-rooted in the religious tradition of India ignited the dormant national consciousness and deeply founded the concept of freedom movement in the illiterates and by dint of this religious proforma, he could bring about a united upheaval in the country for its development. Moreover, his mission was backed by the messages that could remove social evils and vices from the country. Shahid Amin in his essay "Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorakhpur District, Eastern UP", says, "The 1910's movements and organizations of Hindi, Hindu Culture and social reform 'nagri sabhas', pathshalas (vernacular schools), 'gaushalas' (asylums for cattle), 'sewa samithis' (social service leagues) and 'sudrak sabhas' (reform associations) of various sorts provided the support and cover for nationalist activity all backed by popular Gandhi belief even in the rural villages and undeveloped regions. Each type of these socio-political movements served nationalism in its own way, but there was a considerable amount of overlapping in their functions and interests... Yagya (sacrifice) was performed; a Sanskrit Pathshala and a gaushala endowed with financial support from traders, arrangements made for the orderly running of Ramlilas and melas, and panchayats set up for the arbitration of disputes."

4.4 IMPACT OF GANDHIJI ON WRITERS

The name Gandhi and his prescribed guidelines were means enough to resolve the village disputes. Gandhiji gave new strength and new confidence to Indian languages which suffered contempt, neglect, indifference and disgrace for a long time. In his relation to art Gandhiji describes, "I can make no literary pretensions. My acquaintance with Gujarati, and, for that matter, any literature, is, for no fault of mine, next to nothing."

The inspiration and influence which our literatures of all languages have imbibed from him is well noted in the theatre, folk activities and

literary writings based on his life, preaching, and ideologies and of course his welfare activities nationwide. Such a medium produced an immediate feedback from the audience from all parts of the country, as things got well assimilated into their hearts and minds, and the whole of India could respond unitedly at his call.

The literary writers of the period were also no exceptions to the above phenomenon. The writers working in different languages in those days were mostly persons who had come either directly under Gandhiji's influence and many had taken part in the freedom movements, or they were highly influenced by his ideals. Their writings were immensely burdened with Gandhian idealism, lifestyle, his teachings and anti-colonial stands. Bhabani Bhattacharya specifically sums up the elements that the then writers incorporated from Gandhiji: "In every Indian literature a new thinking emerged. There was to be shift of emphasis from the rich to the poor, from the intellectual to the man of character and inner culture, from the educated to the illiterate and the voiceless, and deep rooted in these revaluations was social reform."

Krishna Kripalani puts, "apart from its political repercussions, it was both moral and intellectual and at once inhibitive and liberating.... Gandhi stripped urban life and elegance of their pretension and emphasized that religion without compassion and culture without conscience were worthless. He transfigured the image of India as she was poor, starving and helpless, but with an untapped potential of unlimited possibilities."

Gandhiji was so much part and form of any literary genre of that period that he made appearance in many dramas, novels, stories and in poems.

Gandhiji's social activities were development oriented and his idealism was democratic, rural and homogeneous in nature. It was not only the literary writers who played an active role in reflecting the then Gandhi-mania of the entire country but also the nationalist Press and local newspapers and journals which portrayed the bhakti cult of the Mahatma through different anecdotes, feature articles, soft news and of course, snippets, thereby proving the immense popularity of the political figure who was slowly turned into a divine entity, a messiah who was sure to bring a revolution in human history as Buddha or Christ could. Newspapers like the 'Swadesh', 'Aaj', 'Abhyudaya', 'Gyan Shakti' and local dailies, pamphlets etc all contributed accordingly and respectively in portraying the local reactions in favour of Gandhiji and thereby popularizing him.

4.5 IMPORTANT THEMES PORTRAYED BY GANDHIAN NOVELS

Gandhiji insisted on high thinking and simple living which was also reflected and highlighted by the literary English authors of the time, mainly Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayanan, who in their novels and stories portrayed the real picture of the the-then society from various perspectives, thereby presenting the influence of Gandhi on Indian villages and towns, letting us a scope to probe how Gandhiji's ways of developmental communication created effects on human lives bringing a sea of change in their thoughts, views and living. Almost all of their novels represent events which distinctly correspond to the examples of actual incidents and teachings that Gandhiji in real life encoded during his visits at various places. The crux of the morale or bottom spread of Gandhism, which the novels often portray by vicarious means and events are:

1. Unity among all religions especially Hindu-Muslim Unity.
2. People should not adhere to extremist means of protest, i.e. they should be non-violent and not use domestic arms like lathis, sharp weapons, and stop picketing and looting places.
3. Stop the evil practices of untouchability, castism, enmity among classes, hatred, lying, swearing but spreading of brotherhood, love and unity among all races instead.
4. Stop consumption of tobacco, ganja-smoking, gambling, stop swearing, using slang, whoring, and beating the womenfolk at home, sex-crimes and the like.
5. Boycotting foreign goods, educational, economic and legal institution.
6. Take up the initiative to spin, weave, cultivate, study, learn and teach, control sex, family planning, lead a simple living, self-sacrifice and self- purification.
7. People will not betray their help-seeker; they should be honest, progressive and self-confident about their country, resources and abilities.
8. Believe in the truth, face the truth and apply it in life, realization of Swaraj, grace of God, strength of the united people when motivated towards one goal peacefully

The most important and common fact that we find in the Gandhi novels is that they talk of a distinct village, a representative of all villages in rural India and the rural folk same as others, immersed in their Gandhi- their saviour, their God. Mahatma's image takes form within pre-existing patterns of popular belief and ritual action corresponding to their demographic customs. There are few who oppose him and are swept away in importance and deeds by the Gandhi followers and the whole lot take Gandhian as their life irrespective of any troublesome consequence. The procedure of development as said before was through group communication, through the political meetings held by the Mahatma or occasional visits by him at various places to perform a righteous deed for a great cause, i.e., freedom. The other way was automatic trans-creation of religious slokas to Gandhi slokas or Gandhi Puranas, which found way to stages, temples through songs, Keertans and Jatras.

4.6 FAMOUS NOVELS AND CHARACTERS

INFLUENCED BY GANDHIJI

Such was his popularity that things associated with him got his name attached to it as a suffix or a prefix like Swaraj was called as 'Gandhi-Swaraj' or 'Mahatma Swaraj' only because of his tremendous influence. Gandhi is now transformed into 'Mahatma', great souls, whose words are like that of the Lord and must be adhered to, and the authenticity or the purpose, the deep-rooted meaning is never to be questioned. Such feeling was common to most of the ignorant people and women folk of the village who went on chanting stories and songs about the Mahatma without even properly understanding them; such is the scene in R. K. Narayanan's *Waiting for the Mahatma*, where we find the hero Sriram becoming a blind follower of Gandhiji and joining the freedom movement but not at all understanding what Gandhian is actually about. There are people who still remain a Gandhian even if their leader leaves them or the Mahatma is defeated, severely criticized or if the Sahibs put them behind bars. In Narayanan's *The Vendor of Sweets*, Jagan considers himself a staunch Satyagrahi, spins the charka regularly, and equates himself with achieving Nirvana, like the Buddha, by following the principles of Gandhism. Bakha in Anand's *Untouchable*, is introduced before Gandhism in the end, as redemption from the social evils of untouchability and casteism. After listening to the speech of Gandhiji as a counsel from God, Bakha's life becomes more tolerable from the next day.

Kanthapura sketches the step-by-step social development of a south Indian village Kanthapura, and its people, who following Gandhiji became successful not only in forming a Swadeshi or anti-colonial group and performing anti-colonial protests but also redeeming their village from the social evils of untouchability, Castesism, women backwardness, dis-unity and toddy or wine drinking. Gandhiji's popular effects are noticed when we hear him chanted in a Keertan or in a village-made swadeshi song, songs sung as preface to anti-colonial protests, as he is considered as the main Lord of inspiration behind all actions and all political activities. When the entire village carries out an anti-colonial protest against the Skeffington Estate, the coolies cry out, "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai!" and "we (the villagers) say 'Mahatma, Mahatma, Gandhi Mahatma! and they put their mouths to our ears and say 'Gandhi Mahatma ki jai!'", as a source of inspiration, strength and will power. Kanthapura experiences a total reformation from a place with a common term, 'village' to a village in the real sense of the term, in the end, where there is no caste distinction, backwardness and religious fanaticism, but self-employment, women emancipation, love, social awareness and of course the pride of their Sthalapurana. The enthusiasm that Gandhiji generated, the expectations he aroused and the attack he launched on the British authority, had all combined to initiate the very first anti- colonial movements in the peasant India which could lead to the conceptualization of an over turning of the power structure not only in its international aspect between the British and India but also within the country where a peasant could now dare to violate a landlord, a farmer the unjust priest or police, or a high class - a pariah. The development is gradually noticed in form of the incidents throughout the novel, from the mouth of the narrator, Moorthy and the village folk, all in an interesting and storytelling manner. "So Moorthy goes from house to house, and from younger brother to elder brother, and from elder brother to the grandfather himself, and what do you think? He even goes to the Potters' quarter and the Weavers' quarter and the Sudra quarter, We said to ourselves, he is one of these Gandhimen, who say there is neither caste nor clan nor family, and yet they pray like us and they live like us. Only they say too, one should not marry early, one should allow widows to take husbands and a Brahmin might marry a pariah and pariah a Brahmin." (p.15). Again, when we come to matters like keeping an uncorrupted spirit by the grace of God, we see Achakka narrating: "Ah! says Range Gowda. 'And I shall not close my eyes till that dog has eaten filth,' but Moorthy interrupts him and says such things are not to be said, and that hatred should be plucked out of our hearts and that the Mahatma says you must love even your enemies." (p.75). The development is prominent and is bound to take place as we find the villagers equating

Gandhiji with Brahma, Shiva and Krishna who were all Saviours in our Hindu mythology and anything said by them is bound to be true. The most interesting matter that one must note is that the entire change or transformation, social and civic, as carried on by Moorthy, the representative of Gandhiji, is done only by different modes of communication through group discussions, religious chants, Ramlilas, gram sabhas, etc. based on Gandhi-talks and no non-violent measures are needed or introduced. The Harikatha man, Jayramachar while telling a story from Hindu mythology tells "You remember how Krishna, when he was but a babe of four, had begun to fight against demons and had killed the serpent Kali. So too our Mohandas began to fight against the enemies of the country. And as he grew up, and after he was duly shaven for the hair ceremony, he began to go out into the villages and assemble people and talk to them, and his voice was so pure, his forehead was so brilliant with wisdom, that men followed him, more and more men followed him as they did Krishna the flute-player, and so he goes from village to village to slay the serpent of the foreign rule. Fight, says he, but harms no soul. Love all, says he... He is a saint, the Mahatma, a wise man and a soft man, and a saint. You know how he fasts and prays. And even his enemies fall at his feet." (p.18). All the village folk irrespective of their caste distinction now came up to the temple and swore the oath unanimously to serve the county "My Master, I shall spin a hundred yards of yarn per day, and shall practice ahimsa, and I shall seek Truth', and they feel prostrate and asked for the blessings of the Mahatma and the gods, and they rose and crawled back to their seats." (p.81). A certain village gossip reveals that girls, who are quite aged to bring up children, go to the universities and "talk to this boy and that boy and one, too, I heard went and married a Mohammedan." (p.33). Moorthy, the miniature Mahatma, in the story, experiences an epiphany and it is Gandhiji's loving touch and words that makes him a Gandhi-man, leading him to boycott foreign goods and quit foreign university. In a progressive meeting, Moorthy counsels a woman: "To wear cloth spun and woven with your own God given hands is sacred, says the Mahatma. And it gives work to the workless and work to the lazy. And if you don't need the cloth sister, 'give it away to the poor'..... Our country is being bled to death by foreigners. We have to protect our mother" (p.23). Again, in the village Brahmins sit with the Pariahs in the meetings and eat and sing in the temple. Kanthapura now arranges for even adult Night Schools and Pariah Night Schools. Once in an anti-colonial protest, a Pariah saves a Brahmin and a Brahmin leaves way to a Pariah too.

But Moorthy, the village Gandhi, in the end, leaves Gandhism, joins the Nehru group and writes in a letter "Is there no Swaraj in our states

and is there not misery and corruption and cruelty there? Oh no, Ratna, it is the way of the master that is wrong. And I have come to realize bit by bit..." (p. 183). Though the magical effect of Gandhiji was found bulleted through, to a certain extent, by the introduction of other idealisms, for the common people it was like the God imprisoned for His wrong ways and the huge mass of disciples found no soil under their feet, but still they managed to keep faith on the Lord as He still was the source of strength and existence in their lives. Though Moorthy leaves Gandhi and Kanthapura, yet the other village members stay back firm rooted in Gandhi and the narrator says, "They say Rangama is all for the Mahatma. We are all for the Mahatma. Pariah Rachanna's wife, Rachi, and Seethamma and Timmamma are all for the Mahatma. They say there are men in Bombay and men in Punjab, and men and women in Bombay and Bengal and Punjab, who are all for the Mahatma. They say that the Mahatma will go to the Red-man's country and he will get us Swaraj. and Rama will come back from exile, and sita will be with him for Ravana will be slain and Sita freed, and he will come back with Sita on his right in a chariot of the air, and brother Bharata will go to meet them with the worshipped sandal of the Master on his head." (p. 183). The faith and religious coating on the bitter political truth is prominent and 'Rama', i, e the Mahatma, will go to England in the Round Table Conference and bring back 'Sita' i, e independent India from the 'Ravanas' i, e the British and Pt. Neheru i.e., 'Bharata' will welcome the Mahatma as The Ramayana dictates. It was essentially a Gandhi-Purana that the ordinary village folk understood and because of such religious orientation, the majority of the people blindly followed Gandhi. Despite everything, it is an uncontested truth that it was Gandhiji who introduced the National consciousness among people irrespective of class, caste and religion, not only through religious coated speeches or political campaigns but also bringing the genuine realization of the need to be united against the British to fight back freedom by observing certain social, civic, psychological and behavioural changes in society.

R. K. Narayanan's *The Guide* takes us back to the Natyashastra's philosophy, where the communication for certain development a 'Guru-Chela' relationship should be maintained and the ways of the Guru is to be taken as the ways of the Lord. Unquestionable faith and devotion lead to 'moksha' or union with God and thus whatever Raju, a railway guide utters becomes a Vedanta and his life a doyen for all common people. His sacrifice takes form of a divine contribution for the people of the earth. So, Velan like the others is unwilling to believe Raju's past, that he was a fraud and prisoner after all, and thus acts obediently according to his holy words.

Some of the

4.7 SOME WORKS BASED ON GANDHIJI'S LIFE

01 'The Story of my Experiments with Truth' by Mahatma Gandhi

No one can write better about the Mahatma, than he himself. With all the other interpretations and studies of his life, it's good to take in his own perspective. In his autobiography he tells us about his life from childhood to 1921. It was written in Gujarati, in weekly instalments and was published in Navjivan from 1925 to 1929. The English version was translated by Mahadev Desai in 1940. It is an honest account of his early life, ideologies, his mistakes and the lessons he learnt from them.

02 'Gandhi before India' by Ramachandra Guha

Written by the respected historian Ramachandra Guha, this book takes us to Gandhi's youth. Starting from his birth in 1869, the book tells of his childhood years, his years studying in London and the time he was practicing law in South Africa. Guha uses private papers of Gandhi's contemporaries and co-workers; newspapers and court documents of the time; as his sources and he creates an interesting narrative showing how Gandhi's formative years shaped his philosophy.

03 My Dear Bapu: Letters from C. Rajagopalachari to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Devadas Gandhi and Gopalkrishna Gandhi

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari or Rajaji needs little introduction as his contribution to India's struggle for freedom is invaluable. He was the first Indian-born governor-general and the last Governor-General of India and a leader of the Indian National Congress. He was described by the Mahatma as his "conscience keeper" and, once, as his "only possible successor". This book compiles an exchange of letters between them from the years 1920 to 1945. The dialogue not only gives an insight into their lives but also provides food for thought.

04 'The Good Boatman' by Rajmohan Gandhi

The author of this book, Rajmohan Gandhi, is a known biographer and the Grandson of the great man he's writing about. In this book, he tries to look into Gandhi's philosophy and the success he had in applying it in detail. As time passes, new generations are taught a simplified version of his struggle, making him but a simplified archetype and with this book, he attempts to show Bapu's struggles and achievements in real light.

05 'Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope' by Judith M. Brown

Judith M. Brown is a British historian who was born in India and being deeply interested in Indian politics, she's written several books on it. Her biography of Gandhi is both fair and insightful. She doesn't deify or try to make him look like a canny politician but rather she writes about his life and shows how it shaped his philosophy and how he attempted to follow what he believed in. It's a good biography of his whole life.

06 'The Death and Afterlife of Mahatma Gandhi' by Makarand R Paranjape

As the title suggests, this book looks into the assassination of the father of our nation, and its implications. The book examines in detail Gandhi's last six months and all he did to prevent bloodshed as the nation he fought for was being torn apart. This book looks for a deeper meaning behind his death and is an interesting take.

07 'Why I Assassinated Mahatma Gandhi' by Nathuram Godse, Gopal Godse

This book contains the account of Nathuram Godse, the man who shot Gandhi thrice in the chest, which killed him. It's written by his brother Gopal Godse and tells of what happened during the assassination and after, until when Nathuram Godse was hung. Though one might not agree with his actions, it's good to know what provoked such an act.

08 'I am Gandhi' by Brad Meltzer

After all the heavy books that examine Gandhi's life, this slim tome is but a simple introduction to the great soul, for children. With few words and detailed images, this book is targeted towards those beginning to read. It simplifies and summarizes his life and philosophy but it's up to parents to provide context for his actions, keeping the child's maturity in mind.

❖ **Check Your Progress**

Answer the following Questions:

1. How did Gandhiji communicated with common people?

2. Describe Gandhiji as a communicator.

3. Compare the changes in the mode of writing before and after the influence of Gandhi?

4. Write about the common factors of Gandhian novels.

5. What were the important characteristics of Gandhian literature?

6. Name some writers who were greatly influenced by Gandhiji.

7. Name some famous books written on the life events of Gandhiji.

8. How was Natyashastra's philosophy explained by R. K. Narayan?

9. How the characters of Ramayana were compared to the characters of real life in Kanthapura?

10. Which character went against the ideologies of Gandhiji?

Short questions:

1 _____ book written by _____ on the life and philosophy of Gandhiji is best suited for children.

2 _____ wrote the book 'Why I Assassinated Mahatma Gandhi'.

3 The Guide is a story about _____.

4 C. Rajagopalachari was _____ to Gandhiji.

5 _____ was the Harikathamam.

6 _____ was the grandson of Gandhiji.

7 _____ and _____ social evils were the matter of conflict in Anand's novels.

8 _____ book tells us about the childhood stories of Gandhiji.

9 The book that was authored by Gandhiji himself was published in _____.

10 Gandhian philosophy was mainly based on _____ and _____ technologies.

Answers

1. 'I am Gandhi' by Brad Meltzer
2. Gopal Godse
3. Raju, a railway guide
4. "conscience keeper"
5. Jayramchar
6. Rajmohan Gandhi
7. Untouchability and casteism
8. Gandhi before India
9. Navjivan
10. Traditional and labour-oriented

4.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have learnt about

- Personality and idealisms of Gandhiji
- How Gandhiji influenced literature in India
- How different writers portrayed Gandhiji in different light

4.9 KEY WORDS

Literary topic	main idea or underlying meaning of novel, short-story or other literary work
Actual incident	real life events
Idealism	the belief that a perfect life, situation, etc. can be achieved, even in difficult situations
Replica	an exact copy of something
Cult	group
Multi	faceted personality- someone with different talents in all kinds of fields and subjects
Preach	teach

Cross	cultural hurdle- challenges or conflicts between people of different culture
Dispute	conflict
Feedback	comment about some work done
Imbibe	to absorb something, especially information
Homogeneous	made up of parts of same type
Emancipation	free/ liberate

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UNIT : 5**THE REPRESENTATION OF
DRAUPADI IN INDIAN LITERATURE****:: STRUCTURE ::****5.0 Objectives****5.1 Introduction****5.2 Birth of Draupadi and Childhood****Check your Progress I****5.3 Marriage****Check your Progress II****5.4 The Struggle of Draupadi****Check Your Progress III****5.5 Representation of Draupadi in Literature****Check your Progress IV****5.6 Let us Sum up****Answers****References**

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, the learner shall:

- Understand the life journey of Draupadi
- Analyse her character from a feministic perspective
- Evaluate the life of Draupadi and learn from her qualities.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The life of a woman in the Indian society is conditioned to be like a sacrificing, meek, humble and docile person. Indians admire if a woman endures the agony and suffers in silence. In contrast to this, Draupadi was a compassionate, merciful but a revengeful woman against the evil that was done to her. She is not an example of idealism as per the standards set by the Indian society of an ideal woman. She was a strong, brave and courageous woman who could question the injustice imposed on her life. Indian Mythology has portrayed her as the cause of the Mahabharata war. It is her firm determination, grit and the spirit in which she continued to kindle the fire of revenge in her husbands. Her husbands did not rest until they avenged her insult and humiliation. This fiery spirit is what makes Draupadi the strongest woman in the world history.

5.2 BIRTH OF DRAUPADI AND CHILDHOOD

"Draupadi has five husbands - but she has none -She had five sons - and was never a mother ...The Pandavas have given Draupadi ... No joy, no sense of victory No honour as wife No respect as mother -Only the status of a Queen ...But they all have gone And I'm left with a lifeless jewelAnd an empty crown ... My baffled motherhoodWrings its hands and strives to weep".

The above lines are from a long poem Kurushetra written by Amrita Shyam. These lines convey the anger that Draupadi or Panchali (as she belonged to the kingdom of Panchal and was the daughter of the Panchal King Drupad) had within her due to the disgrace and suffering she passed through. King Drupad had no children many years after his marriage. He performed a *tapasya* and began thinking of God and continued praying fervently. The Gods were pleased by his *tapasya* and blessed him with a son and daughter that were born from the *havan* fire that was lit by King Drupad to fulfil his revenge against Sage Dronacharya, the Guru of the Kauravas and Pandavas. Thus Draupadi was born out of the fire of vengeance that was being nurtured by her father Drupad and this made her a volcanic woman with anger and passion. Actually the King was performing the *yagna* to obtain a son who would avenge Dronacharya. The King did not ask for a daughter but Draupadi sprang forth from the fire full grown at the peak of her youth.

The story of her birth is linked to an event that took place in the life of King Drupad. As a young child Prince Drupad was sent to the hermitage of Sage Agnivesh for his education. At the hermitage Drupad became acquainted with a Brahmin Drona who was the son of Sage Bharadwaj. During their camaraderie Drupad once swore that both he and Drona would equally share whatever both of them owned. Both parted their ways after the completion of their education. Drupad became the King of Panchal but life was unfair to Drona as he was finding it difficult to make two ends meet. In despair he approached Drupad and was insulted by him saying that friendship exists only between equals and he would willingly help Drona if he begged for alms instead of using old friendship as a crutch. Feeling insulted Drona left the palace but the insult festered in his mind.

In due time Drona was appointed as the Guru of Hastinapur and had to educate the Pandavas and Kauravas. As *gurudakshina* he demanded Drupad to the Pandavas and Kauravas. The princes fulfilled this promise and brought Drupad in chains to Dronacharya who mocked at the king and reminded him of their friendship by reminding him that how he turned back on his pledge of dividing everything equally with him. He added that due to their friendship he will not own all his wealth but will divide it into half because of their friendship bond and let bygones be bygones. The infuriated King Drupad was unwilling to do so and as he was aging it was difficult for him to avenge his insult nor could his 3 sons - Shikhandi, Satyajit and Vikra were incapable too. In order to avenge this insult of Drona he wanted to obtain an offspring so he requested Sage Yaja to perform a sacrifice. Thus was born the intuitive, brave and intelligent Princess Draupadi.

The Princess was named Draupadi (being the daughter of King Drupad) and had different names. She was called *Panchali* as she was the princess of the Panchal kingdom. As she was born out of a fire *yagna* she was called *Yajnseni*. Being the granddaughter of Prushata, she was also known as *Parshati*. Being a wife of five husbands, she was called *Panchami*. She is *Ayonija* as she is not born of a woman. She was also called *Krishna* as she had thick long hair, fiery eyes and was copper skinned. She had a boon that she would become a virgin every fortnight and thus was called *Nityayuvani*. She was blessed with the fragrance of blue lotus that lingered on till two miles and thus was called *Yojanagandha* (one whose fragrance can be felt for miles). As she was dark and pure skinned by birth, she was *Krishna*. The world admired her unique relationship with her *Sakha* Krishna for whom she was a *Sakhi*. She had a mind of her own and was a true virgin. The events that took place in her life made her life a saga of suffering and disgrace.

❖ Check your Progress I

1. How was Draupadi born?

2. By which names is Draupadi called?

3. Who had a unique relationship of a Sakha and a Sakhi?

4. What did Dronacharya demand as *gurudakshina*?

5.3 MARRIAGE

At her paternal house, Draupadi lived a life full of satisfaction as a Princess by defying all the prevalent social norms. Her father educated her along with her brother. In the book, 'Eminent Women in Mahabharata' written by Vanmala Bhawalkar, she is described as a quick learner with a keen memory and knowledge of various subjects and an expert in political science. The writer also describes her qualities of audacity, confidence and intelligence as attributes to her education. During the birth of Draupadi, a celestial voice proclaimed from heaven, "*This unparalleled beauty has taken birth to uproot the*

Kauravas and establish the rule of religion". The circumstances for this had already laid its foundation when King Drupad was young. The incident that took place between the young Prince Drupad and Drona had sowed the seeds of enmity between Drupad and Drona.

When Draupadi came of the age, a *Swayamvar* was conducted for her so that she chooses her husband. The news of her unparalleled beauty had spread far and wide due to which many prospective suitors eager to win Draupadi had gathered in hundreds. King Drupad had a condition for all the suitors. He had arranged a mechanical device on which an object in the form of a revolving fish was placed. The task was to hit the eye of the revolving fish by looking at its reflection in the water below. The bow with which this task had to be completed was a heavy bow which could not be lifted by anyone who is weak. The bow had to be lifted, bent and then the bowstring had to be tied to pierce the target. The target had to be hit by taking aim with five arrows and hitting the revolving fish.

It is only during the *swayamwar* that Krishna and Draupadi share the same stage for the first time. Many suitors retreated from the venue as they failed. The *swayamwar* takes an unexpected turn when Karna went ahead to participate in it. As Draupadi had committed herself to Arjun; she was tensed and nervous when Karna came forward. Draupadi categorically refused Karna saying that he was not a Kshatriya. The insulted Karna felt humiliated and stepped back. This insult sowed the seeds of revenge in Karna which had its aftershock during the dice game. The Pandavas arrived at the *swayamwar* disguised as Brahmins. On receiving a signal from Krishna, Arjun comes forward and fulfils the condition of King Drupad and pierced the eyes of the revolving fish by looking at its reflection in the water. This created a chaos in the *pandal* and it was Krishna who pacified the kings who had come to win Draupadi. After things settled, the Pandavas and Draupadi left for their home.

❖ Check your Progress II

1. What was King Drupad's condition to the suitors for marrying Draupadi?

2. Why was Karna refused to participate in the *swayamavar*?

5.4 THE STRUGGLE OF DRAUPADI

Draupadi was extremely beautiful, virtuous and highly intelligent woman. She is one among a handful of women in Hindu mythology who had a voice of her own amongst the men around her. She is the first feminist of Indian Mythology who despite being a *sati* was born as a *kanya*. Her life was a journey of trials and tribulations over which she had no control. Her struggle in marrying five men at the same time and loving them all equally was a difficult task. The sexual commitment which was expected of her intimidated her. She explicitly questioned Krishna, “How am I to divide myself physically and emotionally between five husbands?” Lord Krishna found a solution to this predicament by advising her to spend one year with each husband. During that one year no other husband should have any sort of physical connection with her. The other husbands will be forbidden to enter that chamber where Draupadi and her husband of the year are spending their togetherness during that particular year. If any one does so he will be exiled for twelve years. Thus unwillingly Draupadi became a common wife for all the Pandavas.

Despite all the riches at her feet Draupadi’s life was a life full of regimented self-control. Her sentiments and emotions had to be accommodated according to her husband of the year. She had to make huge adjustments in her life style every year. She bore 5 sons from her five husbands. Amidst these difficulties she has emerged as one of the strongest character of Hindu mythology who bravely accepted all the challenges that came in her journey by enduring and shouldering all the responsibilities. Draupadi’s marriage was not only a polyandrous but also a polygamous marriage as the Pandavas had other wives too and Draupadi was compelled to manage all these relations harmoniously.

It was Draupadi’s unparalleled beauty and intelligence that put her in this misery. She was smitten by Arjun who won the contest in the *swayamvar* but is bundled off by her father as the wife of the five

Pandavas at the behest of Sage Vyasa. Her cruel fate made her a possession of the five Pandavas and shattered her psyche and her whole personality. Despite everything she did not remain passive, was fiery and could never tolerate injustice of any kind. She was brilliant and had the qualities of purity and purification in her to the extent that any man who tried to touch her with evil intentions would get burnt.

The horrific incident of disrobing Draupadi in the court of King Dhridharashtra during the dice game between Yudhishtira and Shakuni was a bolt from the blue for Draupadi. The insults hurled at her at the command of Duryodhana by Dushasan and Karna tormented her. She had vowed never to tie her hair unless she drenches them in the blood of Dushasan. The battle of Mahabharata took place due to this insults hurled at Draupadi. She avenged this insult by fulfilling her vow.

At the time of her death, none of the Pandavas came to her side except Bhima. It was during this time that Draupadi realized the futility of her life and the decisions taken by her. She struggled in the moments of death with her thoughts and inner turmoil. Thus overall the struggle of her life had drained her emotionally and she felt the pangs of every wound that was afflicted upon her. She was merely an object amongst those whom she considered as her family. All of them had ulterior motives beginning from King Drupad, Krishna, Kunti and her husbands. The strength of her character lies in her loyalty and dedication towards her family despite the odds which no other women in mythology would do so.

❖ Check your Progress III

1. What was Krishna's advice to Draupadi on her marriage?

2. Who was the Pandav who supported Draupadi at the time of her death?

5.5 REPRESENTATION OF DRAUPADI IN LITERATURE

There is a mention of Draupadi in many works of Indian writers. Indian Literature has presented her as a controversial yet a rewarding, strong & heroic character of the Mahabharata. Poems, short stories and novels have been written on Draupadi by writers. One of the great Bengali litterateur Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay points out the stark difference between Draupadi and Sita. According to him Sita is a wife by whom the finer feminine traits are expressed whereas Draupadi is a forceful queen with a will of steel, intelligence and pride. She is the most befitting consort of Bhīma who was the mightiest. He points out that Draupadi performed all the duties of a woman flawlessly but with a detachment. She was in control of her senses by the higher self. As society considers a woman as a producer of children, she gives birth to one son from each Pandav and like Kunti she is in control of her senses. Once she mothers the child of every husband she does not indulge into any physical relation with any of her husband. Thus she is called as the symbol of chastity despite having five husbands.

Yajnaseni written by Pratibha Ray portrays Draupadi as a fierce character who struggles to balance her passions and protect her *dharma*. She comes out as a feminist in many versions of the epic all over India. This is because she is a match against Krishna's wits and has a voice of her own in the society. In one of the versions of a short story written by Mahashweta Devi she emerges as a tribal woman Dopdi Mejhen where one finds the modern day *vastraharan* which is a rape by the local police and is portrayed as a woman of grit. Chitra Divakaruni has presented her as a romantic woman in love in The Palace of Illusion.

Keki Daruwala has portrayed the life of Draupadi in a poem titled Draupadi by calling her life as an eternal struggle. She is a representation of all the women who are sexually exploited. The miserable state of women is depicted by the symbol of 'bleeding stars'. According to Daruwala women are first exploited by men and further the exploitation continues by the feminists. The poignant poem written by Daruwala:

*The travails of Draupadi
are never-ending.*

*It seems— some people have it
in their bleeding stars:
first exploited by the Pandavas,
five to one,
then by the Kauravas,
hundred to one
and now by the feminists
in millions.*

*"Boat-ride along the Ganga", casts a
wry look at the contradictions that
abound in the life of a Hindu:
What plane of destiny have I arrived at
where corpse-fires and cooking-fires
burn side by side?*

A lot of literature has been written on Draupadi which represents her as a strong, fierce, confident, intelligent and courageous woman. She is fire as no one can cast an evil eye over her else he would be burnt. If Sita is a role model for an ideal wife it is because she had an ideal husband too. In the Indian society there is a deep rooted fear in our Indian women and that is the reason instances of atrocities take place in their lives. Draupadi's life teaches us that one must take a stand for themselves and believe in themselves. The brave Draupadi had declared a war with the Kauravas long before the actual war of Mahabharata took place. This bold step of taking a stand for herself was not entirely for herself but for the entire women clan. She sent a message of 'do not mess with women' to the Kauravas. She did not need anyone's support in taking a stand for her. She is incredible and empowered in terms of her beauty and her traits and she is an ideal wife because of the *pativrata* image she had. She devotedly abided to each and every thing that was expected of her as a dutiful wife. She follows everything that Kunti commands her to do and performs all her duties towards the husbands. Her individuality is praised and feared by men as she is at an equal status with them because of her intelligence as she is consulted by her husbands over political matters. This intellect of Draupadi transforms her into a strong character where she takes a stand for herself and finally emerges as a phoenix from her own ashes.

❖ Check your Progress IV

1. State the qualities of Draupadi that you find in the unit?

5.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we discussed about the life and birth of Draupadi. The life of the princess was a struggle in terms of the trials and tribulations that she was confronted with in life. Yet despite everything she fought bravely and succeeded in getting her revenge. Indian literature has depicted her character and woven it into poems, stories and novels. Indian Literature holds her in high esteem as she paved the path for the women of today in terms of her strength, her boldness, her honesty and loyalty towards her husbands and the strength of character that she possessed. Even though she is criticized for her polygamous marriage but after giving birth to a son through each husband she never indulges into any physical relation with any of them. Thus despite having five husbands she demonstrates the strength of her character. Keeping aside her marriage if we focus on her qualities as a woman she is a complete package of beauty, intelligence, courage and tolerance.

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❖ Answers

Check your Progress I

1. Draupadi was born from the *havan* that her father King Drupad had performed to obtain a son.
2. Draupadi had called by different names like *Yajnaseni* (one who was born of a yajna), *Panchali* (as she was the Princess of Panchal) *Parshati* (as her grandfather was from Prushata), *Yojangandha* (as her blue lotus fragrance lingered on for miles) and *Ayonija* (as she was not born of a woman), *Krishna* (as she had dark skin), *Nityayuvani* as she could gain her virginity every fortnight.
3. Krihsna and Draupadi had a unique relationship of a *Sakha* and a *sakhi*.
4. Dronacharya demanded that the Pandavas and Kauravas bring King Drupad as a prisoner to him in *gurudakshina*.

Check your Progress II

1. King Drupad had a condition for all the suitors. He had arranged a mechanical device on which an object in the form of a revolving fish was placed. The task was to hit the eye of the revolving fish by looking at its reflection in the water below. The bow with which this task had to be completed was a heavy bow which could not be lifted by anyone who is weak. The bow had to be lifted, bent and then the bowstring had to be tied to pierce the target. The target had to be hit by taking aim with five arrows and hitting the revolving fish.
2. Karna was refused to participate in the *swayamvar* because he was not a Kshatriya.

Check your Progress III

1. Lord Krishna found a solution to this predicament of Draupadi by advising her to spend one year with each husband. During that one year no other husband should have any sort of physical connection with her. The other husbands will be forbidden to enter that chamber where Draupadi and her husband of the year are spending their togetherness during that particular year. If any one does so he will be exiled for twelve years. Thus unwillingly Draupadi became a common wife for all the Pandavas.
2. Bhima supported Draupadi at the time of her death.

Check your Progress IV

1. The qualities of Draupadi that are described in the unit are intuitive, intelligent, courageous, confident, audacious, fierce, dutiful, chaste and disciplined.

UNIT : 6

STUDY OF A CROSS CULTURAL LITERARY THEMES

:: STRUCTURES ::

- 6.0 Objectives**
- 6.1 Introduction**
- 6.2 Exploring Cultural Studies: A Recap**
- 6.3 Deciphering the Notion of Culture**
- 6.4 Unraveling the Evolution of Cultural Studies**
- 6.5 Probing the Theoretical Landscape of Cultural Studies**
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6.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to:

- To provide comprehensive explanations of cultural studies concepts and theories.
- To offer insights into the application of cultural studies lenses to diverse examples.
- To foster an understanding of the dynamic relationship between culture, power, and identity.
- To facilitate the exploration of cultural studies' impact on literary analysis and pop culture interpretation.
- To empower users with the ability to critically analyze texts through a cultural studies perspective.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Cultural Studies, a multidisciplinary realm of inquiry, delves into the complex interplay of human societies, identities, and expressions. In this journey through its facets, we embark on a retrospective recap, revisiting foundational concepts and influential thinkers. We then decipher the elusive notion of culture itself, peeling back its layers to reveal its intricate influence on our lives. Tracing the historical trajectory, we unravel the evolution of Cultural Studies from its nascent beginnings to its contemporary relevance.

Venturing further, we probe the theoretical landscape that underpins Cultural Studies, exploring diverse perspectives from the likes of Stuart Hall to feminist and postcolonial theories. The intersection of Cultural Studies with literary analysis beckons, where we discern how literature mirrors and shapes cultural narratives. Lastly, we witness the practical applications of Cultural Studies, as it breathes life into real-world examples, from dissecting media to understanding subcultures. Our journey beckons—a voyage into the heart of cultural exploration and academic engagement.

6.2 EXPLORING CULTURAL STUDIES: A RECAP

At the crossroads of diverse disciplines lies the captivating realm of Cultural Studies. This intellectual journey delves into the intricate fabric of societies, identities, and their expressions. As we embark on this exploration, we navigate through a myriad of lenses that illuminate the cultural intricacies shaping our world.

Cultural Studies unveils the layers of meaning woven into human interactions, traditions, and institutions. By scrutinizing historical origins and pivotal debates, we uncover the discipline's evolution and its role in reshaping perceptions of culture. This venture transcends theory, as it intersects with literature, media, and real-world applications, revealing how cultural dynamics influence our lives.

In essence, this exploration unravels the threads that bind us to the past, present, and future. It invites us to question, interpret, and appreciate the myriad influences that shape our shared human experience. From the theoretical foundations to tangible manifestations, the journey through Cultural Studies is an odyssey into the heart of what it means to be human.

6.3 DECIPHERING THE NOTION OF CULTURE

The expansive terrain of cultural studies traverses numerous disciplines, reflecting the vastness of its subject matter: culture.

Indeed, culture, often regarded as one of the most encompassing topics, is inherently interconnected with a plethora of aspects that shape human existence. As we embark on a journey deeper into the realms of cultural studies, history, and theories, it becomes imperative to establish a comprehensive understanding of what "culture" truly entails.

When one contemplates culture, a myriad of facets spring to mind – cuisine, music, religious beliefs, attire, sports, language, and social norms. While these components do indeed comprise culture, they are merely the tip of the iceberg. Culture encompasses far more than the sum of its tangible parts; it encapsulates the very essence of a 'way of life' – whether for an individual, a community, a nation, or even the entirety of humanity.

Yet, a crucial underpinning of culture, particularly within the realm of cultural studies, is its inherent dynamism. Culture is not a static entity confined to a singular definition or interpretation. It is a perpetually evolving and intricate process. Culture, in its essence, is in a constant state of flux – a vibrant tapestry of change, growth, and development.

Cultural studies, at its core, seeks to illuminate these transformative nuances of culture. It strives to unravel the intricate threads of how cultures evolve over time, adapting to external influences, technological advancements, shifting ideologies, and the ever-changing human interactions. By recognizing culture as an ongoing process, cultural studies acknowledges that the understanding of culture is not confined to any given moment but rather involves tracing its evolution across history.

As we delve into the annals of cultural studies, it's essential to acknowledge the temporal dimension that defines culture's continuous motion. Each epoch leaves its indelible mark on culture, and each generation contributes to the ever-growing mosaic of human existence. What was considered cultural norm yesterday may be transformed by the winds of change today.

Ultimately, the significance of defining culture as a process lies in its potential to shape perceptions and interpretations. The notion of culture as a dynamic entity invites us to approach cultural studies with an open mind, prepared to explore the interplay of influences, reactions, and adaptations that mold societies and individuals. Through this lens, cultural studies becomes a platform to decipher not just the 'what' of culture, but also the 'why' and 'how' that propel cultures forward.

In essence, cultural studies embarks on a journey to understand the very essence of humanity – our diverse beliefs, practices, expressions, and interactions. By grounding our exploration in the understanding that culture is an evolving process, we equip ourselves to navigate the intricate tapestry that is human culture, weaving together history, theory, and contemporary dynamics into a comprehensive understanding of the ever-changing 'way of life'.

6.4 EXPLORING THE EVOLUTION OF CULTURAL STUDIES

In the annals of academic history, few milestones have had as profound an impact as the establishment of the University of Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) by Richard Hoggart in 1964. This marked the birth of the academic discipline known as cultural studies, a field that would reshape our perceptions of culture, media, and societal dynamics.

The CCCS, under Hoggart's visionary leadership, introduced a radical departure from the prevailing norms of academia. Prior to its inception, the prevailing sentiment was that only "high culture," epitomized by art, literature, and music often favored by the elite, deserved scholarly attention. This exclusionary perspective relegated "low culture" and mass media—comprising advertisements, television shows, and popular entertainments—to the margins of academic inquiry.

At the heart of the CCCS's innovation was the proposition that this distinction between high and low culture was artificial, unjust, and in dire need of deconstruction. The scholars of the CCCS passionately argued that so-called "low" cultural elements held profound significance and should not be dismissed simply due to their mass accessibility. They recognized that popular culture and mass media were powerful conveyors of meaning, shaping societies and individuals in profound ways.

The demarcation between high and low culture, once entrenched in academic discourse, had broader societal implications. High culture was often seen as the domain of the educated elite, symbolizing intellectual refinement and social status. In contrast, low culture was cast as the realm of the working class and less-educated masses, often belittled and marginalized. This division perpetuated a hierarchy of cultural value, reinforcing class distinctions and reinforcing the idea that some cultural expressions were inherently superior to others.

Cultural studies emerged as a transformative response to this skewed paradigm. It was not content with analyzing culture solely through the lens of aesthetics; rather, it aimed to unearth the social, political, and ideological underpinnings of both high and low culture. This transformative approach was driven by a commitment to expose systems of oppression and resistance embedded within cultural artifacts.

Throughout its existence, cultural studies has relentlessly examined the intricate interplay between culture and power. The CCCS's legacy extended far beyond its closure in 2002. Its groundbreaking ideas resonated across borders, catalyzing the formation of a global discipline. The field evolved into a dynamic platform for scrutinizing the media landscape, the consumption of cultural products, and the influence of these processes on shaping social structures.

However, like any pioneering field, cultural studies has not been devoid of critique. Detractors have argued that its vast scope risks diluting its focus, leading to a perception that it attempts to encompass everything yet deeply engages with nothing. The literary critic Harold Bloom voiced a concern that the field's emphasis on left-wing politics could potentially overshadow the aesthetic appreciation of art and restrict the breadth of discussions it could foster.

In conclusion, the establishment of the CCCS and the subsequent trajectory of cultural studies exemplify a paradigm shift in academia's approach to culture and its multifaceted significance. This field has dismantled the binary distinction between high and low culture, unveiling the intricate layers of meaning that permeate all cultural forms. The legacy of the CCCS continues to resonate through cultural studies, a discipline that empowers us to critically engage with the media, art, and practices that shape our world, while also fostering conversations about the broader societal implications of these engagements.

6.5 PROBING THE THEORETICAL LANDSCAPE OF CULTURAL STUDIES

Within the realm of cultural studies, the notion of "texts" transcends traditional understanding. These texts are not confined to written words alone; they encompass a diverse array of mediums, from speeches and advertisements to photographs, culinary choices, and fashion statements. In cultural studies, these texts are windows into the intricate fabric of meaning that shapes our perception of the world. This approach is underpinned by various theoretical frameworks, and one of the most influential is semiotic theory.

Semiotics, rooted in linguistics, investigates the structures of language, its components, and how it is interpreted. Cultural studies, recognizing the inherent interplay between culture and language, has embraced semiotics as a powerful tool. The reciprocity between culture and language suggests that culture functions as a kind of language, with both serving to represent the world and convey meaning.

Central to semiotics is the concept of signs – symbols used to represent or symbolize abstract meanings. Consider the word "tree" as a sign representing the idea of a tree or the ubiquitous ' ' emoji conveying the feeling of happiness. In cultural studies, the creation and interpretation of signs constitute an ongoing process that is mutually influenced by and influences our perception of reality. Thus, the dynamism of cultural studies theory asserts that meaning is not a fixed entity; it's a construction that is fluid and subject to change.

This fluidity of meaning construction is intricately tied to a multitude of factors, a notion further elucidated by the theory of cultural materialism. Cultural materialism delves into the intricate connections between material conditions, cultural practices, and their reciprocal influence. It emphasizes that culture doesn't exist in isolation; it's intimately linked to the socio-economic and political contexts in which it emerges. This theory posits that societal changes, technological advancements, and shifts in power dynamics all contribute to the continuous reinterpretation and redefinition of cultural signs.

Semiotics and cultural materialism are symbiotic in cultural studies. Semiotics aids in dissecting the layers of meaning within cultural texts, while cultural materialism provides the broader context within which these meanings are crafted and transformed. Together, they create a framework that acknowledges culture's profound impact on the perception of the world and the world's impact on culture.

However, the exploration of cultural texts and their meaning isn't confined to the theoretical realm alone. Cultural studies theorists actively engage in critical analysis, employing a toolkit of perspectives that illuminate various dimensions of these texts. Among these perspectives, structuralism and post-structuralism play pivotal roles.

Structuralism delves into the underlying structures that organize and give coherence to cultural texts. It seeks to uncover the inherent rules and patterns that govern the creation and interpretation of signs. In doing so, structuralism emphasizes the interdependence of elements

within a cultural text, highlighting how individual components contribute to the overall meaning.

On the other hand, post-structuralism challenges the notion of fixed, universal meanings. It contends that meaning is contingent upon context, subjectivity, and power dynamics. Post-structuralism reveals the complexities of interpretation, asserting that no single interpretation is definitive. Instead, interpretations are shaped by personal perspectives, cultural backgrounds, and prevailing ideologies.

Cultural materialism, an influential theoretical approach developed by Raymond Williams, serves as a crucial lens within cultural studies, shedding light on the intricate processes that underlie the creation and dissemination of cultural texts. This theory propounds that cultural products, like any consumer items, are not born in isolation; rather, they are shaped by a complex web of economic, social, and historical factors that span from pre-production to post-consumption.

The crux of cultural materialism lies in its assertion that cultural texts are intricately linked to their production and consumption contexts. They are not ethereal creations devoid of grounding in reality; instead, they emerge from the same material conditions that give rise to other consumer commodities. Just as televisions and cosmetics are influenced by economic considerations, cultural texts are subject to the sway of socio-economic factors that mold their content, presentation, and dissemination.

Rooted strongly in Marxism, cultural materialism draws inspiration from Karl Marx's socio-economic theories. Marxism, as a socioeconomic framework, posits that capitalist societies are characterized by the unequal distribution of power and resources between the ruling upper classes and the lower-class masses. The upper classes perpetuate this inequality by controlling the economy and upholding the capitalist agenda. It's within this context that the concept of "hegemony" comes into play.

Hegemony, within the Marxist framework, refers to the dominant values, ideas, and interests that stem from the ruling classes. These notions shape societal norms, perpetuate inequality, and maintain the status quo. Cultural materialism harnesses this idea of hegemony to scrutinize how cultural texts contribute to the propagation and reinforcement of these dominant ideologies, as well as how they may be sites of resistance against them.

The concept of hegemony holds paramount importance within cultural studies. Cultural texts, in this framework, are not mere passive

vehicles of communication; they actively participate in the dissemination of societal values and ideas. By dissecting these texts, cultural studies theorists uncover how hegemonic forces are both perpetuated and challenged within society.

However, cultural materialism doesn't adhere to a deterministic view that culture is solely molded by hegemonic forces. This is where the notion of an "active audience" comes into play. Stuart Hall, a prominent cultural studies theorist, introduced the concept of an active audience that actively engages with cultural texts. This perspective counters the conventional notion of passive consumers, instead recognizing that audiences actively interpret and decode meaning based on their individual experiences and perspectives. Even unconsciously, audiences contribute to the construction of meaning within cultural texts, blurring the boundaries between producer and consumer.

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) delved into the dynamics of hegemony and resistance, particularly evident in their exploration of contemporary youth subcultures like punks. These subcultures were seen as expressions of resistance against the prevailing hegemonic norms, embodying alternative ideologies and aesthetics. This investigation underscores the nuanced relationship between culture and societal power structures, revealing how cultural expressions can function as sites of contestation and negotiation.

Cultural materialism, as conceptualized by Raymond Williams, offers a lens that unveils the intricate layers of cultural production. It exposes the interplay between economic contexts, societal power dynamics, and cultural texts' creation, consumption, and interpretation. By recognizing the active agency of both producers and consumers, cultural materialism goes beyond deterministic views and acknowledges the complex processes that shape cultural meanings. This perspective not only empowers us to dissect the mechanisms of hegemony but also highlights the potential for culture to serve as a platform for resistance, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the intricate tapestry that is human expression and interaction.

In the ever-evolving landscape of academic exploration, cultural studies theories stand as dynamic and enlightening frameworks that have reshaped our understanding of culture, meaning, and human interaction. This journey through the rich tapestry of cultural studies theories has revealed a diverse array of perspectives that collectively unravel the intricate threads woven into the fabric of society, art, and expression.

The journey began by redefining culture itself, recognizing that it encompasses not just highbrow pursuits but also the entirety of human existence – from food and fashion to media and language. This holistic approach shatters the conventional boundaries and invites us to see culture as a constantly evolving process, where meaning is constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed in response to ever-changing socio-economic, political, and technological contexts.

Semiotic theory emerged as a foundational lens, illuminating the ways in which culture operates as a language, employing signs and symbols to convey intricate meanings. This perspective expanded our comprehension of culture's complexity and its inherent connection to communication. This foundation laid the groundwork for cultural materialism, which boldly asserted that cultural texts are products embedded in socio-economic realities. Just as consumer items don't emerge in a vacuum, cultural products are molded by factors ranging from economic considerations to historical backgrounds, shaping both their content and interpretation.

Embedded within cultural materialism is the powerful concept of hegemony – the dominance of values, ideas, and interests of the ruling classes. This concept, firmly rooted in Marxism, underscores how cultural texts become platforms for the perpetuation or resistance of societal norms. It emphasizes that culture isn't just a reflection of society; it's a dynamic force that shapes, sustains, and challenges the status quo. The active audience theory further dismantles the notion of passive consumers, recognizing that audiences engage with cultural texts by actively decoding meaning based on their personal experiences, enriching the interpretations with their own unique perspectives.

Structuralism and post-structuralism, like two sides of a coin, illuminate the inherent rules governing cultural texts and then dismantle the notion of fixed, universal meanings. Together, they demonstrate the complexity of interpretation and remind us that meanings are deeply influenced by context, subjectivity, and power dynamics. This insight dismantles the idea of a singular "correct" interpretation and acknowledges the multifaceted nature of understanding cultural texts.

The legacy of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) looms large, as its revolutionary insights have propelled cultural studies onto the global stage. By examining cultural texts through diverse theoretical lenses, the CCCS and subsequent cultural studies theorists have empowered us to perceive culture as a living, breathing

entity – a realm where meanings intertwine, contest, and reshape societal paradigms.

However, cultural studies theories are not without their critics. The field's breadth has invited concerns about its potential to encompass everything and nothing simultaneously. Furthermore, accusations of left-wing bias have prompted discussions about the balance between political perspectives and aesthetic appreciation in the analysis of cultural expressions.

In conclusion, cultural studies theories have illuminated the vibrant mosaic of human culture, uncovering its dynamic, ever-shifting nature. They've unveiled the intricate processes through which meanings are constructed and transformed, enriching our comprehension of culture's role in shaping society and identity. From the foundational insights of semiotics to the socio-economic explorations of cultural materialism, and from the lens of active audience theory to the deconstruction of structuralism and post-structuralism, these theories have enriched our ability to navigate the intricate complexities of cultural expressions. As we navigate this journey through the realm of cultural studies theories, we're equipped with an expanded toolkit that enables us to decode the layers of meaning embedded within the cultural texts that surround us, fostering a deeper connection to the diverse tapestry of human experience.

6.6 INTERSECTING CULTURAL STUDIES AND LITERARY ANALYSIS

The intersection of literature and cultural studies constitutes a fascinating avenue of inquiry, enriching our understanding of literary works by embedding them within the complex tapestry of their economic, social, and cultural contexts. This approach extends beyond the mere examination of words on a page; it delves into the intricate interplay between the literary creation and the world that engendered it.

Cultural studies' core interest in dismantling hegemonic power structures finds profound resonance when applied to literary analysis. By scrutinizing literature through this critical lens, a multidimensional understanding of texts emerges, inviting us to explore the nuances of resistance, identity, and societal paradigms. This perspective aligns cultural studies with various political theories, fostering a comprehensive exploration of literary meanings.

One such lens through which literature is analyzed from a cultural studies perspective is disability theory. This academic framework probes the intricate relationship between disability, culture, and society. It questions what disability signifies within a cultural context and how these perceptions are molded by societal norms and values. When applied to literature, disability theory unravels the layers of meaning woven into representations of disabilities in narratives, exposing how culture influences both the portrayal and interpretation of disabled characters.

Another potent lens that cultural studies employs is postcolonial literary theory. This theoretical paradigm employs literature as a vehicle to examine the repercussions of imperialism and colonialism. As literary texts reflect the complexities of cultural encounters and power dynamics, postcolonial literary theory uncovers the ways in which colonial history leaves indelible imprints on narratives. By analyzing the textual nuances, we gain insights into the narratives of colonized and colonizer, offering a deeper comprehension of the intricate web of cultural interplay.

In essence, these lenses act as windows through which cultural studies theorists can scrutinize literature, revealing layers of meaning that extend beyond the surface narrative. By doing so, cultural studies amplifies the resonance of literary texts, contextualizing them within the broader currents of cultural change and resistance.

Moreover, cultural studies' ethos of questioning entrenched norms and seeking diverse voices prompts scholars to extend their gaze beyond the literary canon – the collection of works traditionally deemed as "high culture." This expansion transforms the landscape of literary analysis, embracing the broader spectrum of human expression and creativity. Pop culture and literature, often dismissed by conventional canons, gain prominence as fertile ground for exploration.

By incorporating pop culture into the cultural studies framework, scholars venture into uncharted terrain. They explore the cultural significance of popular songs, films, television shows, and even internet memes. These seemingly mundane forms of expression become mirrors reflecting societal beliefs, aspirations, and conflicts. This approach challenges the hierarchy of cultural value and amplifies the voices of those who are often marginalized within traditional literary discourse.

Notable literary figures like Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare, revered within the Western literary canon, serve as touchstones that mark the trajectory of literary evolution. However,

cultural studies expands beyond these icons, embracing the diversity of voices that have been historically underrepresented. The likes of Chaucer and Shakespeare remain significant, but the cultural studies perspective beckons us to explore the narratives of authors and characters that have been obscured by the dominant literary narratives.

In conclusion, the marriage of cultural studies and literature breathes new life into literary analysis, enriching our perception of texts by embedding them within their socio-cultural milieus. This approach, marked by lenses like disability theory and postcolonial literary theory, unveils the intricate layers of meaning that ripple beneath the surface. The embrace of pop culture and non-canonical literature further widens the scope, enabling a more comprehensive exploration of diverse voices and cultural dynamics. As we navigate the intersection of cultural studies and literature, we are equipped with tools to decipher not only the narratives themselves but also the societal currents that shape them, fostering a deeper connection to the kaleidoscope of human experience and expression.

6.7 ILLUSTRATIVE INSTANCES OF CULTURAL STUDIES APPLICATION

In the dynamic realm of cultural studies, the lens of analysis is not limited to abstract theory but is firmly grounded in real-world dynamics. When examining literature from a cultural studies perspective, three keywords come to the forefront: power, identity, and representation. These concepts serve as guiding beacons, illuminating the intricate interplay between texts and the societal forces that shape them. Let's delve into these concepts and see how they manifest in a contemporary context.

Power:

When scrutinizing a text from a cultural studies perspective, it's imperative to unravel its specific social, economic, and cultural context. Consider the power structures at play, whether they're fictional or non-fictional. For instance, the popular Netflix series "Stranger Things" unfolds within a complex power dynamic. The series, produced by a multinational streaming service, explores the struggles of children and young adults as they navigate both supernatural forces and controlling adult figures, including parents, law enforcement, and governmental authorities. This juxtaposition highlights how power dynamics are intricately woven into the fabric of the narrative.

Identity:

Identity plays a pivotal role in cultural studies analysis. Consider the text's target audience and the characters' social, economic, and cultural identities. "Stranger Things" primarily caters to a young adult demographic, between the ages of 18 and 30. This demographic's political power may be diminished due to lower voter participation compared to older age groups. The characters in the series are predominantly young adults, mirroring the show's intended audience. The intersection of these identities provides a lens through which we can examine the societal dynamics at play.

Representation:

Representation is a cornerstone of cultural studies analysis. It involves assessing how a text portrays power structures, identities, and the relationships between them. "Stranger Things" offers a fascinating perspective on the representation of youth subcultures. The series presents youth as a realm of belonging and resistance, countering hegemonic ideas and values. The main characters turn to a role-playing game, Dungeons & Dragons, to interpret supernatural events, rejecting the explanations offered by adults, many of whom prove to be misguided or antagonistic in the series. This representation showcases the subversion of authority and the empowerment of youth culture.

In essence, the example of "Stranger Things" serves as a microcosm of the broader concepts within cultural studies. By applying the lenses of power, identity, and representation, we can dissect the intricate layers of meaning embedded within cultural texts. This analysis not only enriches our understanding of the text itself but also offers insights into the broader social and cultural forces that shape our world.

Cultural studies, with its interdisciplinary approach, bridges the gap between theory and practice. It challenges established norms, delves into the interplay between high and low culture, and uncovers the intricate dance of power dynamics and identity representations. As we journey through this realm, we discover that cultural studies is not merely an academic pursuit; it's a tool that empowers us to decipher the undercurrents of meaning that shape our perceptions, interactions, and societal structures.

❖ **Check Your Progress:**

1. What is cultural studies?

2. How does cultural studies redefine culture?

3. What is the significance of semiotic theory in cultural studies?

4. Explain cultural materialism in brief.

5. How does postcolonial literary theory relate to cultural studies?

6. What role does the active audience theory play in cultural studies?

7. What's the connection between disability theory and cultural studies?

8. Why is representation a crucial aspect in cultural studies?

6.8 LET US SUM UP

To sum up, the exploration of cultural studies has revealed a rich tapestry of insights into the interplay of culture, power, and identity. The theories examined, ranging from semiotics to cultural materialism, have illuminated the nuanced mechanisms that underlie the formation of meaning within cultural texts. Through these lenses, we uncover the intricate interconnections between societal contexts, power dynamics, and the narratives we engage with. This journey transcends academic discourse, empowering us to critically analyze literature, pop culture, and the world around us. Armed with these theories, we navigate the diverse landscape of human expression with heightened awareness and profound understanding.

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યુનિવર્સિટી ગીત

સ્વાધ્યાય: પરમં તપ:

સ્વાધ્યાય: પરમં તપ:

સ્વાધ્યાય: પરમં તપ:

શિક્ષણ, સંસ્કૃતિ, સદ્ભાવ, દિવ્યબોધનું ધામ
ડૉ. બાબાસાહેબ આંબેડકર ઓપન યુનિવર્સિટી નામ;
સૌને સૌની પાંખ મળે, ને સૌને સૌનું આભ,
દશે દિશામાં સ્મિત વહે હો દશે દિશે શુભ-લાભ.

અભણ રહી અજ્ઞાનના શાને, અંધકારને પીવો ?
કહે બુદ્ધ આંબેડકર કહે, તું થા તારો દીવો;
શારદીય અજવાળા પહોંચ્યાં ગુર્જર ગામે ગામ
ધ્રુવ તારકની જેમ ઝળહળે એકલવ્યની શાન.

સરસ્વતીના મયૂર તમારે ફળિયે આવી ગહેકે
અંધકારને હડસેલીને ઉજાસના ફૂલ મહેકે;
બંધન નહીં કો સ્થાન સમયના જવું ન ઘરથી દૂર
ઘર આવી મા હરે શારદા દૈન્ય તિમિરના પૂર.

સંસ્કારોની સુગંધ મહેકે, મન મંદિરને ધામે
સુખની ટપાલ પહોંચે સૌને પોતાને સરનામે;
સમાજ કેરે દરિયે હાંકી શિક્ષણ કેરું વહાણ,
આવો કરીયે આપણ સૌ
ભવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ...
દિવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ...
ભવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ



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