While writing ‘foreword’ to “the whirligig of taste: Essay in comparative literature”, a great Indian comparativist has indulged in declaring comparative literature as a discipline still alive. In his statement that comparative literature is not dead, he remarks that the students of comparative literature need not be disturbed if some scholars treat it dead. He asserts, “in our age of endism things familiar and fundamental to us like God (Nietzsche), history (Francis Fukuyama), geography (Arvind N. Das) politics (Martin Jacques), literature (Alvin Kernan), and author (Roland Barthes) among others have come to an end”.\(^1\) In their opinion comparative literature also might be dead. Susan Bassnett, would also admit that in one sense, comparative literature as discipline is already dead. The author confesses that it is a non-subject, without meaningful methodology or nomenclature as others like Croce, Cooper and Wellek informed us. However, such pronouncements, according to Avdesh Kumar Singh about the discipline are wrong. To him, instead of declaring the discipline as dead, it has reached the stage of new development with new purpose and direction.

Comparative literature survives with efforts of great many scholars who have tried and are trying to grant the discipline a new status in various genres of world literature. It is thriving in the areas of


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study of comparative culture, post-colonial and hitherto marginalized, subsidiary, derivative, subservient, parasitic and even "Juvenilia" called translations. We know structuralists rejected the idea of synonymy and with emphasis on binary oppositions refused to admit translation studies as a serious sphere of academic operations. It influenced the place of translation in comparative studies adversely. Now translation studies are taken up seriously with the intervention of scholars like, S.S. Prawer and Susan Bassenett.²

In the case of methodology, therefore, it becomes imperative for every comparativist to devise a working methodology so that a world literature emerges which helps to establish oneness in us as humans. There may be acute problems of methodology presently, but the comparativists are one in evolving a scientific method in creating a discipline independent of other disciplines. Before indicating the problems, it is necessary to say a word on the difference between intercultural and intracultural studies--i.e. the study of literature originating in different cultures and the study of literature produced within the boundaries of one culture.³ The notion of culture is problematic, because it has varied definitions and explanations. One may say that each nation, each class, or even each person has his or her own culture. However, in larger context, it is primarily geographical zones coinciding with continents or for that matter, sub-continents. Accordingly, we have Indian culture, European culture, and Chinese and Latin American culture and so on. There is still further problem that in each cultural zone, you find further sub-cultures or sub-nations.

³ Mohan Chander, edited work, India publishers and distributors, New Delhi, 1989, P.119.
Then the distance from one literature produced in one culture or sub-sub-nations, you find a long way to find a relationship. In our case A.A Azad is the product of a sub-sub-nation of Indian sub-continent, whereas Mayakovsky belongs to Russia, a nation by itself. Thus the difference between large and small cultural distance is not to be ignored. However, Jan Mukarovsky suggested that, in principle there is no difference between interliterary and intraliterary comparison. To him whether the cultural distance to their object is large or small researchers must apply analytical instruments, must ask questions, and must search for answers which are bound to simplify or even distort the material under examination. In short he likes to begin a dialogue which will be continued by other scholars, some of them living in another cultural zone.4

The comparativists attach great importance to the cross cultural dialogue in scholarly matters. Empiricism in the study of literature is not acceptable to those who believe that it is pretension to produce statements that are universally valid. There are scholars who defend our views across cultural boundaries and welcome criticism from scholars educated in quite different cultural surroundings. Claude Levi-Strauss was certainly right in postulating that "the human mind is everywhere one and the same and that it has the same capacities" but it raises at the same time many questions and eyebrows. As a postulate it is the preliminary condition of intellectual debate across cultural boundaries. There is in research in terms of "Popp's" view only one method and that he recognizes it as scientific method. The term scientific if allied to the sphere of the humanities, is somewhat problematic but it bothers

4 Mohan Chander, Ibid, P. 120.
Fokkema less than the much more important problem of how propositions can be tested—which amounts him to the question of the legitimation of judgments, on the correctness or validity of so-called scientific propositions.\(^5\)

The postmodern philosophers such as Leotard (1979), could talk about the complications of the scientific method, yet we are convinced that if we wish to have scholarly discussions across national & cultural boundaries, we need common standards for distinguishing between correct and false, between valid and invalid propositions. The question then arises about the criteria of scientific study. There may be the need to solve that epistemological problem if we want to be taken seriously. By our fellow scholars in and outside the humanities, it is embarrassing to see that after a short span of ten or twenty years our discipline seems to enter a totally new paradigm. We find after positivism, the rise of Russian formalism, New criticism and structuralism which, were succeeded by deconstruction and post structuralism and these again seem now to be replaced by a new historicism. Actually we need in our discipline the continuity of reliable results. According to Fokkema the empirical study of literature aims to produce such results. Each new generation feels the urge to produce new concepts of literature, new theories of literature. Thus it seems that there are three main criteria for judging scientific propositions. “First, there is the well known view that a scientific proposition is correct and valid if it corresponds with the empirical facts it purports to describe. The proposition is legitimized by the criterion of correspondence with the facts. Second, a proposition can be considered valid on the basis of it being in agreement with

\(^5\) Mohan Chander, Ibid, P.121.
theories that are held to be correct. Here the proposition is legitimiz
by the criterion of coherence with accepted theories. Third, a
proposition can be considered valid on the basis of agreement among a
particular community of scholars. Now the proposition is legitimiz
by the criterion of consensus.6

These three criterions alone are not sufficient to legitimize
scientific propositions say some. They contend that they are operative
in conjunction, although usually one of them is emphasized in
particular. For a long time the correspondence criterion was held to be
sufficient means of establishing the validity of scientific propositions.
Some scholars like Fokkema, think that an appeal to either empirical
facts alone or a coherent theoretical system subscribed by scholars
cannot be convincing. The belief that some facts that are related to each
need an element of interpretation to be introduced based on concepts of
causality and theoretical positions accepted by a particular community.7
On the other hand, it is equally impossible to rely exclusively on the
criteria of inter subjectivity or coherence with established theories. It
means that the possibility of an open discussion is a precondition to
scientific research.

There are many things more to say on the triangle of
correspondence, coherence and consensus by which the validity of
scientific propositions can be held. These criterions may be held
adequate for some disciplines but not all. In experimental physics the
criterion of correspondence with observed facts is rather important.

6 Fokkema, Donwe, Aspect of comparative literature, India publishers and distributors, New Delhi,
1989, P. 122.
7 Aspect of comparative literature, Ibid, P. 123.
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Theoretical physics relies very much on the criterion of coherence with established theories. In the humanities consensus among scholars may be sufficient criteria for legitimation. However, other criterions cannot be ignored.

Likewise the students of literature cannot rely on consensus alone. The new critics and structuralists, who did that, entered a blind alley without being aware of it. However, it is to be conceded that scientific propositions are stronger and hence a greater survival chance, particularly when they are supported by three possible kinds of legitimation.

The findings of students of literature may become more reliable if its study acquires a greater continuity, if scientific propositions about literature and literary communication is supported not by consensus but also by correspondence with empirical facts and by coherence with accepted theories. According to Fokkema the validity of our propositions in the field of literary studies can be expressed in terms of more or less support in empirical research, in theoretical coherence and in lacking by a community of scholars.²

There is another choice of methodology for the study of comparative literature and it involves analytical instruments. The above mentioned observations are necessary before our research is to begin according to Fokkema. In his view research begins with a problem or question, whether simple or complex, and if the research that is planned is to have scientific value, it must be related to problems that are in discussion, but which have remained unsolved so far. Such problems are considered to be scientifically relevant. One way of connecting with

current research is to investigate aspects of literary communication, such as were distinguished by Felix Vodicka and Roman Jacobson. This can be specified with regard to the following:

a) The production of texts with literary intention.

b) The literary reception in the entire world irrespective of their being produced with a literary intention.

c) The distribution of texts intended for literary reception.

d) The analysis of texts whether received as literature.

e) The codes which can be construed in function of an explanation of how the understanding of texts accepted as literature by a particular reading public.

There can be limited sphere of analysis for example comparing of explicit poetics. It would mean the comments of writers on their own literary production in various cultural zones. In case of Kashmir and Russia one would like to have a similarity in samavar, where in other things there may be no similarity what so ever. Another problem in intercultural studies is the question of which corps of texts whether oral and written need to be examined.9

The difference in the concepts of literature in different cultures and different times is a complicated factor in intercultural research or studies. However, it is a difficulty that can be over come. According to Fokkema, “perhaps one of the most interesting research topics nowadays is the question of how the domain of literature has been staked out, and which factors have determined the shape of the literary system”. In the western tradition, presently the idea that literature is a precarious product of convention and innovation has found enough

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support. The text must receive recognition and surprise. It must be relevant to life and must allow new outlook on things. The work must be treated as a piece of aesthetic or literary in nature and should be received as a universally accepted one. Both relevance and innovation are relative concepts shifting with the position, knowledge, interests and emotional constitution of the perceiver. In modern reception theory these notions have been elaborated and the findings of reception theory may be interesting also for scholars outside the European tradition.\(^{10}\) In the context of Marxism the artist is to be guided by the political ideologues. Highlighting it Yuri Barabash writes, "The concept of guiding artistic activity embraces an extraordinarily broad range of questions relating to the cultural policies of the party and the state".\(^{11}\)

Coming to the value judgments, it may be recorded that Fokkema has emphasized the perspective of the universal validity of propositions. He says that the value judgment with regard to texts is very much linked to the necessity of protecting oneself against being overwhelmed and paralyzed by the constant flow of information. Regarding, he asserts that only such information should be utilized as the research might require by criteria related to the purpose. It would be pertinent to mention here that I as research scholar have a preference to A.A. Azad versus Mayakovsky of the erstwhile USSR. To teach or research into a text by me shall not be liked necessarily by some one else that I would select. It may be interesting from a comparative point of view, however, to learn what may be preferred text corpus is and which criteria I have employed for selecting it. Things, at times are different, when we come to talk about literary principles. A common

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\(^{10}\) Aspect of comparative literature, Ibid Pp. 126-127.

\(^{11}\) Barabash, Aesthetics and Poetics, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, P.56.

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principle in selecting text is to select well-known texts, which we consider valuable. Another principle may be to select a text in accordance with ones educational goals. The goals vary in the form of ideological, political, philosophical and religious. The principles or cannons by Fokkema, are not usually around and they need to be adjusted to existing cannons to the challenge of new developments. The adjustment of a principle is bound to occur if there is considerable difference between the knowledge transmitted by the cannon and the knowledge needed and available in texts which do reflect non-canonized texts. For example a social consciousness, such as manifested in the present awareness of living in a multi-racial society as well as in a period of feminist emancipation, undoubtedly will lead and to certain extent has led already to adjustment and expansion of the canon. (ef. Riesz 1985: Gilbert and Guhar 1985). The continued secularization, the introduction of universal suffrage and parliamentary democracy, increasing awareness of the equality of all human beings without regard to race and sex have created the need for a reshuffling of existing canons.\textsuperscript{12}

According to Fokkema, one of the future tasks of the comparativists may be the comparative examination of various canons of world literature as they are current in different cultural zones. But in such a cross-cultural study we have left the problem of evaluation behind us and turned again toward an examination of the literary system in different parts of the world, which any way is something we should begin with, since it will provide us with knowledge about the

\textsuperscript{12} Fokkema, Donwe, \textit{Aspect of comparative literature}, India publishers and distributors, New Delhi, 1989, P. 129.
potentialities and effects of literature.¹³

After discussing the basic principles that could guide us in evolving methodology and trying to find out to legitimatize a method or methods, including the choice of analytical study of comparative study, we may be able to generalize broad canons for the adoption of methodology to make comparative discipline to help preserve human civilization as one. It would be pertinent here to assess historical and comparative methods in a general way to know something that research scholars could pursue or are pursuing. The historical method views a work of art against the background of the age in which it is written. Every writer is influenced by the age in which he lives. An author’s work cannot properly be estimated without an understanding of the social, economic, religious, political and literary events and trends which influenced the writer, formed his personality and coloured the very texture of his work. Thus Shakespeare’s work cannot be understood without the knowledge of social and political life of the day, more specially its popular customs and sports. Historical method examines a work with reference to its social milieu. It relates the writer to his age and this seeks to account for his short comings and excellencies. Thus, the knowledge of the Shakespearean theater and the nature of his audience enables us to judge his art and genius in the right perspective. This kind of method also examines a work with reference to other works in the genre and determines its place and importance. For example the Shakespearean sonnet would be studied with reference to the sonnets of other writers, and in this way its place in the history of

¹³ Aspect of comparative literature, Ibid.
the sonnets would be defined. Historical method has its value, but its one great weakness is the preoccupation with history which often makes the researcher forget the very existence of the work under consideration.

On the other hand comparative method seek to evaluate a work by comparing it with other works of similar nature, either in one's own language or in other languages. This method is foreshadowed in the criticism of Dryden, but Arnold was its first powerful advocate and exponent. He asserted that the researcher must know the best that has been thought and said, both in ancient and in modern times, not only in his own language but in the languages from which his native literature is derived, and in those which produce literature concurrently. He also suggested the, “Touchstone method”, for measuring the intrinsic excellence of a work of art. Passage, extracts, quotations, from different works of art should be compared to know the excellence of the work under consideration. Even brief quotations would do. The comparative method makes exacting demand upon the critic. It requires him to acquire a thorough knowledge not only of anyone literature but of a number of literatures and the larger the number the better. Genius and temperament differ from people to people and age to age and such differences must be fully taken into account while applying the comparative method. Moreover comparison must be made between works of the same type and genre. Within these limitations, a comparative study of literature can both be illuminating and interesting.

Whether broad conceptual framework or methodology three broad view points emerge from either definitions or from the research pursuits, which can be summarized under the following heads:

i. World literature-- its history and the histories of the national
literature, collection of the best works and totality of the best creative works.\textsuperscript{14}

ii. Similar to the Western as well as the East European comparativists particularly Russian, are prepared to reconcile with the Historico-comparative method including analytical method.

iii. One way of connecting with current research is to investigate aspects of literary communication, such as were distinguished by Felix Vodicka and Roman Jacobson. Its three dimensions include production of texts, reception of literary work, distribution of texts and their analysis and explanation and finally socialist realism.\textsuperscript{15}

A very eminent soviet literary theoretician A.S. Myasnikov gives the following defense with regard to Socialist Realism. He says:

"The problem of studying artistic forms of socialist realism in all their diversity is linked with the solution of a large set of theoretical and historical literary problems. Such questions include: studying art as a special form of social consciousness, importance of Linins theory of reflection, the subjective elements in art, specificity of aesthetic reality, literary method, diversity of literary trends and creative individualities, stages of development of socialists realism and their peculiarities and many, many others."\textsuperscript{16}

At the very outset, it must be observed that the correlation of content and form of literary work has to be constantly changing. It

\textsuperscript{14} Wollman R, quoted by D. Dyurishin, Op cit, P. 83.
\textsuperscript{15} Vesyolovsky A.N Op cit, P. 54.
\textsuperscript{16} Maurya, Abhai, Confluence, Sterling publishers Delhi, quoted from A.S. Myasnikov on P.116.
depends on the change in reality itself. The new reality is reflected in ‘aesthetic reality’, as a result of the innovation in artistic forms. Even writers comment on this phenomenon. For example, Vladimir Mayakovsky, whose poetry we are going to examine and analyze aptly remarks:

“The storming of the ‘winter Palace’ on October 25, 1917, cannot be depicted in the manner of Les (the Forest) of Ostrovsky. As is well known, the Volcano and the explosions which came in the aftermath of the October revolution would need new arms for their artistic realization”.

Maxim Gor’ky also, in his article on socialist realism accepted that new forms generated by Soviet literature are valuable accomplishments in the realm of form and the capturing of reality and expanding the literature, only to become further deeper. According to him this way is the method which shall give rise to such a proud and happy era of feelings, which will endorse Russian literature with a new tone and tenour. It will facilitate to create new forms but create new direction. The spectrum of colours and poignancy of events surcharged with a high degree of revolutionary fervour, as also the complexity and diversity of real life situations required equally rich multiplicity of forms of their artistic realization. However, it is observed that the multiplicity of forms is intimately related with both subjective and objective factors. The multiplicity itself depends on merit and talent or caliber of a writer. According to Belinsky, the famous Russian critic, a writer must, “figure out such a form”. The socialist Realism at the same time declare that talent without an optimum blending of ideological content is absurd. While explaining the correlation of

\[^{17}
\textit{Confluence}, \textit{Ibid}, \textit{P. 117}.
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ideological content and artistry Konstantin Fedin observed,

“The thought content of a literary work is constituted by the totality of all the elements of content, while the artistic level of a work is an integral whole of all the elements of its form and content. When we try to unravel the intimately interlinked notions of thought-content and artistic parameters, we in our practical work, encounter an extremely intrinsic understanding of content and form”. 18

The decisive role in the relationship of content and form is played by the former. In this effort, socialist writers take active part by delving deep into the turmoil's of life in a bid to interpret and change it. Here, they are ideologically motivated by Marx.

The eminent literary theoretician, George Lukacs has linked the activeness of a writer with the problem of the perception and sensitivity of a writer. In socialist realism the modernist writers are interested in receptivity which mean listening to ones own sensations and to the experience of their own ego. Their attention is directed not towards the outer world, not towards life itself, but towards their own reactions to the outer world and their so called “receptivity” is merely a passive contemplation of their own navel. 19

On the other hand of modernists, the socialist realists believe only in an active interference and participation in life which helps in the working out of typical material which is elicited from the chaos of numerous fragmentary and often incidental “facts”. It is vitally important that a realist writer, unlike a naturalist counterpart, differentiate the typical from the incidental and the real from the

18 Fedin K. *Iskusstvo i Vremya* (“Art and time”), Moscow 1957, P. 416.

superficial.

It may not be out of place to mention that an active interaction with life and a thorough knowledge of real life situations is equally important for literary critics and theoreticians, since without meeting this prerequisite, it is not possible to give an adequate assessment of a literary event or phenomenon. The inability of a writer or critic to distinguish between the typical and the stray phenomena or events could lead to very tragic situations. A Russian theorist has observed, “Real artistic value cannot tolerate one-sidedness: Generalization of incidental phenomena and diluting of focus on general laws results in an inevitable empiricism.”

In case a writer is unable to discriminate the typical phenomena or from the chaos of happenings, events, incidents, things and the like, then he looses something important. It means that he lives in a state of isolation from the mainstream of his life. George Lukacs has rightly observed that a person rich in the diversity of life-time of experience and full of really significant content could give a definite spur to the creation of “great literature”. A writer must live a rich life in order to be able to present what is really typical.

Gor’ky also, while speaking at the first congress of soviet writers, had underlined that the harmonious combination of thoughts, feelings and actions of the heroes of Homer’s tragedy is the creative work of reality itself. The work is recreating life. Socialist realist can place better literature before the people than literature created by an out

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20 Maurya and Khvatov, Puti narodnosti i realisma (paths of kinship with people and realism) in Russian, Leningrad, 1980, P. 55.
21 Puti narodnosti i realisma, Ibid, P. 118
looker, isolated from life, on the basis of passive contemplation. According to Marxists, the writers who observe life as if from an ivory tower contribute only to the poverty of literature. These isolated writers, who are drifted to inner self according to Marxists take resort in the sentimentalist expressions of their sick inner-self and accordingly their literature is sickening type literature. Konstantine Fedin had very correctly high lighted this view while describing artistic value as an integral whole of all the elements of form and content. He observed that harmony in this regard could be ensured only by a creative blending of high artistic quality with an intimate link with life. He concedes to say, “In my opinion the artistic skill of a writer is primarily a skill to observe and understand life, coupled with the skill of embodying life in artistic images. The artistic skill of a writer, his technical ability can be applied only to something which has been observed and understood. Life dictates its forms.\(^\text{22}\)

Marxist do not treat tradition and innovation as irrelevant. According to the socialist realism theory the process of development leads to changes not only in life but also in the forms of capturing it in art. Engle’s had once observed that every artist must know not only history of the society, but also the forms of depicting this history in the works of art. According to this school of thought in literature the study of traditions should not lead to blind acceptance of readymade forms as it would be no different for imitation, while every work of socialist realism must be an artistic discovery in one way or the other. Thus the new literature, while embodying in itself the best accomplishments of classical literature, should at the same time be in a constant quest for

\(^{22}\) Fedin, K. Op cit, P. 413.
conveying the new content in every new form.”23

After the establishment of USSR as a state run under the system of what they called dictatorship of the proletariat, the problem of the attitude to the traditions of the old pre-revolution literature, proved to be extremely complicated. The post revolution school of literature and the pre-revolution literature was vertically spilt. Some of the writers and critics of 1920’s and 1930’s, who were under the clear influence of the older school of thought regarding literature, were apprehensive that the classics would be infected by an alien ideology. They accordingly advocated the use of technique only or form of classic literature. The others thought that it would minimize the importance of Soviet literature. In reality this sought of attitude, in the context of the new school of literature would have restricted the enormously rich treasury of Russian literature. The classic Russian literature had taught not only how to inculcate the art of narrative skills, weaving of compositions, structuring of plots, creating of styles, but it had facilitated the art of understanding life in all its depth and diversity, finding the most appropriate forms of depicting it. Alexander Fadeev has observed, “The study of classic work should be in the first place, linked with the process of understanding new life, since the new life dictates new forms, new methods of its depiction. A person who thinks that he can invent new forms while sitting at home in a closed room is deeply mistaken. Only new content gives new birth to a new form.”24

The progressive school of literary thought in USSR after the revolution of 1917 AD landed themselves exactly opposite to those

23 Maurva, Abhai, Confluence, Sterling publishers, Delhi, P. 119.
24 Fadeev, A, Za tritsat Let (For thirty years) in Russian, Moscow, 1957, P.565.
who were entrenched in classical thought. In their might they highlighted only the social role of the new literature. All of them were deeply convinced that a work of literature can be explained not through the analysis of an artistic texture but only by studying the social circumstances, creative biography of a writer, impact of the work on the readers etc. Some of them were so enthusiastic regarding socio-genetic analysis that they attributed all types of ideology to the means of production. Though Lenin had termed such an analysis vulgarization of materialism, while others like V. Fritche declared that the creation of the works of art was analogous with material production. They demonstratively declared that the earlier artists sang panegyrics only about the ruling classes. It was thus not surprising that some of such writers gave a call to dump Pushkin and Tolstoy or Chekhov deep into the sea. There were many others who transformed the class origin of a writer into a sort of caste-ism. The unfounded primitive nature of the vulgar “sociologists” is too obvious to need any elaboration. They were subjected to extremely scathing criticism both in 1920’s and in subsequent years by most of the serious writers, critics and theorists of Soviet literature. But the Western scholars deliberately tried to project these transparently wrong positions as the real Marxist-Leninist theory of literature.  

In the post revolution Russia, the writers, who believed in socialist Realism, were criticized by Western historians on the basis of the complicated nature of the times which gave rise to the erroneous phenomena of the type described above. These were the times when the struggle was on or had come to its logical end. The slogan of the

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Russian Association of Proletarian writers for example stood for the hegemony of proletarian literature. Against this slogan the followers of Trotsky group of socialists, who were mostly serious writers opposed these fellow-travelers. The supporters of Russian Association of Proletarian writers did not spare even Gor’ky and Mayakovsky from their intemperate attacks. But most importantly, the best representative of the new literature had carried out a fierce struggle against crude behavior of Marxist-Leninist understanding of literature and literary criticism. “Our criticism” wrote Gor’ky in 1933 “is one sided beyond imagination.” While carrying out the exclusive task of inculcating socio revolutionary teachings, it did not help the young writers in mastering the artistic skills. If a teacher of architecture stops at teaching only the “construction manual” he will not be in a position to make the students learn how to build”.26

During 1930’s there was a debate carried out on the phenomenon of crude sociology prevalent in the theory of literature. Later literary discussion appeared that showed the dialectical unity and contradiction of the notions of content and form. This problem could not be solved for long time, till Alexander Fadeev wrote:

“There are fields where ignorance is our greatest bane. Having been torn from the practice of analyzing the artistic form of literary work, we have almost stopped studying even that material which is supposed to be the main material for literature, i.e. the language of a creative work”.27

There has been a debate during the forties and fifties of 20th

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27 The first founding congress of writers of Russian federation, recorded minutes in Russian language, Molodaya Gvardia, Kn.3 (Book No.3), 1933, Pp. 137-138.
century in Russia about the split between positions on various ideological-cum-artistic conceptions of a work of literature. This was considered a dangerous division concerning the very kernel of literary art. Is it conceivable, some writers thought that in literary theory and aesthetics, the artistic quality became independent thought content and vice versa? But in practice, such an autonomy of each of the two elements was becoming an accepted canon. It is in this context that Konstantin Fedin spoke in the congress of the writers of the Russian federation that, “this leaves an impression as if all that had been said till this appended piece has a value or meaning independent of the plot and even of the form of the work. This is being done by us-the opponents of formalism. But is not, in fact, formalism turned upside down”.

The problem of ‘content and form’ had created quite a storm in the world of literature as well as in Russia. There was a debate going on between the ‘formalist school’ and progressive ones. A group of talented writers, critics, and scholars came to the conclusion that neither the old bourgeois academic criticism nor subjectivistic, nor impressionistic criticism of the pre-revolution days was in a position to reveal the specific character of the new art. They occupied the position diametrically opposed to that of “vulgar sociologists” and propounded that it was necessary to separate art from politics and life. B.M Eikhenbaum, in his article, however suggested that art thrives thanks to the process of blending and mutual counterpoising of its own traditions and that “it had no causative link” with ‘life’ ‘temperament’ or “psychology”.

The above discussion do not leave, according to Maurya, even a shred of doubt that the methodology of the formalist school was essentially erroneous. However, none can ignore that in the process of artistic evaluation of the literary works the adherents of this school made a significant contribution particularly to the working out of the methods of analyzing artistic techniques and problems of form. As is known, a group of extraordinary talented scholars and linguists happened to subscribe to the theory and practice of the Russian formalist school and they created valuable works on the question of artistic forms and language resources.

One would like to reiterate that in soviet literary criticism and theory of literature, principled struggle had been carried out against the formalist excesses right from the 1920’s onwards. On the other hand the works of western literary theoreticians and critics, time and again a legend has been sought to be perpetrated to the effect that Russian formalism was cut short through an administrative intervention. According to Western literary critic it was routed by a political decree. Jacobson and others raised vociferous and incessant hue and cry about it in the west. Later in Russia the formalists and the opposing school got closer to the school of sociological method, Shklovsky in the article, “Monument to a scientific mistake” published in 1930 considered formalism to be bygone phase. As far back as the 1920’s G. Karabel’nikov noted the vulnerability of formalistic positions according to which the technique of art was transformed into something “self-exerting”, with complete disregard for “ideological content of the writers”. Karabel’nikov wrote that in the opinion of the formalists, “the eternal technical secrets” constitute the “specificity” and “valuable
secret of art’. Some western historians of soviet art link the criticism of formalism, which had spread far and wide in 1936, with Stalin’s personality cult. However, according to Maurya, the debate on formalism in the 1930’s was as relevant as in the preceding decades. It is precisely during these years that the first books on the problems of theory of literature and questions of poetics appeared in the Soviet Union. The major part of this theoretical literature had been created by the adherents of Plekhanov’s thesis, ‘about the two acts of scientific criticism’. In other words sociological and aesthetic acts and the translation of ideas from the languages of images into the language of sociology.

Nevertheless, time and again the followers of both advocates of sociological and formalist methods, in one way or the other, argued that the new realism (socialist) in the realm of form should embody the accomplishments of both the schools of thought. At the same time, the positions taken by the formalists during the course of these discussions bear testimony to the fact that they reconsidered their extremist standpoints through the process of gradual evolution and not under pressure of any political dictats or physical pulls or strains. Lev Tolstoy had made some fine observations regarding it and is interesting reading:

“The reasons why decadence is undoubtedly a decline of civilization, consists in the fact that the aim of art is uniting the people in one and the same sentiment. This perceptively is entirely absent in decadent (culture or literature-A.M). Their poetry, their art is liked only


by their small group of people, who are as abnormal as they themselves are. Real art captures the widest possible realms, it captures the very essence of a man's mind. And such has always been the exalted and real art".32

In his article on Tolstoy, George Lukacs writes that Tolstoy's poetics had been directed against the modernistic art is clear from Tolstoy's understanding of the purpose of art: "for whom and by whom is this art (modernistic-A.M) produced? His (Tolstoy's-A.M) answer is for the idlers of the ruling class".33 Adds Barabash that Tolstoy's long, syntactically complex periods, frequent digressions and philosophical meditations appear to be the result of 'non-economical' style".34

In the West, the formalist school is projected beyond proportion, according to the Russian scholars, in view of the fact that with it are linked the theories like the "theory of interpretation", and the "theory of literature". The interpretationist like Kayser and others actively advocate that the researchers need not look to left or right. They say instead, the artist should analyze only the inner structure of a work and in particular, its language structure.

In the west, particularly in USA during middle of 20th century, the theory of literature was enunciated by two scholars namely R. Wells and S. Warren. Their approach could be treated as eclectic and was to be carried out in two stages. The literature of the 19th century, according to this theory, belongs to the first stage. The study of this stage was to be studied in the context of its social reality. That is why at this stage, in the opinion of the theoreticians of this school, problems

33 Lukacs, G. Op cit, P. 196.
34 Barabash, Aesthetics and Poetics, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, P. 188.
like literature and biography, literature and psychology, literature and ideal of literature and society were treated quite relevant. But the 20th century literature was to be treated as immanent study “of the internal structure of the literary work as a whole: emphony, rhythm, metrics, stylistics, metaphor, symbol, geneses etc.  

Western and East European scholar, particularly erstwhile USSR waged an ideological warfare in a subtle manner in the first half of 20th century. It aimed at incapacitating literature in its potential of becoming a forceful weapon for socio-political change. According to the Russian scholars, literature, when gets out of the bounds of bourgeois fold, is sought to be put back into its chamber. They believe that literature unbridled or unleashed is dangerous for the forces of status-quo. Accordingly many theories, in the opinion of these scholars emerge with a view to mystify the very essence of literature. Its result is that sober voices are still audible in this context. The scholars like Ladislav Shtoll of Czechoslovakia theoretician is of the view that formalism was overcome by the formalists themselves. According to him they were facilitated by the theory of socialist realism. He wrote:

"Not only the followers of ‘Opoyaz’ an organization dedicated to the refinement of poetic language alone according to Maurya which Eikhenbaum, Tornashevsky, Yakushensky certainly were, but also such outstanding representatives of the Soviet literary science as Zhirmunsky and Vinogradov, who in fact never identified themselves with Opoyaz orthodoxy, went through a remarkable path of development."

At the same time, we still confront the question, which was

35 Myasnikov, A.S Op cit, P. 38.
posed by Myasnikov, "If form while being considered outside its nexus with content and content outside its link with form, cannot explain the structure of a work of art as a whole, which are the constants that could explain this structure.\textsuperscript{37}

Marx's advice to writers and other literary figures is to treat an object in a manner as required by the object itself. According to him evaluation of the process of the real life, getting transferred into aesthetic reality need to be the result or complex blend of subjective and objective factors. To Marx, the writer should speak in the language of the object itself and he must express the peculiarity of its essence so that the artist treats an object in a manner as required by the object itself. To Marx, therefore, the activeness of the object itself has immense importance: He writes:

"It is possible that when the object is in merry mood its study is in some tone and conversely when the object is morose, the study is rather cheerful and flippant.\textsuperscript{38}

Leonid Leonov, finds a writer or literary figure to establish forms of the events themselves or to find a new form of events, which according to him are adequately equal to the complicated modern life. In the words of famous soviet writer Chingizh Aitmatov, soviet literature has "seeped into the very depths of the inner world of man; it began speaking, first of all, about the commotion taking place in his heart and mind, about his thoughts, hopes and dreams, agony and ecstasy about the lofty dignity of man".\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{37}Myasnikov, A.S. Op cit, P. 30.
\textsuperscript{38}K. Marx, i F Engel's, ob Iskysstve (K Marx and Engels on Art-in Russian), Vol II,Progress publishers, Moscow, 1957, Pp. 454-455.
\textsuperscript{39}Gumanism i Sovremennaya Literatura,(Humanism and modern literature) in Russian, Progress publishers, Moscow, 1963, P. 337.
Lastly, we shall have to admit that life of man is constantly in a dynamic flux and every social change makes it complicated with every passing moment. Thus form should change the content that could reflect it. There are still many questions that remain unsolved. The problem of concept of man, the question of correlation of method of socialist realism to other methods and trends. There exist problems of imagery and fantasy in the art of socialist realism. The problems of depiction of time, the correlation of direct and metaphoric expression, the lyrical hero in poetry, specificity of the forms of national literatures and many more. We face the problem of typological generalizations as opposed to the depiction of incidental and stray happenings and many many more.

Having discussed most of the Western methods relating to comparative literature or world literature and with emphasis dealt with the Russian literary schools and thought, we assume that our methodological approach shall be based on scientific and analytical process of thought. Our study is a comparative study of two poets V. Mayakovsky (Russian) and A.A. Azad of Kashmir, later representing a sub-nationality of India. One expresses himself as a poet in Russian language and the other in Kashmiri language. Both the poets are socialist or communist ideologues. There is accordingly a reason to study the two poets on the basis of scientific, comparative and Socialist Realism. In the next two chapters we shall, therefore, study the social commitments of the two poets relating to their times.