Chapter II

Comparative Literature: Theoretical Aspect.

‘Comparison’ is one of the qualities which are universally embedded in human character. It may be logically speculated that since the day awareness dawned on man, the concept of comparison entered his neediest. The comparison between the appearance of face with the full moon or the rose, between God and devil or demon, between man and man appeared so natural to him that the idea of having an independent theory about it did not strike him before the nineteenth century. Otherwise, it would be difficult to believe that scholars of old like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle et al did not ponder over such an interesting phenomenon. And yet in their writings as also in the writings of the Indian literatures and theoreticians there is an abandonee of comparisons. The figure of speech Metaphor is an example of this Comparison between a place and a place or an author and author gets established by comparative studies. It would not be illogical to hold that in the remote past the method of comparative estimate was there, but in a very rudimentary form. The method found a definite form only in the modern times-

“Long before comparative studies of literature emerged as a formal academic discipline, many scholars felt the inadequacy of the framework within which individual literatures were studied. Many of them realized that literatures did not ‘evolve in isolation from one another and the study of a single literature more often than not obliged one to look beyond one’s own language and literary tradition. The necessity for a wider perspective involving more than one language and one literary tradition was felt in different periods of history whenever two literatures came into contact. There had been many occasions in every civilized society when different cultures and different literary tradition came into close contact with one another............

All these contacts have results in certain changes, at times marginal and at time quite profound and pervasive in the literary activities of the people involved, and have necessitated an enlargement of critical perspective one realizes that diversities of literature do not necessarily prevent one from discovering deeper affinities between
them. The necessity for the study of literatures in relation to one another, which is the
basis of comparative literature today was felt very strongly—only in the nineteenth
century but some of its regulating concepts appeared even earlier though in their
embryonic form”.

We have to admit that in spite of the connection between comparison and
comparative studies, the latter has a much larger scope and space. We must also note
that in different countries various literary theories developed with marked and
independent aspects. So we can discover a clear separatory line between the eastern
and western literary theories. Putting the one against the other, it appears first to the
understanding mind that in the eastern world, in comparison with the eastern,
discussions on literary theories are much wider and voluminous. The reason for this,
perhaps, embedded in the difference, between the two worlds, in their social and
historical facts and attitudes to life. We may quote what Bimal Kumar Mukhopadhay
observes about this

“ভারতীয় রসিক আলাপনিকদের তুলনায় যুরোপীয় সাহিত্য বীর্যকেরা সাহিত্যের সংগঠনগত
উপাদান, সাহিত্যের বিভিন্ন শ্রেণী এবং পাঠকের সামাজিক সত্তার ভূমিকার গুরুত্ব নিয়ে অনেক বেশি
আলোচনা করেছেন। ভারতীয় আলাপনিকদের কাছে, রসিকা ছিল যে সামাজিক অভিনবকে অধিকার করে
ক্রমশঃ হয়ে ওঠা একটা নির্বিবেচনা সত্য। কিন্তু পাশ্চাত্য সমালোচকরা শব্দ ও অর্থকে কেন্দ্র করে তাদের প্রশ্ন
ছড়িয়ে দিয়েছেন সৃষ্টির অভ্যন্তরে অদ্বিতীয় প্রকৃতিভাব গড়ে ওঠা হঠার সামাজিক বাণিজ্যের দিকে।
দেশবাদের মাঝামাঝি পাশ্চাত্য সমালোচকরা বিশেষ গুরুত্ব দিয়েছিলেন।”

But the Sanskrit the theoriticians

“ভরত থেকে জগন্নাথ বা বিভব্যক্তি পর্যন্ত কেউই সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যের বিচিত্র শ্রেণীর অনিত্যের জন্য যুরোপীয়
সমালোচকদের মতো তাঁদের আলোচনা বিস্তৃত ক্ষেত্রে ব্যাপনে করতে পারেননি।”

And as a result –

“এবং এর ফলস্বরূপ 'ভারতীয় আলাপনিক সাহিত্য আবাদনকালে চিত্রার গভীরতার প্রমাণ
দিয়েছিলেন, যুরোপীয় সমালোচকরা ছিল ব্যাপ্তি ও শৈল্পিক।”

But the term ‘comparative literature’ was used first, perhaps, by the
poet-critic Matthew Arnold of the Victorian period in English literature. He
combined the two words viz. ‘comparative’ and ‘literature’ and joined the term
‘Comparative Literature’, which at a later period became the centre of
attraction of the whole world in the form of a new literary concept. Arnold first
used the term in 1848 while making a comparative estimate of English literature and other European literatures. In 1886 Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett in his book ‘Comparative Literature’, and again in 1901 in his essay ‘Science of Comparative Literature’ made an attempt to establish the term as a critical and literary concept. This was the beginning of the preparation of the ground for acceptability of the concept of comparative criticism, and within decades this concept found a legitimate space in critical and literary studies and became globalizes in the first part of the twentieth Century.

Roughly speaking, in Europe the concept of comparative studies was expressed in various forms and suggestions during the whole of the nineteenth Century: “There is a general agreement that comparative literature acquired its name from a series of French anthologies used for the teaching of literature, published in 1816 and entitled ‘Course de literature Comparée’. In an essay discussing the origin of the term, Rene Wellek notes that ‘this title was used and unexplained’, but he also shown how the term seems to have crept into use through the 1820s and 1830s in France. He suggests that the German version of the term ‘vergleichende literature-geschicte’, first appered in a book my Moriz Carrure in 1854. While the earliest English usege is attributed to Mathew Arnold, who referred to ‘Comparative literatures’ in the plural in a letter of 1848.

Regardless of whether named individuals can be credited with having introduce the term into their own languages, it is clear that some concept of comparative literature which involved a consideration of more than one literature was in circulation in Europe in the early years of the nineteenth century. The term seems to have derived from a methodological process applicable to the sciences, in which comparing or constrasting served as a means of confirming a hypothesis”.

Of course, the same period witnessed also the voice of opposition to this concept. As early as 1903 Croce div expressed his refusal to accept it as an independent theory and opposed its methodology. In the second decade of the twentieth Century L. Cooper of Cornell Univ. commented that this term was meaningless and lacking currency.

In some respects there is synonymity between comparative reading and comparative literature, but there are differences between the two. The relation
between the two is covered by a foggy haziness. And yet it may be a fruitful
endeavour to note the differences between the two----

"Fundamental questions of literary theory and literary history have to be understood
in their proper settings and arguments not in pure abstraction but in circumstantial
details." 6
And so-

"That comparative literature has currently a certain adventitious modishness is as
much an embarrassment as an advantage, curiously, as theoretical activity has vastly
expanded, the active canon of literary works seems to have narrowed. This is surely
not a stable situation." 7

At times comparative reading may be between the writings in the same
language, for instance, Nature in the poetry of Rabindranath and Jibanananda;
at times it may be between the literatures of two or more languages, for
instance, Political novels in Bengali and Assamese literatures, at other times it
may be between the literatures in different countries, for instances, Folklore in
India and Russia. Such comparatives reading may be extended to such areas as-
between literature and region or philosophy or history or politics. Though this
type of comparative reading falls within the compass of comparative literature
but only this is not comparative literature, which has a more vast compass. It
clearly signifies that a great part of comparative literature remains beyond this
type of comparative reading with brevity it may be said that comparative
literature is an inter- literary study which aims at a study of different literatures
under the backdrop of the vast comity of countries and nations, led by the
concept that literature created by the homo sapiens every where in the world is
full of feelings and emptions which are not subject to geographical and social
differences, but are marked by indivisibility. This theory of literature is clearly
based on the notion that all the literary prodecty are characterized by oneness
and indivisibility. It is we may hold akin to the utterance of the poet- "সবার উপরে
মনুষ্য সত্য, তাহার উপরে নাই" this utterance has been given a modern mould in the
theory of comparative literature.
Nirajana Mahanta Bejbora in one of her books has enumerated some characteristics of Comparative Literature. We may, taking the cue from her, express these characteristics thus:

(a) To Comparative Literature, the whole and the indivisible form of literature is the target of discussion. This implies that the only acceptable aspect of literature is its universal form.

(b) The aim of Comparative Literature is to unearth and express the concepts or ideas lying embedded in different literatures without being confined to its outer form and content.

(c) The life of the concept of Comparative Literature is the discovery of ‘unity in diversity’.

(d) The area of discussion in Comparative Literature is the whole range of human feelings without being guided by the diversities among nations, communities and creeds.

And

(e) Comparative literature supports the establishment of an independent and generally acceptable aesthetics of literature for tasting the whole and universal form of literature.

As we focus our attention on the aforesaid characteristics, we realize the possibility of unification of all literatures of the world through comparative literature. With its help we may attain the sense of universality which is beyond the differences among nations and countries and ages without, however, sacrificing this own individual treats. And perhaps this is what Rabindranath wanted to convey through the term (বিশ্বসাহিত্য)⁸. In the essay written in Māgh 1313 B.E. (which was later on incorporated in the book ‘Sāhitya’) Rabindranath categorically mentioned this particular term. He said——

"এইবার আমার আসর কথাটি বলিবার সময় উপস্থিত হইয়াছে, সেটি এই, সাহিত্যকে দেশকালপারে ছেট করিয়া দেখিলে ঠিকমত দেখাই হয়না। আমারা যদি এইটে বুঝি যে, সাহিত্যে বিশ্বমানবই আপনার প্রকাশ করিতেছে তবে সাহিত্যের মধ্যে আমাদের যাহা দেখিবার তাহা দেখিতে পাইব। সেখানে সাহিত্য রচনায় লেখার উপলক্ষমাত্র না হইয়াছে সেখানে তাহার লেখা নষ্ট হইয়া গেছে। সেখানে লেখক নিজের ভক্তাদের সমগ্র মানুষের ভাব অনুভব করিয়াছে, নিজের লেখায় সমগ্র মানুষের বেদনা প্রকাশ..."
Comparative Literature name diyahe. Baboloy Ami thahake bishashahitya bolib."

Rabindranath also told us what we should search for in what he called ‘Viswasâhitya’ (Comparative literature); what material may be discovered from the arena of this literature. According to him

".............. sahithe dey, manush apandar anandake kemun karia prakshan kariteche, eit prakshanbho bichitra muktiy dey manushe apandar aajya apandar koon nitarap dekhichte chay, tahai bishashahityo dey dey yatharth dekhiche jinisa. Se apandarke vrohi na bhoi na vrohi koon parichye parichita karite anandarap kariteche, jagate dey manusho aajhiyta kartu kartu parsho sattah hija utthil, artha sattah kartu kartu parsho tathar aapnare hija utthil, tahai jainibar jahy eit sahithe karate prakshan karite hije. Ihake kumarin rodna boliyaa jinile hije na; hije ekta jagat; hije tath apandar koono baktibishesh dey aarajyamani nade; .......’’ ityadi.

And again, he expressed his opinion –“Ami kiben eitukoo bolite chhahirachilam se, puithihi deyman aamar dechhe ta bhoi dechhe ta tathar dechhe nade; puithihike termun karia rane aatast pramanabare jana, termun sahithe aamar rana, bhoi rana ta tathar rana nade. Aamar satharant sahitheke eit kariahithepramanabare diye”

We may hold, basing ourselves on what Rabindranath said, that we can make judgment on one literature under the backdrop of one or more other
literatures. The relationships between them may become, through the medium of comparative literature, transparent to the readers and enable us to focus on impartial light on all literary works.

The target area of comparative literature is to discover the universality of inter-relationship between one and another or among different literatures. The structure of that inter-relationship depends on the purpose of comparison or the selection of the subject matter. The purpose of comparative literature is to be universal—beyond the bounds of time and place and nationalistic sentiments. As a result the notion that all literature and all criticism is comparative attains a form. We consider the following from the pen of Nabanita Devsen quite relevant—

"Comparative literature is a point of view, an approach, that pushes the boundaries of literary criticism not only beyond the study of a single literature, but also beyond the conventional fence of aesthetic appreciation and historical criticism by making the study of literature interdisciplinary. The term comparative literature is often too narrowly interpreted to mean merely the study of parallels and analogies between two or more literatures, books or authors, or the study of interliterary relations, tracing sources, influences, responses and intermediaries. But the actual expanses of comparative literature include all aspects of life and knowledge that might be relevant to the proper, understanding of a literary phenomenon. Many of the accepted critical approaches to literature today (ie, psychological, sociological, anthropological, structural, archetypal or linguistic) automatically fall within the area of comparative literature, thus, comparative literature regards as its major concern the intricate problems of translation the impact of historical situation upon literary phenomena, the comparative study of themes, motifs, forms and techniques as well as of literary genres, and movements, also the study of literature in the light of other arts."

Comparative Literature is now acknowledged as an independent field by virtue of the fusion of scholarly opinions and cooperation. But the geophysical distances between different countries as well as the differences of opinions among scholars of these countries have begotten
some schools of comparative studies of literature. The titles of these schools have been given after the names of these countries, in accordance's with the opinions of the scholars of Europe and America, for example, the French School, the Russian School, the Canadian School, the American School etc. In the recent times two more schools, the Chinese Schools and the Indian School have developed. It must be owned that conflicts of opinions have of the cropped up among the scholars of all these schools, but often they reached definite decisions through acceptance and rejection. Such endeavors still continue. We must gather some knowledge about the different Schools as we try to trace the historical development of comparative Literature.

(a) French German School- In the field of comparative literary studies, the scholars of the French-German Section lay the greatest emphasis on historical perspective. Though it is popularly called the French-German School, it may be considered the conception of the whole of Europe. This European conception is rooted in the desire for colonial expansion our begotten by the industrial revolution, Gurbhagat Singh called this theory the instruments of the industrial capitalist society to keep others under their subjogation. This theory "can be said to have sprung from the hegemonic needs if the rising industrial-capitalist class of Europe, from the pressures of a disintegrating Europe under the world wars, and from the ideological remnants of a medieval theocentric world-view that explained the universe as structured around a centre. The theory also drew inspiration from the Heideggerian kind of interest in Being in which the mind history and cosmos could be integration in language, less under a theological shadow and more with a secularized existential consciousness, shaping in time."13

This attitude of explaining the whole earth to be the part of Europe, the centrality of which is taken for granted, may be interpreted as the European colonial attitude.

In spite of the fact that in this theory or School a kind of communal regionalism may be discerned, it may not be illogical to hold that in this may be found the elementary thought points of Comparative Literature. Comparative
Literature has been incorporated as a Department in the system of education in Paris Sorbonne and Arwan University in France. This impaired the European countries like Russia and Italy and on the other side of the Atlantic America and Canada to introduces the study of Comparative Literature in the Universities. The French-German School has been considerably enriched through the conjunction of a variety of opinions of scholars which helped conquer the limitations of the school in the initial stage.

The French-German School, as already noted, wants to lay greater emphasis on the historical analysis in Comparative Literature. The principal goal of this School is the searching for inter state or inter cultural relationships in literature; the critics are not inspired by aesthetic qualities. Some scholars of this School quite openly opine that comparative literature is an integral part of history; in it the substantial and sustainable relationships between literatures of different spaces, their inspirations and this products are discussed. Naturally it may be held that the structure of the French-German School is grounded on the analysis of the raw materials supplied by history. According to Van Tieghem, a great scholar of this school, comparative literature is the mutual study of different literatures—"The object of comparative literature is essentially the study of diverse literature in their relations with one another".14

(‘Discriminations’ by Rene Wellek, p-15)

The revelation of this historical relationship is still one of the most important features of the French School. This comes out from the writings of the scholars of this school; scholars like Brunnel, Van Tieghem, Pichoix, Jauss, Rene Eliemble et al are interested in imitation, source impact etc in the analysis of comparative literature. On the whole, they have greater amount of interest in inter literary historical source—

"The French School, according to them, established the foundations of solid research, the necessity, before any interpretation, of an impeccable and minute chronology 'la Principale difficile netant pas ditablir des dates, mois de les choisir' (the principal problem being not to establish dates, but to choose them)—the obligation of a supranational erudition backed by good linguistic knowledge, the reassembling of a multitude of off-neglected but connected facts pertaining to civilization."15
For them, comparative literature is such a historical means by which the process of evolution of literature may be traced. The growth and development of literatures of different countries and the changes wrought in literature by geographical changes may be explained by this method. At the same time, how one single idea influences the literary circles in different lands in a given period, how the idea, expresses itself in different moulds and how it shows itself in a novel form- all these things may be explained by this methods of study.

With the march of time, however, some new thoughts have been incorporated into the French-German School. The French theoretician Rene Etiemble has opined that in comparative literature the bases is the image of humanity. According to him, the study of comparative literature enhances the mutual love and fellow feeling and acceptability among different nations which helps in the process of the forward movement of all mankind. As he spoke of 'historicism', so he spoke of 'aesthetics'.—"History and historicism are not always progressive, nor aesthetics always reactionary." 16

It means that historical survey and search for aesthetic beauty-comparative literature may advance and flourish by means of a combination of both the two methods- that is the critical position that they accept.

(b) The American School- The American School of Comparative Literature initiated its victorious march in 1958, after the conclusion of the second conference of the International Comparative Literature Association. The conference was held in North Carolina University at Chapel Hill. In the conference all the currents and ideas of comparative literature were analyzed and elaborate plan was chalked out for the progress of Comparative Literature. Here the famous American Scholar Rene Wellek delivered his famous speech entitled “The Crisis of Comparative Literature” This epoch-making speech became the source of significant changes that came in the theorization of comparative Literature and signified the beginning of the end of French-German School. Yue Daiyun in ‘Prospect of Chinese comparative Literature’ wrote—
Wellek believed that a work of art was a symbolic structure but one possessing significance and value and requiring substantiation with meaning and value. As soon as this structure was formed, it stood apart from the mental process of the writer engaged in writing and become a substance of independent existence. *** Never the less, he had made an important contribution to the development of world comparative literature because he stressed that intrinsic literary nature was a central question of aesthetics and indicated that literary research must take literature as a discipline to be studied, which differed from other human activities and their products. On this basis he set forth 'the Crisis of Comparative literature'.

Since the speech given by Rene Wellak in the Second Conference, aesthetics and universalism have been added to historical studies in comparative study of literature; this at a later date influenced the French German school as well. The American School is really the patron of the aesthetic evaluation in Comparative Literature. Broadness of view, aesthetic evaluation and universal sensibility- these are the gifts of the American School to Comparative Literature. It may be borne in mind that although the famous intellectuals like Rene’ Wellak, Austia Waren, Harry Lavin, H.H. Henry Remak, Paul Warner Fredrich, Owen Alridge et al dwelt on the search of similarity, imitation influence, tradition etc., they laid the greatest amount of emphasis on aesthetics. It is a universal truth that any literary work attains the status of great literature by virtue of its inherent aesthetic beauty. In it the quantity and nature of imitation, its similarities or otherwise with the works of other literatures are only the outer garb. Thus in no way the aesthetic aspects of works of literary art can be disregarded. In critical judgment of literature influences, similarities, imitations, purpose etc. may be considered to be the means of analysis, but aesthetic beauty should be the ultimate goal; only then the judgment would be balanced, approximating perfection. And so, when in August 1985 in the XI congress of the International comparative Literature Association some scholars placed the proposal for the explanation of Comparative Literature in the light of the modern literary concepts (eg. Narratology, Intertextuality, Semiotics, Deconstruction etc), other scholars like Rene Wellek and Owen Alridge opposed it. Rene Wellek went so far as to say that these concepts deny literature its aspect of the perception of life.” and deny
"the experience of aesthetic sensibility" and are "unhelpful for practical criticism"\textsuperscript{18}. He further added—

"Such literary theories only served to erect neonihilistic ivory towers for opposing aesthetics".\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{(c) The Russian School} The Russian School in the realm of critical analysis of Comparative Literature is known to be comparatively conservative. In the initial century of the growth and development of comparative literature, the Russian Scholars considered it to be an instrument of expansion of Euro-American Capitalism. It must also be admitted that in the initial years of Comparative Literature, nationalistic sentiments were one of its foundations in Europe, for which the French-German School was, perhaps, responsible. There was, therefore, some logic behind the Russian notion that it was 'Bourgeois universalism'.

When Rene Wellek of the American School spoke of aesthetics and wanted a unification of national characteristics with 'universal cosmopolitanism' in the analysis of Comparative Literature, the Russian scholars vehemently protested against this. E.G. Napokoeva called it 'narrow formalism'\textsuperscript{20}. Napokoeva holds— "... The task set forth for comparative literature by Wellek was not a process of studying the living history of literature from the multifaceted perspective of the entire nation. Instead it "liberated" the works analyzed from the social content and national characteristics that constituted the works. At the same time the national boundaries between different literature were obliterated so that the distinctive contribution made by every nation to world or/and culture was blended into a given man-made 'global' literature."\textsuperscript{21}

Napokoeva opined that the best method of judging comparative literature is the Marxian method, for this is the method to judge impartially the contribution of the common people to literature. It is essential to analyses thoroughly the contributions of national literatures and it would not be correct to remain indifferent to the peeliacritics of national literatures and mix them up with the literatures of the world. So by studying different literatures and analyzing their characteristics and the points of unity among them to discover the roles of these points in the evolution of the society, we can give a
dependable judgment. Globalization, which has general acceptability, is possible in this way, for in this there is co-ordination among the cultures of all races and peoples.

But it is a fact that the opinions of the Russian scholars are also not fool-proof. Many of them are not interested to move beyond the Marxist point of view. But the theoreticians of the recent times have, in the sphere of intellectual speculation, shown great freedom of mind. The doubts expressed by the Russian theorists and the fundamental question that sprang from the doubts were very significant. Not to remain satisfied with the capitalist analysis, but to plead for a democratic method for everybody that is the main contribution of the Russian school to Comparative Literature.

(d) The Canadian School – As a subject of academic studies, Comparative Literature appeared in Canada in 1961-62. From that angle of view Comparative Literature is comparatively young in that country. According to M.V. Dimic, the late entry of comparative literature to Canada is accounted for by, first, the orthodox mindset of the country, and secondly, the limitless influence of the Universities in England. It may be noted that in Canada, comparative Literature was introduced in Alberta University as late as 1969 in the post-graduate level. From that University, the magazine ‘Canadian Review of Comparative Literature’ was published.

One of the most important problems in Canada is that here literature is produced in two languages-English and French. And, again, as the majority of the population, of Canada are immigrants, important differences of attitudes are discerned among them, so that it is quite there to adopt any commonly agreed opinion about Comparative Literature. Chandra Mohan has observed—

"By now Canada has emerged as a nation of immigrants from various countries, and as such the scholarship attributed to the growth of comparative literature in the country has also been subjected to certain varying attitudes of the Canadian scholars 'who have been trained in French, the United States, Central and Eastern Europe and very recently in Canada.' As a result of this Conglomeration the older and the middle generations of scholars have been acquainted with positivist philosophical studies, with the history of ideas, and phenomenological scholarship, with formalism, new
criticism hermeneutics and werkanalyse (kunst der Interpretation), as also with Marxist, sociological and psychological (Psychoanalytical) perspectives, not forgetting the archetypal or myth criticism (mainly the Northrop Frye type).²²

However, in ‘The Canadian Encyclopaedia’ published in 1985, we find the names of some scholars in the field who great endeavoured for the advancement of Comparative Literature in Canada. Among them Northrop Frye, Victor Graham, D.M. Hayne, D.C. Jones et al are worth mentioning.

Canada has not yet been freed from the problem of being a bilingual country. Moreover, the question of the existence of the language dialect of the Quebeccs can hardly be ignored. And naturally until a political resolution of the Language problem is found, it will continue to exert an impact on other affairs. The progress of Comparative Literature shall also be hampered because of this. Hopefully, Ronald Sutherland, D.G. Jones and some other critics have made an in-depth study of this problem and tried to reach a resolution by means of analyses of their standpoints. They explored the relationship between the two languages and concluded that there are similarities between the two in various matters. Ronald Sutherland, in his ‘Second Image: Comparative Studies in Quebec/Canadian Literature’ (1971) and ‘The New Hero: Essays in comparative Quebec/Canadian Literature’ (1977) wrote-

"It can be safely said.....that French Canadian and English-Canadian novels of the twentieth century have traced a single basic line of ideological development, creating it whole spectrum of common images, attitudes and ideas...........aside from language, it is quite probable that there are at the moment no fundamental cultural differences between the two major ethnic groups of Canada."²³

Thus, through the assimilation of new thoughts and notions, the Canadian School of Comparative Literature has been making progress. It is to be admitted that the Canadian efforts to discover a way for the assimilation among the linguistic groups in the country, may greatly help resolve similar issues in multi-lingual countries.

(e) The Chinese School- Comparative Literature found a foothold in China through the introduction of two courses of study in Qinghua University in Beijing between 1929 and 1931. The then
Head of the Department of English of Cambridge University Prof. I.A. Richards was the pioneer of this effort which attracted different researchers and scholars of China. They started transliteration of books of the western world in Chinese and at the same time original works on comparative literature started to appear in China. In the post second world war period this effort was expanded in an organized form in the whole of China. When in 1979 the book ‘Partial views’ of Qian was published in four volumes, China received the recognition of having a new School in Comparative Literature. It should be admitted, however, that the foundation-stone of the Chinese School of Comparative Literature had been laid when intellectuals like Zhu Guanggin, Xianlin et al published their works on Chinese Literature under the backdrop of world -literature. Yue Daiyun wrote in his essay ‘Prospects of Comparative Literature’ –

"In short, Partial Views has opened the way for the development of Chinese comparative literature in various respects. It runs counter to the trend towards 'theoretical withering in current world comparative literature, and has registered trailblazing and distinguished achievements in the development of Chinese and Western comparative literature by distilling the universally common 'literary mind' and 'poetic mind' in close integration with Chinese and Western art practice as such. If we say that the discipline of comparative literature requires the scholars engaged in it to posses extraordinary ability .......... and to be able to show more personality,' Qian Zhongshu displays just such a capability and personality. If we maintain that current comparative literature requires writing which will serve as a signal example, rather than abstract methodological formulaic, then 'Partial Views' precisely represents such an 'example'.”24 (page-56-57)

An analysis of the Comparative Literature of China reveals that the theoreticians of the country endeavored to come out of the finds of conventional ideas. And in this endeavors they seemed to betray their lack of belief in the recent literary theories. It comes out as we try to understand Qian
Zhongohu, that he did not have confidence on these conventional theories; rather "... ‘he has always striven to eliminate the interference of details and minor issues and to grasp general strands underlying development of things. He advocates ‘simplifying a multitude of things into two or three major issues’ so that one can ‘achieve a great insight’ to watch end ‘there cannot be minor and scattered obstacles to obstruct one’s view’. ‘25

The ‘Partial Views’ did not put a stop to its responsibility and commitment by just pointing out the similarities and connection between the Chinese and the Western literatures, rather discussed a few aspects of comparative literature. Indeed, in the book there is not much about the origin and influence of the analyses of comparative literature, though these are esemited in this sort of analyses. But there are some important subjects in it. He holds that though there are some similarities in the theories, there is no mutual affinity in 1km. At the same time it is noticeable that there are theories contradictory to each other, and yet, surprisingly, they are dependent upon each other. So it is not correct to hold that - ‘Two things trace back to the same origin when they fortuitously share the same theme,’26 OR ‘arbitrarily decide that two things have kinship when one sees a similarity in their appearance.’27

Despite all these, he has accepted the issue of ‘influence’ in comparative literature studies. In ‘Quin Zhongshu Talks on Comparative Literature and the Comparisons of Literatures’ he holds that comparative literature represent the spread of literature beyond the geographical boundary of a given country. So the mutual relation in between and among different countries and literatures becomes an inseparable pact of Comparative Literature. So, “To develop our own comparative literature studies, one of the important tasks is to sort ant the interrelationships between Chinese and foreign literature.”28

It is true that Comparative Literature has marched ahead with the passage of time, but it is also an undeniable fact that the sphere of the endless quaries of human mind has also been always expanding under the given situation all our established sense of values or aesthetic attitudes have been landed before on inevitable question. It appears that there is here an opposition to all literary theories; anti-thesis by the side of thesis. In the infinite gamut of information the original pect or the creative work of art gradually gets lost. The
hollowness of these theories which strangle the aesthetic attitude could be felt by the critics. We have already mentioned the name of Rane Wellek. While accepting the opinions of Wellek and the scholars who stand by him, we may hold that, without being indifferent to these literary theories we have to analyse them with complete reasonableness and accept the core by rejecting the unnecessary weeds. And exactly this has been done by the modern Chinese scholars and researchers of comparative literature. The made an objective analysis of the new literary theories and kept alive within them the seed of the possibility of comparative literature. Their credit should be acknowledged it is for this that when an conference of the Comparative Literature association held in Paris in 1985 Prof Etiemble in his last public speech said: "The awakening of comparative literature in China will without doubt, greatly contribute to the development of world Comparative literature."29, its appropriateness cannot be shorned by doubt.

We may here dwell on another issue of no man significance. China being a communist country it is quite natural that Marxist concept and attitude shall enjoy great importance there, even in their methodology of Comparative Literature. It is not a matter of great surprise that the Chinese scholars and researchers in the field of Comparative Literature have engaged themselves to create a methodology of their own in the light of the Chinese Marxist Aesthetic System. The Chinese scholars in the initial phase confined their discussions under the influence of the scholars of the erstwhile USSR. But in the later phase they tried, in consonance with the literary theories of the changed and changing world, to give to their own methodology of Comparative Literature a new direction; they have actually done it. In place of the earlier Russian conservatism, they confronted the challenge and gave a more elastic methodology. As a result, while they engaged themselves in studying literature of the world outside China in the light of their own aesthetic literary theories on the one hand, on the other they endeavoured to study their own literature in the light of the foreign theories. At the same time they carefully saw to it that there is no room for social discrimination in their critical analyses.

Comparative Literature and Indian point of View:
‘Comparative Literature and Indian point of View’ is a comparatively new phenomenon. But at the outset we would like to emphasize that the term ‘Indian point of view’ demands a greater explanation. When we speak of ‘Comparative Indian Literature’, we need to have a clean idea about what is called ‘Indian Literature’. Modern Indian Literature has been festered by the current of thought of colonialism. Language and literature play a significant role in the process of creation of a nation. Thoughts of Indian nationalism found a root when anti-British movements were launched here. All the Indians emerged as a nation when movement to free India from the British yoke gathered momentum. As a result of this, side by side with the emergence of an Indian nation, there flourished the concept of an Indian Literature. It can hardly be denied, and with argument refuted that this ‘Indian Literature’ had its source in the influence of and the direction given by the western imperialist British. The beginning of the modern Indian literature is traced back to the system of education imposed on India by the colonial masters, their literary productions and the medium of language decided by them. However, this notion is not above controversy—

“What is Indian literature? .......We, culturally situated as we are in India today .......we are a multilingual people. Perhaps Dr. Radhakrishnan uttered something that would appear obvious when he gave at the inaugural of the Sahitya Akademi in 1954, the brilliant aphorism, Indian literature, through written in many languages, is one.”

“Not that there was no disagreement voiced regarding the idea of Indian Literature—Attention was drawn to the fact that a literature was written is a language. There is the Tamil Language there is the Hindi Language, there is the Punjabi Language. So, we have Tamil Literature, Hindi literature, Punjabi Literature. But if there is no particular language, like ‘Indian’ how can there be ‘Indian literature’?”30

Hindi was given recognition as the National language or ‘Rāstrabhāsā’ as a part of the process of creating one nation. But in a multilingual country like India, where there are many other worlds or spheres of work other are many other world or spheres of work other than official work, there persists the debate about the applicability of this process on an all-India basis, particularly in the sphere of a national mindset or psyche. Still if we go with the conventional historically recognized way, if we journey through the way
directed by the English, we will find that the initial form of modern Indian literature was created in Bengali literature; this at a later time spread to include other Indian languages. As Kolkata was the centre of British India, so education, literature, and culture etc. which afterwards helped the growth and development of other Indian languages and literatures, spread with Kolkata in particular and Bengal in general as the centre.

With the spread of education, Indians, living in colonial India were gradually becoming modern. The sense and essence of modernism hastened the process of creation of the Indian nation. The essence of life of the occidental world gradually became known to the Indians from which sprang the feelings of love for the country as well as nationalism. Each race tried to free itself from its narrow regional identity and assume the greater identity of being Indians. The establishment of the Hindu Mela or Bankim Chandra’s conceptualization of Mother India was the result of this phenomenon. Even before that, the expression of this feeling could be discovered in such poems as ‘ভারত সম্বন্ধের প্রতি’, ‘ভারতের অবস্থা’ etc. of Iswar Gupta. We may also remind ourselves of the poem ‘ভারতবর্ম’ of Madhusudan Dutta. Nabinchandra in his famous ‘বাহী’ drew the dream of ‘One’ great India. In this respect the inauguration song of the Hindu Mela ‘মিলে সব ভারতবর্ম’ of Satyendranath Tagore and ‘বিহিমালের উপহার’ (1875) of Rabindranath are worth mentioning. And above everything stands Bankimchandra’s hymn ‘নদেনাত্রস’ that charmed the whole country.

In Assam, in the post-Arunodai era, as a result of the spread of English Education and because of the intimacy of such stalwarts as Anandaram Dhekial Phukan and Hemchandra Barua with the educated Bengali society, the people were introduced to the modern concept of Indianness. In support of this contention we may quote from the thought provoking writings of Dr. Dilip Bora—

“গুপ্তাঘাটে করুন হ্রদে সমাজস্ত যোগ দি ভারতবর্ম জুড়ি চলা এক নতুন চেতনার লগত সমষ্টি পাতিয়ে, আরু কমলকান্ত ভট্টাচার্য ভারতীয় পরম্পরার যাইকথারের নতুন যুক্তির বিচার করি অসমর অজাতীয় লোকসকলকে শুরু চলাই অনার হকে প্রচেষ্টাচলানে। পরবর্তী সময়ে যোগাযোগ বেজবোদ্ধ, পোহাঁজিবোদ্ধ আদি রথী মহারথীর তেজ তেজলোকের সাহিত্য মাঝ তেজ সমবাহে তুলি ধরিলে আরু তারেই ফলকামিত জ্যোতিষ্পাদ আগরওয়ালার দরে যুক্তির তার আরু একাপ আগ্রাই

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Not merely within the geographical Space of Bengal and Assam, but also in the other regions of the country the notion of Indianness flourished at the same time-space. The theory or notion of Indianness flows ceaselessly and the concept of one single Indian literature stands on that theory. That this notion or sense is not above controversy is proved by the aforementioned comment of Umashankar Joshi. His comment leads to the inevitable conclusion that the concept of an Indian literature is characterized by artificiality. The simple reason is that there is no Indian literature, and the concept has been manufactured by including different regional literatures of the country.

It may be said that though as early as 1823 the German part Schlegel used the term ‘Indian literature’ for the first time, yet in this sphere the first significant step was taken by Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee who, in 1919, established the Department of Modern Indian languages (MIL) in Calcutta University. The concept of Indian literature was made more distinct by the series of articles Rishi Aurabinda Called ‘Bharatiya Sahitya’, published in the magazine Arya in 1920. In 1936 was established ‘The Indian Progressive Writers Association’. In the annual conference of this Association held in Kolkata in 1939 the inaugural speech was given by Rabindranath Tagore. The Sahitya Akademi was established in 1954; and three years later was published the mouthpiece of the Akademi, ‘Indian Literature’. As an outcome of all these endeavours the Department of ‘Comparative Literature’ was open in Jadavpur University in 1964.

Question may be raised as to where lies the difference between the Indian attitude towards comparative literature and the Western attitude. As an answer to the question we may quote the following critical observation-

31
"The business of conducting a comparative study of various literatures in the West and various national literatures in India is not quit the same. The fact that Indian literatures are a product of a multiracial and multicultural socio-historical mélange cannot be overlooked. Both those who have their roofs in common linguistic stock, and those who have stemmed from different linguistic stocks, share and are bound together by common socio cultural and historical bonds. The fact that the impacts and influences on the Indian psyche have been more or lees similar in various regions can not be overlooked. There might have been some difference of degree and variation in chronology. In some cases it would be impossible to capture the spirit of a particular movement or a particular trend in its entirety, without reference to more than one literature. The case of bhakti in the medieval period and that of the renaissance in the modern age can be cited as examples."

The influence of Colonialism in Indian literature is comparatively recent. But before that a huge and rich treasure of Indian Literature had been created, dose by dose, marked by the wealthy and long Indian tradition, the glory of which was entirely its own. So our endeavour should be to discover the essence of world literature in the whole gamut of Indian literature taking its own tradition and the western influence on it side by side, Dr. Sisir Kumar Das writes-

"The term Comparative Indian Literature, like Comparative literature, is not self-explanatory, and it is necessary not only to define the term Indian literature’ but also to defend the necessity of the qualifier. If the Indian literature means the sum total of literatures written in Indian languages, then it can hardly serve as a significant literary category. In order to make it a significant category, Indian literature must be taken as a complex of literary relations and any study of Indian literature must reflect that. It is not an enquiry into their unity alone, but also a study in their diversity which enables one to understand the nature of literary facts."

While discussing the influence of the west, it should be borne in mind that it is perhaps not possible for the west to exercise a superfluons and deliberately imposed influence on the ancient and rich tradition of Indian literature. Rather, it should be explored how the characteristic western influence and the glorious Indian tradition were not just yoked together, but were fused in modern Indian literature. We would again quote Dr. Das-
The validity of comparative Indian literature can be argued from two directions. Whatever be the goal of comparative literature, it must have a 'terra firma', a solid ground. Indian literatures, produced in Indian languages like Hindi, or Tamil, Marathi or Assamese, alone provide that solid ground to start with. Literatures deal with the concrete, not with abstractions. It is born of language and yet it goes beyond language; it is nourished by a culture. Its meaning and significance comes out of its relation with that culture. Any attempt towards a literary cosmopolitan son neglecting the literature or literature or literatures that are components of a cultural history is bound to turn into dilettantism. The lesson we must learn from the Western comparatist is the lesson of vigilance against dilettantism. Our comparative literature must be comparative Indian literature because nothing else can be the basis of our literary study. This is not chauvinism, but only an affirmation of the relation between literature and people. We can not study literature as a body of impersonal Knowledge without any relation to the people or to the time to which we belong.

So it is time to confess that in the realm of Comparative Literature, the Indian School is a relevant and different School. In a large number of about 1652 languages of India we find a fabulous amount of literacy products, and it is essential to study them in comparisons with the literary products of the languages recognized by the Indian Constitution. Each of these languages, while bearing its own characteristic attributes, also identifies itself as 'Indian'. So a comparative estimate of these literatures may be very fruitful. And thus it is possible to discover the embedded. 'Unity in Diversity' among them and open up to the world a new horizon.

Comparative Literature: Analysis of Methodology

A common and conventional notion about the methodology of Comparative Literature is that its functions come to an end by pointing out the similarities and differences between two literatures or languages and its periphery is limited to the sphere of comparative study of the writers of two distant regions. But this notion is not acceptable, for the theory of Comparative Literature depends on its own distinct critical methodology. This methodology,
with the help of logical arguments, enters into the deep provinces of art and literature and tries to point out the source of creativity. Rene Wellek therefore writes-

"Comparative literature in the narrow sense of binary relatives can not make a meaningful discipline, as it would have to deal only with the foreign trade between literatures and hence with fragments of literary production. It would not allow treating the individual work of art ................... The method of comparison is not peculiar to comparative literature; it is ubiquitous in all literary study and in all sciences, social and natural. Nor does literary study, even in the practice of the most orthodox comparative scholars, proceed by the method of comparison alone. Any literary scholar will not only compare but reproduce, analyse, interpret, evokes evaluate, generalize etc., all in one page."

When a conscious reader of Comparative Literature analyses the literatures of two countries in the light of comparisons, taking time and space, environment and tradition together, his own opinions as a reader almost inevitably come to the fore. This made it necessary for the critics to thoroughly analyse the standard of judgment that would be most workable. And this analysis occurs in various sphere-sometimes in historical approach, at times in the sphere of Inter-relation of Author, Reader and critic, again in the matter of Methodological Aspects or comparative Aesthetic, and still again in the Thematic Aspects of comparative literature. It may be held that comparative study of all the sources of humanitarianism embedded in different literatures finds place in comparative literature. So when a modern critic of comparative literature discusses these spheres in accordance with a formula, it appears to be quite reasonable-

'The scope of comparison, at times, extends vertically by including other from of human expression. This extension may become detrimental to growth of comparative literature as a discipline...... Thus, international Contextualism in literary history and comparative criticism are the laws, which determine the overall plan or method for all proper understanding of the field which has now taken shape into a five dimensional discipline.

1. The study of influence or affinity or tradition/convention of literary works in relation to each other and other farms of human expression.
2. Studies of movements and trends (these studies are essentially cross-cultural mainly sociological studies of literary history and other forms of human expression.)

3. Formalistic study of literary works.

4. Study of themes and motifs.

5. Study of theory oriented poetics and text oriented criticism.\textsuperscript{36}

Scholars after a lot of analysis and experiment, have come to the conclusion that seven aspects have been emphasized in the methodology of Comparative Literature. These are\textsuperscript{37}

a) Historical
b) Formalistic
c) Social realistic
d) Folk-lor
e) Influence or source
f) Genre
g) Theme

After a discussion of these aspects it is possible to focalize two fundamental features of Comparative Literature which are the signifiers of its character. These two features are

a) International Contextualism and
b) Comparative Criticism.\textsuperscript{38}

It is worth mentioning at this point that the objective of comparative criticism is not achieved simply by studying the similarities of characteristics of two or more literatures, or their influences on one another, or their traditions; analytical study also remains incomplete. So methodology has followed so that comparative criticism may not miss the mark. All the literatures \textsuperscript{‘একক বলে ধরে নিয়ে একবিদ্যাধী} মানসিকতায় পরিচালিত হয় এর প্রভাব।\textsuperscript{39} Because of this, other main literature such subjects as art, science, history, philosophy, politics or various fields of culture- where there is human touch- in all these Comparative Literature searches for unification of literature. In Comparative Literature efforts are made to discover relationships in the structural aspects of literature, the interlinking of historical traditions or the connections of other branches of art. And thus it is possible to bring to light the unification of thought of all
mankind by focusing on the human feelings and emotion embedded in literature and other subjects. The unification of literatures will be established by analyzing the peripheral features of all the literatures of the world, instead remaining confined to literature of one’s own language. So it is seen that the first and the chief instrument of comparative literature is comparative criticism of international points of view and its successful establishment is possible only through the execution of the five methods spoken of by prof. Indranath Chowdhury and referred to by us.

International contextuatism initiated a dual relationship in the field of literature, this relationship is the mutual relationship of literature with the created art and man-made events. The critic writes-

“এই সম্পর্কের আধারেই প্রভাব, পর্যাপ্ত, আরু চরিত্রগত সাহিত্য তুলনা করা হয়। ভারতবর্ষ দেব বহুভাষিক দেশে ক্ষেত্র ক্ষেত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় প্রস্থান এই জৈব সম্পর্ককে দৃষ্টি বিশ্লেষণ আরু মূল্যোনার মাধ্যমেই ভিত্ত উত্থাপন রচনা করা হুই ভিত্ত সাহিত্যকর্ম তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন করিব লাগিব। আন্তর্জাতিক পরিপ্রেক্ষাপটকের আধারেই সাহিত্যক মূল্যোনার করিব বাচ তুলনামূলক সাহিত্য এক প্রশস্ত ক্ষেত্র নিধরণ করিষি। সেইটে হ’ল বিদ্যুত বিজ্ঞান ধরণ ভিত্তি আরু বৈচিত্র্য খালিলেও, স্থান, কাল আরু পাহ ভিত্তি হ’লেও সমস্ত পৃথিবীর মানুষের সকলে সময় সাহিত্যের সাহিত্যের সাহিত্যের অন্তর্ভুক্ত একক আরু অবিভক্ত। সেইটে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক অধ্যয়ন হিচাবে গাণস করি সাহিত্য তুলনামূলক অধ্যয়ন করা হয়।”

Prof Naresh Guha in his book ‘Tulanātmak Sāhitya’ spoke of seven field of study in the realm of Comparative Literature which is as follow

1) Subject matter and motif
2) Various categories, form and techniques of literature
3) Period, tradition and movements.
4) The Bible, ancient Classics, multifarious Geographical and Linguistic groups/Communities.
5) Transliteration, courses of subject matter and the applicable medium.
6) Literary traditions flourished in different countries
7) Literary works of different literatures of Comparative Literature.
The definite methodology of Comparative Literature that assumes the form of a formula through the in-depth study of the aforesaid fields may be set down thus-

a) Affinity Study Method  
b) The Study of Tradition  
c) The Study of Influence.  
d) The Study of Reception of Recognition  
e) Interrelated Diabetic Method  
f) Comparative Study Method.

These methods lead the reader towards a certain goal in Comparative Literature by pointing to definite way. In a study which is guided by methodology, subject matter and medium is the two spheres which are chiefly discussed. In any study of Comparative Indian Literature, the application of the Methods not undimensional but multedimensional, for we have to bear in mind before we study the Comparative Indian Literature or Indian Comparative Literature that there is nothing like “Indian Literature” there is only Indian Literatures. The methods which are applied to study these literatures are what may be called ‘Comparative Indian Literature.’

Here we may speak of a few important spheres of the study of Comparative Indian literature-

a) Influence: Influence of any classical literature or foreign literature or folk culture or any ideology on more than one Indian Literatures  
b) Tradition and Inclination: The same tradition in the selected Literatures (eg. the Tradition of Krishna cult in Bengali Vaishnava literature and Assamese Vaishnava literature of the middle age) or close reading of similar picture of life (eg. The Sub-altern life in Bengali and Assamese Novels).  
c) Comparative study : Putting two literatures side by side and studying their respective features  
d) Study of other fields: Study of aesthetic values society, psychology, philosophy etc. together with the study of literatures.

Comparative Indian Literature may be studied from another angle— its applicability for instance, the selection of time, analysis/judgment or ideology, provincialism or regionalism, literary movement, structure or stylistics.
The subject of our research project ‘The Bengali and the Assamese River-Centric Novels: a Comparative Study’ undoubtedly falls within the preview of Comparative Indian Literature. So we may go forward for a comparative study with the help of the aforediscussed methodology. In the project there shall be an analysis of tradition as much as of Influence. And as most the river-centred novels are bound by regional limits, so the reference to definite regions will automatically come. As we shall proceed with our discussion and analysis we will have to seek the aid of compression obviously, the methods which are to be applied in comparative estimate of literature will have to be referred to in our discussion. We may draw a sketch of the project thus-

a) Influence: the influence of folk culture on the river-centric novels in Bengali and Assamese literatures, the influence of other literatures, the influence of the Puranas and myths in the river centric stories- all these may be discussed.

b) Tradition and Inclination:- That the river-centric life and quotation activities are different from the life in other spheres, - that their sorrows and sufferings, their hopes and aspirations, their successes and failures, their festivals and rituals are all their own which they received from their tradition- may also been pointed out.

c) Regionalism:- Most of the rivers represent any specific region. From this flows the current of regionalism. So we may proceed with our discussion and analysis through a comparative study between one region and another.

d) Comparative Study- If the entire study is directed towards comparative estimate by placing the novels side by side in a parallel. Then all their independent and distinguishing features, and similarities and dissimilarities between and among them shall be fore grounded.

And perhaps we will be able to reach, as the core of comparative study, our goal which will reveal that despite all their differences and dissimilarities, all great literatures aim at signing the glory of a greater life.

We may now proceed towards the next step of our study.
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