**The American School**

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

Though some critics claim that it is an offshoot of modernist literary criticism, the American perspective is actually a formulation of earlier definitions of the subject. In the 1890s Charles Mills tried to draw a distinctive line of American comparative literature (not differing much from the line drawn by Matthew Arnold, H. Macaulay Posnett and Arthur Marsh) by assuming that the subject "should be seen as 'nothing more or less' than literature philology..., by insisting on the importance of psychology, anthropology, linguistics, social science, religion and art in the study of literature." (47)

Putting aside all the distinctions used by the French School, the American comparatists fastened their attention on constructing a model of an 'interdisciplinary work.' The sole aim beyond this model is to do away with chauvinistic nationalism, mainly brought about by considering literature in the light of linguistic or 'political boundaries.' Despite difference in language and culture, all nations have certain things in common. Hence, as Bassnett sums it up, "the American perspective on comparative literature was based from the start on ideas of interdisciplinarity and universalism."(48) Furthermore, this perspective threw over another basic principle of the French School, namely binary study, in regarding that the study of affinities and differences between two international literatures was just one angle of the subject, and that, as Gayley proposed, "the study of a single literature may be just as scientifically comparative literature if it seeks the reason and law of the literature in the psychology of the race or of humanity." (49)

The attitude of early scholars towards comparative literature was quintessentially humanistic. Posnett, Galey's contemporary, linked the subject to "the social evolution, individual evolution, and the influence of the environment on the social and individual life of man." (50) In this way, the influences between international literatures are ignored and an emphasis is placed on humanity's collective achievements through time and place and across disciplinary lines - a view which seems to break down the barriers drawn by the French School between the interrelated elements of one single subject, which is literature. Arthur Richmond Marsh's definition of the subject was distinctive in relating it to pure literary criticism rather than to history.(51)

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

'parallelism' and 'intertextuality.'

1. **The 'Parallelism' Theory:**

The Egyptian-born American critic Ihab Hassan has severely criticized the comparative literary study based on the principle of 'influence,' believing it to be inaccurate and ambiguous. He maintains that the impact of Rousseau or Byron, for instance, on the various Romantic attitudes in late 19th century Europe is in fact not based on the presumed idea of literary influence or imitation, but rather on more than one factor. Above all, the circumstances surrounding both the 'influencing' and 'influenced' writers were similar. In the second, there was an urgent need in different parts of the world for revolutionary reactions against the rigid, restrictive rules of Classicism in literature. There would be no room therefore for Goethe's story *Die Lieden des Jungen Werthers* or Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, as examples, in foreign countries, if people were not prepared (mentally or culturally) for absorbing all these works' ideas, philosophies or concepts. These factors have prompted Ihab Hassan, and other American critics, to suggest 'parallelism' as an alternative to the theory of 'influence' in comparative literature. (52)

The 'Parallel' theory has been adopted by many comparatists in America and Eastern Europe. Konrad, a Russian comparatist, sees that this theory is derived from the idea of similarities in humanity's social and historical evolution, which means harmony in the process of literary development. Any study of parallelism claims that there are affinities between the literatures of different peoples whose social evolution is similar, regardless of whether or not there is any mutual influence or direct relation between them. To give an example, political and social relations during the feudal period resulted in similar patterns of thought, art and literature in different parts of the world. (53) Beyond study, the comparatist seeks to determine the bases and premises which underline common features between literatures and writers, or the affiliation of a phenomenon with a specific pattern. Although this theory is opposed by some critics, on the account that literatures differ according to their discovering national and historical backgrounds, it is significant in the common properties of literary phenomena, whether related or not, and the national and historical attributes of each phenomenon.

1. **The 'Intertextuality' Theory:**

'Intertextuality' simply means the reference of a text to another. But the term has been elaborated upon at length. M. Enani defines it as the relation between two or more texts at a level which affects the way or ways of reading the new text (the 'intertext,' allowing into its own contexture implications, echoes or influences of other texts). (54) A deeper analysis shows the phenomenon to be a melting-pot into which designated components of the influencing text (or 'hypotext,' as Gennette calls it) are intermixed with the content of the influenced text (hypertext). This involves the phenomenon with what is socalled 'transtextuality', across textuality. (55) Roland Barthes takes the same position in looking upon the text as a 'network'. In interpreting the text the author is no longer 'the great originator' or 'the creative genius,' but as someone whose task is to put together in a certain literary form and structural pattern 'linguistic raw materials.' (56) Literature in this way is no more or less than a reworking of frequently-dealt-with materials, with a certain amount of change. The story of *Oedipus*, the quest for the Holy Grail, *King Solomon's Mines*, *The Waste Land*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Don Quixote*, and several other stories and themes, are all indicative of "the ways in which a particular story or myth can be repeated in different ways." (57) This view may be adopted from the idea that "a writing surface [is like] a wax tablet on which the original has been partially or wholly reworked, written over success-fully."(58)

As critical appraisals of any phenomenon are (in)famous for yielding variant views, 'intertextuality,' too, is made to imply further meanings. Without referring directly to the phenomenon, Bakhtin has hinted at the overlapping of textual forms in the novel upon which both Julia Kristeva (who originated the term) and R. Barthes have relied in their approaches to 'intertextuality'. In the preamble of his book *Desire in Language* (trans. by Kristeva) Leon S. Roudiz refutes the idea of 'influence' between two writers and the sources of a literary work, and takes 'intertextuality' to be "a mutual exchange of the sign system between texts," which means the use of one stylistic system in lieu of another. (59)

Despite variation, the approaches to the phenomenon may meet at an essential point, namely that all the literary ingredients ("Bits of codes, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages, etc.") (60) drawn from other familiar works into a text are modulated in different ways to serve the writer's literary goal beyond it. A writer may try to blend another text into his own, yet the alignment between the two texts can never be entirely broken: there is always another text that strives to exist under the 'hypertext.' Noticing this, Enani urges "the reader or the writer (or both)... to refer strongly to the other text for an understanding of the new one ..." (61) But this is exemplified at length: "Eliot published a set of explanatory notes with *The Waste Land* which locate it in frames of reference external to the text of the poem;" (62) many critical discourses about Joyce's *Ulysses* have related the novel to the narrative works of which certain aspects are mixed with its content; and Anne Muller's "Flaubert's Salammbô: Exotic Text and Inter Text" is a study which reveals the exotic morphemes used in *Salammbô* to stand as variants for familiar ones in *Madame Bovary*. For example, the use of 'Zaimph' (an out of use word meaning 'gown') in the place of these frequent signifiers: 'voile,' 'manteau,' 'vêtement' or 'robe' "generates a description in two codes, sacred and vestmentary, motivated respectively by its metonymic relationship with the goddess – therefore sacred object – and its capacity as article of clothing." (63)

The ways of reading or interpreting the literary text expand the province of 'intertextuality': each critic or individual reader takes a certain position, which is of course associated with his or her culture, language and experience, from the text. Since literary forms and human experience are known for their recurring change throughout history, the text then becomes susceptible to various interpretations or readings. This is stressed in Antony Easthope's view that "the text has an identity, but that identity is always relational." (64) In one sense, the text is traversed again and again by various readers or critics across time and place. Evidence of this is the innumerable different approaches to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, from the moment it appeared till now.

Enani, as a well-versed translator of many English works into Arabic and vice versa, gives room for

'intertextuality' in the process of translation. In translating a text the translator is often tempted to refer the idioms and expressions of the original text to their equivalents in the target culture. Inasmuch as this may 'violate' the original, it gives rise to a new text, still related to the original. Enani creates a professed case of 'intertextuality' in his *Comparative Moments* through a comparison between Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *Romeo and Juliet* and Eliot's *The Waste Land* (by quoting certain parts from each one) and their literary translations by Lewis Awad. Nabil Raghib and M. S. Farid. Though Eliot's poem has a dynamic intertextuality with Shakespeare's plays (as Eliot uses, for example, 'chair' in the place of 'barge' and 'marble' instead of 'water,' with regard to the connotation of words, to convey his idea of the loss of the glorious past and of love), Awad's translation of these two texts from English into Arabic creates a case of 'intertextuality' as well. Awad's choice of الكرسي (al-kursi) and الشراع (al-shira') for both 'chair' and 'barge' and العرش الوضاء(al-arsh el-wadda') for 'a burnished throne' (an image maintained in both the Qurän and the Bible) gives The phenomenon becomes more complex as literary texts come to refer to arts (music, painting, sculpture), applied sciences (mathematics, engineering), natural sciences (physics, chemistry), religion, cinema, and so on. Michael Holquist asserts that comparative literature's development as a discipline in the twentieth century has affected other academic disciplines in most of Europe. (66) Literature, in a sense, resembles a body of water on whose surface are reflected various forms of knowledge. Michelle E. Bloom's dissertation hypothesizes that "the physical properties of wax constitute a useful conceptual framework for reading wax fictions and other texts." (67) The definition of 'wax fiction' centers on the idea of "dissolution," with regard to "several figurative senses, especially psychological (insanity) and discursive (narrative incoherence)." (68) As 'wax' can be turned into solid and liquid, this process is suggested as a 'paradigm' for literary movements in fact of their rise and decline. Bloom shows that Shaw's *Pygmalion* (based on Ovid's myth of making a female creature out of a statue) is a paradigm of many modern wax fictions such as: Champfleury's "L' Homme aux Figures de Cire," Balzac's "Le Chef-d'oeuvre Inconnu," E.T. Hoffmann's "Der Sandmann" and many such narratives in which statues assume life. This wax case is also used in the cinema, such as in the "Hollywood horror films" of the 1930s. (69) The dissertation ends with stating that though the progress of technology in the last few decades has caused, for instance, 'robots' to supplant wax figures, the wax museums are still relied upon in substantiating "human desires and fantasies." (70) Zola's *Le Docteur Pascal* is argued to be related to Darwin's "theory of heredity" and H. James' *The Turn of the Screw* to "the stream of consciousness (experimental psychology)." (71) On the contrary, Viviane Casimir (in "Savoir as a New Space of Communication: Emile Zola and Henry James," a Ph. D. dissertation) challenges the view of the impact of science upon literature, rendering it to just a "cultural receptacle," by proposing that the two fields communicate in sharing "common modes of thinking" ('Savoir')" to create particular models, themes or paradigms. (72) This turns intertextuality between science and literature to "interdiscursivity." It is on this ground that *Le Doctreur Pascal* (which "problematizes the "living" through the question of similarity)" is put in relation to "natural history/biology," while *The Turn of the Screw* (questioning "the truth as a process of seeing)" is related to "pragmatism." (73)

In conclusion, the American School of comparative literature, though largely welcomed in different parts of the world, has not escaped criticism. To start with, it confuses 'comparative' with 'general' literature on the ground that both are involved with studying one subject (literature). The determination of comparative literature's boundaries is marked by 'duality' in relating literature to other arts and sciences - a duality which makes the subject's province too vast to investigate and come up with accurate conclusions. The final and most serious fault is the failure of the American comparatists to avoid the problem of rabid nationalism, which has marked the French School and which they have intensely opposed, as they have shown in considering their literature superior to all others. (74)