

Comparative Literature 2

First lecture

(Chapter seven: Literature and the Arts)

What's is comparative literature

What are the spheres of investigation?

What is the difference between the French school and the American school?

Comparative literature has many functions:

The study of two works from different countries.

The comparison between *Hamlet* by Shakespeare, an English writer, and *Hamlet Woke up Late*, by Name out Audwan, an Arabian writer.

A comparison between *Divine Comedy* by Dante and *Resalat Alghofran* by AlMaari.

The study of different branches of knowledge.

The study of the comparison of literature with other spheres of human expression

Pages 183, 184

There are three approaches to comparative studies of arts and literature : relationship of form and content, influence, and synthesis. The most important one is the first one which needs to be defined.

Here we can make a comparative study between a poem and a painting by .studying the components of each art. There should be a common theme

Here we can make a comparison between a play , *Hamlet* for example, and a ballet about the same theme. There is also a comparison between Faustus and the legendary figure , Icarus. They both have the theme of over ambition.

Second lecture

Pages 185, 186 show Lessing's view of the relationship between poetry and the plastic arts. Here we have a comparison between *The Aeneid*, an epic, and the sculptor's representation of Laocoon.

How each artist expresses the idea of pain in poetry and sculpture.

Pages 186,187, 188,189 ,190

Lessing's effort is based on two considerations

Third Lecture

Chapter 8: Literature For The Unlettered

Definition of oral literature

Examples of oral literature; the myth of Hercules and Ala'a Eddin

Page 207

The factors which encouraged the evolution of oral literature among primitive people

Page 210

The rules under which oral literature is told

Summary of chapter 7

Literature and the Arts

Pages 183_ - 184

Comparative studies of literature and the arts are important because these studies show how each art functions and the way it follows to deliver its message. Some critics oppose such comparative studies claiming that each field of knowledge has its terms of description and identification. Critics argue that how could we compare between two things each with different components?

The components of a poem are words, images, rhyme, figures of speech, music, etc.

The components of a painting are colours, shades, and lines. The images in a poem serve to emphasize each theme. Similarly, looking at the painting, we have to think about the way the colours suggest its thematic concerns. There should be a common theme between the two pieces being compared. It is not done haphazardly

Now make a comparison between a painting and a poem and the common theme is pollution or childhood. What are the components of each art? The approaches to comparative studies of arts and literature seem to be of three primary kinds: the relationship of form and content (or manner and matter), influence (who influenced whom, similarities and differences), and synthesis (structure or combining separate things or ideas to form a complex whole, the way the components of each work of art collaborate. In this context one could make a comparison between *Hamlet*, a play, and an "Italian ballet," "Hamlet

Summary of pages 185.186.187

The relationship between poetry and the plastic arts by Gotthold Lessing.

He studied the myth of Laocoon to define the limits of this restoration

He states that certain subjects are more suitable for painting and others are more suitable for poetry. Describing physical objects is suitable for painting, whereas expressing inner feelings and emotions is suitable for poetry

Lessing made a comparison of the sculptor's presentation of Laocoon and his sons in the coils of two sea monsters with Vergil's account of the same incident in *The Aeneid*.

He wonders whether a theme (like pain for example) is done by sculptor or depicted graphically as Vergil has done has the same influence on the reader or audience. Can both of them affect people in the same way; each with its components and deliver a message?

The sculptor shows pain or danger through facial expressions whereas the poet allows his characters to weep, cry ,...etc.

Lessing concludes that poetry is more flexible and elastic while plastic arts are limited or compressed into space.

Lessing wanted to separate the modern of poetry from that of the plastic arts depending on two considerations: the art forms; our modes of perception.

Time is the element of poetry

Space is the element of the plastic arts.

When we look at a canvas we see the whole of its objects in space. When we read a poems understand it through the sequence of effects in time. The poet is freer in his choice of the material but is limited in his means. What the painter expresses with Colour and line in space is more difficult to render with words in time.

For Lessing, the realm of the plastic arts is limited to objects in space, while the realm of poetry includes movement in time.

(Note: (just for further information.

The myth of Laocoon is a myth of a priest who was supporting Troy against Greek. He warned the Trojan people but the god of sea punished him by sending snakes to torture him and his sons.