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Comparative literature and compare-and-contrast essay: A trajectory of confusions

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Abstract: Both comparative literature and the compare-and-contrast essay involve the act of comparison, yet they serve different purposes and operate within distinct frameworks. Comparative literature emphasizes the analysis of literary works in relation to social, cultural, political, and ideological contexts across nations and languages. It requires interdisciplinary approaches. Comparative literature also reveals the essential values of the literary works' messages. In contrast, the compare-and-contrast essay is mainly a composition skill aimed at presenting logical arguments about similarities and differences between two objects of any kind, including literary texts, without necessarily engaging varied theoretical views. Though comparative literature necessarily involves comparing literary works, not all literary comparisons qualify as comparative literature. This has often been misunderstood, leading many scholars to wrongly take into account a simple compare-and-contrast writing as a valid comparative literary analysis. This paper is intended to clarify the true concepts of the two subjects and reveal the backgrounds of many scholars misapplying these concepts. Using a qualitative method and drawing on the theories of comparative literature, this study finds that there are two main causes of their being on a trajectory of confusion: the ambiguity of the term "compare" and the obscurity encompassing the theoretical foundations of comparative literature. A more accurate understanding of the differences between the two subjects will guide scholars toward more appropriate analyses of literary works throughout nations, languages, and cultures within the framework of comparative literature.

Keywords: *comparative literature*, *compare-and-contrast*, *literary comparison*, *trajectory of confusion*

INTRODUCTION

Compare-and-contrast has been used for thousands of years in the realm of argument building. Comparing and contrasting are methods of reasoning, and since the era of Aristotle, these have been part of knowledge to learn and practice. No scholars have ever heard the words compare, contrast, and comparison. These words can be used as common terms in daily talks and writings. Even from a very early age, all people learn comparison through comparing and contrasting everything around them, including their parents to other people. Kids discern attributes and develop preferences through noticing sameness and difference (Hynes-Berry, 2022); even comparison is inherent in people since birth (Kay, 2024).

Comparing is an action of finding similarities, while contrasting is to identify differences between or among objects. Both are put into one word, comparison; therefore, the word comparison refers to any activity or action as a mental process that perceives similarities and differences (Brown, 2014). With such a frame of thought, it can be understood that when scholars of literature engage in comparative literature, their thoughts are overwhelmed with the basic idea of comparison as they grow up with.

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Comparison is used greatly in many fields, including literary studies, and through globalization it develops comparative literature and cultural analyses on a universal scale (Friedman in Zepetnek, 2013, p. 5). Comparison covers comparative literature and compare-and-contrast essays, although they are essentially two different subjects with a similarity in that both analyze two or more objects side by side. This similarity may drive literary scholars to confuse them. Although the article uses comparison as its primary analytical method, the extent to which it fulfills the broader aims of comparative literature depends on how substantially its comparison engages with different national, historical, cultural, and literary contexts. Only presenting and cataloguing similarities and differences of the characters' emotional features can be said to be literary comparison but not comparative analysis, considering that comparative literature is not a minimal comparison of literary works (Xu, 2023). Such a comparison is more a compare-and-contrast script than a comparative literature analysis. Thus, although the intention is to present analyses on comparative literature, the works may slip into a compare-and-contrast essay.

This topic is very important to present due to the fact that many literary scholars confuse comparative literature with compare-and-contrast essays in their articles. To support this assumption, a number of articles of comparative literature labels in various journals are taken and analyzed. To give a fair evaluation of an article labelled as comparative literature, this analysis will investigate the extent to which the articles employ compare-and-contrast as a method, and to what extent they fulfill the broader aims of comparative literature. It is expected that this study will be able to enhance readers' horizons about comparative literature analyses and how to apply its principles without mistakenly applying a compare-and-contrast essay or literary comparison instead. Although there is even a strong nuance of compare-and-contrast in comparative literature analysis, the two subjects are different. Comparative literature can employ compare-and-contrast, but it does something beyond comparison itself; it fulfills the broader aims of comparative literature by engaging the comparison with the different national, historical, cultural, and literary contexts of the two works.

Two research questions are emerging for this topic: first, why are many comparative literature analyses considered compare-and-contrast essays? Second, why do literary scholars confuse these two subjects? With these two problems, this study is intended to analyze articles presenting comparative literature analyses to break down the errors in the articles based on the principles of both comparative literature and compare-and-contrast essays. This will also try to disclose the possible backgrounds of literary scholars misapplying the concepts of comparative literature.

Unlike what often appears in world writings about comparative literature, as represented or shown by the three essays in the following section, this study presents the scholars' misunderstanding of implementing comparative literature principles in their analyses. This also presents how comparative analyses mistakenly change into pure literary comparisons or compare-and-contrast essays. Hence, it can be confirmed that this study presents novelty.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

In his essay, Wilson (2026) presents his idea that comparative literature shall not be an action of comparing texts, but it is an action of comparing interpretations. He suggests that the basic arguments to consider when someone intends to write a comparative literature analysis are the argument for influence and the argument for analogy. Wilson only gives clues to write comparative literature analysis, but he does not

talk about compare-and-contrast writing. Different from Wilson's, this analysis presents further and deeper insight into the way comparative literature analysis differs from a mere comparison of literary works.

Sahin (2016), in his article, presents the definition and history of comparative literature, as well as the way to conduct analysis in comparative literature. He also agrees with the notion that comparative literature analysis cannot be conducted on one nation's literary works. In Theory and Practice section of his article, Sahin presents Baudelaire's poetry works as one who makes great influences to English, Turky, and France poets. However, he does not clearly explain the process of the influence and the way Baudelaire's works influence the other countries' poets. Sahin only takes the wraps off several similarities among the poems and claims that those similarities are due to the influence of Baudelaire. Sahin is like most scholars' writings on comparative literature that do not engage the common misunderstanding taking place among comparatists when they apply the theories in their analyses. Thus, Sahin's article is different from this study.

Simon During (2024) presents a critique of some writings in comparative literature, particularly those by Hutcheson Posnett and Rey Chow. Posnett proposes an idea that comparative literature is a social science that establishes a basis for the politics of cosmopolitan democratic individualism formations because the comparative method enables the recognition of social and cultural differences and urges the dissemination of relativism as well as entry into a single world system. Rey Chow sees that comparison is always locally situated and nuanced, and literary studies routinely involves recognition of old power differentials between societies. Marginal cultures are particularly transcultural, and comparative literature needs to possess neither a transnational nor a multilingual scope. Simon agrees with Chow, but he does not agree with Posnett, especially because of the idea that literature is mainly an institution organized radically differently in different times and places rather than a set of aestheticized texts or genres. Although within a similar frame of topic, During's article is different from this study that engages the two confusing subjects.

METHOD

Comparative literature engages with two or more national literatures and languages, applies various disciplines, and has an inclusive ideology to others, covering up also literatures of marginality for the study of literature (Zepetnek, 1998, p. 13; Zepetnek, 2013, p. 5). Zepetnek proposes that comparative literature needs methods and theories to comprehensively study culture and literature, to bring dialogues between literatures, cultures, languages, and disciplines (1998, pp. 15-18 & 80; 2013, p. 58), and to be loyal in interdisciplinary studies (Chao & Wang, 2014, p. 183). The dialogues can be understood as the contest or confrontation among thoughts, concepts, and views in diverse cultures (Chao & Wang, 2014, p. 185). Comparative literature needs more than an academic discipline (Jost, 1974, p. 29). Therefore, comparative literature assists cross-cultural and interdisciplinary study of literature. This shows that comparative literature covers more than one national language, literature, and discipline, and takes literature in the psychological, social, political, and cultural contexts (Zepetnek, 2013, p. 5; Zepetnek, 1998, p. 82). Comparison should encompass a larger magnitude than relying only on individual cultural boundaries (Bassnett, 1993, p. 37).

Furthermore, comparative literature means the study of relationships between two or more literatures (Wellek, 1956, p. 47). It is a study of literature of more than one country, a comparison between or among literary works and between literary works and other kinds of works (Remak in Bassnett, 1993, p. 31) through a renewed engagement

with national traditions and with global contexts (Damrosch, 2003, p. 327). Thus, comparative literature is essentially the study of diverse literatures in their relations with one another (Sahin, 2016, p. 7). Shunqing Cao proposes that comparative literature exchanges literary phenomena and interpretations between different cultures in transnational, cross-linguistic, and cross-cultural contexts, as well as with regard to the image of Otherness (Chao & Wang, 2014, p. 184) to explore and engage in the essence of human literature with a worldwide vision (Cao, 2013, p. xxxii), a vision of the cultural universe, inclusive and comprehensive (Jost, 1974, p. 29). Comparative literature is the study of texts across cultures, applying interdisciplinary practices connecting works of literature across both time and space (Bassnett, 1993, p. 1). This is in line with the idea stated by Matthew Arnold (1857) that there is illustration and connection everywhere, and a single literature cannot be appropriately understood without relating it to other literatures. Therefore, specifying exclusively one nation or nationality in conducting an analysis of comparative literature is not enough, and it cannot be sustained as a practical matter (Guillen, 1993, p. 6). These elucidations indicate that analysing literary works of authors from the same nations cannot be categorized as a comparative literature analysis (Sahin, 2016, p. 5).

A compare-and-contrast essay is a rhetorical style that discusses the similarities (how they are alike) and differences (how they are different) of at least two distinct things: ideas, concepts, items, places, etc., and this essay analyzes the two objects by comparing them, contrasting them, or both in meaningful ways (Scribd.com, n.d.; Wolf & Barnes, 2025; Lumen Learning, n.d.; OWL, 2025; Libretext, 2025, p. 62). Comparison is connected with any endeavors or actions as a mental process that perceives similarities and differences (Brown, 2014). A compare-and-contrast essay is intended to make an evaluation of two or more different things, whether one is more or less than the other or the most or least of all. By using a compare-and-contrast essay, makes a decision among the available alternatives, gives information to readers to make a decision, encourages people to experience something, offers useful knowledge to the reader, or clarifies some complex objects for a better understanding to the readers (Mack & Ojalvo, 2010; nmoer, n.d.).

This study applies a qualitative method in which it collects data by examining the texts, in this case the 13 essays from various sources, and exploring other secondary data. Qualitative research recommends a comprehensive understanding of any opinions and data used to analyze the subject. In a qualitative essay, the author accumulates various modes of data rather than relying on a particular data basis. The author then evaluates the data, logicalizes them, and organizes them into themes and codes (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher gathers the information and interprets it.

This study explores library research to collect the appropriate data for the topic. Creswell and Creswell (2018) mention that there are four types of qualitative data collection: audiovisual digital materials, observation, documents, and interviews. Among those types of data collection, the document type is the one matching this study, and this is in line with library research applied to data collection. The primary data are from 13 essays in various sources (as presented in the following table). The secondary data are those related to the topic in the form of theories, criticisms, and essays to support the primary analyses of the primary data. The analyses of the 13 articles are based on the principles of both comparative literature and compare-and-contrast to answer the above research questions.

Table 1. List of articles labelled as comparative literature

Author(s)	Title	Year
Neelam Dwivedi	A Comparative Study of Similes *Vikramorvasiyam* of Kalidasa and *The Winter's Tale* of Shakespeare	2025
Excel Heluin, Dr. Diana Anggraeni, M.Hum Dian Fitri. K., M.A.	A Comparative Study of The Characters in The Movie *Lady and The Tramp* (1955) And *Lady and The Tramp* (2019)	2025
Prasasri Ibrahim, Zilfa Achmad Bagtayan	Perspektif Sastra Bandingan dan Antropologi dalam Novel *Bumi Manusia* dan *Ulysses*	2025
Regina Nandira Putri Ratna Dewi Kartikasari	Analisis Sastra Bandingan Dengan Pendekatan Feminisme Dalam Novel *Dearest Love* Dan *Catatan Bella Soang, Vampir Kucrut Jatuh Cintrong*	2025
Adya Nitami Dian Hartati	Sastra Banding Novel *Kemarau* Karya A.A Navis Dengan Novel *The Dry* Karya Jane Harper	2022
Dr. Ezzeldin Elmadda	Ruins of The Heart: Emotional Stasis and Cultural Decay in Miss Havisham (*Great Expectations*) and Emily Grierson (*A Rose for Family*)	2025
Ima Masofa Irwan Sumarsono	Comparative Literature in Indonesian Folktales: *Timun Mas* And Disney's *Beauty and The Beast*	2021
Himadri Shyam	Treatment Of Love And Supernatural Elements: A Comparative Study Of Shakespeare's The Tempest And Kalidasa's Abhijnanashakuntalam	2020
Dr. Rajesh Kumar	A Comparative Study of Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Jasmine*	2019
Dr. Sandeep Kumar Dr. Pooja Sharma	Predicament of Women in the cross-cultural encounters: A comparative study of Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* and Anita Desai's *Bye Bye Blackbird*	2018
Ima Masofa	Comparative Literature in Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* And Pramoedya's *Panggil Saja Aku Kartini*	2018
Dr. Shaswati Gosh, Janak Arora, Dr. Poonam Swami	Shakespeare and Kalidasa: A Comparative Study of Dramatic Purpose of Supernatural Intervention	2014
Mary M. Lago	The Parting of the Ways: A Comparative Study of Yeats and Tagore	1966

There are many more criticisms that can be studied, but this study cannot cover up them all because this must be limited. Therefore, with certain considerations and judgments, a selection must be made, and the 13 articles that are considered adequate to represent the entirety. By referring to the principles of both comparative literature and compare-and-contrast writing depicted previously, this study elucidates the articles in the table list.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

Since comparative literature analysis studies ideology, culture, and literature and makes dialogues among literatures, cultures, languages, and disciplines (Zepetnek, 1998, pp. 15-18 & 80; 2013, p. 58), any analysis labelled as comparative study must go beyond a simple exploration of similarities and differences. Xu (2023) says that a minimal comparison of literary works does not qualify as a comparative literature analysis. Comparative literature indeed applies comparison in its analysis. However, placing two or more literary works side by side to peel off the similarities and differences of the characters, the themes, the narration, the structures, the messages, the setting, and others of the literary works without relating to social, cultural, ideological, and literary contexts

simply represents an execution of literary works comparison or a compare-and-contrast essay. The previous discussion sub-section has obviously presented that almost all the articles merely provide a catalogue of static similarities and differences of literary works. A few present a fairly comparative literature since there are interdisciplinary allusions and cultural context moods in the discussion.

In terms of the research questions, the discussion proves that the articles present simple literary works comparisons by comparing the objects side by side through cataloguing the similarities and differences. Although some writers provide theoretical bases, those theories function more as attachments rather than the grounds for the analyses. Moreover, it shows that the writers are trapped by the word "compare" and thus forget the fact that the word comparative in the phrase comparative literature needs more than just "to compare". It needs a confrontation among thoughts, concepts, and views in diverse cultures (Chao & Wang, 2014, p. 185). It needs dialogues between literatures, cultures, languages, and disciplines (Zepetnek, 1998, pp. 15-18 & 80; Zepetnek, 2013, p. 58). This confirms the notion that the analysis must put forward the values of the compared literary works. The way the values are socially, morally, culturally, linguistically, ideologically, and literarily analyzed through the compared literary works is the operation of comparative literature analysis, as proposed by Zepetnek (1998), that it is a matter of "how," not "what," when literary works are analyzed (p. 15 & 29). The word "comparative" then brings some kind of ambiguity to literature scholars and drives them to replace it with comparison.

In many works of Comparative Literature, the notion of system is conceptual and less operational and functional in its framework and methodology (Zepetnek, 1998, p. 35). Such a condition offers learning scholars to walk in a vague path concerning the ways how to do comparative literature analyses. However, Zepetnek himself does not give a clear and plain explanation of comparative literature in practice. Scholars learn from what has circulated in the media about how other literature scholars analyze literary works within the umbrella of comparative literature. Books and texts of comparative literature present only conceptual elucidation of the experts' thoughts and notions. In such a realm, it makes sense that literature scholars are on a trajectory of confusion.

Tabel 2. Analysis of the Results

Author(s)	Title	Results
Neelam Dwivedi	A Comparative Study of Similes *Vikramorvasiyam* of Kalidasa and *The Winter's Tale* of Shakespeare	Only presents similarities of the similes used in the works; no discussion of moral, cultural, ideological, or social value as implied by comparative literature principles.
Excel Heluin, Diana Anggraeni Dian Fitri. K.	A Comparative Study of The Characters in The Movie *Lady and The Tramp* (1955) And *Lady and The Tramp* (2019)	Comparing two movies of the same title, language, and nation deviates from the principles of comparative literature.
Prasasri Ibrahim, Zilfa Achmad Bagtayan	Perspektif Sastra Bandingan dan Antropologi dalam Novel *Bumi Manusia* dan *Ulysses*	Only presents the similarities and differences of the theme, narrative structure, cultural setting, and historical context of the two novels.
Regina Nandira Putri Ratna Dewi Kartikasari	Analisis Sastra Bandingan Dengan Pendekatan Feminisme Dalam Novel *Dearest Love* Dan *Catatan Bella Soang, Vampir Kucrut Jatuh Cintrong*	Only presents the differences in gender roles, power relations, women's struggles, and the use of humor in two different novels.
Adya Nitami Dian Hartati	Sastra Banding Novel *Kemarau* Karya A.A. Navis Dengan Novel *The Dry* Karya Jane Harper	Only presents two tables listing similarities and differences of the two novels and concludes that, among many differences, the social value and the title are the same.
Ezzeldin Elmadda	Ruins of The Heart: Emotional Stasis and Cultural Decay in Miss Havisham (*Great Expectations*) and Emily Grierson (*A Rose for Family*)	The way the analysis runs and the interdisciplinary theories are used, qualifies as comparative literature principles, but the two novels are in the same language and have somewhat similar social and cultural atmospheres, which deviates from comparative literature laws.
Ima Masofa Irwan Sumarsono	Comparative Literature in Indonesian Folktales *Timun Mas* And Disney's *Beauty and The Beast*	Only presents a catalogue of similarities and differences between the two stories and between the features of the two monsters in the folktales.
Himadri Shyam	Treatment Of Love And Supernatural Elements: A Comparative Study Of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* And Kalidasa's *Abhijnanashakuntalam*	Retells the stories, discusses how both playwrights use supernatural elements and love, and concludes that the supernatural elements serve a dramatic purpose and bring dramatic relief.
Rajesh Kumar	A Comparative Study of Bharati Mukherjee's *The Tiger's Daughter* and *Jasmine*	Compares two literary works written by the same author
Sandeep Kumar, Pooja Sharma	Predicament of Women in the cross-cultural encounters: A comparative study of Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* and Anita Desai's *Bye Bye Blackbird*	Compares the difficult lives of both protagonists through story retellings. The closing analysis puts one author as better than the other at certain points.
Ima Masofa	Comparative Literature in Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* And Pramoedya's *Panggil Saja Aku Kartini*	Only focuses on cataloguing the similarities and differences of the two stories and the main characters.
Shaswati Gosh, Janak Arora, Poonam Swami	Shakespeare and Kalidasa: A Comparative Study of Dramatic Purpose of Supernatural Intervention	Only presents a catalogue of similarities and differences of how both authors use supernatural figures in the stories.
Mary M. Lago	The Parting of the Ways: A Comparative Study of Yeats and Tagore	The historical and biographical backgrounds refer to the French school, but the analysis slips into presenting only the differences between the two authors' poems without discussing the influence or ideas transmission as the French school suggests

Discussions

Neelam Dwivedi (2025) compares two plays, i.e., *Vikramorvasiam* by the Indian playwright Kalidasa and *The Winter's Tale* by Shakespeare, by exploring the similarities of both literary works. She writes "a comparative study" in her title, implying that the analysis is in the frame of comparative study of literature, or more commonly known as comparative literature since the two objects to compare are literary works. However, the title also implies a non-comparative study through the word "similes". Dwivedi seems to show that only the similes of the two literary works are compared, emphasized through a sentence: "This paper aims at studying the similes used by these two playwrights in their plays" (p. 278). Dwivedi presents an act-by-act elucidation of similes in both literary works along with retelling the stories of the plays. Only the descriptive similarities of the two literary works' similes are in the entirety of the analysis. The conclusion presents that similes are used to create atmosphere, to enrich theme, to develop characters, and to reveal the spiritual aspect of life along with the aesthetic and emotive evocation (p. 289). There is no moral, social, cultural, or ideological value presented in this study as required by the principles of comparative analysis. Observing the conclusion contributes to an understanding that the analysis is a presentation of similarities and differences of the two works. Hence, it can be inferred that Dwivedi has presented a compare-and-contrast essay or a merely literary comparison rather than a comparative literature analysis.

Excel Heluin, Diana Anggraeni, and Dian Fitri. K (2025) present their manuscript as a comparative literature. They provide interdisciplinary perspectives with Stuart Hall's theory of representation, Zepetnek's theory of comparative literature, and Mario Klarer's theory of characterization as the bases of their analysis of the characters in the same movie, *Lady And The Tramp*, produced at different times, i.e., 1955 and 2019. Reading the abstract gives the impression that the study will really present a comparative literature analysis, yet the analysis in the manuscript presents the reverse outcome. However, the aim of this study is to find the differences between the characters in the two movies and analyze the influence of the differences in the characters on the movies. The writers actually explore similarities and differences through a descriptive compare-and-contrast of character portrayals. This exploration becomes the essential core of the analysis throughout the study. Indeed, comparative literature covers up also comparison, but the comparison must go further, reaching out to social, cultural, moral, or political values. Thus, the theories mentioned serve as a frame to obtain a valid judgement that the study is a systematic comparative literature analysis. Heluin cites comparative literature theories but applies only compare-and-contrast writing. Furthermore, citing Zepetnek's notion that comparative literature allows the multidisciplinary and cross-cultural study of literature (1998, p. 13) cannot qualify that movies are literary works, so that comparing two movies is a comparative literature analysis. In comparative literature analysis, the two or more literary works to compare are across languages, cultures, and national borders. On the other hand, the two movies analyzed are produced in the same language, nation, society, and culture. Even the producer of the two movies is Walt Disney. Moreover, Heluin et.al. state that "This study aims to find the differences between the characters in the two movies and analyze the influence of the differences in the characters on the movies" and "this study will do an analysis of how the differences in the characters, including the characterization and its development in the movie can influence the storyline" (2025, p. 53). These statements clearly show that the analysis will absolutely deviate from the principles of comparative literature that suggest a dialogue in cultural, social, moral, and ideological contexts. This manuscript is a literary criticism or literary comparison, but it obviously does not qualify as a comparative literature analysis.

In the title, introduction, and discussion, Ibrahim and Bagtayan clearly proclaim that their writing is a comparative literature analysis. However, they also say that their objective is to study and understand the similarities and differences (2025, p. 182-183) of things within the two novels they analyze. Referring to the elucidation of the principles of comparative literature and compare-and-contrast on the previous page, both writers fall into confusion because they do not really understand the two subjects. They present four points to compare, i.e., theme, narrative structure, cultural setting, and historical context. Both novels have the same theme, i.e., a search for the character's identity, but display different ways of the characters in finding their identity. The main character of *Bumi Manusia* fights against discrimination and social injustice, while that of *Ulysses* fights against social alienation. The narrative structures of both novels are different: *Bumi Manusia* is conventional and linear, while *Ulysses* is complicated and complex in its technique. Ibrahim and Bagtayan state that both settings are different with the one having a Javanese setting under Dutch colonialization and the other having Ireland under British colonialization. Just like the settings, both writers state that, in historical context, *Bumi Manusia* presents Indonesia's social and political condition under Dutch colonization, while *Ulysses* presents the condition of fragmented Dublin after the First World War. The results and conclusion repeat the similarities and differences of those four points without having deeper analysis and explanation. It seems that both writers have the belief that comparative literature is a presentation of just similarities and differences. The article could be a better analysis under comparative literature if the title were *Pencarian Jati Diri* "A Search for Identity". Then the analyses would be related to the political, social, cultural, and moral contexts of the characters' dynamic struggles to achieve identity without placing both characters side by side and exploring only their similarities and differences.

Unfortunately, Regina N. Putri and Ratna D. Kartikasari have an incorrect understanding of comparative literature. They clearly state that comparative literature is a way to perceive similarities and differences of different literary works (2025, p. 26-27). They also wrongly choose a reference book to present the definition of comparative literature. This is not a surprise, as the discussion in their presentation is not comparative literature, as they claim. They present points to compare, comprising gender roles, power relations, women's struggles, and the use of humor within the two novels. Both writers figure out that in those four points, the two novels exhibit differences. This is a surprise to find such an article in an academic journal because showing differences between two different things cannot be considered an academic analysis, let alone a comparative literature analysis. Hence, this article is absolutely not a comparative literature analysis, although it is claimed as such. Not only do the writers confuse comparative literature with a compare-and-contrast essay, but they also do not really comprehend how to apply comparison in writing.

Ezzeldin Elmadda firmly declares that the manuscript is a comparative literature analysis. He compares the main characters of the two works, focusing on how they demonstrate emotional stasis and decay in response to trauma, and how their portrayals act as cultural critiques to reflect the disintegration of both personal identity and societal order (2025, p. 158). Not only does Elmadda present a comparison of the two protagonists, but he also correlates his analysis of the two protagonists with social and cultural contexts through psychoanalytic and feminist theories as interdisciplinary approaches. At this point, this study is comparative literature. He clearly employs interdisciplinary theories so that he meets the disciplinary codes of comparative literature. The way he connects social and cultural contexts also meets the laws of

comparative literature by placing literary characters within social and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, this study can be questioned in relation to some traditional principles of comparative literature. They often emphasize the study of literary works across linguistic, national, and cultural boundaries. Although the two works came from different national literary traditions, both texts were originally written in English and emerged from broadly Western cultural contexts: the one is England, the other one is America. Therefore, the study does not sustain a cross-linguistic comparison norm, and its cultural comparison is relatively limited. At this point, this analysis can be better described as general English literary criticism. More importantly, comparative literature generally uses comparison to examine wide-ranging contacts among literary texts, cultures, historical contexts, and systems of thought rather than merely identifying similarities and differences between textual elements. Elmadda, however, places the two protagonists at the centre of the analysis and steadily compares their experiences of isolation, trauma, emotional stagnation, and decline. Although the article does connect the protagonists to broader social and cultural contexts, its primary analytical movement remains a comparison of the two protagonists. Instead of being a simply conventional comparative literature, the article may be, thus, more accurately seen as a character-centred comparative literary study that employs a compare-and-contrast method. Its comparative literature dimension emerges from its engagement with social, historical, and cross-national contexts, while its compare-and-contrast attribute is evident in its systematic examination of similarities and differences between the two protagonists.

Stating the phrase comparative literature " on every page has confirmed that the article is a comparative literature analysis. However, Adya Nitami and Dian Hartati also state that the objective of the writing is to know the comparison of the titles which have similar words but different meanings (2022, p. 73) due to the fact that every author has a specific differing style (202, p. 74). It is also stated that the writing aims to help readers understand the novels' plots and hidden messages. Applying the sociology of literature as the theory, Nitami and Hartati are intended to review the differences of the two works, categorize the similarities and differences, and make a table list of comparison. Presenting two tables of similarities and differences of the two works, followed by a conclusion saying that there is similarity in the social value and the title, among many other differences, validates the judgment that this article is not a comparative literature analysis, although it is claimed to be so. This study only provides a catalogue of similarities and differences. Comparative literature often seeks to uncover relationships, meanings, and values that emerge through the interaction of texts from different cultural or literary contexts, rather than merely presenting a descriptive comparison. Based on this notion, this article can be considered a compare-and-contrast essay without reaching the realm of comparative literature.

Ima Masofa and Irwan Sumarsono open their abstract by saying that this study focuses on the differences between the two literary works (2021, p. 99). Both writers base their analyses on Susan Bassnett’s notion of comparative literature and Henry Remak’s concept of the American School of comparative literature. However, those concepts are inappropriately developed in the discussion since both writers present only the stories and a catalogue of similarities and differences between the stories and between the monsters in the two folktales. Only presenting and cataloguing similarities and differences of the characters’ emotional features can be said to be literary comparison but not comparative analysis, considering that comparative literature is not a minimal comparison of literary works (Xu, 2023). Hence, based on Xu’s idea and other principles of comparative literature, this study cannot be qualified as comparative literature,

although it proposes academic theories as its basis. Ima Masofa, as a single author, presents a study comparing Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* and Pramoedya's *Panggil Saja Aku Kartini* under the label of comparative literature. Just like her study with a co-writer, Iwan Sumarsono, this study focuses on cataloguing the similarities and differences of the two stories, while claiming to be based on Bassnett's and Remak's notions of comparative literature. The Analysis and Discussion section provides two subheadings labelled as (1) similarities and (2) differences, and is then followed by the conclusion section. The writing's layout, along with its content that does not logically and systematically rely on theoretical bases, is undoubtedly a simple comparison presenting only similarities and differences. Therefore, Masofa's two articles cannot be classified as comparative literature.

In his article, Himadri Shyam compares love and supernatural elements in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Kalidasa's *Abhijnanashakuntalam*. The discussion only displays the ways both playwrights treat love and supernatural elements in their plays through retelling the stories. Syam exposes the similar functions of those two works and concludes that the supernatural elements serve a dramatic purpose and bring dramatic relief. Although Shyam claims his study as a comparative study, he does not mention any single concept or notion of comparative literature, nor does the analysis go beyond simple comparison. The other three articles share a very similar way of presentation as that of Himadri Shyam. Rajesh Kumar (2019), Rajesh Kumar & Pooja Sharma (2018), and Shaswati Gosh, Janak Arora, and Poonam Swami (2014) all designate their studies as a comparative study that implies comparative literature analysis. However, their analyses do not yet systematically compare the literary works as proposed by comparative literature. The discussions carry on mainly through separate examinations, with simple comparisons emerging primarily through broad thematic correspondences and concluding synthesis. Shaswati Gosh, Janak Arora, and Poonam Swami (2014) explore the dramatic purpose of supernatural intervention in Kalidasa's and Shakespeare's literary works. They present a catalogue of similarities and differences in the ways Shakespeare and Kalidasa used supernatural figures to accentuate the stories of their plays. Yet, they label their article as a comparative study. The second sentence in their abstract even said, "Being a fan of Kalidasa and Shakespeare, I have observed some similarities and differences in their way of writing" (Gosh et.al., 2014, p. 70). This shows that Gosh et.al. do not fulfil the principles of presenting comparative literature analysis.

The literary works in those Indian scholars are therefore placed within a shared thematic framework, but their respective textual constructions are not consistently brought into direct comparative literature analytical relations. They juxtapose themes and stylistic devices without engaging the systemic and intercultural frameworks emphasized by comparative literature theorists. Bassnett's concepts will draw attention of those articles to translation, reception, pattern of literary works connections, and cultural changes. Guillén's notions of comparative literature will place Yeats, Tagore, Kalidasa, and Shakespeare within literary traditions encompassing local and universal values and systematic study of supranational assemblages. Cao Shunqing's and Zhang Longxi's ideas on comparative literature require a cultural dialogue between Indian works as indigenous traditions and Western works to highlight local poetics in a global cultural conversation. Zepetnek's and Remak's theories will analyze literary works as part of social, ideological, political, and cultural systems of relations through interdisciplinary perspectives. Since neither study extends into the dimensions of these methodologies, they remain simply descriptive comparisons or compare-and-contrast studies rather than disciplinary comparative literature. Furthermore, the one written by Rajesh Kumar (2019) is a comparison between two literary works of the same author, Bharati

Mukherjee, and indeed such an analysis cannot meet the principles of comparative literature. The three studies clearly slip into simple compare-and-contrast writing.

Lago opens his article by saying that his writing will be about the controversial relationship between Yeats and Tagore. The first two paragraphs substantiate a number of similarities between the two figures, yet Lago believes that these similarities are superficial. These similarities therefore function as a background against which their differences can be examined. Lago then discusses the history of Tagore's *Gitanjali*, particularly its movement from India to England and its role in Tagore's receiving the Nobel Prize. He subsequently provides biographical accounts of both Tagore and Yeats. This historical and biographical elaboration takes 18 pages. Only after this extensive biographical elaboration does the article undertake its sustained textual comparison, focusing primarily on differences between the two writers' selected poems. Lago explicates the poems and catalogues their differences. Finally, he concludes that "despite their apparent similarities, the basic difference between Yeats and Tagore lay in their concepts of time" (p. 53). This article was published in 1966. Considering the period in which the article was published, its approach can be situated against the background of the French School of comparative literature, which emphasized demonstrable relations between literatures, including contacts, sources, influence, and transmission. The extensive discussion of the historical relationship between Yeats and Tagore might initially suggest such an approach. However, the article's actual comparison does not substantially investigate literary influence or the transmission of ideas or texts between the two writers. Instead, it primarily places selected poems alongside one another and identifies their differences. Thus, although the article has a clear comparative dimension, its method is better characterized as a contrastive comparison than as a conventional French-School comparative study. The historical and biographical material provides contextual background for the comparison, but it is not evidence for a systematic investigation of literary relations between Yeats and Tagore.

CONCLUSION

The concepts of comparative literature offer literary analyses in social, cultural, moral, political, ideological, and literary contexts. Hence, the word comparative in the phrase comparative literature does not imply merely the exploration of the similarities and differences of literary works detached from the ideological, psychological, social, political, and cultural contexts. Comparative literature is an overall view of literature, of the world of letters, a humanistic ecology, a literary *Weltanschauung*, a vision of the cultural universe, inclusive and comprehensive (Jost, 1974:29). When scholars are in the process of disclosing the similarities of literary works for the sake of comparative literature analysis, they should advance the universality, supranationality, or universal values of the works (Guillén, 1993:3). Scholars must find out the hidden universal values within the exposed differences.

Finally, based on the explanation in the previous sections and related to the research questions, it is concluded that ambiguity of the word "comparative" and obscurity of the theoretical practices of comparative literature are the sources of errors or the milieus of scholars confusing the two related subjects: comparative literature and compare-and-contrast (literary comparisons). All the articles engage comparison as their primary analytical method, but they fail to substantially and substantively connect with different national, historical, cultural, and literary contexts. Such comparisons ultimately fall into a

compare-and-contrast script instead of producing comparative literature analyses, despite the writers' intention of posing analyses on comparative literature.

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