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Comparative literary theory: A cross-cultural approach to English literature

Olena Kholodniak

Mykolas Romeris University, Vilnius, Lithuania

Email: olenakholodniak@mruni.eu

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2736-3189>

Abstract

The comparative analysis of the known and the unfamiliar, the self and the other, forms an integral part of cultural exploration throughout history. Culture itself becomes the subject of comparison, and each act of comparison contributes to the broader understanding of cultural phenomena. The historical development of human society lacks examples of completely isolated social, cultural, and literary advancements, as interaction between various segments has always played a significant role. The degree of cultural sophistication within a society often corresponds to the intensity of its connections and exchanges with other communities. This article aims to accentuate the benefits of comparative literary theory in examining English literature from a cross-cultural standpoint and its potential impact in fostering a greater appreciation for cultural diversity. Explore literary traditions, genres, and historical contexts, emphasizing common themes and distinctive features. Engaging with the literary traditions worldwide broadens our perspectives and challenges existing notions while re-evaluating canonical texts. We emphasize the critical examination of cross-cultural influences and the transformative power of translations in interpreting and analyzing literary texts. Translations play a determining role in disseminating literary works across language barriers, allowing readers to explore different cultures through literature. We study how English literature has cross-fertilized with other literary traditions, demonstrating how a comparative approach can illuminate shared themes, motifs, and narrative techniques across different cultural contexts. Comparative literary theory helps us understand how societies influence and change their literary canons over time. A cross-cultural approach uncovers interrelatedness between different literary traditions and broadens our global perspective of English literature.

Keywords: English literature, comparative literary theory, cross-cultural approach, literary traditions, global framework



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Introduction

The role of comparative literature in modern philology is becoming increasingly prominent. The reasons for this are evident: the world is changing, the previous boundaries between cultural spheres are shifting and receding, and active processes of cultural transfer require intensive interpretation. A new literary reality is emerging today. Bilingual writers are no longer isolated exceptions, as in previous periods, but rather represent a frequent phenomenon stemming not so much from personal cataclysms and the fate of the emigrant author, but from a new bilingual or multilingual poetics. In this poetics, the artistic text incorporates both the native and foreign discourses simultaneously. Thus, Andriy Lyubka, a Ukrainian writer, has been actively exploring the boundaries between different cultural and linguistic traditions in his literary works. In his novel “Carbide,” which has been translated by Reilly Costigan-Humes and Isaac Stackhouse Wheeler into English, Lyubka masterfully intertwines English and Ukrainian discourses (Lyubka, 2015, 2020). Through the use of bilingualism, Lyubka (2015) creates a unique narrative voice that reflects the multiple cultural influences on the characters and explores the complexities of identity in a globalized world.

This incorporation of both native and foreign discourses in Lyubka’s work not only reflects the changing dynamics of language and cultural exchange but also draws attention to the role of Comparative Literature in analyzing and interpreting these diverse linguistic and cultural intersections.

Literature, as a reflection of human experiences, has given birth to countless narratives across diverse cultures throughout history. For the instance, the ancient Indian epic, the Mahabharata (Smith, 2009), explores complex themes of duty, morality, and the consequences of one’s actions, providing vision into human virtues and vices. In the Afro-Caribbean novel “Wide Sargasso Sea” by Rhys (2001), the narrative delves into themes of identity, race, and colonialism, offering a powerful critique of the legacy of British imperialism. The Latin American masterpiece “One Hundred Years of Solitude” by Gabriel Garcia Marquez weaves together magical realism and historical events (Márquez, 2009), presenting a multi-generational tale that reflects the complexities of love, power, and human existence. Japanese literature, such as “The Tale of Genji” by Murasaki Shikibu (2011), offers a glimpse into the complex dynamics of courtly life, exploring themes of love, power, and the fleeting nature of beauty.

English literature has a rich and expansive heritage, encompassing works from various time periods and regions. The renowned playwright William Shakespeare, often considered the pinnacle of English literature, wrote plays such as “Romeo and Juliet” (1597), “Hamlet” (1603), and “Macbeth” (1623), which continue to be studied and performed worldwide. The Romantic poet William Wordsworth’s works, including “The Prelude” and “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey” (Wordsworth, 1798), capture the beauty of nature and explore themes of human emotion and spirituality. The gothic novel “Frankenstein” by Mary Shelley (1818) shows the ethical implications of scientific advancement, challenging the boundaries of human nature and the pursuit of knowledge. The postcolonial literature of authors such as Chinua Achebe (1958) (“Things Fall Apart”) and Salman Rushdie (1981) (“Midnight’s Children”) addresses the legacy of British colonialism and its impact on identity, culture, and society. Contemporary works like Kazuo Ishiguro’s “Never Let Me Go” (2006) and Zadie Smith’s “White Teeth” (2000) navigate themes of memory, identity, and social change, reflecting the multicultural and globalized nature of modern English literature. However, traditional approaches to studying English literature often focus solely on its internal development, neglecting the broader global context. By adopting a cross-cultural approach, scholars can transcend the boundaries of a single literary tradition and explore the interplay between English literature and other cultural and literary traditions.

The main goal in this article is to investigate how comparative literary theory can be applied to the study of English literature. By taking a cross-cultural approach, we discover the links and overlaps between various literary traditions, genres, and historical contexts in English literature. In this task, comparative literary theory allows us to go beyond the limitations of studying literature in isolation and provides a broader framework for analysis. It enables us to examine how English literature relates to and interacts with other literary traditions, thereby enriching our understanding of its themes, motifs, and influences. Through

this exploration, we emphasize the significance of comparative literary theory in expanding our perspectives and fostering a more inclusive understanding of English literature within a multinational context. By examining the parallels, contrasts, and exchanges between cultures and literary traditions, we can discern the universal themes and timeless aspects of human experiences that literature seeks to portray.

The Analysis of Existing Literature

A considerable amount of specific comparative research is built on the study of transformations and structural shifts in particular texts and literary phenomena during their assimilation by a different tradition. One prominent scholar who has contributed to the development of comparative literary theory is Edward Said. In his influential book "Culture and Imperialism," published in 1993, Said argues for the importance of examining literature from different cultures and societies in order to challenge and dismantle the dominant narratives and power structures imposed by imperialism (Said, 2012 [reprinted]). His work is rooted in his experiences as a Palestinian-American scholar, and he brings a unique perspective to the field of Comparative Literature. He argues that literature can be a powerful tool for understanding and critiquing the workings of imperialism and colonialism. By analyzing the representation of colonized peoples and cultures in literature, Said contends that we can uncover and challenge the underlying assumptions, prejudices, and power dynamics that shape these representations.

Said's approach to comparative literary theory emphasizes the need to go beyond national or cultural boundaries when studying literature. He argues that literature is not limited to a single culture or language, but rather exists in a complex web of interconnected influences, histories, and power relations. His concepts of "contrapuntal reading" and "worldliness" encourage scholars to read across different cultures and societies, looking for connections, resonances, and tensions. Said's study has had a profound impact on the field of Comparative Literature, not only in terms of its theoretical contributions but also in its practical applications. His ideas have influenced the way scholars approach the study of literature, challenging them to critically examine the dominant narratives and power structures that shape literary texts (Sawant, 2011). By bringing attention to the ways in which literature can perpetuate or resist imperialism, his work has paved the way for more inclusive and nuanced readings of literary works from diverse cultures and societies. Furthermore, Said's work has also played a crucial role in the broader field of postcolonial studies. His analysis of literature as a site of contestation and resistance has contributed to the understanding of how literature can be mobilized as a tool for social and political change. By paying attention to the voices and perspectives of the marginalized and oppressed, and by exposing the ideological underpinnings of imperialist narratives, Said's work has inspired scholars to engage with literature in a more ethical and politically-conscious manner. Edward Said's research has had a transformative impact on the field of comparative theory (Said, 2012). His emphasis on the importance of examining literature from different cultures and societies, and his critique of the power dynamics inherent in imperialist narratives, have reshaped the way scholars approach and understand literary texts. His legacy continues to inspire new generations of scholars to critically engage with literature in order to challenge dominant narratives and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable understanding of the world.

Another key figure in the theory is Homi Bhabha (Sawant, 2011). His work on postcolonial theory, introduced in 1994, emphasizes the idea of hybridity and the interplay of different cultural identities (Phillips, 1999). Bhabha's concept of "third space" encourages the exploration of liminal spaces where cultures intersect and transform, offering a valuable perspective for analyzing the cross-cultural dynamics within English literature.

The works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak also contribute to the theoretical foundations of comparative literary theory (Sawant, 2011). According to Riach (2017), Spivak's concept of "subaltern" stresses the marginalized voices and perspectives within literature and challenges the dominant power structures. This framework prompts scholars to examine English literature from a postcolonial lens, considering the impact of colonialism on the production and reception of literary works. The contributions

of theorists such as Franco Moretti and Pascale Casanova have expanded the scope of comparative literary theory by illuminating the importance of analyzing literary systems, circulation, and translations on a global scale (Mattar, 2014). These scholars argue for a broader examination of English literature within the context of a global literary network, encouraging a comparative approach that transcends traditional boundaries (Moretti, 2000; Ganguly, 2012).

Need to note, the field of Comparative Literature has been enriched by the contributions of influential scholars, each offering unique perspectives and theories that have shaped the way we understand and analyze English literature. Wolfgang Iser's work on reader-response theory (Iser, 1993) emphasizes the active role of readers in engaging with literary texts and constructing meaning. He accentuates that readers bring their own experiences, beliefs, and cultural backgrounds to the interpretation of a text. By focusing on the reader's role, Iser's ideas challenge traditional notions of authorial intention and intensify the dynamic nature of the reading process.

Terry Eagleton's book "Literary Theory: An Introduction" has been influential in the field of Comparative Literature (Eagleton, 2011). Through this book, he explores various theoretical approaches such as Marxism, feminism, and poststructuralism, offering readers a comprehensive introduction to different critical perspectives. Eagleton's work encourages scholars to analyze and critique English literature through the lens of these various theories, fostering a multidimensional understanding of literary texts. According to Renfrew (2014), the ideas about dialogism and the polyphonic nature of literature have had a significant impact on comparative theory. He emphasizes that texts are not monolithic but rather consist of multiple voices and perspectives. The interplay of cultural and social contexts shapes English literature, prompting scholars to consider diverse perspectives and influences within a text (Renfrew, 2014).

Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory has had a profound influence on the study of English literature. His approach challenges traditional interpretations by examining the inherent contradictions and complexities within texts. Derrida (2020) invites readers to critically examine the linguistic and philosophical underpinnings of literary works, uncovering the underlying assumptions and hierarchies embedded in the language used. This approach encourages a decentering of meaning and an exploration of the multiplicity of interpretations that can arise from a text.

The Challenge of Categorizing Lexicon in a Cross-Cultural Literary Context

Culture is a phenomenon that reflects the system of social values and norms within a society. National culture develops under various social and environmental conditions, contributing to the formation of specific national stereotypes (Löfgren, 1989). Therefore, the formation of national and cultural differences is natural, and the study of cultural universals serves as a primary approach to understanding them. In this context, one important stimulus for comparative cultural studies lies in identifying lexical invariability, observed in different English language variants, which reflects the development of the lexical system within different cultures. Such development manifests through the cultural bearers' perspectives on various events. The socio-cultural lexicon also acts as an indicator of societal behavior and psychology (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Translation experts refer to this as non-equivalent lexicon. We will use both terms, as appropriate, to maintain the originality when interpreting classifications established by renowned linguists regarding the classification of socio-cultural lexical layers.

The approach to this problem is not within the context of translation but from a socio-cultural standpoint. When addressing the issue from a socio-cultural perspective, important elements become the ethnic and national characteristics of different peoples, their way of life, and the lexicon associated with it (Sodirzoda, 2021). Therefore, individuals from different cultures sometimes struggle to understand each other, both in terms of traditions and communication.

Language, as a complex system of communication, is deeply intertwined with culture. The development and evolution of language are profoundly influenced by the cultural values, traditions, and norms prevalent within a society. Within the field of comparative literary theory, there is a growing awareness

of the significance of socio-cultural lexicon – words and phrases that carry specific socio-cultural meanings – and the need to understand their equivalence or non-equivalence across different languages and cultures (Yang, 2011). However, the classification of socio-cultural lexicon remains a challenging task, influenced by various factors such as linguistic diversity, historical context, and cultural nuances.

The Notion of Non-Equivalent Lexicon

The concept of non-equivalent lexicon refers to words and phrases that possess specific socio-cultural meanings and are not easily translatable or have no direct equivalent in other languages or cultures. Scholars have provided different explanations for the absence of equivalence in other cultures. Schweitzer (1999) attributes it to the lack of an exact equivalent term, while Tomakhin (1986) argues that the absence arises from the lack of a corresponding concept in other cultures. Eliot (1986) suggests that the foreign nature of the object being examined, along with its historical context, makes it alien to another language. For illustration, in George Orwell's novel "1984," the term "doublethink" is introduced (Orwell, 1984). It refers to the act of simultaneously holding contradictory beliefs or accepting contradictory information without perceiving it as illogical. This concept captures a unique socio-cultural meaning and is not easily translatable into a single word or phrase. Also, in J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" (1999), the Elvish word "namarie" is used as a farewell greeting, signifying a deep and profound goodbye. The word carries a specific sense of sadness, beauty, and reverence that is not easily conveyed by a direct equivalent in English. In Virginia Woolf's novel "To the Lighthouse" (1927), the term "stream of consciousness" is used to describe the narrative technique that reflects the inner thoughts and feelings of characters in a continuous flow. This concept captures the depth of human consciousness and is not easily translated into a single word or phrase in other languages. This shows how specific terms and phrases in English literature possess unique socio-cultural meanings that are challenging to express in other languages or cultures.

To address the challenges posed by socio-cultural lexicon, scholars have developed and refined three approaches within the context of intercultural relations and foreign language exploring:

1) Linguistic geography (Bottiglioni, 1956)

It focuses on the study of linguistic variation and the geographical distribution of language features. This approach helps identify regional variations in socio-cultural lexicon and understand the impact of geography on language development. In English literature, authors like Thomas Hardy in his novel "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" (1891) explore the distinct dialects and linguistic features of the characters, underscoring the cultural and geographical backgrounds of the story:

"Tha didst ought to hae come to thy husband, instead o' creeping in like this" (Hardy, 1891).

These lines demonstrate the use of dialect, specifically the West Country dialect, which is prevalent throughout the novel. The phrase "Tha didst ought to hae come" represents the dialectal variation of "You should have come" in standard English. This use of dialect serves to depict the cultural and geographical backgrounds of the characters and adds depth to the narrative.

2) Communicative-ethnographic approach (Sysoyev, 2014)

This approach focuses on understanding the socio-cultural context and communicative practices within a particular community. It examines how language is used within specific socio-cultural settings, considering the cultural norms, values, and practices that shape linguistic expression. In the novel "White Teeth" by Zadie Smith (2000), the author delves into the multicultural and multi-ethnic community of North London, portraying the diverse language use and intercultural communication among its characters:

"Scuze me, man, you got da time? ...Can I axe you a question about your religion, man?"
'What are you? A Jehovah's Witness?'
'Not Jehovah's, but something very, very similar. Can I leave this pamphlet?'

'I take Englishness to mean a love of freedom, tolerance, respect for privacy and the rule of law, a commitment to a democratic government, and so on. I think these are what binds all British people together...' (Smith, 2000).

These lines demonstrate the interplay of different linguistic styles and cultural references within the multicultural community portrayed in the novel. The characters use a mix of standard English, colloquial expressions, and even dialectal variations, reflecting the diversity of language use in their communication. This reflects the author's exploration of the multi-ethnic and multicultural dynamics of North London.

3) Socio-cultural approach (Gee, 1991)

This approach explores the interplay between language and culture, emphasizing the social, historical, and cultural factors that influence the meaning and usage of words. It seeks to understand how socio-cultural aspects impact the interpretation and translation of socio-cultural lexicon. In George Orwell's dystopian novel "Animal Farm" (1945), the author uses allegorical storytelling to comment on socio-political events, emphasizing the socio-cultural implications of language manipulation and propaganda:

"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" (Orwell, 1945).

This phrase, repeated throughout the novel, showcases the manipulation of language by the ruling pigs on the farm. The phrase starts with the principle of equality, but through the subtle manipulations of language, it is twisted to justify the unequal treatment and privileges bestowed upon the ruling class. This use of language serves to emphasize the socio-cultural implications of propaganda and how it can be used to control and manipulate the masses.

Thus, scholars as Perry (2004) embracing a sociocultural perspective have placed significant emphasis on cultural connections and their idiosyncrasies the English literature. Larke (1990) and Lucy (1992) stated in their works, that English linguists should foster a sense of cultural equality and consider this aspect throughout the research process. Such ideas are closely linked to the notions of cultural universality and the concept of multiculturalism, which gained prominence in the 1980s. This conceptual framework is closely associated with the cultural approach towards non-equivalent lexicon. According Kashgary (2011), non-equivalent lexicon denotes words or expressions that exist solely within a specific language and lack precise translation equivalents in other languages. This discrepancy arises from the absence of corresponding life experiences among language users.

Methods

Comparison serves as the fundamental operation of the scientific methodology in this article, as it is used throughout all stages of the research. The subject of comparative analysis in this study is the literary process, which is carried out through a complex interplay of interconnected national-literary and inter-literary relationships and convergences, and where the progressive movement of global literature finds its manifestation. This study uses a qualitative research design to explore the intricacies of cross-cultural analysis in English literature. The approach involves analyzing themes, language use, and stylistic features in selected literary works through textual investigation. To ensure diversity and comprehensiveness, a representative sample of English literary works from various periods and genres has been selected, including works by renowned English authors and those influenced by other cultures. The selection process considers critical reception, historical significance, and relevance to cross-cultural analysis. Primary data is collected through close reading of selected literary works, focusing on themes, characterization, language use, and socio-cultural contexts, while secondary data is gathered through literature analysis. The collected data is analyzed using a thematic approach to identify recurring patterns, symbols, and metaphors that reflect cross-cultural influences in the selected literary works.

The findings are interpreted through the theoretical framework of comparative literary theory, pointing at the importance of cross-cultural analysis in understanding English literature. Proper citation and acknowledgement of sources used in the analysis are observed in adherence to research ethics. One fundamental aspect of the hypothetical framework is the recognition that literature is not confined to

national or linguistic boundaries. Rather, it is a dynamic and interconnected web of narratives and ideas that transcends geographical and cultural borders. Another key component is the consideration of the historical and socio-cultural contexts in which literary works are produced. Comparative theory encourages us to examine not only the individual works but also the dialogues and echoes between them, both within English literature and across different literary traditions. The theory offers a set of conceptual tools and analytical frameworks that enable scholars to explore the connections, influences, and intersections between different literary traditions and works (see Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3).

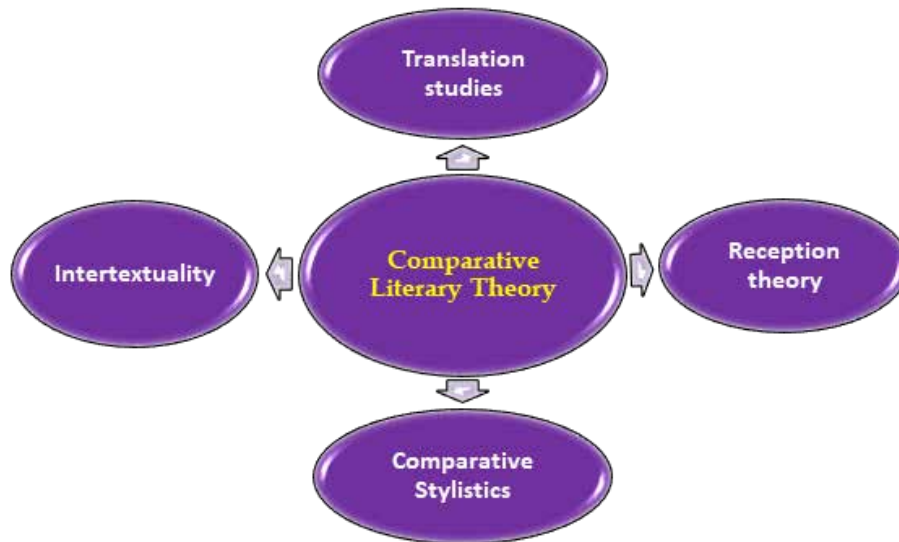


Figure 1. Comparative literary theory connections' model*

Scientific thought changes depending on the changes occurring in culture, society's worldview, and methodological structure. In other words, one branch of knowledge gains a leading position in the system of sciences and influences other disciplines.

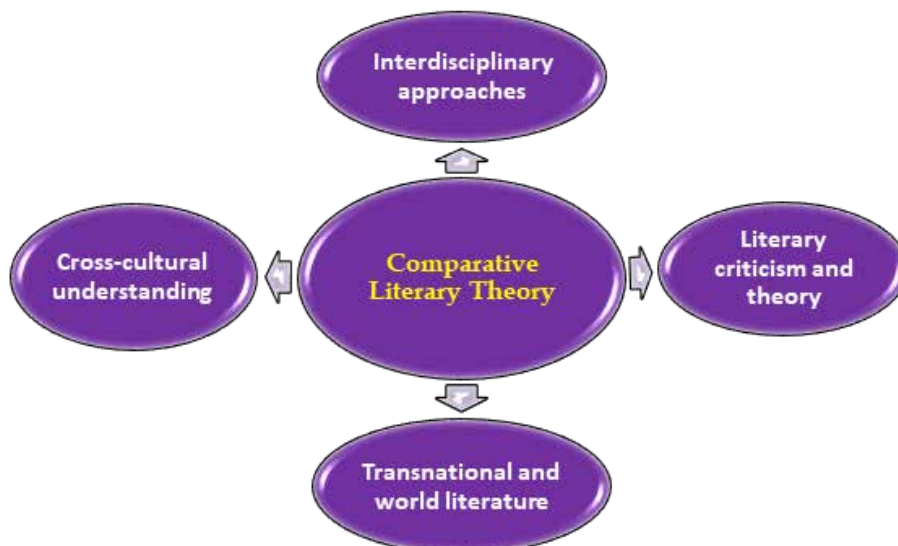


Figure 1. Comparative literary theory influences' model*

The scope of comparative studies is expanding to encompass various genres, styles and literary movements, and also entering the domain of general literary criticism.

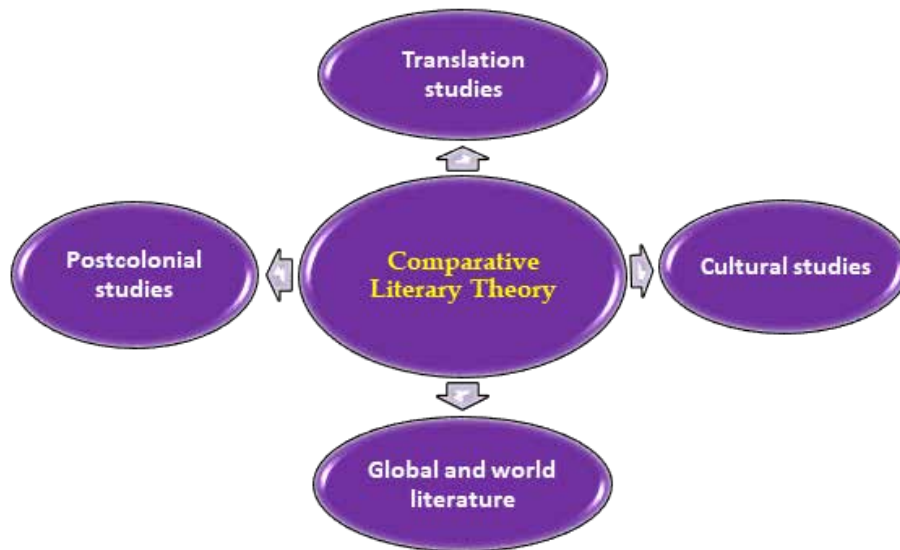


Figure 3. Comparative literary theory intersections' model*

Comparative theory illuminates the universal threads that bind humanity together through the power of storytelling and creative expression. The application of conceptual tools presents a significant asset in scrutinizing and elucidating the correlations among literary compositions. This technique facilitates a more in-depth cognition of the intricacies that are integral to literature.

Results and Discussion

In order for science to progress, it is necessary to identify commonalities among writers and reveal the connections that unite them, creating what is known as the literature of a particular time period. This general historical and literary process is essential for understanding the unique qualities of each individual writer and distinguishing the differences between them.

Comparative literary theory emphasizes the concept of intertextuality, which explores the connections and references between different literary works. In T. S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land" (1922), there are numerous references and allusions to other literary works. For instance, the lines "*April is the cruellest month*" (Eliot, 1922) can be seen as a reference to Geoffrey Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" (1476), where April is portrayed as a time of renewal and rebirth. By incorporating this intertextual reference, Eliot (1922) adds depth and layers of meaning to his own poem. Another variation is the use of intertextuality in James Joyce's novel "Ulysses" (1922) – the entire structure and narrative of the novel parallel Homer's "Odyssey" (1488). Each chapter corresponds to a specific episode in the original epic, and the characters and events in "Ulysses" (Joyce, 1922) mirror those in "Odyssey" (1488). This intertextual connection enriches the reading experience by inviting comparisons and drawing on the timeless themes and archetypes found in the ancient Greek epic.

In J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" series (1997-2007), intertextuality is evident through the incorporation of mythological and literary references. For example, character names such as Remus Lupin (alluding to the Roman myth of Romulus and Remus) and Sirius Black (referring to the brightest star in the constellation Canis Major, also known as the "Dog Star") create intertextual connections with classical mythology and astronomy, adding depth and symbolism to the characters and their stories. It demonstrates how intertextuality in English literature enriches the reading experience by establishing connections and references to other works, thereby broadening the scope of meaning and creating a dialogue between different texts. Scholars can analyze how texts from different literary traditions influence and interact with each other.

The explored theory is also incorporates recognition from translation studies. In the translation of

“The Divine Comedy” by Dante Alighierin (1472), originally written in Italian, and translated into English by translators such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1867, and later, in 1997, Robert and Jean Hollander embarked upon the task of translating The Divine Comedy. Their efforts culminated in the publication of *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradiso* translations in 2000, 2003, and 2007, respectively. These translations have since been recognized as invaluable contributions to the field of literature, and have earned the admiration of scholars and readers alike.

Thus, it can be explored how different translators have approached the linguistic and poetic challenges of conveying Dante’s complex verses and symbolism in English. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in his translation of “The Divine Comedy,” sought to capture the lyrical and rhythmic qualities of Dante’s original Italian verses. He aimed to maintain the poetic flow and musicality of the text, often using rhymed verse and a more structured poetic form. This approach prioritized the aesthetic elements of the poem and aimed to create a melodious reading experience for English readers. But Robert and Jean Hollander, in their translation, opted for a more close and literal rendering of Dante’s verses. They aimed to capture the precise meanings and nuances of the original text while staying true to its poetic rhythm. Their translation emphasizes accuracy and fidelity to the source material, ensuring that the complexity and subtleties of Dante’s symbolism and metaphors are conveyed as faithfully as possible. By analyzing these translated versions, we can understand the relationship between the original text, the target language, and the cultural context.

When Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s “One Hundred Years of Solitude” (2009) was translated from Spanish to English by Gregory Rabassa, it was presented a chance to examine the difficulties and opportunities of this cross-cultural literary exchange. Translating a complex and richly written novel like “One Hundred Years of Solitude” requires the translator to find appropriate equivalents for idiomatic expressions, wordplay, and linguistic devices used in the original text. This can be a challenging task, as certain language-specific elements may not have direct equivalents in the target language. Still, in the case of “One Hundred Years of Solitude,” the English translation allowed readers who may not have been proficient in Spanish to experience and appreciate the novel’s powerful storytelling and magical realism. The translation process impacted the novel’s reception and interpretation in English-speaking cultures, as well as how the translator managed to capture the essence of Marquez’s writing while navigating through linguistic and cultural subtleties.

Regarding the reception theory, comparative literary theory examines how different readers and communities receive and interpret literary works. The reception of “Jane Eyre” by Charlotte Bronte (1847) provides an interesting case study. The comparison of the reception of “Jane Eyre” in the Victorian era with its reception in contemporary times reveals significant differences in readers’ interpretations and perceptions of the novel. In the Victorian era, “Jane Eyre” was met with mixed reviews due to its controversial themes. Bronte (1847) praised Jane’s portrayal of a strong, independent female protagonist, while others criticized the novel for challenging social norms and questioning the role of women in society. George Henry Lewes, a prominent Victorian writer and critic, criticized “Jane Eyre” in his review for *Fraser’s Magazine* (Lewes, 1847). He disapproved of what he perceived as the novel’s feminist leanings and unconventional portrayal of female independence. In addition, Elizabeth Rigby raised concerns about the character of Jane Eyre, describing her as being “morally delinquent” and questioned the values presented in the novel (Rigby, 1848). As we can observe, the reception reflected the conservative nature of the era and the prevailing expectations for women.

In contemporary times, however, “Jane Eyre” has gained a more widespread appreciation and has become a classic of English literature (Gao, 2013). Readers now recognize the novel’s feminist undertones and celebrate Jane’s assertion of her own identity and autonomy. The shifting societal values and cultural shifts towards gender equality and women’s rights have influenced readers’ interpretations, leading to a more favorable reception of the novel. Accordingly, the comparison is showing the evolving perspectives and changing societal values that have shaped the interpretation and reception of “Jane Eyre” over time.

Studying the reception of William Shakespeare’s plays is a captivating topic. One can analyze how

Shakespeare's works have been interpreted and adapted across different cultures and time periods. For instance, exploring how "Hamlet" (1603) has been received in various countries and contexts can uncover the diverse interpretations and adaptations of the play, illuminating how different audiences receive and transform the text. This area of study demonstrates how the reception of a particular work changes based on cultural and historical contexts, unveiling the connection between literature and society.

Comparative literary theory employs comparative stylistics to analyze the stylistic features of different literary works. This approach involves comparing the language, narrative techniques, and rhetorical devices employed in various texts to identify similarities, differences, and the influence of one work or tradition on another. In this way, we can compare the stream-of-consciousness technique employed by Virginia Woolf in her novel "Mrs. Dalloway" (1925) with the multiple narrators and shifting perspectives used by William Faulkner in "The Sound and the Fury" (1929). Both Woolf (1925) and Faulkner (1929) experiment with non-linear storytelling and delve into the inner thoughts and perspectives of their characters. They both aim to capture the complexity and depth of human consciousness. However, there are notable differences in the execution of these techniques. In "Mrs. Dalloway," Woolf (1925) uses a more fluid and continuous stream-of-consciousness style, moving seamlessly between different characters' thoughts and experiences. The narrative flows in a more connected and cohesive manner. On the other hand, in "The Sound and the Fury," Faulkner (1929) employs multiple narrators, each with their own distinct voice and perspective. The novel is structured in a fragmented and nonlinear manner, with different sections told from various characters' viewpoints. These techniques are used to evoke a sense of subjectivity and illuminate the intricacies of human thought and experience. It also showcases the unique artistic choices and approaches of Woolf (1925) and Faulkner (1929) in their notable works.

The comparison of the use of metaphors and symbolism in Emily Dickinson and T. S. Eliot's poetry reveals distinct approaches and thematic focuses in their poetic works. Emily Dickinson (1998) is known for her concise and often enigmatic expressions, employing metaphors and symbolism to explore themes of nature, love, and the human experience. Her metaphors and symbols are often intimate, drawing on everyday objects and occurrences to convey deeper meanings and emotions. On the other hand, T. S. Eliot's poetry, particularly in "The Waste Land" (1922) and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915), utilizes metaphors and symbolism to convey a sense of disillusionment, fragmentation, and the alienation of modern life. His metaphors and symbols often draw on religious, mythological, and historical allusions, creating a densely layered and complex poetic landscape. While both poets use metaphors and symbolism in their works, the result of the comparison reveals divergent thematic concerns and different approaches to the use of figurative language. Dickinson's focus is often on the exploration of individual experience and emotions, while Eliot tackles broader societal and existential themes.

One of the primary influences of comparative literary theory is its emphasis on fostering cross-cultural understanding:

"Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements" (Achebe, 1958)

Chinua Achebe's novel "Things Fall Apart" (1958) explores the clash between African traditional cultures and the arrival of European colonialism. By delving into the Igbo culture and its protagonist Okonkwo, Achebe offers readers an opportunity to understand and empathize with a cross-cultural perspective different from their own.

"My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost" (Kureishi, 1990).

Hanif Kureishi's novel "The Buddha of Suburbia" (1990) investigates the experiences of a British-Asian teenager named Karim. Through Karim's hybrid identity and his navigation of multiple cultures, the novel invites readers to explore the complexities of identity, belonging, and cultural diversity in England.

"For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy – a perpetual

wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts" (Lahiri, 2003)

Jhumpa Lahiri's novel "The Namesake" (2003) delves into the experiences of Ashima, an Indian immigrant in the United States, and her son Gogol's struggle with his dual cultural identity. Through their story, Lahiri highlights the challenges and nuances of cross-cultural adaptation and the significance of understanding and appreciating different cultural perspectives.

These works demonstrate how English literature can foster cross-cultural understanding by exploring the experiences, perspectives, and challenges of characters from other cultural backgrounds. By comparing and analyzing texts from different literary traditions, readers and scholars engage with literature beyond their own cultural boundaries, enabling a more global and inclusive understanding of literary texts.

Comparative literary theory bridges the gaps between disciplines by encouraging interdisciplinary approaches:

"I busied myself to think of a story, – a story to rival those which had excited us to this task. One which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature and awaken thrilling horror – one to make the reader dread to look round, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart" (Shelley, 1818).

Mary Shelley's novel "Frankenstein" (1818) combines elements of gothic fiction, science fiction, and philosophy. The story not only explores scientific advancements and their ethical implications but also delves into philosophical questions surrounding the nature of humanity, the pursuit of knowledge, and the boundaries between science and morality. This amalgamation of disciplines in the novel encourages readers to examine the intersections between science, philosophy, and literature.

*"April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain"* (Eliot, 1922).

Eliot's poem "The Waste Land" (1922) combines elements of literature, mythology, history, and psychology. It references various cultural and historical texts, making allusions to different disciplines. This interdisciplinary approach prompts readers to appreciate the interconnectedness of literature, history, and other fields of knowledge, encouraging a deeper engagement with the poem.

"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" (Austen, 1813).

Jane Austen's novel "Pride and Prejudice" (1813) merges elements of social commentary, psychology, and satire. Through her depiction of the societal norms, complexities of human relationships, and the impact of class structures, Austen explores various disciplines within the context of a compelling narrative. This interdisciplinary approach invites readers to consider the intersections between literature, sociology, and psychology.

Researchers drawing from fields such as anthropology, sociology, history, linguistics, and philosophy can utilize comparative methods to explore the connections between literature and other cultural domains. This interdisciplinary approach enriches the analysis of literary texts and enhances our understanding of their socio-cultural contexts.

Comparative literary theory has contributed to the development of literary criticism and theory by expanding the scope of analysis:

"They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did. But we were not in their ranks" (Rhys, 2001).

Jean Rhys's novel "Wide Sargasso Sea" (2001) serves as a prequel to Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre." It explores the story of Bertha Mason, the "*madwoman in the attic*" from "Jane Eyre," by providing a postcolonial perspective and presenting a distinct voice and narrative that challenges the dominant Eurocentric perspective.

"She sliced like a knife through everything, at the same time was outside, looking on" (Woolf, 1925).

Virginia Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway" (1925) uses stream-of-consciousness narrative technique to delve into the inner thoughts and experiences of its characters. This novel expands the scope of analysis by examining the complexities of human consciousness and challenging traditional linear narrative structures.

This technique encourages scholars to explore similarities and distinctions between literary traditions, leading to the emergence of new theoretical frameworks and perspectives. This approach challenges traditional notions of canonical literature by featuring the importance of global literary interactions and cross-pollination of ideas.

Comparative literary theory has played a crucial role in shaping the field of transnational and world literature studies:

"I am the sum total of everything that went before me, of all I have been seen done, of everything done-to-me. I am everyone everything whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come" (Rushdie, 1981).

This quote from "Midnight's Children" by Salman Rushdie (1981) highlights the exploration of interconnectedness and the transnational connections between individuals and cultures. It reflects the influence of Comparative literary theory by emphasizing the relationship between different identities and experiences.

"For her life was continuity. The Native Village of her past was not left behind with the rungs of the metal ladder that now took them to the surface of a new world. It came up with them" (Ali, 2003).

"Brick Lane" by Monica Ali (2003), illustrates Monica's examination of the transnational experience. It demonstrates the influence of comparative literary theory by exploring the continuity of cultural identity and the connections between the protagonist's past and present.

"To be Jamaican British is to be an in-between child. You belong in neither place. When you go to your 'home' country you are a foreigner. And in England, the country of your birth, you are referred to as 'coloured'" (Levy, 2004).

This passage from "Small Island" demonstrates Andrea Levy's exploration of the complex intersection of Jamaican and British identities (Levy, 2004). It reflects the influence of Comparative literary theory by examining the experiences of individuals caught between two cultures and challenging traditional notions of national identity.

By transcending national boundaries and exploring the global circulation of literary texts, this

approach has paved the way for a better knowing of the interconnectedness of world literatures. It has prompted scholars to consider literature as a global phenomenon, rather than confined within national or linguistic boundaries.

Comparative literary theory intersects with postcolonial studies by examining the works of writers from formerly colonized regions and their connections to European and Western literary traditions. This intersection allows for an exploration of the effects of colonialism, cultural hybridity, and resistance within literature:

“That’s what careless words do. They make people love you a little less” (Roy, 1997).

In “The God of Small Things,” Arundhati Roy (1997) explores the social and political complexities of postcolonial India. The novel delves into the lives of a family in Kerala and examines the impact of colonialism, caste, and social hierarchies on their experiences, shedding light on the intersections of power and oppression.

“Ah can tell you something about loneliness... you know how it feel when you’re in a strange place and you doh have no friends?” (Selvon, 1956).

“The Lonely Londoners” by Sam Selvon (1956) explores the experiences of Caribbean immigrants in post-World War II London. Sam Selvon’s novel captures the struggles, identity formation, and the search for belonging experienced by these characters in the context of a colonial history and the intersections of cultural encounters.

These pieces of English literature demonstrate how comparative literary theory and postcolonial studies intersect to provide critical understanding of the impacts of colonization, the complexities of identity, and the relationships between formerly colonized regions and Western literary traditions.

Comparative literary theory intersects with translation studies by considering the challenges and complexities of translating literary works across different languages and cultures. This intersection acknowledges the role of translation in facilitating cross-cultural literary exchanges and emphasizes the importance of linguistic and cultural mediation in comparative analysis:

“As pessoas aprendem, desde cedo, qual é a razão de ser das suas vidas”, disse o velho, com certo amargor. “Talvez seja por isso que desistem dela tão facilmente também... Mas é assim que é” (Coelho, 1988)

[In Portuguese, the language of original]

Paulo Coelho’s internationally acclaimed novel “The Alchemist” (1988), originally written in Portuguese, has been translated into over 80 languages. The process of translating “The Alchemist” allows for the exploration of how cultural and linguistic nuances are conveyed and understood across different translations. Here is the translated text by Alan R. Clarke:

“People learn, early in their lives, what is their reason for being,” said the old man, with a certain bitterness. ...Maybe that’s why they give up on it so early, too... But that’s the way it is” (Coelho, 2005).

Here, the performer attempts to maintain the sense of wisdom and reflection portrayed by the old man. The cultural and linguistic nuances, such as the bitterness and resignation, are conveyed through the choice of words and sentence structure.

Comparative literary theory intersects with cultural studies by analyzing literature as a cultural

artifact that reflects and shapes societal beliefs, values, and power dynamics:

“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it” (Lee, 1960).

Harper Lee’s novel “To Kill a Mockingbird” (1960) explores themes of racial inequality, social injustice, and the complexities of morality in the Deep South during the 1930s. The story serves as a cultural critique of racial discrimination and challenges societal beliefs and prejudices. This intersection explores how literature both influences and is influenced by cultural contexts, allowing for a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural implications within literary texts.

Finally, the theory intersects with the fields of global and world literature by examining literary works from around the globe:

“It was not a story to pass on. So, they forgot her. Like an unpleasant dream during a troubling sleep” (Morrison, 1987).

Toni Morrison’s novel “Beloved” (1987) explores deeply the traumatic legacy of slavery in America. Through the evocative portrayal of African American characters, Morrison addresses universal themes of history, memory, and the enduring impact of systemic oppression. The novel invites a global perspective by shedding light on the shared experiences of marginalized communities worldwide.

“The greatest thing to come out of this country... is the Rooster Coop. Nowhere else in the world could men live with such complete freedom from malevolent forces” (Adiga, 2008).

“The White Tiger” by Aravind Adiga (2008) provides a critical examination of social and economic inequality in modern-day India. Through its scathing social commentary, the novel underlines the oppressive structures that exist in societies globally, encouraging readers to consider the broader implications of systemic injustices. This intersection contributes to a broader understanding of literary canons beyond national boundaries and encourages a global perspective on literature.

The study of comparative literature is a highly relevant field within global literary comparativism. Its significance is largely shaped by the existence of multiple literatures within a specific region, each possessing distinct identities, linguistic and cultural differences, as well as similarities. Consequently, the examination of various convergences and divergences between literary works not only aids in identifying their identities but also contributes to the advancement of methodology and the thesaurus of comparativism as a discipline. However, linguistic and cultural diversity places specific demands on researchers, who must possess knowledge of diverse languages and be immersed in ethnocultural realms beyond their own. This necessitates a distinct researcher persona characterized by unwavering curiosity, persistent intellectual exploration, dynamism, and the capacity to constantly broaden one’s “horizon of perception.”

One of the overarching missions of comparative literature is to bring together the most characteristic aspects of national literatures in order to recreate the spiritual world of humanity. This goes beyond providing a psychological characterization of a particular nation; it also encompasses their creative potential. What may be beyond the capabilities of one or a few nations can be achieved through the collective efforts of many. The spiritual world of humanity, often discussed, is a combination of diverse and specific manifestations across nations, and literature reflects them in the most expressive and concrete manner. Furthermore, this collection should include not only the essential properties of the spiritual world of humanity, but also the varying degrees of intensity, all the merits and flaws, from which the overall picture is created. It is true that each nation, as a part of humanity, reflects the characteristics of the whole, but a comprehensive understanding of the whole can only be achieved by synthesizing all national specificities.

The more thoroughly the contributions of each nation are considered, the more accurate the overall picture becomes. The study of various forms of interliterary connections, as well as typological similarities and specific characteristics of individual literatures, contributes to the creation of this comprehensive image of the spiritual life of humanity.

Conclusion

The examination of interliterary contacts and typological similarities brings evident practical benefits by facilitating the process of spiritual convergence and mutual understanding among nations. Rather than simply juxtaposing two (or more) objects, they are subjected to a comparative analysis where an equal, or identical, measure is applied. In a profound philosophical sense, comparison is always infused with the idea of an ideal (in the Platonic sense), pushing it to its logical extreme where the object's deepest potentials are realized. This pursuit aims to find a unifying equal unity. Exploring the similarities in the development of cultures across different nations, as well as identifying the differences in their distinctive cultural features, contributes to the unification of nations. Comparative-historical studies of various literatures corroborate the necessity of international interactions, enabling national literatures to discern their strengths and weaknesses while freeing themselves from nationalist fervor.

The application of comparative literary theory presents a compelling avenue for investigating English literature through a cross-cultural lens. By elucidating the intricate connections and influences that traverse diverse literary works originating from various cultures and regions, this approach enriches our understanding of the subject. The technique allows for a nuanced exploration of how these texts serve as both reflections of and catalysts for societal beliefs, values, and power dynamics. Consequently, it transcends national confines, fostering a global perspective that uncovers fresh dimensions within the literary canon. When viewed through the prism of translation studies, the complexities inherent in rendering these literary works across languages come to the forefront. This facet underscores the paramount importance of capturing the intricate cultural and linguistic nuances embedded within the texts. By paying meticulous attention to these nuances, the translations can retain the original essence and cultural authenticity, enabling a more comprehensive appreciation of the global literary landscape. The intersection of the theory with cultural studies offers a unique framework for examining literature as a cultural artifact. This approach recognizes that literary creations are not created in isolation but are instead deeply influenced by and embedded within the societies that produce them. This perspective encourages an exploration of literature's role in shaping and reflecting societal constructs, challenging prevailing norms, and giving voice to marginalized experiences. By embracing this interdisciplinary perspective, the study of English literature gains novelty, shedding light on previously unexplored dimensions and broadening our horizons.

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Author Bionote

Olena V. Kholodniak was born in Vovchansk, Kharkiv region, Ukraine. In 2003, she graduated from H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv State Pedagogical University with honors, earning a Specialist's Degree in Pedagogics and Methods of Secondary Education. Her specialization included English, Russian Language and Literature, qualifying her as a teacher of English, Russian Languages, and Foreign Literature. She has been working as an English teacher at H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University since 2006. In 2017, she successfully defended her thesis and obtained the Candidate Degree in Philology from H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University. Since 2022, Dr. Kholodniak has been employed as a Senior Researcher at the Faculty of Human and Social Studies at Mykolas Romeris University in Vilnius, Lithuania. Her areas of specialization include text linguistics, epistolary discourse, lingvopersonology, methods of teaching foreign languages, and methods of teaching and fostering the development of foreign students. Dr. Kholodniak is an active member of TESOL-Ukraine, which is the international branch of TESOL, Inc. She is also a member of the Lithuanian Scientific Society (LSS).

Authorship and Level of Contribution

The article entitled "Comparative Literary Theory: A Cross-Cultural Approach to English Literature" was authored by Olena V. Kholodniak, who conducted extensive research to gather information from various sources. Through a meticulous analysis of the intersection of comparative literary theory with the study of English literature from a cross-cultural perspective, she formulated the central arguments, provided relevant examples, and developed the overall structure of the article. Throughout the process, she ensured that the content was clear, coherent, and accurate, thereby demonstrating her expertise and dedicated efforts in creating the article. Her contribution was crucial in the successful completion of the project.

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