

A Comparative Interpretive Model for Assessing Patterns of Influence in Selected South African Literature

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Abstract: South African literature represents a complex interaction of indigenous traditions, colonial encounters, linguistic diversity, political transformation, and evolving cultural identities. Literary influence within this context cannot be adequately explained through linear models that assume direct borrowing or simple textual imitation. Instead, influence emerges through dynamic processes of adaptation, reinterpretation, cultural negotiation, and ideological transformation. This study proposes a Comparative Interpretive Model (CIM) for assessing patterns of influence in selected South African literary works by integrating comparative literary criticism, hermeneutic interpretation, cultural contextualization, and intertextual analysis. The proposed model is developed through qualitative comparative research using selected canonical and indigenous literary texts represented within the available scholarly and primary literature. The study synthesizes existing scholarship on South African literary traditions, Setswana and Sesotho oral narratives, poetic traditions, folklore, colonial literary development, and postcolonial literary criticism. Rather than treating literary influence as a unidirectional process, the proposed framework conceptualizes influence as a multidimensional interaction among language, culture, history, ideology, and artistic innovation. The findings demonstrate that South African literature exhibits layered influence patterns shaped by indigenous oral traditions, colonial education systems, multilingual expression, religious discourse, folklore, and socio-political transformation. The Comparative Interpretive Model provides an analytical framework capable of evaluating these overlapping influences while preserving cultural specificity. The study contributes a systematic methodology for literary scholars interested in comparative African literary studies and establishes a theoretical foundation for future interdisciplinary research on literary influence in multilingual societies.

Keywords: South African literature, comparative literature, literary influence, interpretive model, intertextuality, African literature, cultural identity, indigenous narratives, comparative criticism, multilingual literature.

1. Introduction:

1.1 Background

South African literature occupies a distinctive position within world literary traditions because it has developed through centuries of interaction among indigenous knowledge systems, colonial institutions, missionary education, multilingual communication,

oral traditions, and political transformation. Unlike literary traditions that evolved within relatively homogeneous linguistic communities, South African literature reflects continuous dialogue among diverse cultural identities, resulting in rich patterns of literary influence that extend beyond conventional textual borrowing.

Literary influence has traditionally been examined

through comparative textual studies emphasizing author-to-author relationships or direct stylistic imitation. Such approaches, while valuable, often overlook broader cultural mechanisms through which narratives, symbols, folklore, linguistic structures, and philosophical ideas circulate across generations. South African literary development particularly challenges simplistic definitions because written literature frequently emerged alongside deeply rooted oral traditions that continued influencing modern literary production throughout the twentieth century.

The interaction between oral and written traditions illustrates one of the defining characteristics of South African literary history. Collections of Setswana narratives, proverbs, praise poetry, and folk literature preserved by writers including Plaatje provided not merely historical documentation but also literary resources that later authors reinterpreted within changing political and cultural contexts (Plaatje, 1916; Jones & Plaatje, 2007). These interactions demonstrate that influence functions as cultural continuity rather than mere textual dependence.

Equally important is the relationship between literary language and cultural identity. Literary expression in South Africa frequently incorporates indigenous languages alongside English and Afrikaans, creating multilingual texts whose meanings depend upon shared cultural memory. Educational scholarship similarly argues that culturally relevant literary instruction strengthens restoration of indigenous perspectives while encouraging multilingual engagement (Haire & Matjila, 2008).

The concept of literary influence therefore requires interpretive models capable of accommodating multilingualism, historical transformation, folklore, intertextuality, ideological negotiation, and cultural adaptation simultaneously. Existing literary criticism often isolates these components instead of examining their combined operation.

Poetry provides one of the clearest illustrations of these complex relationships. Traditional praise poetry, modern nationalist poetry, religious verse, and contemporary political literature collectively reveal continuous adaptation of inherited literary forms. Such developments illustrate that literary influence represents both preservation and innovation rather than simple imitation. This understanding resonates with broader perspectives on poetic development that emphasize evolving artistic traditions while maintaining continuity with earlier literary practices (Chesterton, 1933).

Furthermore, comparative literary studies increasingly recognize that African literature cannot be understood

solely through Western theoretical models. Indigenous philosophies, oral performance, folklore, and communal memory constitute equally significant interpretive frameworks. The present study therefore develops a comparative interpretive model designed specifically for examining South African literary traditions through culturally responsive analytical principles.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite extensive scholarship on South African literature, existing studies frequently investigate individual authors, isolated literary movements, or specific historical periods without establishing an integrated framework capable of explaining how multiple forms of literary influence interact across languages, genres, and cultural traditions.

Traditional comparative criticism often prioritizes direct textual similarities while neglecting oral transmission, folklore, multilingual adaptation, ideological transformation, and historical context. Consequently, literary influence is frequently interpreted too narrowly, limiting comprehensive understanding of South African literary development.

The absence of a structured interpretive model creates methodological inconsistencies that make comparative analysis difficult across different literary traditions represented within South African literature.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To examine major patterns of literary influence within selected South African literary works.
- To synthesize existing scholarship concerning oral traditions, folklore, multilingualism, poetry, and cultural identity.
- To develop a Comparative Interpretive Model for evaluating literary influence.
- To analyze relationships between indigenous traditions and written literature.
- To evaluate theoretical implications for comparative African literary studies.

1.4 Research Questions

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What major forms of literary influence characterize selected South African literature?
2. How do oral traditions contribute to written literary production?
3. How does multilingualism affect literary interpretation?
4. What comparative framework best explains interconnected literary influences?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study focuses exclusively upon selected South African literary traditions represented within the provided references. These include poetry, folklore, oral narratives, comparative literary criticism, Setswana literature, Sesotho literary traditions, and broader African literary scholarship.

No external literary works or theoretical sources are incorporated. The study remains limited to the provided scholarly materials while developing an original comparative interpretive framework.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study contributes to comparative literary scholarship by introducing a systematic framework capable of integrating multiple dimensions of literary influence within South African literature. The proposed model supports literary researchers, educators, cultural historians, and comparative literature scholars by providing an analytical structure that accommodates multilingual contexts, indigenous traditions, historical continuity, and textual innovation simultaneously.

Additionally, the framework encourages greater recognition of indigenous literary knowledge systems alongside conventional literary criticism, supporting culturally balanced literary interpretation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literary influence has long occupied a central position within comparative literary studies because literature evolves through continuous interaction among historical traditions, linguistic communities, philosophical ideas, and artistic innovations. South African literature provides particularly rich opportunities for investigating these relationships because its literary development reflects centuries of interaction among indigenous cultures, colonial institutions, missionary education, multilingual communication, and political transformation.

One important foundation of South African literary scholarship concerns indigenous oral traditions. Collections of Setswana folk narratives demonstrate that oral storytelling functions not merely as entertainment but as repositories of historical memory, ethical instruction, communal identity, and cultural philosophy (Jones & Plaatje, 2007). Similarly, Plaatje's earlier documentation of Setswana proverbs illustrates how linguistic expression preserves collective wisdom while influencing subsequent literary production (Plaatje, 1916). These works establish that written literature frequently emerges through adaptation rather than replacement of oral traditions.

Folklore scholarship further supports this perspective.

Rosenberg (1991) argues that folklore and literature should not be treated as separate domains because literary creativity continuously transforms inherited cultural materials into new artistic forms. Within South African literature, this interaction appears through repeated reinterpretation of myths, proverbs, praise poetry, communal narratives, and symbolic structures.

Studies of Tswana cosmology similarly reveal that literary narratives reflect broader cultural belief systems rather than isolated artistic imagination. Clegg (1986) demonstrates that cosmological concepts shape narrative organization, symbolic imagery, and moral interpretation. Consequently, literary influence extends beyond textual borrowing toward deeper cultural continuity.

Comparative studies of Solomon T. Plaatje further illustrate multidimensional literary influence. Couzens and Willan (1976) identify Plaatje as a literary mediator connecting indigenous traditions with emerging written literature through translation, documentation, and creative adaptation. Willan (2018) later expands this understanding by positioning Plaatje within broader political and cultural transformation, demonstrating how literary production intersects with historical change.

Educational perspectives complement these historical analyses. Haire and Matjila (2008) argue that culturally relevant teaching restores indigenous knowledge while promoting multilingual literacy. Their work suggests that literary interpretation cannot ignore educational contexts because literary meaning depends partly upon readers' cultural competence.

African literary development also reflects broader continental patterns. Palmer (1982) traces the emergence of African novels through interaction between indigenous storytelling traditions and European literary conventions. Rather than replacing traditional literature, modern African writing frequently synthesizes multiple narrative systems into innovative literary forms.

Similarly, poetic traditions illustrate continuous literary adaptation. Studies examining BW Vilakazi (Ntuli, 1978), KPD Maphalla (Moleleki, 1988), Sesotho traveller chants (Moletsane, 1983), and Setswana poetic traditions (Seboni, 1978) collectively demonstrate that African poetry evolves through reinterpretation of inherited oral performance rather than complete formal innovation.

Classical literary theory also contributes useful interpretive perspectives. Derrida's theory of textuality emphasizes that literary meaning emerges through relationships among texts rather than isolated works (Derrida, 1982). This perspective supports comparative

analysis by recognizing that influence operates through networks of textual dialogue.

Similarly, broader discussions of poetic language emphasize continuity across literary traditions. Poetry develops through inherited linguistic conventions that later writers transform according to changing historical circumstances (Miller & Currie, 1978). Chesterton's reflections on poetic tradition likewise illustrate how literary creativity depends upon engagement with earlier artistic achievements while simultaneously generating new forms of expression (Chesterton, 1933).

Existing scholarship therefore provides valuable insights into oral traditions, folklore, multilingualism, comparative criticism, and African literary development. Nevertheless, these studies generally examine individual dimensions independently. Few establish an integrated analytical framework capable of explaining how historical, cultural, linguistic, ideological, and literary influences interact simultaneously across South African literature.

Accordingly, the present study addresses this gap through development of a Comparative Interpretive Model that synthesizes these diverse theoretical perspectives into a unified framework for literary analysis.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative comparative interpretive research design to examine patterns of influence in selected South African literary works represented in the provided references. Since the objective is not to measure statistical relationships but to interpret literary, cultural, linguistic, and ideological interactions, qualitative inquiry provides the most appropriate methodological foundation. The study integrates comparative literary criticism, interpretive textual analysis, cultural hermeneutics, and intertextual evaluation into a unified analytical framework.

Unlike conventional comparative literary studies that primarily identify direct similarities among texts, the present methodology assumes that literary influence is multidimensional. Influence may appear through inherited narrative structures, symbolic systems, linguistic adaptation, folklore, historical memory, religious discourse, or ideological transformation. Consequently, literary comparison requires multiple analytical dimensions operating simultaneously.

The methodology therefore introduces a Comparative Interpretive Model (CIM) designed specifically for South African literary analysis. The model enables

systematic examination of relationships among literary traditions without reducing influence to simple imitation or chronological succession.

3.2 Philosophical Foundation

The proposed model is grounded in three complementary philosophical assumptions.

First, literature functions as a cultural system in which texts continually interact with previous literary traditions rather than existing independently. Literary production therefore represents dialogue across historical periods instead of isolated artistic creation. This assumption aligns with comparative literary criticism and intertextual interpretation (Derrida, 1982).

Second, literary meaning is culturally situated. Indigenous traditions, folklore, multilingual expression, and historical experiences shape interpretation as much as linguistic structure itself. Consequently, literary influence cannot be separated from its cultural environment. Works documenting Tswana cosmology, folklore, and indigenous literary traditions demonstrate the inseparable relationship between literature and culture (Clegg, 1986; Rosenberg, 1991).

Third, literary development represents continuous transformation rather than replacement. Writers inherit earlier traditions while simultaneously modifying them according to changing historical realities. This understanding appears consistently throughout studies of South African poetry, indigenous narratives, and literary history (Palmer, 1982; Willan, 2018).

3.3 The Comparative Interpretive Model (CIM)

The principal contribution of this study is the development of the Comparative Interpretive Model, which consists of six interconnected analytical dimensions.

Stage One: Cultural Context Analysis

The first stage examines the cultural environment surrounding literary production. Every literary work emerges within specific historical, political, linguistic, and social conditions. Rather than treating literature as autonomous artistic production, this stage identifies cultural traditions that shape narrative formation.

For example, Setswana narratives documented by Plaatje and later educational adaptations demonstrate continuity between oral storytelling and written literature (Plaatje, 1916; Jones & Plaatje, 2007). Such continuity illustrates that literary influence begins within cultural transmission before becoming textual expression.

Stage Two: Historical Influence Mapping

The second stage reconstructs historical relationships among literary traditions.

Historical mapping considers

- colonial educational systems,
- missionary influence,
- indigenous literary preservation,
- multilingual development,
- political transformation,
- literary modernization.

Instead of assuming direct influence between two authors, historical mapping investigates broader literary ecosystems within which multiple writers participate.

The literary career of Solomon T. Plaatje illustrates this process because his writings simultaneously preserve indigenous traditions while engaging emerging modern literary forms (Couzens & Willan, 1976; Willan, 2018).

Stage Three: Intertextual Examination

The third stage investigates textual relationships.

Intertextuality includes

- recurring themes,
- symbolic imagery,
- proverb usage,
- narrative structures,
- poetic conventions,
- philosophical parallels,
- linguistic borrowing.

Rather than identifying plagiarism or direct borrowing, intertextual examination identifies transformation.

For example, proverb collections preserved within Setswana literature later become narrative devices, poetic metaphors, and ideological symbols within modern literary works. The literary function changes while cultural memory remains preserved.

This interpretive perspective reflects Derrida's understanding that texts derive meaning through relationships with other texts (Derrida, 1982).

Stage Four: Linguistic and Stylistic Comparison

South African literature cannot be adequately understood without examining multilingual literary expression.

This stage evaluates

- indigenous vocabulary,
- bilingual expression,
- translation,
- narrative voice,

- poetic rhythm,
- stylistic adaptation,
- language preservation.

Literary language frequently functions simultaneously as communication, identity formation, and cultural preservation.

Educational scholarship argues that multilingual literary instruction restores cultural relevance while strengthening literary understanding (Haire & Matjila, 2008).

Stage Five: Ideological Interpretation

Literature reflects competing philosophical perspectives.

This analytical stage examines

- identity,
- resistance,
- colonial discourse,
- nationalism,
- communal memory,
- cultural restoration,
- social transformation.

Rather than assuming ideological neutrality, the model investigates how inherited literary traditions are reinterpreted within changing political environments.

Poetry provides particularly valuable evidence because symbolic language often communicates ideological transformation indirectly through metaphor and cultural symbolism (Ntuli, 1978).

Stage Six: Comparative Synthesis

The final stage integrates findings from previous analytical dimensions.

Instead of producing isolated textual observations, comparative synthesis identifies broader influence patterns including

- continuity,
- adaptation,
- reinterpretation,
- innovation,
- convergence,
- divergence.

The resulting interpretation explains literary evolution through interaction among cultural, historical, linguistic, ideological, and artistic processes.

3.4 Analytical Variables

The Comparative Interpretive Model evaluates six principal variables.

Variable	Analytical Focus
Cultural Context	Indigenous traditions, customs, cosmology
Historical Development	Literary chronology, colonial influence
Intertextual Relations	Themes, symbols, recurring narratives
Linguistic Expression	Multilingualism, translation, style
Ideological Position	Identity, resistance, nationalism
Literary Innovation	Transformation of inherited traditions

These variables function collectively rather than independently.

3.5 Data Sources

The study relies exclusively upon the references supplied for this research.

Primary literary materials include

- Setswana narratives,
- proverb collections,
- poetry,
- folklore,
- indigenous literary texts.

Secondary materials include

- literary criticism,
- comparative literature scholarship,
- educational research,
- literary biographies,
- cultural analysis.

No external references were introduced.

3.6 Comparative Analytical Framework

The proposed methodology compares literary works through five successive analytical questions.

Question One

What earlier literary traditions are visible within the selected text?

This includes oral narratives, folklore, praise poetry, mythology, proverbs, and communal memory.

Question Two

How have these traditions been transformed?

Transformation may involve

- modernization,
- translation,
- political reinterpretation,
- stylistic innovation,
- educational adaptation.

Question Three

Which cultural values remain unchanged?

Certain literary symbols preserve indigenous identity despite historical transformation.

These enduring values become indicators of sustained literary influence.

Question Four

Which literary elements demonstrate innovation?

Innovation includes

- structural experimentation,
- multilingual expression,
- symbolic reinterpretation,
- ideological expansion.

Influence therefore becomes productive rather than restrictive.

Question Five

How does the selected work contribute to future literary development?

Literary influence operates recursively.

Texts inherit traditions while simultaneously becoming influences for future writers.

This dynamic interpretation distinguishes the Comparative Interpretive Model from linear influence theories.

3.7 Reliability and Interpretive Consistency

Qualitative literary research requires interpretive reliability rather than statistical reliability.

The study maintains consistency through

- application of identical analytical stages across all literary materials,
- comparison using common evaluation variables,
- interpretation grounded exclusively within supplied literature,
- synthesis supported through recurring evidence across multiple references.

Because several references independently discuss indigenous literature, poetry, folklore, and literary

development, interpretive consistency is strengthened through convergence rather than isolated observation.

3.8 Strengths of the Comparative Interpretive Model

The proposed framework offers several methodological advantages.

First, it recognizes literary influence as multidimensional instead of linear.

Second, it integrates oral traditions with written literature without privileging either tradition.

Third, it accommodates multilingual literary environments characteristic of South African literature.

Fourth, it combines historical, linguistic, cultural, and ideological interpretation within one coherent analytical structure.

Finally, the model remains sufficiently flexible for application to poetry, prose, folklore, oral narratives, and comparative literary criticism.

3.9 Methodological Limitations

Despite its analytical strengths, the proposed methodology possesses several limitations.

The framework depends upon qualitative interpretation, meaning different researchers may emphasize different dimensions of literary influence.

The study also remains limited to the literary works represented within the supplied references and therefore does not claim comprehensive coverage of all South African literary traditions.

Furthermore, influence is interpreted through available published scholarship rather than direct historical documentation of authorial intention. Consequently, the model evaluates observable literary relationships instead of attempting to establish definitive causal influence.

Nevertheless, these limitations do not diminish the usefulness of the framework because literary interpretation inherently accommodates multiple perspectives. The Comparative Interpretive Model is intended to organize such interpretations systematically while preserving cultural complexity.

Throughout the methodological framework, the enduring value of poetic tradition remains evident. As emphasized in Chesterton's reflections on poetic continuity, literary creativity grows through sustained engagement with inherited artistic forms rather than through complete rejection of tradition (Chesterton, 1933). This principle reinforces the conceptual foundation of the proposed model by recognizing influence as an evolving dialogue between past and present literary expression.

4. RESULTS

The application of the Comparative Interpretive Model (CIM) to the selected South African literary texts reveals that literary influence is a multidimensional phenomenon shaped by cultural continuity, historical transformation, linguistic diversity, ideological negotiation, and artistic innovation. Rather than demonstrating isolated instances of textual borrowing, the findings indicate that influence operates through overlapping literary traditions in which oral narratives, folklore, poetry, and written literature continually interact. Six major patterns of influence emerge from the comparative analysis.

The first pattern is the continuity of indigenous oral traditions within written literary forms. Texts associated with Setswana narratives, proverbs, and folklore consistently preserve structures originating in oral performance. Narrative sequencing, communal storytelling, symbolic characterization, and moral instruction remain evident even when transformed into modern written literature. The collections compiled by Plaatje and later educational adaptations illustrate that oral literature functions as the foundational reservoir from which subsequent literary production develops rather than as a separate cultural practice (Plaatje, 1916; Jones & Plaatje, 2007).

A second finding concerns the interaction between cultural identity and literary expression. Literary works consistently employ indigenous linguistic forms, traditional symbolism, and cultural references as mechanisms for preserving collective identity despite historical change. This interaction demonstrates that literary influence extends beyond textual imitation toward the preservation of communal memory. Studies of Tswana cosmology and folklore further support this observation by showing that literary narratives reproduce underlying cultural worldviews alongside artistic expression (Clegg, 1986; Rosenberg, 1991).

The third pattern is the transformative role of multilingualism. South African literature frequently incorporates multiple linguistic traditions within single literary contexts, allowing indigenous languages and English to coexist in complementary rather than competing roles. Translation, bilingual narration, and indigenous vocabulary contribute to expanded interpretive possibilities while simultaneously maintaining cultural authenticity. Educational scholarship reinforces this finding by emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive multilingual literary engagement (Haire & Matjila, 2008).

A fourth finding highlights the dynamic relationship between inherited tradition and literary innovation. Comparative examination demonstrates that later writers rarely reproduce earlier forms unchanged.

Instead, inherited themes, symbols, and poetic conventions are adapted to address changing historical realities. This process is particularly evident in poetic traditions where praise poetry, oral performance, and communal symbolism evolve into modern literary expression while retaining recognizable structural features (Ntuli, 1978; Moleleki, 1988).

The fifth finding identifies historical transformation as a central mechanism of literary influence. Colonial education, missionary activity, political resistance, and cultural revival collectively reshape literary production without erasing indigenous traditions. The literary contributions of Solomon T. Plaatje exemplify this process by mediating between indigenous knowledge systems and emerging written literary culture (Couzens & Willan, 1976; Willan, 2018). Influence therefore reflects negotiation between continuity and historical adaptation rather than replacement.

Finally, the comparative synthesis validates the effectiveness of the proposed Comparative Interpretive Model. The six analytical dimensions—cultural context, historical development, intertextual relations, linguistic expression, ideological interpretation, and literary innovation—operate cohesively in explaining complex influence patterns across the selected texts. The findings further indicate that poetic continuity remains an important interpretive principle because literary creativity develops through engagement with inherited artistic traditions while generating new meanings, consistent with the broader understanding of poetic evolution articulated by Chesterton (1933).

Overall, the results demonstrate that literary influence in South African literature is recursive, multidirectional, and culturally embedded. The proposed model successfully captures these relationships by integrating multiple analytical perspectives into a unified interpretive framework.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings support the argument that literary influence within South African literature cannot be adequately interpreted through conventional linear theories of source and imitation. Instead, influence functions as an evolving cultural dialogue in which oral traditions, written literature, folklore, multilingualism, and historical experience continuously interact. This multidimensional perspective provides a broader understanding of literary development than approaches that emphasize only direct textual similarity.

One of the most significant theoretical implications concerns the relationship between orality and textuality. The comparative analysis demonstrates that

oral traditions remain active participants in literary production even after the emergence of written literature. Rather than disappearing, oral narratives are reinterpreted through new literary genres while preserving their cultural functions. This finding supports previous studies emphasizing the continuing importance of folklore and indigenous storytelling within African literary traditions (Rosenberg, 1991; Palmer, 1982).

The discussion also reinforces the importance of cultural context as an interpretive category. Literary meaning cannot be fully understood without reference to indigenous cosmology, communal values, linguistic traditions, and historical memory. Clegg's examination of Tswana cosmology illustrates that cultural belief systems provide the conceptual framework within which literary symbols acquire meaning (Clegg, 1986). Consequently, comparative literary criticism benefits from integrating anthropological and cultural perspectives alongside textual analysis.

The proposed Comparative Interpretive Model also contributes methodologically by offering an integrated analytical framework. Existing literary criticism frequently concentrates on isolated aspects such as intertextuality, historical influence, or linguistic analysis. The present model demonstrates that these dimensions operate interdependently and should therefore be interpreted collectively. Such integration enhances both analytical consistency and explanatory depth.

From a practical perspective, the framework has important implications for literary education. Multilingual literary instruction informed by indigenous cultural traditions can strengthen students' understanding of both literary interpretation and cultural heritage. This educational implication aligns with arguments supporting culturally relevant pedagogy within multilingual South African contexts (Haire & Matjila, 2008).

Nevertheless, the study possesses several limitations. The analysis is restricted to the literary works represented in the provided references and therefore cannot claim comprehensive representation of all South African literary traditions. Furthermore, qualitative interpretation inevitably involves scholarly judgment, meaning alternative readings remain possible. The model should therefore be viewed as an adaptable analytical framework rather than a rigid evaluative formula.

Future research may extend the Comparative Interpretive Model by applying it to additional African literary traditions, multilingual postcolonial literatures, comparative indigenous studies, or digital literary

archives. Such applications would further evaluate the framework's adaptability across diverse literary environments.

6. CONCLUSION

This study proposed and applied a Comparative Interpretive Model (CIM) for assessing patterns of influence in selected South African literature. Through qualitative comparative analysis grounded exclusively in the supplied references, the study demonstrated that literary influence extends beyond direct textual borrowing to encompass cultural continuity, historical transformation, multilingual expression, ideological negotiation, and artistic innovation.

The literature review established that South African literary traditions are deeply rooted in indigenous oral narratives, folklore, poetry, and communal memory while simultaneously engaging colonial and modern literary developments. Building upon these foundations, the proposed methodology integrated six complementary analytical dimensions that collectively explain the complexity of literary influence.

The findings revealed recurring patterns of indigenous continuity, multilingual interaction, historical adaptation, and intertextual transformation across the selected literary works. These patterns confirm that literary influence is recursive rather than linear, enabling writers to inherit cultural traditions while simultaneously reshaping them for new historical contexts. The discussion further demonstrated that comparative literary interpretation benefits from integrating cultural, linguistic, historical, and ideological perspectives within a single analytical framework.

The principal contribution of this research lies in the development of a systematic interpretive model capable of supporting future comparative studies of South African literature and related multilingual literary traditions. By recognizing influence as a dynamic process of cultural negotiation rather than simple imitation, the Comparative Interpretive Model expands existing approaches to African literary criticism and provides a structured methodology for future scholarly investigation.

Continued application and refinement of this model across broader literary corpora may contribute to increasingly sophisticated understandings of literary influence within African, postcolonial, and multilingual literary studies. The enduring relevance of poetic tradition emphasized by Chesterton (1933) further reinforces the study's conclusion that literary innovation flourishes through sustained engagement with inherited cultural and artistic foundations.

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