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Longing in the Song *Ummi* by Maher Zain and *Jasa Poma* by Rafly Kande (A Comparative Literature Study)

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by the discovery of shared meanings related to the concept of motherhood in the song *Ummi* by Maher Zain and *Jasa Poma* by Rafly Kande. The research aims to reveal both the similarities and differences in the expression of longing portrayed in *Ummi* and *Jasa Poma*. A qualitative research method is employed in this study, with data collected through reading and note-taking techniques. The data are analyzed using descriptive and comparative approaches, followed by conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that both songs share similar elements of longing, including longing for a mother's affection, a mother's prayers, and devotion to one's mother. Meanwhile, the differences lie in the cultural backgrounds: *Jasa Poma* is rooted in Acehese culture, while *Ummi* is based on Middle Eastern culture, *Jasa Poma* belongs to the genre of Acehese socio-religious poetry, while *Ummi* represents contemporary music, differences are also found in the messages conveyed by each song, as well as in the portrayal of the mother figure in *Ummi*. Through this comparative analysis, both *Ummi* and *Jasa Poma* demonstrate distinctive characteristics as original literary works. This study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the literary and cultural dimensions of the two songs.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Longing creates a desire to meet someone who leaves a deep impression. This feeling also reflects an inner emotional experience. When unfulfilled, longing can lead to pain and suffering (Hashmi, 2022). Basically, longing aims to achieve fulfillment and inner peace. The fulfillment of this desire brings a sense of calm within a person. Moreover, longing is not only felt personally but is also expressed in literary works as a reflection of the author's experiences (Agsan & Wulandari, 2022).

A song is a form of literary work in the genre of poetry that is accompanied by melody. The sung poetic lyrics create a pleasant rhythm when heard and can evoke the listener's emotions (Pristiwati et al., 2024). Functionally, a song serves as a medium of expression to convey one's feelings, whether of sadness or happiness (Harnia, 2021). A songwriter creates songs with the purpose of providing entertainment and delivering messages (Nasution et al., 2024). The message in song lyrics may contain didactic meaning, serve purely as entertainment, or combine both. Therefore, song lyrics become a medium for the songwriter to express emotions and creativity ('Aini & Tasnimah, 2024).

As seen in the lyrics of *Ummi* by Maher Zain and *Jasa Poma* by Rafly Kande, both songs are clear examples of the use of beautiful words filled with deep meaning (Rahman et al., 2024). Through the lyrics of these two songs, the singers express profound longing for a mother figure, revealed from two different perspectives. Maher Zain is a Lebanese religious musician who has become one of the most influential figures in modern Islamic music. With his melodious voice, Maher Zain combines elements of contemporary music with deep Islamic messages and has gained international recognition as a global icon of Islamic music (Wati et al., 2024). Maher Zain's songs carry meaningful Islamic values and strong messages of humanity, especially in the song *Ummi*, which was released in 2019 as his latest single on the Awakening Music YouTube channel. The song, which has received more than 15 million views, invites listeners to remember the immense love of a mother. Meanwhile, Rafly Kande is a musician, singer, and cultural figure from Aceh, Indonesia. He is recognized as one of the prominent figures who has greatly contributed to preserving Acehese art and culture through music (Rozak, 2020). His songs often highlight themes of culture, tradition, Islam, and social issues. One of his well known works, *Jasa Poma*, was released in 2009 on the Kasga Record YouTube channel and has been viewed more than 1.4 million times. The song, accompanied by a blend of traditional Acehese and modern musical instruments, reminds listeners of parental love especially a mother's love for her child.

Based on the explanation above, *Ummi* by Maher Zain and *Jasa Poma* by Rafly Kande share a common purpose to remind listeners of a mother's love for her child. On the other hand, the researcher sees that both songs are not only intended for that purpose but can also be interpreted as expressions of the singers' longing as children for their mothers. This is supported by the music videos of both songs, which portray memories of a mother's devotion to her child during childhood. Although both songs express longing for a mother in similar ways, the researcher found differences in how each singer expresses and illustrates the feeling of longing in their lyrics.

In relation to this, the researcher aims to make these two literary works (*Ummi* by Maher Zain and *Jasa Poma* by Rafly Kande) the objects of study. For the researcher, both songs are important because they play a significant role in the literary traditions of the Arab world and Aceh, Indonesia. Both Maher Zain and Rafly Kande are prominent figures who have contributed positively to the development of Arabic and Acehese literature. Therefore,

these two songs, which come from different languages and cultures, become interesting subjects to analyze.

This research is motivated by the discovery that both song titles share similar meanings and themes. Thus, this study begins from two assumptions: first, that *Ummi* and *Jasa Poma* express the element of longing experienced by a child toward their mother; and second, to explore the similarities and differences in the elements of longing found in each song. One way to uncover these aspects is by analyzing the lyrics using a comparative literary approach.

Several previous studies have also examined the theme of longing in songs. One example is Rustandi (2020) analysis of the song *Hanya Rindu* by Andmesh Kamaleng using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The study employed a qualitative interpretive method with a document analysis technique. The results revealed three levels of meaning: (1) Denotation, referring to a child's deep longing for a deceased mother; (2) Connotation, reflecting deep regret for not being able to meet and relive moments with the mother; and (3) Myth, which suggests that longing can be eased by looking at photos, videos, and recalling memories shared during her lifetime.

Rohmah (2021) research examines the theme of longing in the song *Qissat Hubb* through Morris's semiotic theory. The method used is descriptive analytical. The results of the study reveal three layers of meaning: syntactic (sadness), semantic (confusion), and pragmatic (deep suffering) as the impact of separation from a loved one. Meanwhile, Yolanda (2023) applies Schleiermacher's hermeneutic approach (through grammatical and psychological interpretation) to analyze the meaning of longing in the song *Kota* by Dere. Using a qualitative interpretive method, this research explores the song lyrics in depth at the levels of words, lines, and stanzas. The findings show that the implicit meaning in *Kota* reflects the connection between rain and emotional moods, memorable encounters, the loss of hope, persistent longing despite disappointment and sadness, and the lingering scent of someone that evokes memories. From these previous studies, it can be seen that the main focus revolves around the theme of longing in songs, analyzed through various perspectives namely Roland Barthes's semiotics, Charles Morris's semiotics, and Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. Unlike these studies, the researcher identifies a new perspective that has not yet been used to explore longing in songs, namely comparative literature.

Comparative Literature initially developed in France in the 19th century. In general, Comparative Literature is known to have two major schools of thought, namely the French school and the American school (Mustaka, 2022). The French school of comparative literature requires that the literary works being studied must be written in different languages, and that the works being compared must have an interrelated influence through various forms of media (Chalis, 2013). In contrast, the American school of comparative literature emphasizes that comparative studies are not limited to comparing one literary work with another, but also involve comparisons with other disciplines such as philosophy, history, social sciences, religious studies, and others (Badriyah et al., 2023). However, both schools agree that what can be compared must be cross-national in nature (Fahrizal & Tasnimah, 2022).

Previous research that examined comparative literature includes an article entitled "The Representation of Aisyah in the Song Lyrics Sayyidah 'Aisyah and Aisyah Istri Rasulullah." This study compares the depiction of Aisyah in the song lyrics Sayyidah Aisyah and Aisyah Istri Rasulullah based on Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective, revealing that both lyrics highlight the theme of Aisyah but from different viewpoints or illustrations (Azizah & Nawangsari, 2022). Another study is titled "Optimism in the Song Lyrics Waka-Waka and Tahayya: World

Cup Soundtracks.” This study focuses on revealing the differences in the concept of optimism found in the two song lyrics using comparative literature theory. It found that the optimism expressed in Waka-Waka (This Time for Africa) is built upon self empowerment influenced by African culture and history, while the optimism in Tahayya is rooted in religion and Middle Eastern culture (‘Aini & Tasnimah, 2024). The last study is titled “An Intertextual Study of the Poetic Verse I’tiraf by Abu Nawas and the Song Andai Ku Tahu by Ungu Band.” The researcher examined the intertextuality of the two works using comparative literature theory to identify similarities in theme, tone, figurative language, message, and concrete diction (Fahrizal & Tasnimah, 2022). The differences between the two works lie in their physical structure, particularly diction and typography. From these previous studies, it can be concluded that the research objects originated from different countries (and languages), focusing on issues such as the representation of Aisyah, optimism, and intertextuality. Meanwhile, this study explores the element of longing in Maher Zain’s Ummi and Rafly Kande’s Jasa Poma through a comparative literature approach. Although comparative literature has been widely studied, discussions specifically addressing the element of longing remain rare especially in these two works. This has led to limited development of cross-cultural literary studies in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study aims to reveal the similarities and differences in the elements of longing found in Ummi by Maher Zain and Jasa Poma by Rafly Kande using a comparative literary approach. This study also seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the elements of longing within these literary works.

This study offers novelty by introducing a new perspective in comparative literary studies, particularly by revealing the similarities and differences in how the two songs express longing through distinctive metaphors, diction, and lyrical structures that are shaped by their respective cultural contexts. The researcher hopes that readers and future researchers will further explore and study comparative literary theory. Moreover, this research may benefit students especially those majoring in Arabic Language and Literature by encouraging them to study more cross-cultural literary works.

2. METHOD

The type of research used in this study is qualitative research (Kurniawan, 2023). Qualitative research is more suitable for literary studies, as it involves interpretation and meaning that require intensity and depth of understanding (Semi, 2021). The data sources used in this study consist of primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are the songs Ummi by Maher Zain and Jasa Poma by Rafly Kande, which serve as the main subjects of this research. The secondary sources include articles, journals, and books that are relevant to the topic of this study (Noriska & Chalis, 2025). The data for this research were collected through library research, involving both online and offline sources (Sahir, 2022).

The theory used in this research is comparative literature theory. According to Endraswara, comparative literature is a study of texts across cultures. This study is an interdisciplinary effort, focusing more on the relationship of literature in terms of time and place. From the aspect of time, comparative literature can compare two or more different periods. Meanwhile, in terms of place, comparative literature connects literary works according to their geographical literary regions (Endraswara, 2023). The purpose of comparative literature is to understand a literary work more deeply while immersing oneself in the essence of literature itself. The urgency of comparative literature lies in its importance in helping to recognize and understand the culture of other nations, thereby fostering cross-cultural interaction and communication (Nugraha, 2021).

In this study, the researcher utilized reading and note-taking techniques as the primary methods for data collection (Hartati et al., 2021). The reading technique is the researcher's initial effort to find concrete and factual data by repeatedly reading and carefully observing each stanza of both song lyrics. The data analysis techniques used in this study are descriptive and comparative techniques. The descriptive technique here aims to explain how the elements of longing are contained in both songs, namely Ummi and Jasa Poma. Then the comparative technique aims to compare the longing found in the objects studied to obtain their similarities and differences using the French school of comparative literature theory (Lahung et al., 2023). The stages of data analysis in this study are as follows: first, intensive and repeated reading of the entire lyrics. Second, manual coding and data categorization to select and record the stanzas that become the core data for analysis. Third, describing, interpreting, and explaining in depth the elements of longing in the songs. Fourth, comparing the results of the descriptive analysis of both songs to find the similarities and differences in the elements of longing within them. Fifth, synthesizing or concluding all the findings.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The theme of longing is presented in two song lyrics the first is Ummi by Maher Zain, and the second is Jasa Poma by Rafly Kande. However, it was found that Jasa Poma by Rafly Kande was released earlier in 2009, followed later by Maher Zain's Ummi in 2019.

Basically, although Ummi by Maher Zain and Jasa Poma by Rafly Kande are composed of different words, both titles share the same meaning. The word Ummi comes from Arabic, meaning "my mother," while Jasa Poma consists of two Acehnese words meaning "a mother's service."

According to Kamus al-Munjid (1978) and the Acehnese Dictionary (2001) Both Ummi and Jasa Poma convey meanings of respect and appreciation for the role and sacrifices of a mother. There is no figure more devoted in a person's life than a parent, especially a mother.

In this discussion, the researcher found several data related to the element of longing in the songs Ummi and Jasa Poma. The researcher identified the similarities and differences in the elements of longing for a mother, as presented in the following table:

Tabel.1 Similarities and differences in Ummi and Jasa Poma songs

The Song Ummi and the Song Jasa Poma	
Similarities	Longing for mother's love
	Longing for mother's prayers
	Being devoted to one's mother
Differences	Message in the song
	Depiction of the mother

The explanation of the data found in both songs is as follows:

1) Similarities in the Elements of Longing

a) For a Mother's Love

Longing for a mother's love arises from her sincerity in caring for, nurturing, guiding, and directing her child throughout life. The love she has given leaves a deep mark in the heart, creating an overwhelming sense of longing when the mother is no longer present (Karmiza, 2025). In Maher Zain's song Ummi, there are several stanzas that convey longing for a mother's love, as follows:

مهما كبرت .. أعودُ بينيديك
 “No matter how old I am... in your embrace, I return.”
 طفلا صغيرا ما كبرتُ لديك
 “Like a little child, as if I am still not grown up.”

The data above shows that the singer has a strong desire to meet his mother regardless of age, seeking the love he once received as a child. The word *أعودُ* (*I will return*) expresses the longing experienced by the singer, clarified by the word *بينيديك* (*in your embrace, Mother*). The word “embrace” is not merely a hug from the mother but also represents an act showing her love and care for her child. The following lyrics depict that the intensity of longing is not limited by time. Even though he has grown up, he still feels like a child in need of maternal love. Thus, it can be said that the stanza conveys longing for a mother’s love.

Meanwhile, in Rafly Kande’s song *Jasa Poma*, longing for a mother is also illustrated in the following stanza:

“Yoh watee ubiet geu sayang sabe
 Adoe ngoen adun saban geu doda”
 “In childhood always loved dearly
 Both brother and sister cherished equally”

Rafly uses memories of childhood, when the child was fully loved by the mother, to illustrate the longing he feels. The song fragment “*Yoh watee ubiet*” (*in childhood*) explains that the singer misses something from his childhood, revealed in the lyrics “*geu sayang sabe*” (*always loved dearly*). This refers to longing for a mother’s sincere love, given without favoritism to her child, as described in the following stanza.

From the explanation above, it can be understood that the element of longing in both lyrics is a longing for a mother’s love. This is evident in *Ummi*, where the lyrics show a strong desire to meet the mother to feel her love. Likewise, in *Jasa Poma*, the lyrics express longing for a mother’s sincere love during childhood. Therefore, it can be said that both songs share the same element of longing for a mother’s love.

b) For a Mother’s Prayer

Longing for a mother’s prayer involves the emotional and spiritual feelings experienced by the child. This is because a mother’s prayer serves as a remedy that can heal and motivate the child in daily life, both in worldly matters and spiritual matters. In Islam, a mother’s prayer has extraordinary spiritual power. Prayer becomes a medium connecting the child to divine strength, providing protection from harm and facilitating the path to success (Karmiza, 2025). The following stanzas interpret longing for a mother’s prayer in Maher Zain’s song *Ummi* as follows:

يا أمي
 “O my Mother”
 يا مَنْ حملتيني و ظنك أئني
 “You always pray for me”
 أسعى لبرك ما حيتُ سنيني
 “That I become a good child throughout my life”

The lyrics above imply a deep emotional and spiritual connection through the mother, filled with hope and prayers for the child to grow into a devoted person throughout life. A mother’s prayer leaves a lasting impact on the child into adulthood. This is seen in the phrase *أسعى لبرك*, which means that a mother’s prayer always accompanies her child, showing that her

prayers and hopes never fade and continue to motivate the child in life. Here, the singer shows that the memory of a mother's prayer remains alive in the child's heart, fostering an irreplaceable sense of longing over time.

Meanwhile, in the song *Jasa Poma*, the element of longing for a mother's prayer is illustrated in the following stanza:

*"Yoh watee ubiet geu sayang sabe
Uroe ngon malam sabe lam doa"
"In childhood always loved dearly
day and night always in prayer"*

The lyric fragment *"uroe ngon malam sabe lam doa"* (*day and night always in prayer*) shows a mother's sincere love by always including her child in every prayer she offers, regardless of time, as a hope for the child's well-being. This prayer connects the child to divine power, providing protection and success in life, and leaves a lasting impression as a deep spiritual memory. Thus, childhood memories filled with a mother's prayers evoke longing in the singer.

The songs *Jasa Poma* and *Ummi* both hold high spiritual value. Both convey longing for a mother's prayer as a medium to build a spiritual bond with the child. Specifically, *Ummi* shows longing arising from the influence of a mother's prayers on the child into adulthood, while *Jasa Poma* expresses longing through the sincerity of a mother's prayers during childhood. Both songs share the element of longing for a mother's prayer, each with its own expression.

c) Being Devoted to One's Mother

Being devoted to parents means treating both parents well: being gentle, not raising one's voice in front of them, not disobeying, obeying them, carrying out what pleases them, avoiding what angers them, respecting them, making them happy, and praying for them both while they are alive and after they have passed away. In this context, devotion to a mother requires the child to act kindly, always obey her in matters that do not disobey Allah SWT, avoid anything that disappoints her, and perform actions that gain her approval (Astuti, 2021). The following stanza shows devotion to a mother in the lyrics of the song *Ummi*:

*أمي... حبيبتي أمي
"My Mother.....My love my Mother"
رضاك يا أمي جنتي و جناني
"Making you happy, dear Mother, is my life and my heaven"*

As seen in the lyrics above, the singer expresses love for his mother. This feeling motivates him to be devoted to her. The lyric fragment *رضاك يا أمي جنتي و جناني* (*making you happy, dear Mother, is my life and my heaven*) shows a form of a child's devotion realized by bringing happiness to the mother. Here, happiness refers to performing actions that please the mother. The words *جنتي و جناني* (*my life and my heaven*) represent the virtue of being devoted to one's mother as one of the highest deeds, which can lead to paradise with Allah's approval.

Meanwhile, in the song *Jasa Poma*, the stanza that illustrates devotion to a mother can be seen in the following lyrics:

*"Bek ta meulawan meu sikrek haba
Singoh geupasoe dalam nuraka"
"Do not oppose even a single word,
Tomorrow you will be cast into hell"*

Rafly conveys advice in the form of a prohibition against disobeying parents, especially the mother. This prohibition emphasizes obedience and respect toward the mother, who has sacrificed her life to give birth, then breastfeed, care for, and raise her child sincerely. The stanza above aligns with the prohibition against disobeying parents as stated in *Surah Al-Isra* verse 23, which contains two main commands, one of which is to be devoted to parents by not saying “ah” (Jamin & Pristian Hadi Putra, 2022). In other words, Rafly Kande’s advice here aims for children to be devoted to their mother by not committing acts of disobedience. In the next stanza, Rafly delivers a warning about the punishment for being disobedient to one’s mother, while also reinforcing the encouragement to be devoted.

The songs *Ummi* and *Jasa Poma* explain devotion to a mother through different approaches. Maher Zain shows the practice of devotion to a mother and its virtues, while Rafly provides advice on being devoted and warns of the consequences of disobedience. Nevertheless, both songs can be said to share the same theme of devotion to a mother.

2) Differences

a) Message in the Songs

The message contains moral values and guidance conveyed by the author to the audience. It can also reflect the author’s perspective on the truth and values they believe in. (Nurgiyantoro, 2018) Furthermore, Sudjiman states that the message can be found in literary works, such as in the lyrics of a song (Nugroho & Fatoni, 2021). In the song *Jasa Poma*, the message is conveyed through the following stanza of lyrics:

*“Jasa poma jasa poma
Ingat tanyoe bandum
Ingat sabe ingat sabe
Bek geutanyoe lale”*
*“Mother’s kindness, mother’s kindness,
Remember all of us,
Remember always, remember always,
Let us not forget”*

The lyrics convey a moral message in the form of a command to always remember a mother’s services. Rafly Kande clearly emphasizes that a mother’s contributions should never be forgotten but always remembered. This message encourages respect and appreciation for the mother. The word “*Jasa*” in the lyrics refers to a mother’s love, including giving birth, breastfeeding, caring for, and raising her child with sincerity, while always praying for the best for her child. This is the meaning of “*Jasa*” depicted in the song lyrics. Through this depiction, Rafly intends for children to be devoted to their parents, especially their mother, by obeying and respecting every word without ever opposing her.

This aligns with religious teachings and the cultural values of Acehese society, which includes the proverb “*Hukom ngon adat lage zat ngon sifeut*”, meaning religion and custom are like substance and nature. This shows that the role of customary values in Acehese society always goes hand in hand with religious rules. Acts of devotion to parents, especially mothers, are regulated in Islam, so these teachings automatically become cultural values practiced socially in Aceh. One example is the *Manoe Pucok* tradition, which teaches manners to remember and honor the love and contributions of parents (Indah & Anwarsyah, 2022). Likewise, the song *Jasa Poma*, as a cultural product of Aceh, conveys a message to remember, respect, and appreciate mothers. Meanwhile, in the song *Ummi*, the moral message is conveyed implicitly in the lyrics *والله لن أوفي حنانك لحظة* (By God, I will never be able to repay

even a moment of your love and care). Maher Zain emphasizes the greatness of a mother's love and affection, which cannot be fully reciprocated even with the most valuable sacrifices. Therefore, he also conveys that every child should prioritize devotion to their parents, especially their mother, throughout life.

Furthermore, the moral messages in the lyrics are inseparable from Arab culture, which highly values kinship and family. They place great importance on humanity and courtesy within the family. As a result, the strong family-oriented culture of the East is reflected in the lyrics, which carry familial elements.

In relation to this, the moral messages of both songs are also influenced by their respective musical styles. *Jasa Poma* is an Acehese *syair* with socio-religious elements, reflecting Acehese life. Its moral message is reinforced by traditional musical instruments such as the *serunee kale* and *rapai*, and by the repetitive lyrics (*jasa poma jasa poma, ingat sabe ingat sabe*), strengthening the conveyed moral lesson. Meanwhile, *Ummi* is an Islamic contemporary song, so its moral message is universal, meaning the message can be understood by anyone regardless of background.

Thus, the moral messages of both lyrics share similar substance but differ in background and genre. *Jasa Poma* communicates the moral message as a directive for children to remember their mother's services, influenced by Acehese cultural values and the socio-religious *syair* genre. In contrast, *Ummi* expresses the message through a child's deep emotional expression towards their mother, with a universal approach influenced by Middle Eastern culture.

b) Depiction of the Mother

In this section, the researcher found that *Ummi* presents an explicit depiction of the mother, which is not found in *Jasa Poma*. Maher Zain describes the mother explicitly in the lyrics: *أنت أمانتي وسعادتي* (*You are my protector, my comfort, and my happiness*). The word *أمانتي* (*my protector*) portrays the mother as a hero who has greatly contributed to her child. *راحتي* (*my comfort*) signifies that the mother enables her child to face the emotional challenges of growing up and helps them understand their own emotions. *سعادتي* (*my happiness*) expresses the joy the child feels from a mother's love. The mother's efforts become a lifelong memory, showing that she is a figure to be cherished throughout life.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research presented, it can be concluded that the lyrics of *Ummi*, sung by Maher Zain from the Middle East, and *Jasa Poma*, popularized by Rafly Kande from Aceh, both address the theme of mothers despite being in different languages. The two songs share similarities and differences. Both lyrics convey longing for a mother's love, her prayers, and filial devotion. Differences are found in cultural background and musical genre, which influence the moral messages, and in the explicit depiction of the mother found in *Ummi*. Through this comparison, *Ummi* and *Jasa Poma* are original works that demonstrate high artistic creativity and distinct characteristics. This study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of literary works, particularly within the field of comparative literature. It is expected to serve as a foundation for future comparative literary studies and further research that is more in-depth and critically oriented. The songs *Ummi* by Maher Zain and *Jasa Poma* by Rafly Kande remain relevant for further analysis using stylistic theory or other relevant analytical approaches.

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