



## The role of literature in shaping cultural identity and social consciousness in contemporary education

(Peran sastra dalam membentuk identitas budaya dan kesadaran sosial dalam pendidikan kontemporer)

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**Abstract:** Literature significantly influences cultural identity and social consciousness within contemporary education, particularly regarding Indonesian literary traditions. Globalization has profoundly impacted education, often resulting in the marginalization of cultural heritage. This study analyses how literature can preserve cultural values while promoting global awareness and social understanding. The research employs James Paul Gee's discourse analysis framework to examine texts by notable Indonesian authors, such as Eka Kurniawan, Chairil Anwar, and Seno Gumira Ajidarma, focusing on themes of identity, tradition, and modernity. Data was collected through textual analysis, supplemented by interviews and focus group discussions with educators, literary scholars, and learners. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify key cultural identities and themes related to social issues. The findings reveal that Indonesian literature illustrates significant tensions between tradition and modernity and highlights individual freedom versus societal expectations. Additionally, it offers critical perspectives on the impact of globalization on cultural identity. The research concludes that integrating literature into educational curricula can enhance learners' appreciation of their cultural heritage, foster critical thinking, and promote multicultural awareness. This approach contributes to a more culturally responsive education system, better equipping learners to navigate the complexities of a globalized world.

**Keywords** Literature, Cultural identity, Social consciousness, Education, Globalization

**Abstrak:** Sastra memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap identitas budaya dan kesadaran sosial dalam pendidikan kontemporer, khususnya dalam budaya sastra Indonesia. Globalisasi memiliki dampak yang besar terhadap pendidikan sehingga seringkali mengakibatkan marginalisasi warisan budaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana sastra dapat melestarikan nilai-nilai budaya sekaligus mempromosikan kesadaran global dan pemahaman sosial. Kerangka analisis wacana James Paul Gee digunakan dalam penelitian ini untuk mengkaji teks-teks karya penulis Indonesia terkemuka seperti Eka Kurniawan, Chairil Anwar, dan Seno Gumira Ajidarma, dengan fokus pada tema identitas, tradisi, dan modernitas. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui analisis tekstual, serta wawancara dan diskusi kelompok terarah dengan pendidik, ahli sastra, dan pelajar. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi tema-tema utama terkait identitas budaya dan isu-isu sosial. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa sastra Indonesia menggambarkan ketegangan signifikan antara tradisi dan modernitas, serta menyoroti isu kebebasan individu versus ekspektasi masyarakat. Selain itu, sastra ini menawarkan perspektif kritis tentang dampak globalisasi terhadap identitas budaya. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa integrasi sastra ke dalam kurikulum pendidikan dapat meningkatkan apresiasi pelajar terhadap warisan budaya mereka, mendorong berpikir kritis, dan mempromosikan kesadaran multikultural. Pendekatan ini berkontribusi pada sistem pendidikan yang lebih responsif budaya, yang lebih siap menghadapi kompleksitas dunia yang terglobalisasi.

**Kata Kunci** Sastra, Identitas budaya, Kesadaran sosial, Pendidikan, Globalisasi

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## INTRODUCTION

Globalization has profoundly influenced and transformed the educational landscape worldwide (Zalli, 2024; Zhang, 2019; Tarc, 2012; Mense et al., 2018). Change, instability, and ambiguity arise from integrating technology, international knowledge networks, and various global forces (Mense et al., 2018). As the nation's next generation, learners must comprehend globalization, which drives economic, cultural, and societal interconnectivity (Cornalia & Tirocchib, 2012; Litz, 2011). To achieve this objective, the educational sector must engage with global developments, particularly about globalization's unique characteristics, namely technological and communication advancements.

As an integral aspect of globalization, education should prioritize interconnectivity to enhance learners' understanding and engagement with the significance of multiculturalism and diversity. To internalize global culture, one practical approach is to involve learners in gaining insights into worldviews, values, and narratives from diverse perspectives. This way, globalization is framed as a reality that schools must address through revisions to their curricula and expectations regarding the identities and futures of children (Popkewitz & Rizvi, 2009). This approach is both feasible and essential, as advancements in technology and communication enable individuals to access a variety of perspectives in both academic and social contexts.

Previous research has examined education as a system changer (Masuhay & Herrera, 2019; Frick, 1990; Destiyanti & Setiana, 2020). That promotes cultural exchange as a heritage that learners can appreciate and impart. Cultural heritage, including oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, and cultural celebrations, should be utilized to respond to the evolving environment (UNESCO, 2021). In this research, literature as an intangible cultural heritage plays a role as an arena for cultural exchange in the era of globalization that facilitates the flow of ideas and art across borders. In light of the growing awareness of cultural sensitivity and inclusion in education, the role of literature is more significant than ever. Educators are increasingly called to create learning environments honoring diverse perspectives and promoting social justice. Educators can validate students' experiences and inspire critical discourse surrounding cultural identity and social responsibility by integrating varied literary voices into the curriculum. Learners acquire language skills and develop critical thinking abilities (Keshavarzi, 2012).

In the learning process, educators can employ cultural acculturation (Tovar-Gálvez, 2021) in literature to enrich learners' experiences and understanding of global objectives. Through the narratives and characters in literature, readers can navigate the complexities of cultural identity (Altun, 2023). In studying Indonesian literature, the acculturation of Indonesian culture with that of other countries can serve as a medium to broaden learners' literary perspectives. This process may involve assimilation, integration, separation, or marginalization (Omodan, 2023). Understanding acculturation is crucial for studying the global community, represented in literature as a unique fusion of Indonesian and other countries' indigenous and ethnic traditions.

Indonesia's acculturation with other countries highlights the significance of cultural awareness in promoting effective communication among individuals from diverse backgrounds (Baan, 2022). Unfortunately, global adaptation often leads people to overlook their cultural heritage. The younger generation shows diminishing interest in their culture (Stanley et al., 2021). This situation arises because diversity is a reality of modern life, which can be viewed both as the "spice of life" and as a "disturber" that society must confront (Stanley et al., 2021). The notion of "Indonesian identity in the global arena" becomes prominent as individuals navigate these elements through cultural practices, language, and social networks. Activating one's cultural identity influences social behavior and the

accessibility of culturally relevant knowledge (Stanley et al., 2021). The impact of culture transmitted through media, technology, and international trade contributes to the erosion of national cultural values (Stanley et al., 2021). This global interaction facilitates the re-creation of cultural identity among Indonesian youth, who may blend elements of their ancestral culture with the dominant Indonesian culture, thereby contributing to a cosmopolitan urban identity. The influence of culture that enters through the media, technology, and international trade causes the loss of national cultural values (Masgoret & Ward, 2016). Futurists predict that teaching and learning through innovative approaches will be more effective as they leverage technology and telecommunications (Mense et al., 2018). This approach aims to foster a nuanced understanding of how learners negotiate their cultural identities within a broader global context.

In contrast to previous research, this research views literature as an arena for social construction through the speaker's language. In contrast to previous research, this study views literature as an arena of social construction through the speaker's language. Incorporating literature from various cultural backgrounds is essential for developing students' awareness of their identities and the identities of others. Multicultural literature in the curriculum invites critical engagement and dialogue, encouraging students to explore complex questions about race, ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status. By examining narratives from different cultural contexts, students can understand the richness of human experience and the nuances of cultural identity.

This research explores the literary traditions of Indonesia and other countries, the cultural values and educational perspectives reflected in scholarly works, and strategies for integrating these works into the academic curriculum to enhance cultural understanding and appreciation. In an increasingly globalized world, fostering cultural awareness and appreciation among learners is crucial. The results of this research are expected to make literature serve as a vital channel for cultural expression and comprehension. The works of Indonesian authors are anticipated to create a rich narrative that explores identity, social issues, and cultural heritage. This approach could reorient the educational curriculum, allowing literary works to increase learners' awareness and appreciation of culture.

## METHOD

This study was conducted to analyze Indonesian literary discourse within the context of education. By combining textual analysis with cultural studies, this research aims to uncover the role of literature in enhancing learners' understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage, ultimately contributing to the development of a more culturally responsive education system. The discourse analysis approach employed in this study is based on James Paul Gee's framework, which seeks to understand the language strategies and social contexts interacting within literary works. The research commenced with text identification and analysis, progressing to intertextuality studies (Gee, 2010).

Data was collected by gathering primary literary texts from written literature, online databases, and secondary sources. Additionally, educators, literary scholars, and learners were interviewed, and focus group discussions were held to gain insights into their perceptions of the text and its educational implications.

Data analysis was performed using qualitative methods, specifically thematic analysis, to identify key themes, symbols, and narratives within selected literary texts, namely the works of Eka Kurniawan, Chairil Anwar, and Seno Gumira Ajidarma. Kurniawan embodies the millennial movement, Anwar symbolizes the independence movement, and Ajidarma represents the post-independence era. The analysis examined these literary works within a cultural context, emphasizing the historical, social, and political factors influencing their literary discourse. Textual analysis was approached through discourse analysis, concentrating on language choices, narrative structures, and cultural representations. Additionally, a comparative analysis of findings from Indonesian literary traditions was conducted to discern similarities and differences in cultural perspectives through an ethnographic lens. To synthesize the results, a discussion was held to (1) interpret the research findings about the research questions, (2) reflect on the research outcomes that illustrate broader cultural

identities, educational philosophies, and pedagogical approaches in Indonesia compared to other nations, and (3) evaluate the implications of this cultural perspective on education, including themes relevant to curriculum development and teaching practices. Curriculum reorientation was facilitated through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) centered on the themes "Use of Language, Metaphor, Narrative Structure, and Character Representation in Literary Works" and "Identity, Cultural Clash, and Tradition Versus Modernity." For curriculum reorientation, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with the themes "Use of Language, Metaphor, Narrative Structure, and Character Representation in Literary Works" and "Identity, Cultural Clash, and Tradition Versus Modernity."

Data validation was conducted through source triangulation. Integrating various sources, including texts, readers, teachers, and prior study results, enhanced reliability. Furthermore, to bolster the validation of interpretations, feedback was solicited from educators or experts in literary and cultural studies. Potential limitations may arise concerning text selection, authors, and researcher bias in determining data sources, selection, and analysis. Nevertheless, the researchers have made every effort to reinforce ethical considerations, including ensuring the appropriateness of citations of literary works and obtaining consent for interviews.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding multicultural literature is essential for developing students' awareness of their identity and that of others. Multicultural literature in the curriculum involves students' ability to engage in critical dialogue, enabling them to explore complex questions. This section elaborates on three discussions related to the research objectives: (1) Traditional Values in Indonesian Literature in Forming Interconnectivity, (2) Educational Perspectives in Culture Reflected in the Literary Works of Anwar, Kurniawan, and Ajidarma, and (3) Reorientation of the Education Curriculum Based on Literature to Enhance Learners' Understanding and Appreciation of Culture.

### Traditional Values in Indonesian Literature in Forming Interconnectivity

Literary works authored by Indonesian writers often explore themes of cultural identity, critique of tradition, and the tension between modernity and historical values. These works illuminate the persistent conflict between societal expectations and individual freedom, employing specific cultural styles and references as the foundation for their critique.

Anwar articulates the struggle for personal identity and societal expectations, particularly in the context of colonialism and the quest for independence. Through his writings, Anwar challenges tradition and aspires to forge a new Indonesian identity that embraces modernity while upholding the richness of Indonesian culture. In the poem "*Cintaku Jaub di Pulau*," Anwar conveys nuances of existential anxiety. The inner conflict, quest for identity, and contemplation of life's meaning—often disrupted by uncertainty and longing—are expressed in a style reflective of youth striving to redefine their identity and liberate themselves from the historical constraints that bind them. His incisive critique of tradition shapes the narrative of struggle within the Indonesian cultural landscape.

*Amboi! jalan sudah bertabun kutempub  
perahu yang bersama kan merapuh  
mengapa ajal memanggil dulu  
sebelum berpeluk dengan cintaku!?*

Through an engaging style, Anwar encourages readers to challenge the constraints of traditional literary genres, even as he unwittingly employs elements of these genres, such as the repetition of rhymes, which are remnants of the past. This work illustrates that traditional literature continues to influence modern narratives. By utilizing the persona of "*Aku*," Anwar seeks to define his identity and confront various forces, including death, that bind and restrict him. Literature reflects the intricacies of human identity shaped by individual experiences, cultural backgrounds, and personal growth (Altun, 2023).

Kurniawan similarly embarks on a quest for identity by delving into historical events and Indonesian culture, intertwining folklore, mythology, and contemporary issues. In his novel "Beauty is a Wound," Kurniawan critiques Indonesia's colonial legacy and socio-political dynamics. His characters navigate the tension between the weight of tradition and the allure of modernity, embodying the struggles of individuals marked by historical trauma and cultural expectations. The dynamic interplay between Indonesian cultural traditions and modernity encapsulates the complexities of multicultural Indonesia as it confronts globalization. He employs the genre of world literature while preserving the distinctiveness of everyday life in his homeland, characterized by violence, love, lust, and peculiar occurrences, as evidenced by the following data.

“One afternoon on a weekend in March, Dewi Ayu rose from her grave after being dead for twenty-one years. A shepherd boy, awakened from his nap under a frangipani tree, peed in his shorts and screamed, and his four sheep ran haphazardly in between stones and wooden grave markers as if a tiger had been thrown into their midst.” (p.1)

The narrative presents a magical tale that frequently occurs in Indonesia. It begins with a story about a prostitute awakening from her grave, which subsequently incites chaos. In narrating the tale, the author employs a non-linear plot, revisiting events before World War II to provide context about Dewi Ayu and her family. Additionally, the author describes the setting of the incident, Halimunda, a small and remote town. Daily life in this city is rife with violence, love, lust, and peculiar occurrences.

Ajidarma also explores the theme of identity struggle through a work that merges elements of realism and surrealism, highlighting the contradictions inherent in Indonesian society. Ajidarma presents the complexity of cultural identity, modernity, and historical memory in a manner that challenges traditional power structures and delves into the nuances of contemporary Indonesian life, resulting in a clash between tradition and distinctive modern values.

*“Kuhirup aroma setinggi yang mengalir dari sebuah jendela. Ketika aku menengok ke jendela itu, muncul wajah seorang wanita bercadar. Dari balik cadarnya yang tipis kulihat ia tersenyum. Bibirnya begitu merah tertimpa cahaya, dan ia memegang batang-batang dupa.” (p. 7)*

The character in the figure is presented using a mixed point of view, specifically the first-person perspective with the term "Aku" and the second-person perspective with the term "Dia" when referring to the first person. Ajidarma explores self-identity and culture through characters who grapple with the "Aku" and "Dia" styles through this method. By employing narration and commentary, Ajidarma effectively articulates identity. Meanwhile, the following poem also shows Anwar's creativity in crafting a magical atmosphere.

*Aku ini binatang jalang Dari kumpulannya terbuang  
Biar peluru menembus kulitku Aku tetap meradang menerjang*

The author establishes a magical ambiance through literary works by portraying himself as an outcast animal. If disturbed, he becomes furious and retaliates, serving as a critique of the tyrannical ruler.

Magical narratives also appear in Ajidarma's writings, which depict the supernatural powers of a woman named Puan Tirana, who can imprison the spirits of rebels. Her paranormal abilities compel the residents of the Land of Twilight to speak only when necessary. The inhabitants of the Land of Twilight think only in various dark places and narrow, stuffy alleys where the light of dusk cannot penetrate.

The story elucidates various magical events. These tales, often believed in Indonesia, include Dewi Ayu's grandmother, who jumped from a mountain and soared into the sky; the aggressive yet unshootable Maman Gendeng, whose bullets bounce off his body and fall to the ground; a ghost pig

that frequently appears and transforms into a human; and a magical chastity belt that can only be unlocked with specific words.

Using a magical realism style, the author portrays the history of his country throughout the twentieth century, examining the end of the colonial period, the wartime occupation and its bloody aftermath, and the subsequent attempts to form a nation. This narrative progresses to more political elements, such as the conflict between the army, communists, and 'pressmen' (gangsters), as illustrated in the following data.

“They believe we are society's garbage,” Maman Gendeng summarised. “This is true, but many of us never got enough education to make anything of ourselves, and they closed the doors on us. What can be done if we finally became robbers and pickpockets and only bided our time until we could get revenge on the people who made us jealous?” (p.458)

Battles occurred with the local government and the Dutch and Japanese colonizers. The power struggle is further depicted in Ajidarma's novel *Negeri Senja*. Through metaphors, the author conveys the nation's discomfort where these events transpired, as evidenced in the following data.

*“Komplotan Pisau Belati adalah suatu organisasi rahasia yang pernah memegang peran begitu penting dalam sejarah Negeri Senja. Pada zaman babari, Ketika anak-anak bangsa antarnegri lebih sering saling memerangi karena berebut kekuasaan, Komplotan Pisau Belati selalu diandalkan untuk melakukan penyusupan ke wilayah musuh.” (p. 50)*

The ongoing secret battles within the country are also infused with gender conflicts, where the theme of beauty serves as a medium for men (and women) to compete against one another. Dewi Ayu, born of mixed heritage, is beautiful but chooses to live as a prostitute rather than marry one of the many suitors vying for her hand, as demonstrated in the following data.

The pursuit of love becomes a primitive strategy for men to obtain women in return. Ajidarma illustrates the power of women by depicting a nation that, for 200 years until that time, was led by Puan Tirana, a blind woman who ruled with cruelty, where any semblance of knowledge and freedom of speech was deemed taboo. The adversary to the primitive mindset of the populace is a religious leader who consistently employs religious justifications, such as heresy, to prevail in the struggle. Nevertheless, the following data shows that women continue to launch attacks within the cultural tradition.

“You are asking a prostitute to take off her clothes,” said Dewi Ayu scornfully, “so you had better have the money to pay me.”

The kyai quickly prayed for mercy, moved along, and never returned. (p.9)

Through their works, Indonesian writers explore cultural identity, critique tradition, and examine the struggle between modernity and past values, which are the main themes in the writings of Kurniawan, Anwar, and Ajidarma. Through their unique perspective, each writer investigates how individuals navigate the complexities of their cultural heritage in a contemporary context. They invite readers to reconsider tradition's significance while acknowledging modernity's inevitable progression and impact on identity. Collectively, their works reflect a rich dialogue about what it means to be Indonesian in a world where the past and present constantly intersect, offering a profound understanding of the nuances of cultural identity in the era of globalization.

Literary works serve as an arena for cultural, social, and political criticism. Many Indonesian literary pieces address themes of cultural identity and nationalism. Writers such as Kurniawan and Ajidarma discuss cultural identity and the effects of colonialism and tradition on individuals. Additionally, Indonesian authors critique tradition by portraying a society that fails to provide peace. Many individuals resist societal traditions through Anwar, grappling with their roles in a perpetually

changing environment. These works can serve as tools for readers to enhance their self-understanding (Altun, 2023).

Through his expressionist style, Anwar represents the "Generation of '45," which rebelled against colonialism and the constraints of tradition. Utilizing a modern poetic form free and unbound by traditional verse structures, Anwar explores identity in a contemporary context through the struggle between historical values and modern identity. This approach contrasts with the narrative style of Kurniawan, who presents the awareness of the post-colonial generation questioning the impact of Western modernity on Indonesian culture. He reveals the vulnerability of individuals caught between adhering to ancestral values and pursuing modern aspirations. These two writers' styles differ from Ajidarma's, who demonstrates his wisdom by blending traditional and contemporary narrative forms. Ajidarma's narratives highlight the complexities of modern life while still honoring cultural heritage. Through humor and satire, Ajidarma critiques societal norms and questions the value of progress that necessitates sacrificing artistic integrity.

From the description above, it is evident that the theme of the struggle between modernity and traditional values in the works of Kurniawan, Anwar, and Ajidarma illustrates the complexities of Indonesian identity in contemporary life. Personal, national, and cultural struggles manifest in various ways. Through their narratives, they invite readers to appreciate the significance of tradition while confronting the challenges posed by modernity. The synthesis of old and new values in their works should be understood as an ongoing negotiation that spans from the past to the present. These findings align with Herben's perspective that literature reflects continuous negotiations involving historical, political, and culturally calibrated aspects (Cornalia & Tirocchib, 2012).

The author's creative process illustrates the existence of literature that reflects the complexity of human identity shaped by individual experiences, cultural backgrounds, and personal growth. Therefore, it must be used as an arena for studying the complexity of life. As Opinion (Altun, 2023) said, by engaging in these narratives, readers grasp the intricacies of human life and the various factors that contribute to shaping their identity. This view aligns with Gabriel's view that literature mimics human behavior on Earth by portraying human existence as either better or worse than it is (Gabriel, 2021).

The findings show the importance of cultural understanding in social practices (Baan, 2022). The findings suggest that literature can affirm and challenge cultural identity through stories, characters, and themes (Stanley et al., 2021). Cultural identity influences not only what one knows but also one's accessibility, but the effects are not very strong. Therefore, in line with the objectives of this study, (Patel et al., 2011) Encourage everyone to use a critical cultural perspective to understand and interpret the various cultural dimensions involved in every intercultural interaction.

### **Educational Perspectives in Culture Reflected in the Literary Works of Anwar, Kurniawan, and Ajidarma**

Education is crucial in shaping individual identity and societal values, particularly among the younger generation. Indonesian authors such as Anwar, Kurniawan, and Ajidarma examine education from various perspectives and their implications for personal development, social critique, and cultural identity.

### **Context and Meaning**

Anwar is a writer whose works frequently reflect the struggle against social inequality, including the role of education in advocating for self and political agency. Kurniawan is an author who merges realism with magical elements, often delving into complex social issues in contemporary Indonesia. His works offer insights into the interplay between education, culture, and social norms. Ajidarma is a contemporary writer known for his short stories, novels, and essays. His works often portray the intricacies of modern society, particularly emphasizing individual experiences within a broader social context.

From an educational perspective, Anwar employs the philosophy of freedom in learning, a foundation for independent education and critical thinking, challenging conventional systems. Kurniawan underscores the disparities in access to education and the significance of cultural education in comprehending societal complexities. Ajidarma characterizes education as an empowering force essential for social critique, addressing the tensions between tradition and modernity.

Educational themes presented by Indonesian writers encompass (1) discovery learning, (2) rejection of conventional education, (3) the need for equal access to education, (4) cultural heritage and learning, (5) education as empowerment, and (6) interaction of tradition and modernity. Self-discovery learning can be explored through Anwar's poetry, which frequently addresses themes of self-exploration. In his poems, Anwar portrays himself and reflects on the educational process—both formal and informal—through a quest for understanding. Anwar's concepts serve as frameworks for learning strategies that foster a more profound comprehension of one's existence and choices within society. Works such as "*Aku*" and "*Cintaku Jaub di Pulau*" underscore the internal quest for knowledge and identity. Through his poetry, Anwar critiques the traditional education system that constrains creative and critical thinking. His writings advocate for intellectual freedom, promoting a more liberating form of education that nurtures individual expression.

In the novel "Beauty is a Wound," Kurniawan examines the disparities in access to education among various social classes, illustrating how poverty and social status influence educational opportunities. The life journeys of these characters often reflect how education—or the absence of it—shapes their choices and life trajectories. Kurniawan also integrates traditional knowledge and cultural narratives into his narratives, demonstrating that education transcends formal institutions. He underscores the significance of cultural education incorporating local wisdom, folklore, and historical narratives that shape Indonesian identity (Dewi et al., 2024). Education and culture are inherently interconnected with human life. Culture serves as both the foundation and a source of inspiration for education. The interconnectivity between education and culture is highly significant for the development of individuals and society. This aligns with research conducted by Rahayu et al. (2024), which highlights that the dynamics of interconnectivity between education and culture represent a relationship that must be understood and appreciated. By comprehending the reciprocal interaction between these two domains, education's potential to preserve, develop, and utilize culture as its foundation becomes meaningful and relevant. This perspective is further supported by Normina (2017) and Trianingsih (2017), who assert that education and culture play crucial, interrelated roles in shaping individual character and preserving a nation's traditional values.

In the novels "Negeri Senja" and other short stories, Ajidarma portrays education as a means of empowerment. His characters frequently embark on learning journeys that enable them to confront social injustice, seek personal fulfillment, and engage critically with their environment. Ajidarma also addresses the conflict between traditional educational values and modern influences. His narratives often depict characters between these two worlds, highlighting the challenges of assimilating modern educational models while preserving cultural identity.

Through the themes he raises, writers grapple with (1) forming an identity, (2) transforming educational ideology, and (3) reforming the education system. Through his works, Anwar, with his identity as an artist and part of the nationalist movement, cultivates educators' awareness to speak out. Education must shape an individual's awareness and vigilance, demonstrating that self-educated individuals can critique those in power (Zajda, 2005). In other words, education can shape students into individuals who understand themselves and reflect on and respond to events around them uniquely, allowing them to be understood by others (Moritz & Lysaker, 2018).

As a member of the generation from 1922 to 1949, Anwar represents a cohort that experienced the struggle for independence from Dutch colonialism. This is reflected in works that articulate the anxiety and voice of a generation yearning for freedom. By exploring themes of individuality and existentialism, Anwar reveals personal struggles and the quest for the meaning of freedom. He adopts modern techniques that diverge from traditional forms and themes in his works, reflecting his courage in shaping changes in the cultural landscape that differ from the old poetry era.

Educational insights derived from Anwar's works include self-awareness, introspection, and the significance of experience articulated by Anwar. Through these works, an educational philosophy that fosters critical thinking and individual self-discovery can be cultivated, which are essential components of cultural development.

As a generation raised in a contemporary context, Kurniawan frequently intertwines magical realism with historical narratives, illustrating the complexities of modern Indonesian society, including issues of identity, corruption, and the socio-political landscape. In "Beauty is a Wound," Kurniawan delves into themes of gender, violence, and societal expectations within Indonesian culture, critiquing historical injustices and the struggle for women's rights.

Insights from Kurniawan's works suggest that educators should encourage learners to engage critically with their history. Educators can promote motivational education by emphasizing society's shortcomings and the historical narratives reflected in literary works. This approach can inspire learners to recognize the socio-cultural implications of history, enabling them to uphold their identity and collective responsibility towards the nation, fostering growth in alignment with the global context.

As a successor to Anwar from the Class of '66, Ajidarma often addresses contemporary social issues in his writings, including human rights, environmental concerns, and the effects of technological advancements. He critiques traditional norms and values, focusing on the marginalized voices within postcolonial Indonesian cultural discourse.

The educational perspective that can be developed through the work of Ajidarma emphasizes the necessity of fostering critical awareness and cultural consciousness in learners. His narratives serve as moral and ethical reflections, encouraging students to scrutinize societal norms and injustices. Furthermore, educational dialogues regarding social responsibility and ethical governance can be facilitated. Ultimately, literature can be a mirror for educators, allowing them to explore readers' experiences and serving as a portal to deepen learners' understanding of human nature (Altun, 2023). This aligns with Omodan's suggestion that Educational Institutions carry out inclusive pedagogical practices, curriculum reform, and promotion of various perspectives in the knowledge system (Omodan, 2023). Masgoret and Ward also suggested a comprehensive evaluation of language learning with a cultural learning approach and its contribution to the international literature on acculturation. This supports research that utilizes literature as an intangible cultural heritage to contribute to the younger generation's ability to carry out global and local cultural acculturation (Masgoret & Ward, 2016).

Educators can enact the dynamic interaction between education and culture in Indonesian literature by engaging with the works of Anwar, Kurniawan, and Ajidarma. Literary works are not merely artistic expressions but also critical educational tools that consistently interrogate social realities, inspire personal reflection, and challenge learners to preserve cultural heritage while adapting to contemporary issues (Reshma et al., 2023) and (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, 2021). Teachers can utilize their significant contributions through literary works as a discourse that shapes Indonesian identity as a medium for literature learning that possesses transformative power in shaping cultural and educational perspectives. In this manner, learners, as readers, can understand the complexities of the human self, enabling them to construct their sense of identity through active engagement with these narratives (Altun, 2023).

### **Reorientation of the Education Curriculum Based on Literature to Enhance Learners' Understanding and Appreciation of Culture**

The reorientation of the education curriculum based on literature aims to integrate local and national cultural values through literature study. This approach facilitates student's more profound understanding of culture, fosters the development of critical thinking skills, and cultivates an appreciation for their cultural identity.

Altering the orientation of the education curriculum by incorporating the works of prominent Indonesian authors such as Anwar, Kurniawan, and Ajidarma can significantly enhance students'

understanding and appreciation of culture. Therefore, it is essential to consider the framework for curriculum reorientation, along with suitable strategies and materials.

Introducing culture through literature should commence with the establishment of appropriate curricular objectives. In alignment with its aim of fostering cultural awareness through the critical thinking processes of learners, curricular objectives must encompass aspects of appreciation, cultural awareness formation, critical thinking, and creative expression. The literary appreciation is intended to enhance analytical skills and learners' appreciation of narratives and values within literary works. The cultural awareness aims to deepen learners' understanding of Indonesian culture, history, and identity (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, 2021; Kristiana & Benito, 2023; Adina & Andrianto, 2021; Kusmiatun, 2024) through literary texts. Critical thinking encourages learners' critical engagement with the studied texts, promoting discussions on themes, particularly those related to social issues and the moral dilemmas faced by the younger generation in the context of globalization. The creative expression aspect seeks to inspire learners to articulate their cultural narratives through writing and innovative projects. The framework must include text selection, thematic units, interdisciplinary relationships, interactive learning approaches, and evaluation techniques to achieve these four aspects.

### ***Text Selection***

As teaching materials, literary texts must be selected according to specific objectives, as literature exerts various impacts, including political, social, communal, and personal influences (Hrastic et al., 2023). The selection of literary texts plays a crucial role in fostering cultural understanding, instilling cultural values, developing students' character, and exploring social and political awareness. Anwar's poems, which focus on themes of existentialism and nationalism, can be chosen as learning materials to instill values of struggle and self-identity in people. Suggested works include "*Aku*," "*Cintaku Jauh di Pulau*," and "*Deru Campur Debu*," which explore individual struggles and identity.

To foster an understanding of culture, Kurniawan's novel *Beauty is a Wound* can be utilized to examine contemporary Indonesian society, which continues to grapple with myths and reality. Furthermore, this work can serve as discussion material by addressing socio-political themes and current issues in Kurniawan's novels.

Socio-political discussions can also be facilitated through novels by Ajidarma, which frequently reflect urban life, cultural identity, and social criticism. Social and political awareness, as articulated by Faruk (1994), suggests that literature serves as a reflection of social and political conditions. It aids students in understanding the complexities of the real world, such as struggles against injustice or the pursuit of civil rights. His works can additionally be employed as discussion material regarding narrative style and human experiences in a rapidly changing society.

### ***Thematic Units***

Literary themes can reconstruct political thought and action, facilitate social and political change, shape individual beliefs, and evoke empathy (Hrastic et al., 2023). For learners' individual and social awareness, thematic works units are categorized into culture and self-identity, cultural heritage, and social criticism. The thematic unit of culture and self-identity serves as a framework to explore the theme of individualism versus collectivism. Following the study, students can be guided to engage in creative writing through reflective essay activities centered on their own identities.

The thematic unit of Cultural Heritage can discuss myths and folklore as cultural identities that continue to be believed and practiced in everyday life. Furthermore, learners are encouraged to research local folklore to examine the community's attitudes towards these narratives. They are then tasked with presenting the findings of their critical study to illustrate their perspectives on the surrounding community. As readers, learners can transcend simplistic thinking and embrace the diversity of human experience by fostering more excellent knowledge and respect for the multifaceted nature of human identity (Altun, 2023).

The thematic unit of Social Criticism is a foundation for critical discussions on social issues. In the study, learners are invited to engage in debates regarding contemporary challenges in Indonesia actively and subsequently articulate the younger generation's attitudes in response to global change. They acquire literary knowledge and cultivate empathy and cultural sensitivity meaningfully (Gafari et al., 2024), enabling them to navigate an increasingly interconnected global landscape (Mariani & Baharuddin, 2023).

### ***Subject Integration***

Literature manifests humanity, influencing perspectives in diverse ways (Hrastic et al., 2023). Consequently, literature can be utilized as a resource across various subjects, including Language, History, Arts, and Sociology.

In Language courses, students are encouraged to engage in critical speaking and writing to prepare for the challenges of globalization (Zajda, 2005). Experts assert that literature is an effective learning tool for enhancing students' language skills (Mariani & Baharuddin, 2023). In the Indonesian History course, literary contextualisation is implemented. As Hrastic et al. (2023) noted, literature can transform the world across millennia. Students can deepen their appreciation of these texts by understanding historical events in literary works. The Arts course aims to inspire students to create artistic works based on literary themes, such as illustrations for poetry or thematic art inspired by novels. In Sociology courses, students are encouraged to discuss the socio-cultural impact of literature and its role as both a reflection and shaper of society. The distinctive power of literature lies in its ability to evolve and adapt, following the people behind the literary text (Hrastic et al., 2023).

### ***Interactive Learning Approach***

The educational process is conducted through Group Discussions, Project-Based Learning, and Literary Studios, which align with independent learning. Group discussions facilitate individuals' and small groups' analysis of texts, promoting collaborative learning. Participants can work together to solve problems, complete tasks, or create products (Laal & Laal, 2012).

Project-based learning is implemented to assist students in adapting stories into other forms, such as dramas or short stories inspired by themes discussed in literary works, thereby enhancing information retention and motivation and increasing cognitive engagement and the application of dynamic thinking (Yu, 2024). The Literary Studio is a creative literary space where students assume various roles (e.g., summariser, questioner, connector) to explore texts in depth (UNESCO, 2021).

### ***Assessment Techniques***

Learning assessments must be authentic and significant, providing feedback for teachers and students (Calendar & Tammara, 2015) through various evaluation forms, such as reflective journals, presentations, and creative writing. Reflective journals are created by students to contemplate their reading and responses, fostering a personal connection to literature. Through self-assessment with reflective journals, students can evaluate their learning abilities (Wicaksono et al., 2020). Presentations serve as activities that assess students when they present themes, authors, or the cultural impact of literature on society, both individually and in groups. Creative writing is an assessment conducted through students' original work inspired by the themes studied, promoting cultural expression through literary works. Teachers' professionalism can be differentiated with a more comprehensive measurement instrument (Yu, 2024).

The literature-based learning framework aims to enhance (1) cultural understanding, (2) critical thinking, (3) empowerment, and (4) learners' comprehension of global issues, enabling them to appreciate the diversity of Indonesian culture. Furthermore, due to this educational approach, students will develop critical thinking skills (Lin et al., 2023), incorporating complex themes from various learning resources to cultivate analytical thinking abilities. By reorienting the literature-based education curriculum, educators can provide students with multicultural insights (Mariani & Baharuddin, 2023), allowing them to understand their culture and that of others. Utilizing literature as a lens to explore

intricate cultural narratives will facilitate a deeper and more critical appreciation that extends beyond the classroom. This approach imparts literary knowledge and nurtures empathy and cultural sensitivity, equipping learners to navigate an increasingly interconnected global landscape. Consequently, they will be empowered to express themselves more confidently and articulate their cultural identities. In this manner, literature serves as a platform for discussing contemporary social issues, aiding learners in navigating the world with heightened awareness and insight.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Indonesian literature encompasses themes of cultural identity, critiques of tradition, and the tension between modernity and traditional values. These works illuminate the conflicts arising from the struggle between individual freedom, societal expectations, and colonial and global interests.
2. The writings of Indonesian authors can be examined from various educational perspectives. Each author offers unique insights into identity formation, cultural heritage, and social awareness.
3. Reorienting the educational curriculum to include Indonesian literary works can significantly enhance learners' understanding and appreciation of culture. Developing a literature-based curriculum aligns with the objectives of contemporary education, which aims to foster multicultural awareness and critical engagement, thereby preparing learners to become informed and empathetic global citizens.

The primary findings of this study indicate that literature is essential for enhancing the understanding of cultural perspectives in education in Indonesia. The following recommendations are proposed:

1. Educators and policymakers are encouraged to integrate cultural narratives in literary works into the educational framework, from curriculum development to implementation.
2. Pilot programs should be established in selected schools to evaluate the feasibility of literature-based curriculum modifications.
3. Educators ought to receive professional development training on effectively teaching these literary works and incorporating cultural discussions into their instruction.

## DECLARATIONS

<b>Author contribution</b>	: Lilik Wahyuni is the principal author, and Coa Jia, Sri Wahyuni, and Gigit Mujianto are the second and third authors. They are responsible for writing articles, collecting data, analyzing data, revising according to the reviewer's suggestions, and also acting as manuscript submitters. As directors and idealists, Dessy Kusuman Vinahari and Inka Krisma Melati, the fifth and sixth writers, helped formulate arguments for developing the writing framework.
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