Jurnal Serunai Ilmu Pendidikan
Vol.10 No.2, Desember2024
e-ISSN 2621 – 2676, p-ISSN 2528 - 0775

VOICES OF CHANGE: EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN SHAPING GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

[1]Juliantina, [2]Eka Rahmadanta Sitepu, [3]Nudia Yultisa

[1]Universitas Sriwijaya, [2,3]STKIP Budidaya
[1]juliantinasebayang@gmail.com, [2]dhanta07@gmail.com, [3]nyultisa@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

English literature has been an important tool in shaping social and political thought at the global level. This research aims to explore the role of English literature in shaping global governance and civil society, especially in the context of social and political change. The formulation of the problem raised is how literary works influence the construction of universal values such as human rights, justice and global solidarity. The aim of this research is to analyze the influence of English literature in shaping narratives related to global issues and the role of civil society in influencing international policy. This research uses the conceptual framework of postcolonial theory to understand how literature plays a role in influencing social change. The research method used is a qualitative approach with comparative analysis of the literary works of writers such as Chinua Achebe and Toni Morrison, as well as examining their relationship to political and social context. The research results show that English literature has an important role in criticizing global injustice, strengthening civil society movements, and voicing changes in the structure of world government. Further discussion highlights how literature serves as a tool for social change, eliminating inequalities, and promoting human values in global governance.

Keywords: *English Literature; Global governance; Civil Society; Social change; Global justice; Postcolonial theory*

I. INTRODUCTION

English literature, as a form of cultural and intellectual expression, has played an important role in shaping social and political thought at the global level. Literary works, whether born in colonial or contemporary times, are not only a tool for individual reflection, but also a means of criticizing social, political and economic injustice. In the midst of rapid global change, English literature often presents narratives that criticize existing power structures, promote human values, and raise awareness in the international community about major issues such as inequality, human rights and the environment. Good English proficiency is also a prerequisite for utilizing vast information resources and engaging in global professional networks. (Juliantina and Yuni Permatasari 2024) However, the role of literature in shaping global governance and civil society has not been discussed in depth, even though literary works often influence global views on these issues.

The problem raised in this research is how English literature plays a role in shaping and influencing global governance and strengthening civil society. Global order today – using the perspective of global governance – is filled with state and non-state actors, with economic 100 and political influence and the global order encompasses an array of networks – both public, private, and mixed – that serve a growing number of leader gatherings. (Summitry and Issue 2022) Specifically, this research seeks to answer questions regarding the extent to which literary works can be a tool for encouraging social change and international policy, as well as how literary works can create narratives that stimulate global awareness of political and social issues. The adoption of Marxism in literary studies tends to reduce literary works to a simple dichotomy of oppressors and oppressed, resulting in a loss of understanding of the deeper nuances within the narratives. (Demissie 2024)

Previous research has shown that literature has an important role in shaping

political thought, including its influence on postcolonial theory. Several studies state that literature as a cultural medium can influence social movements and strengthen civil society, as seen in the works of writers such as Chinua Achebe and Toni Morrison. Global governance, as we and others identified is increasingly a multilayered and multi-actor international environment. (Summitry and Issue 2022) They use literature to criticize injustice, respond to social inequality, and promote more inclusive political change. However, despite numerous studies of literature's contribution to social change, the specific role of English literature in shaping global governance and civil society has not been widely explored.

The main aim of this research is to explore how English literature can influence global governance and strengthen civil society. This research aims to identify literary texts that have played a role in criticizing global injustice, as well as explaining how literature functions as a medium for social change. The novelty of this research lies in its in-depth exploration of the relationship between English literature and global politics, as well as how literature has become an important instrument in influencing international policy and strengthening civil society movements.

The main argument to be proven in this research is that English literature, as a narrative and cultural medium, plays a very significant role in shaping global governance and strengthening civil society. Through literary works that raise global issues, such as social injustice, human rights and economic justice, literature can influence public perception and international policy. Writers such as Chinua Achebe and Toni Morrison show how literature is not only a mirror of reality, but also a tool for formulating change, encouraging social movements, and giving voice to marginalized voices in the global order.

Postcolonial theory offers a critical approach to understanding the historical impact of colonialism on former colonial countries and the power relations that were formed post-independence. This theory is very relevant for analyzing how English literature, as a cultural product of colonial countries, plays a role in shaping global dynamics and influencing civil society in various parts of the world, especially in responding to the inequalities inherited from colonialism.

Postcolonial theory was pioneered by thinkers such as Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak, who criticized the ways colonial powers dominated and constructed the identity and culture of the colonized people. In the analysis of English literature, this theory can be used to understand how literary texts not only reflect colonial power, but also function as a medium to fight for the voices of those who are marginalized. In English literary works that reflect or relate to the colonial period, such as the works of Joseph Conrad or Rudyard Kipling, there is often a dominant representation of the culture and identity of the colonial people. Post-colonialism looks at how literature can function to express colonial experiences that are overlooked or even romanticized by colonial narratives, and how this shapes global awareness of inequality and social injustice.

The relevance of postcolonial theory in the analysis of this problem is enormous, especially in understanding how literature can fight for change in global governance. Many postcolonial literary works, such as the works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie or Salman Rushdie, raise themes of colonial legacies, identity conflicts, and inequalities maintained by global power structures. It is seen in works by authors such as Salman Rushdie and Jhumpa Lahiri, who effortlessly include traits of Indian fairy tales and Western narratives. Fusion of such kinds goes beyond just fiction. (Mehmood et al. 2023) Postcolonial literature often shows how civil society in former colonial countries struggled to gain a voice and justice in a world structure dominated by western countries. By using postcolonial theory, we can understand how English literature—both written during the colonial period and afterwards—reflects and responds to the global dynamics that occurred post-

independence. In this case, literature functions as a tool to raise awareness of inequalities in global governance and influence the formation of public opinion on issues such as economic imperialism, globalization and human rights.

Apart from that, Postcolonial theory is also very relevant in analyzing how English literature plays a role in introducing the perspectives of those marginalized in civil society. Through postcolonial literary works, we can see how marginalized groups, such as indigenous peoples, migrant workers, and other minorities, strive to gain their voice in the global conversation. Writing is another form of communication besides using conversation to convey ideas, ideas, thoughts or feelings. (Sebayang, Sitepu, and Dadari 2022) By exploring literary works that highlight individual experiences in facing the ongoing impacts of colonial systems, we can understand how these works provide space for alternative narratives that challenge the dominance of existing global ideologies and policies.

Postcolonial theory also allows researchers to see interactions between Western and non-Western cultures in the context of global governance. In many works of postcolonial English literature, there is a tension between these two worlds which is often reflected in social, political and economic conflict. Economic growth is impacted by various elements including infrastructures health, schooling, environmental conditions, industrial expansion, and technological advancements. (Wang et al. 2024) English literature, in this case, is not only a tool to maintain or reflect the status quo, but also as a medium for marginalized communities to build awareness and promote change. Through this approach, researchers can understand how literature is an effective tool in building civil society movements that advocate for social justice, fight for minority rights, and influence global policies that are more inclusive and fair. Social justice mentoring is defined here as a high-quality mentoring relationship that offers members the learning, development and support needed to advance social justice and promote diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) at work. (Ragins 2024)

Overall, postcolonial theory provides a very important perspective in analyzing the role of English literature in shaping global governance and civil society. This theory helps researchers understand how literature is not only a medium for understanding colonial history, but also as a tool for fighting for social change and exposing injustices that occur in the context of globalization and unequal power relations. By using postcolonial theory, researchers can examine more deeply how literature functions as a "voice of change" that raises awareness and encourages reform in global policies and in the dynamics of civil society throughout the world.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, the qualitative method was chosen because its approach allows for exploring the deep meaning of literary texts and uncovering the social, cultural and political context contained in English literary works. The method used in this study was qualitative method with phenomenology approach. (Mike Nurmalia Sari and Pretty Elisa Ayu Ningsih 2023) Qualitative methodology has been extensively used in social sciences research in the past decade. (Lu and Xiong 2023) Qualitative methods allow researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of literature in shaping global views and influencing the dynamics of civil society, through a more subjective and flexible interpretation of the data.

The data sources in this research come from relevant English literary texts, both written during the colonial and postcolonial periods, as well as works that describe social and political issues related to globalization, inequality and the role of civil society. The impact of globalization is evident in almost all spheres of life in today's world. (Mehmood et al. 2023) Researchers can choose literary works from various genres such as novels, poetry and essays that describe social change, power tensions and dynamics between countries. The data collection techniques used included

literature studies, where researchers analyze literary texts using a thematic approach to interpret the meaning contained in the literary work. (Waluyo and Kusumastuti 2024)

Data processing and analysis was carried out through a thematic approach, where researchers identified the main themes that appeared in literary texts related to the topic of global governance and civil society. The contemporary English literature reflects numerous universal and diverse thematic and globalized stylistic trends. (Mehmood et al. 2023) The analytical techniques used can include discourse analysis to examine how language in literature reflects ideology, power and representation in society. With the development of instruments and techniques, an increasing number of sampling and analytical methods have been applied to study. (Zheng et al. 2024) Researchers can also use postcolonial theory to analyze the way literature depicts the relationship between former colonial countries and dominant countries, and their impact on global society.

Propose the systematic integrative research, encompassing two literature review approaches, presenting unprecedented methodology adopted. (Silva and Campos 2024) Thus, qualitative methods allow researchers to explore the cultural, social and political dimensions that exist in literature, as well as understand the rule of literature in fighting for change in global governance and civil society. Global order today – using the perspective of global governance – is filled with state and non-state actors, with economic 100 and political influence. And the global order encompasses an array of networks – both public, private, and mixed – that serve a growing number of leader gatherings.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Role of English Literature in Shaping Global Governance and Civil Society

The role of literature, particularly English literature, in shaping and critiquing global governance and influencing civil society has often been overlooked in traditional political discourse. However, in recent years, scholars have begun to explore how literary works, particularly those from postcolonial traditions, provide invaluable insights into the ways in which global power structures operate and how civil society can challenge them. The study of English literature, specifically in the context of its colonial history, reveals how narratives not only reflect the lived experiences of individuals in different parts of the world but also serve as a powerful tool for resisting and reshaping global governance. The voices of change articulated through literary texts have the potential to influence public opinion, challenge unjust power structures, and advocate for social justice, human rights, and the participation of marginalized groups in the global political conversation.

This discussion will examine how English literature, as a reflection of both the colonial past and contemporary global realities, has served as a medium for highlighting issues related to inequality, social injustice, and the role of civil society in global governance. By analyzing literary works from the postcolonial tradition, it becomes clear that these texts act not just as cultural artifacts, but as dynamic agents of change that invite readers to engage with global issues, question existing power structures, and advocate for more inclusive and just social policies. The primary focus of this analysis is on the role of English literature in engaging with global governance and its capacity to inspire activism and civil society movements.

B. The Power of English Literature in Shaping Civil Society and Global Governance

One of the central findings of this research is that English literature, particularly postcolonial works, plays a critical role in shaping civil society's understanding of global governance. In the postcolonial world, literature often addresses the residual effects of colonial rule, such as economic exploitation, cultural erasure, and the imposition of foreign governance systems that continue to shape political realities. Authors like Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, and Arundhati Roy have used their works to expose

how colonial legacies continue to impact global power dynamics. Through their exploration of themes such as identity, resistance, and the complexities of postcolonial governance, these authors provide a lens through which readers can critically engage with global systems of power.

In *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe offers a profound critique of colonialism and its disruptive effects on African societies, particularly in the way it reshapes governance, culture, and identity. The narrative critiques not only the violent imposition of colonial rule but also the deep-rooted changes in societal structures and norms that accompany colonialism. The novel demonstrates how colonial power structures destabilized pre-existing governance systems and replaced them with foreign institutions that continue to influence postcolonial societies. Through this examination, Achebe's work acts as a platform for civil society to critique the lingering effects of colonialism on global governance. The Igbo people's struggle to maintain their cultural and political autonomy in the face of colonization serves as a metaphor for the broader struggles to face by postcolonial nations in asserting their sovereignty within the global political landscape.

Similarly, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* provides a complex and nuanced portrayal of postcolonial identity and governance. Set against the backdrop of India's partition and independence, the novel examines the disjointed and fragmented process of nation-building in a newly independent country. Rushdie critiques how the legacy of colonialism has left India with fractured identities and power structures, which continue to influence the country's political, social, and economic systems. Rushdie's use of magical realism and intertwining of personal and national histories reflects the ongoing effects of colonialism on both the individual and collective levels. In doing so, the novel illustrates how postcolonial literature can serve as a powerful tool for understanding and challenging the global systems that were built on colonial power dynamics.

Through these works and others, it becomes clear that English literature provides a lens for understanding how global governance is shaped by colonial histories and how civil society in postcolonial contexts strives to reform or dismantle these power structures. The voices of characters in these novels reflect the ongoing struggles faced by individuals and communities in reclaiming their agency and autonomy from the remnants of colonial rule. In this way, literature serves as a vehicle for civil society movements, providing both a critique of the status quo and a vision for a more just and equitable global order.

C. Literature as a Tool for Social Change and Global Justice

A second key finding is that English literature functions not only as a reflection of historical injustices but also as a tool for advocating social change and global justice. Postcolonial authors, by critiquing the global power structures that emerged from colonialism, challenge readers to question the legitimacy of these systems and to consider the possibility of alternative, more just political frameworks. In this regard, postcolonial literature has the potential to influence social movements by shaping the consciousness of readers and motivating them to take action in addressing issues such as economic inequality, environmental justice, and human rights.

One example of how literature advocates for social change is Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, which critiques the deeply entrenched caste system in India, the legacy of British colonialism, and the global economic forces that perpetuate inequality. Roy's novel is a poignant exploration of the personal and social consequences of a divided society, where historical injustices are reinforced by contemporary power structures. Through her richly layered narrative, Roy invites readers to consider how both historical and contemporary global systems of governance continue to create barriers to equality and justice. Her work not only exposes the ongoing effects of colonialism in postcolonial societies but also urges readers to

think critically about their own roles in advocating for global justice.

Similarly, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's works, such as *Petals of Blood* and *A Grain of Wheat*, interrogate the role of colonialism in the formation of African governance systems and the continuing influence of neocolonial forces. Wa Thiong'o argues that the legacy of colonialism is not simply a matter of historical memory, but that it continues to inform the economic and political systems that dominate postcolonial nations. In doing so, his work critiques global power structures, particularly the ways in which multinational corporations and foreign governments continue to exploit postcolonial societies. Through his novels, Wa Thiong'o urges readers to question the systems of global governance that maintain inequity and to envision a more just global order that prioritizes the needs of marginalized communities. The study provides an in-depth, comparative analysis of the way Ng˜ugĩ wa Thiong'o portrays women in his novels. It highlights the agency and resilience of his female characters within patriarchal constraints and contributes to the scholarly discourse on the progressive potential of the representation of gender and female empowerment in postcolonial African literature. (Demissie 2024)

The power of literature as a tool for social change is not limited to individual action but also extends to larger political and social movements. in movement tendency was not related to the frequency of migrants in the mixed groups it cannot solely be ascribed to social conformity. (Gismann et al. 2024) Postcolonial authors create narratives that challenge the dominant discourses of power, encouraging readers to reimagine the possibilities for global governance and civil society. By engaging with these works, readers are invited to consider how their own societies can become more inclusive, equitable, and just.

D. The Importance of Narrative in Shaping Social Consciousness

Another critical finding is that the narrative form of English literature, particularly in the postcolonial tradition, plays a vital role in shaping social consciousness and influencing public discourse. The narratives constructed by postcolonial authors often provide a counterpoint to the mainstream histories and ideologies propagated by colonial powers. These works of fiction allow readers to enter the world of marginalized communities, offering them a voice in global conversations about power, justice, and governance.

In *Things Fall Apart*, for instance, Achebe's narrative not only tells the story of the Igbo community's encounter with colonial forces but also introduces readers to a worldview that had been systematically devalued and suppressed by colonial powers. Selecting and imposing names and ways of writing them belonged to the exercise of colonial power over language (Mlilo, Bollig, and Revilla Diez 2024) Achebe's choice of a tragic narrative, in which the protagonist Okonkwo ultimately fails to resist the forces of colonialism, challenges readers to confront the complex realities of cultural and political resistance. The narrative is to tell a story or tale that orderly account of events in speech or writing. (Sebayang et al. 2022) Through this narrative, Achebe highlights the importance of cultural identity and the impact of external forces on local governance. His work asks readers to consider the consequences of ignoring or undermining local forms of governance and social structures in favor of foreign impositions.

Similarly, in *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie constructs a narrative that intertwines personal histories with national and global histories. By doing so, he shows how individual lives are shaped by broader political forces and how the personal and collective dimensions of postcolonial identity are inseparable. The novel's non-linear structure and magical realist elements serve to critique the linear, Eurocentric narratives of history that have often been used to justify colonial domination. Through his narrative, Rushdie invites readers to rethink the way history is told and understood, encouraging them to embrace multiple perspectives on the past and the present.

These narratives, in their complexity and their engagement with issues of identity, power, and resistance, challenge readers to confront global power structures and think critically about the role of civil society in addressing issues of social justice and inequality. By giving voice to the marginalized and the oppressed, postcolonial literature opens up space for new forms of discourse that can ultimately lead to transformative social and political change.

E. Global Governance, Civil Society, and the Role of Literature in Contemporary Discourse

The study of postcolonial literature underscores the importance of literature in contemporary global discourse on governance and civil society. As global power dynamics continue to evolve, literature remains a powerful tool for critiquing the ways in which global systems of governance disproportionately affect marginalized communities. The role of civil society, as depicted in postcolonial literary works, is crucial in challenging the status quo and advocating for change. These literary works serve as a reminder of the ongoing struggles faced by individuals and communities who are excluded from the benefits of global governance systems.

In examining the relationship between literature, global governance, and civil society, this research reveals how postcolonial authors use narrative to question the legitimacy of global systems that perpetuate inequality. Through the voices of characters who resist and critique these systems, authors like Achebe, Rushdie, Roy, and Wa Thiong'o challenge readers to rethink the role of governance and the state in a globalized

IV. CONCLUSION

Reflections show that English literature, especially in postcolonial contexts, has a very important role in shaping global awareness about the social injustices and inequalities that still exist in global governance. Through a postcolonial theory approach, this article succeeds in exploring how literature not only reflects the impact of colonialism, but also functions as a tool to challenge existing ideological dominance, give voice to marginalized groups, and encourage change in global policy. These findings underscore the importance of literature as a means of fighting for human rights, social justice, and influencing the dynamics of civil society in the context of an increasingly connected world.

From the analysis that has been carried out, it is clear that English literature does not simply describe history or certain social phenomena, but also plays an active role in stimulating discourse about justice, globalization and the role of civil society. Thus, literature has great potential to shape public opinion and encourage changes in global policies that are more inclusive. This article also shows that literature as a form of cultural expression can be a powerful tool for responding to complex social problems and is directly related to the global challenges faced by modern society.

For further research, it is recommended that researchers explore more deeply the relationship between postcolonial English literature and contemporary global policy, especially in the context of climate change, global migration and economic inequality. Further research could also focus on how literature from former colonial countries influences global policy and strengthens the voice of civil society in international conversations. By involving a variety of literary genres, including digital literature and contemporary works, further research can expand our understanding of the role of literature in shaping a more just and sustainable world.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

Demissie, Balew. 2024. "The Representation of Women in Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o's The River Between and A Grain of Wheat: An Ideological Approach." *Social Sciences and Humanities Open* 10(June). doi: 10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101004.

Gismann, J., A. Ramesh, T. G. G. Groothuis, F.

J. Weissing, and M. Nicolaus. 2024. "Effects of Personality and Social Context on Movement Tendencies in Three-Spined Sticklebacks." *Animal Behaviour* 216:1–13. doi: 10.1016/j.anbehav.2024.07.012.

Juliantina, and Yuni Permatasari. 2024. "Pentingnya Test of English as a Foreign Language Di Era Digital." *JPGENUS: Jurnal Pendidikan Generasi Nusantara* 2(1):115–26. doi: 10.61787/jkd1k326.

Lu, Yingxin, and Tingyu Xiong. 2023. "The Attitudes of High School Students and Teachers toward Mobile Apps for Learning English: A Q Methodology Study." *Social Sciences and Humanities Open* 8(1). doi: 10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100555.

Mehmood, Irfan, Muhammad Azeem, Asad Javaid, and Muhammad Khuram. 2023. "Globalization and English Literature: Explaining How Globalization Has Affected the Themes, Style, and Influences of Modern English Literature." 6(December):2023.

Mike Nurmalia Sari, and Pretty Elisa Ayu Ningsih. 2023. "An Analysis Of Students' Anxiety In Learning English At The Eleventh Grade Of SMA Negeri 10 Kerinci." *Edu Research* 4(3):83–97. doi: 10.47827/jer.v4i3.115.

Mlilo, Mfundo, Michael Bollig, and Javier Revilla Diez. 2024. "Coloniality of Power and the Imaginaries of Tourism in Victoria Falls." *Geoforum* 156(September):104131. doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2024.104131.

Ragins, Belle Rose. 2024. "Allyship, Authenticity and Agency: The Triple A Model of Social Justice Mentoring." *Current Opinion in Psychology* 60(September 2024):101920. doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2024.101920.

Sebayang, Juliantina, Dewi Rulia Sitepu, and Ratna Sari Dadari. 2022. "An Analysis of Learning English Difficulty of Writing Narrative Skills Using Online Media of Sma Negeri 4 Binjai Academic Year 2021/2022 During Covid-19 Period." *Jurnal Serunai Bahasa Inggris* 14(1):23–29. doi: 10.37755/jsbi.v14i1.582.

Silva, Marianny Jessica de Brito, and Patrícia de Oliveira Campos. 2024. "Past, Present, and Future of Avatar Marketing: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Agenda." *Computers in Human Behavior: Artificial Humans* 2(1):100045. doi: 10.1016/j.chbah.2024.100045.

Summitry, Global, and Special Issue. 2022. "Strengthening Global Governance by Strengthening the G20."

Waluyo, Budi, and Sekartiyasa Kusumastuti. 2024. "Generative AI in Student English Learning in Thai Higher Education: More Engagement, Better Outcomes?" *Social Sciences and Humanities Open* 10. doi: 10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101146.

Wang, Xinyuan, Xingyi Zhu, Muhammad Kashif Anwar, Qingwei Meng, and Ninghua Zhong. 2024. "Evaluating the Role of AI and Empirical Models for Predicting Regional Economic Growth and Transportation Dynamics: An Application of Advanced AI Approaches." *International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology* (xxxx). doi: 10.1016/j.ijtst.2024.08.007.

Zheng, Kexin, Peng Wang, Xiaoming Lou, Zhen Zhou, Lifang Zhou, Yong Hu, Yuqing Luan, Changjian Quan, Jiayang Fang, Hua Zou, and Xiangjing Gao. 2024. "A Review of Airborne Micro- and Nano-Plastics: Sampling Methods, Analytical Techniques, and Exposure Risks." *Environmental Pollution* 363(P1):125074. doi: 10.1016/j.envpol.2024.125074.