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# Global Readability and Locality Negotiation in Indonesian World Literature

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**Abstract:** *The international circulation of Indonesian literature raises questions about how local cultural specificity is negotiated when literary works enter transnational literary spaces. This study examines global readability and the negotiation of locality in selected Indonesian literary works through a comparative literary criticism approach. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method by comparing selected works by Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Eka Kurniawan with their English translations, supported by relevant studies of translation, paratextual framing, and world literature. Data are collected through documentation and close reading of textual passages representing cultural, historical, linguistic, and ideological elements, and are analyzed by comparing their representation in the source and target texts. The findings indicate that global readability is not an inherent quality of a literary work but is constructed through translation, cultural mediation, paratextual framing, publishing, and reception. The analysis further shows that locality is not necessarily diminished through international circulation; instead, it may be retained, transformed, reframed, and reinterpreted. Thus, Indonesian literature participates in world literature through an ongoing negotiation between local cultural identity and transnational readability. This perspective positions Indonesian literature as an active participant in world literary exchange.*

***Keywords***: *world literature, global readability, locality negotiation, Indonesian literature, comparative literary criticism*

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesian literature increasingly participates in literary circulation beyond national, linguistic, and geographical boundaries. Translation, cross-border publishing, literary festivals, academic networks, and international book markets have created opportunities for Indonesian literary works to reach broader cultural contexts. This development raises questions beyond the dissemination of works abroad, particularly concerning how they are understood, received, positioned, and valued within world literature. From the perspective of world literature, a work's presence beyond its national context is closely related to processes of circulation and to the ways it is read in different cultural environments (Damrosch, 2020). Indonesian literature's participation in world literature should therefore be understood as an encounter among texts, cultures, languages, readers, translators, and literary institutions.

This issue is significant because literary circulation from a national to a transnational space is not neutral. Translation does not simply transfer meaning between languages but may influence how a work is perceived and positioned within a new literary environment (Baker & Saldanha, 2020; Bassnett & Lefevere, 2020). In Indonesian literature, Kim and Cho (2025) demonstrate the importance of paratexts in the English translation of This Earth of Mankind, particularly in shaping how the novel

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is presented to international readers. Rakhmawati and Moratto (2026) similarly show that translation and paratextual interventions are connected to the political framing of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Buru Quartet in different readership contexts. These studies indicate that a work's global readability is shaped not only by its textual characteristics but also by mechanisms accompanying its movement across languages and cultures.

From the perspective of comparative literature, this condition raises questions about the relationship between locality and globality. Comparative literature can no longer be limited to identifying formal similarities and differences between texts but must also consider relationships among texts, cultures, and literary traditions within increasingly interconnected literary networks (Bassnett, 2021; Damrosch, 2021). World literature studies likewise emphasize institutions, markets, translation, and other mechanisms that enable literary works to move between literary spaces (Helgesson & Vermeulen, 2022). A work's participation in world literature is therefore not simply the result of geographical movement but emerges through social, cultural, and aesthetic processes that shape how it is read and positioned.

At the same time, the incorporation of Indonesian literature into world literary space raises questions about the persistence and transformation of locality. Locality encompasses more than geographical settings or specific cultural elements; it includes historical experiences, social values, collective memory, identity, language, mythology, and worldviews that shape a literary text. When a work is translated and read by audiences from different cultural backgrounds, these elements may be retained, mediated through cultural equivalents, transformed, or assigned new meanings. Such negotiation is consistent with critiques of approaches to world literature that insufficiently consider language, untranslatability, and power relations in literary globalization (Apter, 2021; Cheah, 2022). Becoming part of world literature therefore does not necessarily mean abandoning local specificity but negotiating between cultural identity and transnational readability.

Previous studies have addressed the translation and international circulation of Indonesian literary works. Angelianawati et al. (2025) discuss the politics of Indonesian literature in international literary spaces, demonstrating that translation and circulation are connected to questions of positioning and representation. Megawati et al. (2025) show that the English translation of Bumi Manusia involves ideological dimensions and changes in the construction of representation. Sirait et al. (2026) likewise demonstrate that translation strategies in This Earth of Mankind shape the transfer of textual elements into another language. These studies provide important foundations for understanding Indonesian literary translation. However, the relationship between global readability and the negotiation of locality as a problem of comparative literary criticism remains insufficiently addressed. The issue is therefore not only how Indonesian works are translated or received abroad, but also how these processes reshape the relationship between their local specificity and their position within world literature.

Based on this gap, the present study positions global readability as a problem of comparative literary criticism. Global readability is understood not merely as the capacity of a literary work to be translated or marketed internationally, but as a process through which its aesthetic, cultural, and ideological elements are negotiated in encounters with different readers, languages, and literary systems. This perspective

enables Indonesian literature to be understood not simply as moving from a local space toward a global one, but as participating in a reciprocal relationship between local and global contexts. Within this relationship, locality functions simultaneously as a source of identity and a site of negotiation when literary works enter transnational networks. Such an understanding corresponds with approaches to world literature that emphasize movement, institutional structures, and cultural relations beyond contexts of origin (Beecroft, 2021; Thomsen, 2021).

The novelty of this study lies in bringing together three issues often examined separately Indonesian literature as world literature, global readability, and the negotiation of locality within a comparative literary criticism framework. Rather than viewing literary globalization as a one-way movement from local to global, this study understands it as a process through which locality may be maintained, transformed, reframed, or reinterpreted. Accordingly, "becoming a citizen of world literature" is conceptualized not as an automatic status achieved through translation and international circulation, but as an ongoing cultural and aesthetic process involving texts, languages, cultures, readers, and literary institutions. This perspective positions Indonesian literature as an active participant in world literary conversations rather than merely an object to which externally established categories are applied.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze global readability and the negotiation of locality in selected Indonesian literary works through comparative literary criticism. The analysis focuses on how local cultural elements interact with transnational contexts and how this interaction influences the positioning and interpretation of the works within world literature. The study is expected to contribute to Indonesian comparative literary studies by advancing an understanding of the relationship among locality, translation, reception, and literary circulation in the context of world literature.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of Indonesian literature as part of world literature requires a framework that explains not only relationships among literary texts but also their movement across languages, cultures, institutions, and geographical boundaries. Comparative literature provides such a foundation by examining encounters among different literary traditions and cultural contexts. Bassnett (1993) emphasizes the development of comparative literature as a field concerned with literary and cultural encounters, while Damrosch (2021) situates comparative study within a global literary environment in which texts circulate across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Spivak (2003) similarly calls for comparative literary practice to move beyond established disciplinary and geographical boundaries. In this study, comparative literary criticism is used to examine how Indonesian literary works negotiate their relationship with broader literary contexts while retaining particular cultural and historical references.

### *World literature and the global circulation of Indonesian literature*

World literature provides the principal framework for understanding the movement of Indonesian literature beyond the national literary space. Damrosch (2020) relates world literature to the circulation of literary works beyond their cultures of origin and their rereading in new cultural contexts. A work therefore does not become world literature simply because it is translated; its position is shaped by circulation and

the meanings it acquires in new environments. Beecroft (2021) complements this view through an ecological conception of world literature in which diverse literary traditions interact within a complex global environment.

Global literary circulation also involves unequal relationships among languages, institutions, traditions, and markets. Casanova (2004) describes the international literary field through the World Republic of Letters, emphasizing literary centers, peripheries, and unequal distributions of literary capital. This perspective is relevant to Indonesian literature because its international circulation takes place within a system in which English and other dominant languages have substantial influence. Thomsen (2008) emphasizes the importance of mapping literary movements and relationships, while Helgesson and Vermeulen (2022) demonstrate the role of institutions, translation, publishing, and markets in shaping world literature. Indonesian literature's position in the global literary field therefore cannot be separated from the material and institutional conditions that make particular works visible internationally.

Angelianawati et al. (2025) further show that the international circulation of Indonesian literature involves politics of representation, cultural identity, language, and literary value. Global circulation should consequently be understood not simply as the movement of texts from one country to another but as a process through which their meanings and positions may be reconstructed.

***Translation, transnational circulation, and global readability***

Translation is a principal mechanism through which Indonesian literary works become accessible beyond the Indonesian-language literary sphere. Baker and Saldanha (2020) emphasize the cultural, textual, and ideological dimensions of translation, while Bassnett and Lefevere (2020) connect translation with history, culture, and the contexts of production and reception. Cronin (2003) further demonstrates the relationship between translation and globalization.

In this study, global readability is closely related to translation but is not limited to linguistic transfer. It refers to the process through which a literary work becomes accessible and interpretable through translation, cultural mediation, publishing, criticism, and reception. Tymoczko (2007) emphasizes translator agency and cultural positioning, while Venuti (2019, 2021) challenges the treatment of translation as a transparent and neutral instrument. These perspectives are useful for examining how Indonesian cultural references, linguistic expressions, historical experiences, and local identities are negotiated in other languages.

Research on Indonesian literature provides concrete support for this perspective. Kim and Cho (2025) examine translator visibility in the English translation of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's This Earth of Mankind, particularly through paratexts, demonstrating how translated works are presented to international readers. Sirait et al. (2026) examine ellipsis as a translation strategy in the same novel, showing that linguistic choices shape the transfer of meaning. Megawati et al. (2025) analyze feminist ideology in Bumi Manusia and its English translation, while Rakhmawati and Moratto (2026) examine paratextual interventions and ideological framing in the English translations of the Buru Quartet. Together, these studies indicate that global readability involves selection, mediation, and transformation rather than simple linguistic

substitution. The present study extends this discussion by connecting translation and reception with the negotiation of locality.

### *Locality, cultural identity, and the negotiation of meaning*

Locality is an important dimension of literary identity because literary works emerge from particular historical, cultural, linguistic, and social environments. In Indonesian literature, locality may appear through geographical references, cultural practices, social relations, historical memories, local languages, myths, religious traditions, and systems of knowledge. When these elements circulate transnationally, however, they encounter readers with different cultural frameworks. Local meanings may consequently be retained, explained, transformed, or reinterpreted.

Cheah (2016) connects literature and world-making with postcolonial historical and geopolitical conditions, challenging the idea of world literature as a culturally neutral space. Apter (2013), through the concept of untranslatability, draws attention to meanings that cannot always be transferred without remainder and therefore become sites of cultural negotiation. Hermans (2022) similarly emphasizes linguistic multiplicity and the coexistence of different voices in literary communication. Walkowitz (2015) shows how contemporary novels may be produced and circulated with awareness of multiple linguistic and cultural contexts. These perspectives allow locality to be understood not as a fixed element that must either be preserved or sacrificed, but as a dynamic component that can acquire new meanings through transnational encounters.

### *Indonesian literature, reception, and the negotiation of global literary space*

The relationship between Indonesian literature and world literature can therefore be understood as a process involving text, translation, institutions, and reception. The international circulation of Eka Kurniawan's Beauty Is a Wound and Man Tiger, as well as Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Buru Quartet, illustrates the importance of translation and international publishing in expanding the visibility of Indonesian literature (Kurniawan, 2021, 2022; Toer, n.d.-a–d). These works contain culturally and historically specific materials while entering literary environments in which readers encounter them through translation and different interpretive frameworks.

The central comparative question is therefore not simply whether Indonesian works have entered international literary markets, but how their cultural specificity is negotiated in that process. Moretti (2013) demonstrates the value of examining literature through broader patterns of circulation. These perspectives support an analysis that connects global circulation with the cultural and ideological structures embedded in literary texts.

Based on these perspectives, this study conceptualizes global readability as the process through which Indonesian literary works become accessible, interpretable, and positionable within transnational literary contexts. It is shaped by translation, publishing, paratextual framing, criticism, and reception, while also depending on how local meanings are negotiated within these processes. Locality negotiation refers to the ways cultural, historical, linguistic, and ideological elements are maintained, transformed, reframed, or reinterpreted when works enter new literary environments. The two concepts are therefore interconnected: global readability requires cultural

mediation, while mediation may reshape the representation and interpretation of locality.

The framework consequently brings together comparative literature, world literature, translation studies, and transnational literary studies. Comparative literature provides the basis for examining relationships among literary traditions; world literature explains circulation and repositioning beyond contexts of origin; translation studies address linguistic and cultural mediation; and transnational literary studies addresses movement across national boundaries. Together, these perspectives enable Indonesian literature to be examined as an active participant in world literary exchange and allow this study to investigate how its local identity is negotiated when it enters global literary space.

## METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with comparative literary analysis to examine global readability and the negotiation of locality in contemporary Indonesian literature. The qualitative approach is used to interpret literary texts as cultural, aesthetic, and ideological constructions, while comparative literary analysis examines relationships between Indonesian literary texts, their English translations, and the transnational contexts in which they circulate. Comparative literature provides a framework for examining works across linguistic, cultural, and national boundaries (Bassnett, 2021; Damrosch, 2021; Spivak, 2022). This approach is relevant because the analysis considers both textual meanings and the processes through which they are mediated and repositioned in broader literary spaces.

The data sources consist of selected Indonesian literary works and their English translations. The primary corpus comprises Pramoedya Ananta Toer's This Earth of Mankind, Child of All Nations, Footsteps, and House of Glass, together with Eka Kurniawan's Man Tiger and Beauty Is a Wound (Kurniawan, 2021, 2022; Toer, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, n.d.-d). These works are selected to examine the relationship between Indonesian cultural specificity and transnational literary circulation. The selection is supported by studies addressing English translation, paratextual framing, ideological construction, and translation strategies, particularly Kim and Cho (2025), Megawati et al. (2025), Rakhmawati and Moratto (2026), and Sirait et al. (2026). Secondary data consist of scholarly works on comparative literature, world literature, translation, transnational circulation, and literary criticism, including Damrosch (2020, 2021), Casanova (2004), Beecroft (2021), Helgesson and Vermeulen (2022), and Cheah (2016).

The data are textual, consisting of passages representing the interaction between local cultural meanings and transnational readability. They include culturally specific expressions, geographical references, social practices, historical experiences, cultural identities, local traditions, religious and social values, metaphors, symbols, and narrative descriptions. The English translations are examined comparatively to identify how local meanings are retained, transformed, reframed, or mediated in the target-language context. Paratextual elements are also considered when they contribute to framing translated works for international readers (Kim & Cho, 2025; Rakhmawati & Moratto, 2026).

Data collection is conducted through documentation and close reading. The researcher identifies relevant passages in the Indonesian source texts and compares

them with corresponding English translations. The data are classified according to two analytical dimensions: global readability and locality negotiation. Global readability refers to how literary meanings become accessible and interpretable within transnational contexts through translation, cultural mediation, and literary framing. Locality negotiation refers to how cultural, historical, linguistic, and ideological elements associated with Indonesian contexts are maintained, transformed, explained, or reinterpreted in another linguistic and cultural environment. This procedure is informed by translation studies perspectives that regard translation as culturally and ideologically situated rather than as simple linguistic transfer (Baker & Saldanha, 2020; Bassnett & Lefevere, 2020; Cronin, 2021; Tymoczko, 2021; Venuti, 2021a, 2021b).

Data analysis is conducted through comparative textual analysis. First, textual units containing significant representations of locality are identified. Second, these units are compared with their English translations to examine changes in linguistic form, cultural reference, narrative representation, and ideological meaning. Third, translation and mediation patterns are interpreted in relation to global readability, particularly how culturally specific meanings are made accessible to readers in different contexts. Fourth, findings are examined through locality negotiation to determine whether local elements are retained, transformed, reframed, or reinterpreted. Finally, patterns across the selected works are compared to formulate a broader interpretation of Indonesian locality and global literary circulation. This process draws on theories emphasizing circulation and rereading (Damrosch, 2020), world literary diversity (Beecroft, 2021), the unequal international literary field (Casanova, 2004), and institutional, translational, and market dimensions (Helgesson & Vermeulen, 2022). The analysis also considers untranslatability and the cultural limits of translation (Apter, 2021; Cheah, 2022).

Data validity and reliability are maintained through source triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and repeated comparative reading. Source triangulation compares Indonesian source texts, English translations, relevant paratextual materials, and previous studies concerning translation and international circulation. Theoretical triangulation combines comparative literature, world literature, translation studies, and literary criticism. Interpretations are repeatedly checked against source and target texts to maintain consistency in identifying translation, cultural representation, and locality negotiation patterns. The analysis is supported by studies of translator visibility and paratexts (Kim & Cho, 2025), ideological construction (Megawati et al., 2025), paratextual interventions in the Buru Quartet (Rakhmawati & Moratto, 2026), and translation strategies in This Earth of Mankind (Sirait et al., 2026).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the selected Indonesian literary works and their English translations indicate that global readability is produced through negotiation between textual accessibility and the preservation of locality. Three patterns emerge. First, Indonesian locality remains visible through cultural references, historical experiences, social relations, geographical settings, and culturally specific expressions. Second, these elements are mediated through translation, paratextual framing, and contextual reinterpretation. Third, international circulation therefore involves negotiation in which local specificity becomes part of broader literary discourse rather than simply

disappearing through translation (Angelianawati et al., 2025; Kim & Cho, 2025; Rakhmawati & Moratto, 2026).

***Table 1. Implication for Global Readability***

| Analytical dimension | Main finding | Implication for global readability |
|---|---|---|
| Local cultural elements | Cultural, historical, social, and linguistic specificity remains identifiable | Locality provides distinctive content for transnational reading |
| Translation | Local meanings undergo linguistic and cultural mediation | Readability is achieved through negotiation rather than simple transfer |
| Paratextual framing | Translator visibility and other framing elements shape presentation | International readers encounter locality through interpretive frames |
| Historical and ideological meanings | Local experiences may be reframed in the target context | Global circulation can generate new interpretive positions |
| Comparative circulation | Indonesian works participate in wider literary networks | Indonesian literature functions as an active participant in world literary exchange |

### *Locality as the Foundation of Global Readability*

The first finding demonstrates (tabel 1) that locality is not an obstacle to global readability but a source of cultural and historical specificity. In This Earth of Mankind and the other novels of the Buru Quartet, historical experience, colonial structures, Indonesian cultural relations, and local identities constitute important elements of the narrative world (Toer, n.d.-a–d). Similarly, Kurniawan's Man Tiger and Beauty Is a Wound are closely connected to Indonesian social and cultural contexts (Kurniawan, 2015a, 2015b).

From the perspective of world literature, a work does not enter global circulation by becoming culturally anonymous. Damrosch (2020) explains world literature through the circulation of works beyond their original contexts and the new ways they are read elsewhere. Beecroft (2021) likewise conceptualizes world literature as an ecological system of interacting with literary traditions. Indonesian locality can therefore function as a point of entry into comparative literary relations rather than as an element that must be removed.

This finding corresponds with Angelianawati et al. (2025), who discuss the politics surrounding Indonesian literature in international literary spaces. Global readability should thus not be understood as removing cultural complexity for international readers, but as creating conditions in which culturally specific meanings can be encountered and negotiated.

### *Translation as Negotiation between Locality and Global Readability*

The second finding concerns translation as a principal mechanism through which locality becomes accessible beyond the Indonesian-language literary sphere. Translation does not function merely as a linguistic bridge between Indonesian and English; it also mediates expressions, references, and meanings for another readership.

This finding supports Baker and Saldanha (2020) and Bassnett and Lefevere (2020), who situate translation within cultural, historical, and ideological contexts.

Cronin (2003) similarly connects translation with globalization and the movement of cultural materials across linguistic boundaries. English translation therefore provides an important route through which Indonesian narratives enter transnational circulation.

The English translations of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's works illustrate this mediating function. The Buru Quartet contains historical and political experiences strongly connected to Indonesian history. When these works circulate in English, their meanings become available to readers who may not share the historical and cultural knowledge of the source context. Translation consequently mediates between source culture and target readership.

*However, mediation does not mean that cultural meanings are reproduced unchanged. Sirait et al. (2026) identify ellipsis as a translation strategy in the English version of This Earth of Mankind, demonstrating that linguistic transfer may involve textual modification. Megawati et al. (2025) likewise show that the English translation of Bumi Manusia can be examined through the construction of ideological meaning. Tymoczko (2007) emphasizes translator agency, while Venuti (2019, 2021) challenges the assumption that translation is neutral.*

Thus, global readability is not an inherent quality of a literary work. It emerges through decisions concerning language, cultural representation, textual form, and target readers: Local cultural meaning becomes accessible to readers in other linguistic contexts through translation and cultural mediation; this accessibility is then shaped by target-language conventions and transnational interpretation. The process is not entirely linear because the target context can generate new interpretations. Global readability is therefore a negotiated process rather than a one-directional movement from Indonesian locality to international readership.

***Paratextual Framing and the Construction of International Readability***

A third finding concerns paratextual framing in the international circulation of Indonesian literature. International readers encounter not only the literary text but also titles, translator information, introductions, publisher descriptions, reviews, and other materials that influence presentation and interpretation.

Kim and Cho (2025) demonstrate the relevance of translator visibility and paratexts in the English translation of This Earth of Mankind. Indonesian locality is consequently encountered not only through the narrative but also through interpretive frameworks surrounding the translated work.

Rakhmawati and Moratto (2026) similarly examine paratextual interventions in the English translations of the Buru Quartet and demonstrate their significance for ideological framing. Global readability therefore involves more than linguistic accessibility; it also concerns how a literary work is positioned before or alongside its reading.

This finding relates to Casanova's (2020) conception of an international literary field characterized by differences in linguistic and institutional power. Helgesson and Vermeulen (2022) likewise emphasize institutions, publishing, translation, and markets in the formation of world literature. A work's international visibility therefore cannot be explained solely through textual characteristics.

Becoming part of world literature involves two interconnected processes: textual circulation, through which a work becomes available in another language, and discursive positioning, through which it is presented and interpreted within a new literary environment. Global readability emerges from their interaction.

### *The Negotiation of Locality in the World Literary Space*

The fourth finding concerns the transformation of locality during transnational circulation. Locality should not be viewed as a fixed cultural package that is either preserved or lost. Instead, it may undergo selection, transformation, explanation, and reinterpretation.

Apter's (2021) concept of untranslatability is relevant because certain linguistic and cultural meanings resist complete transfer between languages. Such limits do not necessarily prevent circulation; they make translation a site of negotiation. Cheah (2016) similarly challenges the idea of world literature as a culturally neutral space, emphasizing its historical and geopolitical relations.

Hermans (2022) highlights the multiplicity of voices and languages involved in literary communication. In Indonesian literature, linguistic difference may involve Indonesian, local languages, culturally specific terminology, historical references, and expressions whose meanings exceed dictionary equivalents. Global readability therefore cannot be reduced to grammatical fluency.

Walkowitz (2015) further demonstrates how contemporary fiction circulates across multiple linguistic and cultural environments, complicating the distinction between national and international literature. Indonesian literature can consequently remain culturally situated while participating in transnational literary networks.

### *Indonesian Literature as an Active Participant in World Literature*

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that Indonesian literature's participation in world literature is a process of negotiation rather than a simple movement from local to global. The selected works do not cease to be Indonesian when translated into English; instead, their cultural and historical references enter new linguistic, institutional, and interpretive environments.

This finding corresponds with Damrosch's (2020) understanding of world literature as literature that circulates beyond its original context and acquires new possibilities of reading. Thomsen (2008) likewise emphasizes the movements and relationships constituting world literature. Indonesian literature's global position is therefore shaped through translation, publishing, reception, and interpretation.

At the same time, the findings indicate that circulation should not replace attention to textual specificity. Moretti's (2020) distant reading demonstrates the value of examining broader literary systems, but the present analysis shows that linguistic, historical, and cultural details remain essential to understanding locality negotiation.

Global readability is therefore relational rather than absolute. A work is not globally readable simply because it has been translated or internationally published. Its readability is constructed through relationships among source text, translation, translator, publisher, paratext, readership, and literary institutions. Locality is not merely something to preserve against globalization but a dynamic component in the production of new meanings.

In this sense, “becoming a citizen of world literature” refers to a process through which Indonesian literary works enter transnational literary conversations while negotiating the cultural identities and historical meanings embedded in them. Indonesian literature can thus be understood as an active participant in the production of world literary meanings.

### *Synthesis of the Findings*

The findings can be understood as an interconnected process rather than a linear sequence. Indonesian locality provides the cultural and historical specificity of a literary work. When the work circulates beyond its original linguistic context, translation and other forms of cultural mediation make that specificity accessible to new readers. Paratextual and institutional framing including translator information, introductions, publishing decisions, reviews, and literary-market contexts also shapes how the work is presented and interpreted. Through these interacting processes, global readability and transnational reception are formed. The resulting interpretations may preserve, transform, or reframe local meanings, so the movement into world literature is best understood as an ongoing negotiation between cultural specificity and new contexts of reading.

The central finding is that global circulation and local identity are not mutually exclusive. International circulation creates a space in which locality can be preserved, transformed, reframed, and reinterpreted. Comparative literary criticism is therefore important for examining relationships among texts, languages, cultures, and literary systems without reducing the local to a mere background for global circulation.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the international circulation of Indonesian literature is a process of negotiation between locality and global readability rather than a simple movement from the local literary sphere to a global readership. The analysis demonstrates that cultural, historical, linguistic, and ideological elements remain significant when Indonesian literary works enter transnational literary spaces. English translation does not automatically erase local specificity; instead, translation, cultural mediation, paratextual framing, and literary institutions influence how local meanings become accessible and are interpreted in different cultural contexts.

The study further demonstrates that global readability is relational and constructed rather than an inherent quality of a literary text. The selected works by Pramoedya Ananta Toer and Eka Kurniawan show that cross-cultural readability is shaped by interactions among source texts, translations, translators, paratexts, publishing contexts, and target readers. This finding supports the view of translation as a culturally and ideologically situated practice (Baker & Saldanha, 2020; Cronin, 2021; Tymoczko, 2021; Venuti, 2021a, 2021b). Studies of Indonesian literary translation further demonstrate the importance of translation strategies, ideological construction, translator visibility, and paratextual framing in international circulation (Kim & Cho, 2025; Megawati et al., 2025; Rakhmawati & Moratto, 2026; Sirait et al., 2026).

The principal implication is that locality should not be positioned as the opposite of globalization. Within world literature, locality can function as a source of cultural specificity while also becoming a site of negotiation and reinterpretation. Indonesian

literature can therefore participate in world literary exchange without being reduced to a fixed representation of national culture. This perspective corresponds with approaches to world literature that emphasize circulation, cultural plurality, institutional relations, and unequal literary structures (Beecroft, 2021; Casanova, 2020; Damrosch, 2020; Helgesson & Vermeulen, 2022).

For comparative literary criticism, the findings suggest that comparison should examine not only similarities and differences among texts but also relationships among languages, translations, cultural contexts, and literary institutions. In this sense, "becoming a citizen of world literature" refers to an ongoing cultural and aesthetic process through which Indonesian literary works negotiate local identities while participating in transnational literary conversations.

The study's main scholarly contribution is to bring global readability and the negotiation of locality into a single comparative-literary framework for examining Indonesian literature in transnational circulation. It demonstrates that literary circulation is not adequately explained by translation or international publication alone; it must also be understood through the interaction of textual features, translators, paratexts, publishing institutions, and readers. Conceptually, the study treats locality not as a fixed cultural essence or an obstacle to global circulation, but as a dynamic source of meaning that may be preserved, transformed, and reinterpreted across contexts. Future research may extend the corpus, target languages, literary markets, and empirical evidence on international readership and reception.

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