



BASE-SUPERSTRUCTURE RELATIONS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS IN NOVEL *GURU AINI* BY ANDREA HIRATA: LITERARY SOCIOLOGY STUDIES OF KARL MARX

Relasi Basis-Superstruktur dan Transformasi Kesadaran Kelas dalam Novel "Guru Aini"
Karya Andrea Hirata: Kajian Sosiologi Sastra Karl Marx

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Abstract

The gap in access to education for the lower class is a structural problem that is not only present in social reality but is also represented in literary works. The novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata reflects this problem through the relationship between material conditions and the ideological structure of society. However, previous studies tend to be descriptive and have not revealed the dialectical relationship between bases and superstructures in depth. This study aims to analyze the base-superstructure relationship and the transformation of class consciousness in the novel using the perspective of Karl Marx's social criticism. The method used is qualitative descriptive with a sociological approach to Karl Marx's literature. Data in the form of text excerpts that represent aspects of base, superstructure, and collective consciousness are collected using reading and recording techniques. Data collection was carried out through the reading and note-taking technique. The steps include: (1) reading the novel thoroughly and carefully; (2) identifying and marking the relevant parts of the text with the analysis category; (3) recording the data into a data card containing citations, page numbers, and category codes, while the analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions drawn. Data analysis is carried out through the stages of data condensation, data identification, interpretation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that the base is represented through structural poverty, limited access to education, and unequal production relations, while the suprastructure exists as an ambivalent education system, which reproduces inequality while opening up the space for emancipation. The transformation of the class consciousness of the character takes place through contradictory experiences that encourage the emergence of a critical awareness of an unjust system.

Keywords: education; *Guru Aini*; Marxist literary criticism; superstructure-basis; transformation of class consciousness

Abstrak

Kesenjangan akses pendidikan bagi kelas bawah merupakan persoalan struktural yang tidak hanya hadir dalam realitas sosial, tetapi juga direpresentasikan dalam karya sastra. Novel "Guru Aini" karya Andrea Hirata mencerminkan persoalan tersebut melalui relasi antara kondisi material dan struktur ideologis masyarakat. Namun, kajian sebelumnya cenderung bersifat deskriptif dan belum mengungkap hubungan dialektis antara basis dan superstruktur secara mendalam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis relasi basis-superstruktur dan transformasi kesadaran kelas dalam novel tersebut

menggunakan perspektif kritik sosial Karl Marx. Metode yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan sosiologi sastra Karl Marx. Data berupa kutipan teks yang merepresentasikan aspek basis, superstruktur, dan kesadaran kolektif, data dikumpulkan teknik baca dan catat. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui teknik baca-catat (reading and note-taking). Langkah-langkahnya meliputi: (1) membaca novel secara menyeluruh dan cermat; (2) mengidentifikasi dan menandai bagian-bagian teks yang relevan dengan kategori analisis; (3) mencatat data ke dalam kartu data yang memuat kutipan, nomor halaman, dan kode kategori, sedangkan analisis mengikuti model Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan kondensasi data, identifikasi data, interpretasi dan penarikan simpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa basis direpresentasikan melalui kemiskinan struktural, keterbatasan akses pendidikan, dan relasi produksi yang timpang, sedangkan suprastruktur hadir sebagai sistem pendidikan yang bersifat ambivalen, yakni mereproduksi ketimpangan sekaligus membuka ruang emansipasi. Transformasi kesadaran kelas tokoh berlangsung melalui pengalaman kontradiktif yang mendorong munculnya kesadaran kritis terhadap sistem yang tidak adil.

Kata-kata kunci: basis-superstruktur; Guru Aini; Kritik sastra Marxis; transformasi kesadaran kelas; pendidikan

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with very diverse geographical conditions, and this diversity also forms a real gap in access and quality of education. In remote areas and disadvantaged areas, people not only face limited infrastructure but also bear the burden of structural poverty that hinders social mobility. Inequality between regions in the field of education is still a serious challenge that has not been fully addressed by state policies. This problem is not just a technical or administrative problem, but reflects a deeper power relationship between the group that controls the resources (material base) and the institutions that legitimize the order (superstructure).

Literature, as a form of cultural expression, often represents these social realities, including class inequality, poverty, and unequal access to education. However, in the practice of reading literary works, there is a tendency to stop at the superficial humanistic meaning: highlighting moral values, passion, and solidarity, without delving further into the layers of social structure that are at the root of the problem. Literary criticism is an activity of evaluating literary works based on clear technical and aesthetic criteria, aiming to identify weaknesses and advantages while encouraging improvement in the quality of works (Aslamiah et al., 2020; Harahap et al., 2025). In addition to being an aesthetic assessment, literary criticism functions as an analytical tool to understand the relationship between literary works and social reality (Endraswara, 2013). Novels as a medium of fiction are a medium that is often used to convey social criticism because of their ability to represent complex issues such as injustice and poverty (Dewi & Balawa, 2017;). However, in the practice of reading, literary works are often trapped in superficial humanistic meanings, while more complex layers of social reality go unnoticed. Through the characters, plots, settings, and conflicts that are constructed, the author presents a picture of life that allows readers to understand social reality more deeply (Ayutya, 2021), so that a critical reading of the novel is able to reveal the values and social problems contained in it.

One of the interesting novels to research is *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata. Through the journey of its main character, the novel does not simply tell the story of education in a remote area, but implicitly represents the transformation of class consciousness that arises from the tension between the material base and the ideological superstructure. This can be seen in various

studies of Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini*, which highlights more humanist values such as solidarity, cooperation, and care (Isfak, 2025).

In fact, if examined more deeply, Andrea Hirata's novels are not enough to be read as inspirational works that prioritize the humanistic side. Such a reading is too simplistic because it ignores the fact that the foundation of the story rests on unequal class structure, unfair access to education, and unequal power relations between characters. By reading *Guru Aini* as a motivational story, we forget fundamental questions, such as who really has access to education, who sets eligibility standards, and how the system works to perpetuate injustice.

The research of Rahman et al. (2023) strengthens this argument. Based on his findings, *Guru Aini*'s novel conveys a sharp social critique of three structural problems, namely education, poverty, and bureaucracy. First, in the context of education, the novel reflects the great differences between rural and urban areas. These injustices include a lack of adequate teachers, a bureaucratic system that does not run well, and facilities that are far from ideal. Second, poverty is presented as the main cause that makes people isolated and always seem less knowledgeable. Third, Andrea Hirata said that only those who are in good economic conditions are considered worthy of having high dreams, while people in villages are generally reluctant to change their lives because the welfare they desire feels too difficult to achieve (Rahman et al., 2023)

One of the relevant approaches to uncovering this problem is the sociology of literature, which views literary works as a representation of the social conditions of society. In this perspective, Karl Marx's thought became an important foundation, especially through the concept of base and superstructure relations and class consciousness. Karl Marx's approach was chosen not only because it was appropriate, but also because *Guru Aini*'s novel clearly presents the class conflicts that are at the heart of the problem in the story. In Karl Marx's framework, society is understood through the relationship between the base (productive forces and production relations) and the superstructure (institutions and collective consciousness) that influence each other. This approach allows for a more in-depth analysis of how literary works represent and, at the same time, critique social inequality.

Research on *Guru Aini* has been carried out with various approaches. Meiferawati (2023) analyzes the representation of love and ethics with the perspective of social action, Talcott Parsons, finding 77 social actions spread across four systems and uncovering the shortcomings of the world of education, such as the lack of teachers' professionalism and the absence of government assistance. Cahayawati et al., (2023) examining social values from the perspective of Karl Marx, finding reflections of class struggles in the education system, social inequality, and individual efforts against an unjust system. Astuti et al., (2023) analyze moral values in the novel and find its relevance to the social context of contemporary Indonesian society.

Research with a Marxist perspective on other works by Andrea Hirata was conducted by Satriani et al., (2024) which analyzed the dominance of the ruling class over the subordinate class in the *Rainbow Army*, which was triggered by differences in professions, environment, and lifestyles, and led to the exploitation of the working class. More broadly, Marxist studies of Indonesian literature are also carried out by Sari & Yanuar (2025) at *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, which represents socio-economic inequality, character alienation, and ideological domination through poverty, women's exploitation, identity crisis, and the influence of traditional beliefs in society; Dewi & Qadriani (2019) in the novel *War* analyzes the form of exploitation of capitalism that causes conflict and alienation of the working class; and Basid & As Sulthoni (2020) in the novel *Kubah*, which analyzes the structure of social classes and causality relations between classes in *Pekaten* society.

Based on previous research that has been presented, there are two main trends that can be identified. First, the study of Guru Aini is dominated by a thematic approach that highlights social values, morals, love, or inequality of access to education in a descriptive manner. Second, research with a Marxist perspective on the work of Andrea Hirata and other authors only highlights certain aspects without integrating the dialectical framework between the base and the superstructure in its entirety. Research that specifically examines the relationship of base-superstructure and the dialectical transformation of class consciousness in the novel *Guru Aini* is still limited.

Thus, the novelty in this research lies in three main aspects. First, theoretically, this study combines Marx's two main concepts, namely the basis and superstructure and class consciousness in a single dialectical analysis framework, not just a description. Second, in terms of objects, this is the first study to specifically apply the dialectical framework to the novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata. Third, in terms of context, this study not only analyzes literary texts in depth, but also connects them to the reality of educational inequality in Indonesia today, so that it has real socio-political relevance. Based on these novelties, this study aims to: (1) analyze the representation of the material base (infrastructure) in Guru Aini's novel, (2) uncover the mechanisms of superstructure (especially the education system and ideology) that reproduce and fight against class inequality, and (3) describe the process of transforming the character's class consciousness from false consciousness to critical consciousness as represented in the novel narrative.

The contribution of this research is theoretical, methodological, and practical. Theoretically, this study enriches the treasure of Marxist literary criticism in Indonesia by showing how the concept of base-superstructure and class consciousness can be operationalized dialectically in contemporary literary analysis. Methodologically, this study offers a replicable analytical model to examine other literary works that raise issues of structural inequality. Practically, the results of this study are expected to be material for critical reflection for educators, education observers, and policymakers on how the education system not only functions as a tool of social mobility, but also has the potential to perpetuate class inequality if it is not accompanied by critical awareness and structural transformation

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Marxist Literary Criticism in the Analysis of Base-Superstructure Relations and the Transformation of Class Consciousness

In the Marxist perspective, literary works are not understood as stand-alone entities, but rather as social products born from certain historical, economic, and ideological conditions. Literature represents the relationship between the material structure of society and the various forms of consciousness that develop within it. Therefore, literary works can be used to reveal social contradictions, power relations, and forms of inequality that occur in people's lives. Karl Marx asserted that the development of society is determined by changes in the economic structure that underlie social life. Changes in the production system will affect the formation of social, political, legal, educational, and cultural institutions that develop in society (Sugianto et al., 2021). Thus, intellectual, artistic, and literary life are part of a superstructure that has a dialectical relationship with the material basis of society.

This view is reinforced by Ridwan & Diana (2025) who found that literary works can be a medium of criticism of the unequal class structure and the practice of domination of the ruling group over the subordinate group. In this context, the novel is not only a reflection of society, but also an ideological battle arena that shows how inequality is produced, maintained, and resisted.

Based on this perspective, this study views *Guru Aini's* novel as a social representation

that contains a dialectical relationship between the material conditions of society, the education system as a social institution, and the development of the character's awareness of the injustice they experience.

Concept of Base and Superstructure

The concept of bases and superstructures is at the core of Marx's historical materialism, which is the main foundation of this research. Base (infrastructure) refers to the material foundation of society, consisting of productive forces and relations of production (Prayogi, 2023). Productive power includes human resources, skills, technology, and means of production that allow economic activity to take place. Meanwhile, production relations refer to the social relations formed in the process of production and distribution of resources.

In the context of this study, base is understood as material conditions that affect an individual's access to education, including poverty, limited educational facilities, family socio-economic position, and power relations that govern the distribution of educational resources. On this basis stands the superstructure, that is, the institutional system and the system of collective consciousness that develops in society. Kambali & Gresik (2020) explained that the base is the lower layer determined by two things, namely productive labor (the means of production and the ability of the community's labor) and production relations (social relations formed in the production process, including ownership of the means of production). It is this relation of production that determines the position of a person's class in the structure of society: whether he belongs to the class that owns the means of production (bourgeois/upperclass) or to the class that only has labor to sell (proletariat/working class).

The relationship between the base and the superstructure is dialectical. The base determines the general character of the superstructure, but the superstructure also has the ability to influence, maintain, and even change the base under certain conditions. Therefore, social change is not only determined by economic factors, but also by the institutions and ideologies that develop in society.

In the field of education, Syafitri et al. (2024) explain that the education system as part of the superstructure often reproduces social class inequality through the unequal distribution of learning opportunities. Nevertheless, education can also be a space of emancipation that allows individuals to develop a critical awareness of oppressive social structures. This perspective is used to analyze how the education system is represented in the novel *Guru Aini*.

Class Consciousness as a Dialectical Consequence of Base–Superstructure Relations

Marx distinguishes two forms of class consciousness, namely class-an-sich (class in itself) and class-für-sich (class for itself) (Hendriwani, 2020). Class-an-sich refers to a group that objectively occupies an equal position in the social structure but is not yet aware of its collective importance. On the other hand, class-für-sich denotes a condition when an individual or group has become aware of his or her social position and is able to develop actions aimed at changing those conditions.

The change from class-an-sich to class-für-sich takes place through a process of transformation of class consciousness. This process begins with contradictory experiences that show the incompatibility between social reality and values that are considered normal in society. In the early stages, individuals are in a state of false consciousness, which is a state in which the oppressed group accepts the values and ideology of the dominant group as something natural. However, certain social experiences can give rise to critical reflection that encourages the birth of a more progressive class consciousness.

Risnawati et al. (2016) show that the development of class consciousness in literary works often arises through the experience of injustice experienced by characters. Mahadika

(2021) also emphasized that literature has the ability to represent social contradictions in a concrete way so that it can show the process of forming critical consciousness in society. In this study, the transformation of class consciousness is used to explain how the characters in the novel *Guru Aini* respond to the limited access to education and social inequality they face.

Novels as Representations of Social Reality

From the perspective of Marxist literary sociology, the novel is understood as a representation of social reality that cannot be separated from the material and ideological context of society. Literary works are not just passive reflections of reality, but rather a space where various ideologies, values, and social interests interact, negotiate, and oppose each other. (Asia et al., 2024) shows that contemporary Indonesian novels are increasingly used as a medium of criticism of socio-economic inequality that occurs in society. Andrea Hirata is one of the authors who consistently raises the issues of education, poverty, and social injustice through her works.

The findings of Satriani et al. (2024) on the novel *Laskar Pelangi* shows the dominance of the ruling class over subordinate groups, which is reflected through unequal access to education and social resources. Nensiliati et al., (2024) also found that novels can be an effective instrument to uncover the impact of socio-economic policies on lower social groups.

These findings strengthen the view that *Guru Aini's* novel can be read as a social document that represents educational inequality as well as a critique of the social structure behind it.

From the perspective of Marxist literary sociology, the novel serves not only as a representation of social reality but also as a medium of criticism of the various forms of inequality that develop in society. Literary works record social experiences symbolically while revealing the contradictions that arise due to power relations, unequal distribution of resources, and the dominance of certain ideologies. Therefore, the novel can be understood as a discursive space that allows the reader to look back at the social structures that shape the lives of the characters, but also as a reflection of the socio-economic and educational conditions that underlie people's lives.

This perspective is in line with the findings of Nurfaizil & Karlina (2025) who show that the novel *Hello* conveys social criticism of the normalization of injustice, access, and life opportunities experienced by marginalized groups. In addition, research by Lubis et al. (2025) proves that literary works can function as a form of cultural resistance to the dominance of capitalism through the disclosure of various social contradictions experienced by society. Thus, *the novel Guru Aini* is positioned as a text that reflects the relationship between the material conditions of society, the education system as a social institution, and the process of forming critical awareness of the inequality that occurs in social life.

Based on the theories that have been presented, this research is built on the assumption that the material conditions of society (base) affect the formation of certain educational systems, values, and ideologies (superstructure). Economic inequality and limited access to educational resources as part of the base will shape the way educational institutions work as part of the superstructure. The interaction between the base and the superstructure produces various social experiences that can strengthen or challenge the existing order. When the character experiences a contradiction between the material reality they face and the values legitimized by the education system, a process of reflection arises that encourages transformation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with an analytical descriptive method. The selection of a qualitative approach is based on the nature of research data in the form of literary

texts, namely excerpts from novels that contain representations of class relations, material conditions, and superstructural dynamics that require in-depth and contextual interpretation, not quantitative measurement (Moleong, 2017). The analytical descriptive method is used to describe data systematically, analyze its meaning within the framework of Marxist literary sociology, and draw conclusions based on textual empirical findings.

The main source of data for this study is the novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata (Yogyakarta: Bentang Pustaka, 2020). The research data is in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs in the novel that reflect: (1) the condition of the material base (productive labor, production relations, structural poverty); (2) representation of the educational superstructure (policies, institutional practices, educational ideology); and (3) the process of transforming the class consciousness of the character.

Data collection was carried out through the reading and note-taking technique. The steps include: (1) reading the novel thoroughly and carefully; (2) identifying and marking the relevant parts of the text with the analysis category; (3) recording the data into a data card containing citations, page numbers, and category codes. This process refers to the procedure for documenting literary text data, as stated by (Ratna, 2013)

The data analysis follows the interactive model of Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M. & Saldaña, (2014) which consists of three components: (1) data reduction, namely the selection process, concentration, and simplification of data by focusing on data relevant to the framework of base-superstructure theory and class awareness; (2) data presentation, namely the organization of data into analytical categories that allow conclusions to be drawn; and (3) drawing conclusions and verification, namely interpretive interpretation of data within the framework of Marxist literary sociology.

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis carried out on the novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata, 153 data were found that are relevant to the framework of Marxist literary sociology. The data were classified into three main categories according to the conceptual framework of the study: (1) material-based representation/production relations (105 data), (2) educational superstructure representation (40 data), and (3) classroom consciousness transformation (8 data). The distribution of this data indicates that *Guru Aini*'s novel predominantly represents the material conditions of the working class and the ideological function of educational institutions, as well as portraying the critical consciousness process of the main character.

Base (Infrastructure): Representation of Material Inequality

In Marx's framework, the basis refers to the material foundations that make up the social structure. This study found that *Guru Aini*'s novel consistently represents inequality in two basic aspects: productive labor (20 data) and production relations (105 data). These findings are consistent with research Anwar (2022) which shows that inequality in access to education in Indonesia is mainly caused by geographical conditions, family environment, and socioeconomic status of the community. Sidauruk et al. (2025) also emphasized that disparities in education quality between cities and villages, as well as between socioeconomic groups, remain sharp, especially in terms of resource distribution, teacher quality, and infrastructure facilities.

Productive Workforce: Work Tools and Education Infrastructure

Inequality of basic infrastructure becomes a structural marker that distinguishes the classes that are entitled and those that are not. This can be seen in the depiction of threats to teachers stationed in remote areas.

Data 1

"Kau bisa dikirim ke pelosok, ke kampung yang listrik saja tak ada, aduh, seramnya! Kau tahu sendiri, Sumatra ni luas sekali, tak terhitung banyaknya pulau kecil, kau akan dipingit nasib nanti, diambil istri sama juragan kopra boleh jadi." (Hirata, 2020, p. 12)

This quote is not just a description of a remote place of duty. The authors show how the absence of infrastructure directly gives birth to subtle but real forms of oppression. This condition confirms that the suburbs not only suffer from a lack of facilities, but are also in a position that is easy to exploit. The absence of infrastructure, such as electricity, marks the absence of the state in the region, so that power is taken over by certain parties who are more socially and economically powerful. Inequality of access to learning resources is also represented through the insinuation of a teacher who doubts the abilities of his students:

Data 2

"Kau dan buku berpisah jauh macam bumi dan bulan. Pasti kau tak pernah ke kios buku itu, bahkan tak pernah ke perpustakaan, benar kan dugaanku." (Hirata, 2020, p. 98)

The metaphor of "earth and moon" is not just a metaphor, but rather a way to show that not all students have the same opportunity to access knowledge. The author wants to show that poor children's failure in education is often mistaken for laziness, even though access to reading is determined by their social class. This is in line with the findings Arsal & Hidayat (2024) regarding the problem of education financing in Indonesia, which shows that the cost of education is rising, making it increasingly unaffordable for poor and lower-middle-class families. This increase in costs widens the inequality of access to education, while increasing the risk of dropping out of school at the primary and secondary levels, so that vulnerable groups rarely go to university and their opportunities to obtain quality learning resources, such as books and other supporting facilities, are increasingly limited.

Thus, the inequality of access to learning resources such as books, libraries, and digital facilities is not only a problem of physical availability, but also due to the burden of education costs, which tend to be increasingly expensive, so that the 'laziness' accused of poor students is actually an indirect impact of economic limitations that are not met by fair financing policies.

Workforce Capability

The condition of educators and students in this novel reflects a systemic crisis. The scene when a teacher falls asleep in class becomes a symbol of the dysfunction of the role of educators:

Data 3

"Pak Syaifulloh tetap tidur duduk. Pulpen tergantung di lengannya yang loyo di atas meja. Murid-murid lain duduk tegak tanpa ekspresi." (Hirata, 2020, pp. 45–46)

The pen that "loyo" symbolizes the loss of the spirit of teaching. Teachers are physically present, but not actively teaching. This is a criticism of the state that allows the education system to deteriorate. Teachers are no longer motivated, not because they are bad, but because the system does not allow them room for growth. What is more sad is that the students in the novel are described as having become accustomed to the condition so that they sit upright without expression, not out of respect, but out of resignation to the situation. This situation shows that the poor quality of educators not only has an impact on teachers but also affects the learning experience of students. As explained by Ufaira & Hendriani (2019), teachers' work motivation

is an important factor that determines the quality of the learning process. When teachers lose motivation due to a lack of appreciation and institutional support, learning effectiveness also decreases and has an impact on student development.

A deeper irony is seen when an honorary teacher who has served for twelve years is finally appointed as a civil servant:

Data 4

"Pemerintah memang tak berperasaan." (Hirata, 2020, p. 63)

This short sentence emphasizes that the state is not present because it cares, but because it is forced. Rapture is not proof of justice, but rather proof that the system moves only when pressure is unavoidable. This illustrates how the state treats honorary teachers like tools: used when needed, ignored when not, while the workload remains the same. This picture is in line with the research of Pitriyani et al. (2022) which shows that honorary teachers often bear the same burdens and responsibilities as permanent teachers, but receive much lower compensation. This inequality affects the welfare and work motivation of teachers, so that it can hinder the improvement of the quality of education.

In addition, the uncertain condition of the status and welfare of honorary teachers also has the potential to cause psychological pressure that affects work productivity. Faridah & Khasan, (2026) explained that the subjective welfare of honorary teachers is greatly influenced by job security, professional awards, and institutional support. Therefore, the criticism conveyed by Andrea Hirata in this novel not only describes the problems of individual teachers but also shows the failure of the education system in developing and maintaining the quality of the education workforce in a sustainable manner.

Production Relationships: Class Relations and Resource Access

Class relations in this novel are presented as a mechanism that actively determines the boundaries of a person's social status:

Data 5

"Jurusan-jurusan tertentu hanya untuk anak-anak orang yang mampu, bukan untuk anak seorang penjual mainan di kaki lima seperti dirinya." (Hirata, 2020, p. 250)

This novel states that academic selection is only the initial stage, while the actual selection is economic selection. Anwar (2022) reinforces these findings by emphasizing that socioeconomic backgrounds not only create technical barriers but also affect the way people interpret education as structural rights and opportunities. Access inequalities, such as tuition fees, do not allow everyone to have the same opportunity to succeed.

This economic obstacle reached its peak when Aini was required to pay a large sum in a short period of time:

Data 6

"Dia diharuskan membayar sejumlah uang yang besar, dalam waktu yang singkat." (Hirata, 2020, p. 252)

This condition confirms that failure is not caused by a lack of ability, but by limited economic access. Education, which is supposed to be a way out of poverty, actually has the potential to maintain social inequality.

Data 7

"Sekolah itu bukan untuk orang miskin, Aini." (Hirata, 2020, p. 257)

This sentence represents collective surrender, where injustice is no longer questioned but accepted as normal. This shows that discrimination has been accepted and justified socially, so that the problem of education lies not only in unjust policies, but also in the weak awareness of rejecting injustice.

Division of Labor and Hierarchy in Educational Institutions

The school in this novel is described as an institution that indirectly reinforces the difference in status between students:

Data 8

"Nilai-nilai tertinggi akan dipanggil lebih dulu. Pemilik nilai-nilai buruk akan dipanggil paling akhir. Murid yang dipanggil lebih dulu akan dipuji, yang bagian tengah diarahkan, yang terakhir, kena damprat 7 halilintar." (Hirata, 2020, p. 113)

This activity is a form of social stratification that occurs in the educational environment. Through the summoning of students based on grade ratings, schools create a status grouping between students who are considered outstanding and students who are considered underprivileged. Education that should be a means of developing students' potential is actually used as a tool to differentiate social status based on academic achievement. According to (Sari & Yasin (2024) education and social stratification are two interrelated elements because education level is often used as a measure to determine a person's social position in society. As a result, students who obtain low grades not only experience academic difficulties but also receive social stigma that can affect their confidence. These conditions show that schools function not only as educational institutions, but also as an arena that reproduces social hierarchies. Sari & Yasin (2024) explained that education can strengthen social stratification if access, opportunity, and assessment in the education process are not managed fairly and inclusively.

Data 9

"Kelasku bukan suaka untuk murid bodoh! Dokumen-dokumen deportasimu sudah kuteken!" (Hirata, 2020, p. 121)

The use of the word "deportation" indicates that students who are unable to attend lessons are treated as if they are unfit to be in an educational environment. Students who have learning difficulties are placed in a lower position than outstanding students. In fact, education should provide equal opportunities to all students regardless of their academic ability. Furthermore, Sari and Yasin (2024) state that inclusive educational practices are needed to reduce social stratification and ensure that every student has equal access and learning opportunities.

Through this depiction, Andrea Hirata criticizes the education system that prioritizes academic results over the learning process. The hierarchy formed in schools causes students with low abilities to be marginalized, even though they are the group that most needs guidance and support. This is contrary to the goal of education, which should be able to create equal opportunities and reduce social inequality in the school environment.

Superstructure: The Education System as a Mechanism for Reproducing Inequality

The educational superstructure in Guru Aini, in the form of rules, norms, institutional practices, and perspectives on educational achievement, strongly strengthens the legitimacy of the unequal class structure. This study found that barriers in educational institutions are not only in the form of resource inequality, but also systemic behaviors that produce narratives of legitimacy of inequality through daily educational practices. Syafitri et al. (2024) emphasized that the education system, as part of the superstructure, reflects and strengthens social class inequality, so that educational institutions do not stand neutrally.

Institutional Order: State and Law

The country in this novel is portrayed as a machine that destroys idealism:

Data 10

"Umumnya, idealisme anak muda yang baru tamat dari perguruan tinggi bertahan paling lama 4 bulan. Setelah itu mereka akan menjadi pengeluh, penggerutu, penyalah seperti banyak orang lainnya. Secara menyedihkan kemudian mereka terseret arus deras sungai besar rutinitas birokrasi, sistem yang korup, budaya kantor yang tak maju, dan formalitas yang palsu." (Hirata, 2020, p. 41)

This process occurs subtly, like the flow of a large river, dragging without resistance. The state not only fails to accommodate idealism but also becomes a machine that destroys it from within. The most striking contradiction was seen when Aini challenged the constitutional promise:

Data 11

"Bukankah undang-undang menjamin setiap warga negara mendapat pendidikan?... Aini merasa telah memperoleh hak pendidikannya setelah lulus tes yang sulit, namun kini ia justru merasa hak itu dirampas." (Hirata, 2020, p. 253)

Vega et al. (2024) in their study on equal access to education, they emphasize that education as a human right should be a mechanism to reduce social inequality and create a just society, but the implementation of this principle in Indonesia still faces structural challenges. The fact that the promise of the constitution is still hampered by economic factors suggests the existence of a veiled discrimination where access is determined more by ability to pay than academic ability.

Institutional Order: The Education System

This category is the most dominant in the research data (40 data), showing that this novel is a criticism of the education system that fails to carry out its functions. Desi teachers who design their own math curriculum and fail repeatedly symbolize the structural limitations imposed on individuals:

Data 12

"Kerap didesainnya kurikulum matematikanya sendiri, dicobakannya pada murid-murid, dan gagal juga." (Hirata, 2020, p. 61)

The repetition of the phrase "also fails" confirms that individual efforts alone are not enough to overcome structural limitations. The author criticizes the conditions when the burden of innovation is placed on individuals, who are then blamed when they do not succeed, while the state that is supposed to be responsible is spared criticism.

The Collective Order of Consciousness: Values, Norms, and Ideologies

The moral perspective in this novel is not neutral, but is used as a tool to judge and judge:

Data 13

"Para penyontek adalah bandit-bandit sekolah! Sudahlah miskin! culas pula! Apa jadinya bangsa ini kalau pelajarnya saja suka curang!" (Hirata, 2020, pp. 81–82)

The statement not only condemns cheating but directly links it to poverty, as if economic conditions are an explanation for reckless behavior. This perspective is wrong because it simplifies complex problems into individual errors.

The ideology of meritocracy that dominates the education system in this novel is also criticized through the statement:

Data 14

"Kalau kalian tak mengubah mental, meskipun Archimedes yang mengajari kalian matematika, kalian tetap takkan bisa!" (Hirata, 2020, p. 108)

This quote suggests that the ideology of meritocracy often blames individuals for their own failures, ignoring structural factors such as limited facilities, the quality of teachers, and economic conditions that are more determinative of learning outcomes. Even the critical Desi Guru is still stuck in this mindset, proving how strongly dominant ideologies limit the way of viewing.

Classroom Awareness Transformation

The transformation of class consciousness in the novel *Guru Aini* takes place through a non-linear and dialectical process. Risnawati et al. (2016) assert that the transformation from false awareness to critical awareness is often shaped by contradictory experiences in daily life. This process is evident in the journey of Aini's character, who moves from acceptance of existing conditions to critical questions about an unjust system.

From False Consciousness to Critical Consciousness

In the early stages, the characters in the novel internalize the dominant narrative that legitimizes inequality. Pak Handai Tolani, who resigned himself to accepting that "school is not for the poor," represents a false consciousness in which injustice is no longer questioned but accepted as a necessity. This condition reflects what Marx called *false consciousness*, in which the oppressed class internalizes the values of the ruling class so that it is unable to recognize the conditions of oppression it is experiencing.

However, resistance to dominant values arises through reflective questions that question the perspective that has been considered natural:

Data 15

"Apakah kau ingin hidup penuh kesenangan... atau hidup penuh arti?" (Hirata, 2020, p. 234)

This question marks the beginning of the process of consciousness transformation. Meaning, struggle, and contribution are positioned as alternative values that challenge mere material logic. True change starts from individual consciousness, which then has the potential to become a collective consciousness.

Critical Awareness and Emancipation Potential

Aini's transformation of consciousness reached a turning point when she began to challenge the constitutional promise of the right to education. This awareness is not just ignorance, but a reflection of an initial awareness of real injustice. In Marx's terminology, this is the moment when *the class-an-sich* begins to move towards *the class-für-sich*, that is, when the objectively oppressed group begins to realize its position and common interests.

This critical awareness was then manifested in action when Aini returned to her community and taught the market children. Although this action was born out of unresolved structural limitations, it represented a possible form of resistance and emancipation within an unequal system. The novel closes with the exclamation:

Data 16

"Matematika, Kawan, bukan untuk para penakut!" (Hirata, 2020, hlm. 262)

This quote criticizes the ideology of meritocracy that judges success based on innate talent, and asserts that courage, not talent, is the key to opposing exclusionary educational structures. This marks the transformation of consciousness that has taken place: from resignation to the system to the courage to challenge it.

Base-Superstructure Dialectical Relations and Their Implications

The findings of this study show that the economic conditions (material base) and the education system (superstructure) in Guru Aini influence each other in forming an unbalanced learning experience. When weak economic conditions meet an education system that only emphasizes achievement without looking at the circumstances of students, education is no longer a way to improve lives. On the contrary, education actually strengthens existing social class differences.

In the context of Guru Aini, good grades are often positioned as a symbol of prestige, while academic failure is understood as evidence of weak personal ability, rather than as a structural consequence. This is a suprastructural mechanism that negates material barriers as personal problems, thus strengthening the argument that educational institutions contribute to reproducing class inequality (Syafitri et al., 2024)

Nevertheless, this novel does not stop at pessimism. The dialectical relationship between the base and the superstructure is not entirely deterministic. The superstructure has relative autonomy that allows the emergence of emancipation gaps. Master Desi's actions of refusing to engage in "bureaucratic talk", Aini's awareness of the injustices she suffered, and her call for courage in the face of mathematics, all represent moments in which the superstructure not only reproduces inequality, but also opens up space for transformation. These findings confirm that literary works, especially Guru Aini's novel, not only record existing social realities but also hold the potential for criticism that can encourage structural change.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of the novel Guru Aini by Andrea Hirata using a literary sociology approach based on Karl Marx's thoughts, it can be concluded.

First, the material base in the novel Guru Aini is represented (105 data) through the depiction of structural poverty, limited ownership of productive resources, and the position of the economically marginalized working class. These findings show that the material conditions of the lower class are the main foundation that shapes the life experiences of the characters, as well as determines their access to education. Thus, this novel shows that educational inequality cannot be understood solely as an individual problem but is closely related to the socio-

economic structure behind it. This representation is also a criticism of the meritocratic view that tends to ignore structural factors as determinants of individual life opportunities.

Second, the educational superstructure in the novel (40 data) is shown as a social institution that has a dual function. On the one hand, education plays a role as an ideological apparatus that reproduces class inequality through policies and mechanisms that are less responsive to the needs of people in disadvantaged areas. On the other hand, education is also an arena of contestation that opens space for the emergence of individual agencies to challenge existing structural limitations. These findings suggest that the relationship between base and superstructure in the novel is dialectical, not deterministic. The superstructure not only reflects the material conditions of society but also could influence and even change these conditions through the social practices conducted by its actors. This dynamic interplay highlights the potential for transformative action, as individuals harness their experiences and perspectives to reshape their environments. Consequently, the novel becomes a powerful commentary on the capacity for personal agency to disrupt entrenched social hierarchies and foster new possibilities for collective advancement.

Third, the transformation of class consciousness (8 data) occurs gradually through the accumulation of material and ideological experiences of the characters, especially Aini. The process shows a shift from passive consciousness, in which limitations are seen as fate to be accepted, to a critical consciousness that recognizes the structural roots of the injustices faced. Although quantitatively the least, this category is the dialectical culmination of the relationship of bases and superstructures represented in the novel because it shows how social experience can give birth to the consciousness that drives the effort of change. This transformation not only empowers Aini but also serves as a catalyst for other characters, encouraging them to question their circumstances and strive for a more equitable society. The narrative illustrates the profound impact of awareness on collective action and social reform.

Overall, this study demonstrates that Guru Aini's novel not only depicts the reality of educational inequality in Indonesia but also offers a social critique of the structural mechanisms that perpetuate this injustice. Through the dialectical relationship among the material base, the educational superstructure, and the transformation of class consciousness, the novel shows that education can function both as a tool that reproduces inequality and as a means of emancipation and social change. These findings show that Guru Aini is a literary text rich in representations of class relations and structural criticism of the Indonesian education system, far beyond readings that have tended to place it as a purely motivational or humanistic narrative.

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