

**REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL CLASS IN THE NOVEL
WILDFIRE BY HANNAH GRACE**

THESIS

By:

Dhenisa Reshi Prestia

19320074



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK
IBRAHIM MALANG**

2026

**REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL CLASS IN THE NOVEL
WILDFIRE BY HANNAH GRACE**

THESIS

Presented to

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

in Partial Fullfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

By:

Dhenisa Reshi Prestia

19320074

Advisor:

Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin, S.S., M.Pd.

NIP 197610112011011005



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK
IBRAHIM MALANG**

2026

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled “**Representation of Social Class in The Novel *Wildfire* by Hannah Grace**” is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

Malang, June 26th, 2026

The Researcher,



Dhenisa Reshi Prestia

APPROVAL SHEET

This to certify that Dhenisa Reshi Prestia’s thesis entitled “**Representation of Social Class in The Novel *Wildfire* by Hannah Grace**” has been approved for thesis examination at Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.).

Malang, June 26th, 2026

Approved by
Advisor,

Head of Department of English Literature,

Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin, S.S., M.Pd.
NIP 197610112011011005

Dr. Ágwin Degaf, M.A.
NIP 198805232015031004

Acknowledged by
Dean,



LEGITIMATION SHEET

This is to certify that Dhenisa Reshi Prestia's thesis entitled "**Representation of Social Class in The Novel *Wildfire* by Hannah Grace**" has been approved by the Board of Examiners as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.) in Department of English Literature.

Malang, June 26th, 2026

Board of Examiners

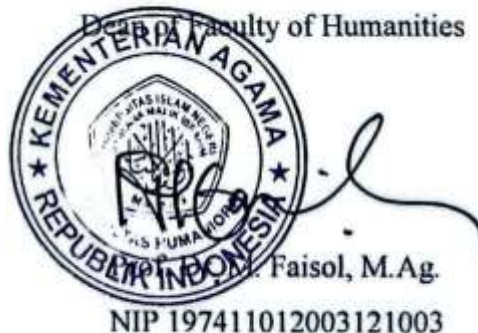
1. Agung Wiranata Kusuma, M.A.
NIP 198402072015031004
2. Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin, S.S., M.Pd.
NIP 197610112011011005
3. Muhammad Edy Thoyib, M.A.
NIP 198410282015031007

Signatures



Approved by

Dean of Faculty of Humanities



M. Faisol, M.Ag.
NIP 197411012003121003

MOTTO

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease.

DEDICATION

I gratefully dedicate this thesis to my parents, who have always supported and encouraged me morally and financially throughout my college journey. To my supervisor for his sincere guidance that has helped me complete this thesis. My entire family for their constant encouragement. To my friends who always support me in joy and sorrow. Lastly, to myself, for persevering, fighting, and remaining strong until the end, completing this thesis. May Allah reward you abundantly for all your sacrifices.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all, the author praises and thanks to the presence of Allah SWT because of His grace, guidance, and blessings the author can complete this thesis. The researcher also conveys prayers and greetings to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, who has brought us all from darkness to the light of life. This thesis was compiled as one of the requirements to obtain a *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.) degree in the English Literature Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

The author acknowledges that the process of compiling this thesis faced many challenges and obstacles. However, the author received guidance, direction, motivation, and prayers from various parties, leading to its completion. Therefore, the author would like to take this opportunity to express her deepest appreciation and gratitude to:

1. Prof. Dr. Hj. Ilfi Nur Diana, M.Si., CAHRM, CRMP as Rector of the Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.
2. Prof. Dr. M. Faisol, M.Ag., as Dean of the Faculty of Humanities.
3. Dr. Agwin Degaf, M.A., as Head of the English Literature Department, who has provided assistance during my studies.
4. Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin, S.S., M.Pd., as my Supervisor, who has dedicated his time, energy, and thoughts to providing guidance, direction, and extraordinary patience to the author until the completion of this thesis.

5. All lecturers and administrative staff of the English Literature Department who have provided the author with knowledge and assisted in the smooth administration of the study.
6. My beloved parents, Mr. A and Mrs. LW, and my entire extended family, who have provided endless prayers, affection, moral and material support, and extraordinary patience for my success.
7. The researcher's best friends, *Seduluran*, who always support and share joy.
8. All my friends from the *Ethereal19* class who struggled together during my studies.
9. All parties whom the author cannot mention individually who have provided assistance, both directly and indirectly, in the completion of this thesis.

The researcher realizes that this thesis is far from perfect due to the limitations of her abilities and knowledge. Therefore, the author welcomes constructive criticism and suggestions for future improvements. Last, the researcher hopes that this thesis will benefit the development of science, particularly in the field of English Literature and readers in general.

Malang, June 26th, 2026

The Researcher,



Dhenisa Reshi Prestia

NIM 19320074

ABSTRACT

Prestia, Dhenisa Reshi (2026) Representation of Social Class in The Novel *Wildfire* by Hannah Grace. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Advisor: Dr. Muzakki Afiffudin, S.S., M.Pd.

Keywords: social class, Hannah Grace's *Wildfire*, *bourgeoisie* vs. *proletariat*

This study looks at how social class shown in Hannah Grace's novel *Wildfire*. It uses a sociology of literature approach and Karl Marx social class theory. The reason for this study is the tension between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which is seen in the different social positions, behaviours and emotional responses of the main characters, Russ Callaghan and Aurora Roberts. The goal of this study is to describe how the relationship between the lower classes is depicted in the novel. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with literary criticism as the research design. The main source of information is the *Wildfire* by Hannah Grace. The information is collected from the story, conversations and descriptive passages related to class. The results show that Russ represents the proletariat because he has to work faces money problems and lives in fear of losing his job. On the hand Aurora represents the bourgeoisie because she comes from a secure and privileged background. Their relationship shows class tension in their different attitudes toward rules, authority and family problems. However, the novel also shows that Aurora starts to understand Russ struggles and Russ learns to accept help from others. In the end *Wildfire* shows that social class affects not social roles but also emotional experiences and conflicts, between people. The study suggests that future research should look at theories and compare *Wildfire* with other books that portray class relation.

مستخلص البحث

بريستيا، دينيسا ريشي (٢٠٢٦). تمثيل الطبقة الاجتماعية في رواية *Wildfire* لهانا غريس. أطروحة. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة الإسلامية الحكومية مولانا مالك إبراهيم مالانغ، المشرف: الدكتور مزي عفيف الدين، الماجستير

الكلمات المفتاحيات: البرجوازية مقابل البروليتاريا، الرواية Wildfire لهانا غريس، الطبقة الاجتماعية

تفحص هذه الدراسة تمثيل الطبقة الاجتماعية في رواية *Wildfire* لهانا غريس باستخدام نهج علم الاجتماع الأدبي ونظرية الطبقة الاجتماعية لكارل ماركس. تستند خلفية هذا البحث إلى التوتر بين البرجوازية والبروليتاريا، والذي ينعكس في اختلافات المواقف الاجتماعية والسلوكيات والاستجابات العاطفية للشخصيتين الرئيسيتين، وهما روس كالاهاان وأورورا روبرتس. الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو وصف كيفية تصوير ديناميكيات العلاقات بين الطبقات الاجتماعية في الرواية. تطبق هذه الدراسة منهجا وصفيا نوعيا مع تصميم بحث نقدي أدبي. المصدر الرئيسي للبيانات المستخدم هو رواية *Wildfire* لهانا غريس، حيث يتم جمع البيانات من خلال سرد القصة، والحوار بين الأشخاص، والنصوص الوصفية المتعلقة بقضايا الطبقة الاجتماعية. تظهر نتائج الدراسة أن روس يمثل البروليتاريا لأنه مضطر للعمل بجد، ومواجهة القيود المالية، والعيش في ظل الخوف من فقدان وظيفته. من ناحية أخرى، تمثل شخصية أورورا البرجوازية لأنها تأتي من خلفية عائلية راسخة ومميزة. تعكس العلاقة بين الإثنين التوترات الطبقية التي يمكن رؤيتها من اختلافات المواقف تجاه القواعد والسلطة والصراعات الأسرية. ومع ذلك، تظهر هذه الرواية أيضا تطورا في الشخصية حيث تبدأ أورورا في فهم صراعات روس في الحياة، ويتعلم روس قبول المساعدة من الآخرين. في النهاية، يظهر *Wildfire* أن الطبقة الاجتماعية تؤثر ليس فقط على الدور الاجتماعي للشخص، بل أيضا على التجارب العاطفية والصراعات الشخصية. تشير هذه الدراسة إلى أن الباحثين المستقبليين يجب أن يستكشفوا نظريات أخرى ويقارنوا *Wildfire* مع أعمال أدبية أخرى تثير أيضا موضوع العلاقات الطبقية.

ABSTRAK

Prestia, Dhenisa Reshi (2026) Representation of Social Class in The Novel *Wildfire* by Hannah Grace. Skripsi Sarjana. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Dosen Pembimbing: Dr. Muzakki Afiffudin, S.S., M.Pd.

Kata Kunci: kelas sosial, *Wildfire* karya Hannah Grace, borjuis vs. proletar

Penelitian ini mengkaji representasi kelas sosial dalam novel *Wildfire* karya Hannah Grace menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi sastra dan teori kelas sosial Karl Marx. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasari oleh adanya ketegangan antara kaum borjuis dan proletar yang tercermin melalui perbedaan posisi sosial, perilaku, serta respons emosional dari dua karakter utama, yaitu Russ Callaghan dan Aurora Roberts. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana dinamika hubungan antarkelas sosial digambarkan di dalam novel tersebut. Penelitian ini menerapkan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan desain penelitian kritik sastra. Sumber data utama yang digunakan adalah novel *Wildfire* karya Hannah Grace, di mana data dikumpulkan melalui narasi cerita, dialog antar-tokoh, serta teks deskriptif yang berkaitan dengan isu kelas sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tokoh Russ merepresentasikan kaum proletar karena ia harus bekerja keras, menghadapi kendala finansial, dan hidup dalam bayang-bayang ketakutan akan kehilangan pekerjaannya. Sebaliknya, tokoh Aurora merepresentasikan kaum borjuis karena berasal dari latar belakang keluarga yang mapan dan memiliki hak istimewa (*privilege*). Hubungan keduanya merefleksikan ketegangan kelas yang terlihat dari perbedaan sikap terhadap aturan, otoritas, serta konflik keluarga. Kendati demikian, novel ini juga memperlihatkan adanya perkembangan karakter di mana Aurora mulai memahami perjuangan hidup Russ, dan Russ belajar untuk menerima bantuan dari orang lain. Pada akhirnya, *Wildfire* menunjukkan bahwa kelas sosial tidak hanya memengaruhi peran sosial seseorang, melainkan juga pengalaman emosional serta konflik interpersonal. Penelitian ini menyarankan bagi peneliti selanjutnya untuk mengeksplorasi teori-teori lain dan membandingkan *Wildfire* dengan karya sastra lain yang juga mengangkat tema relasi kelas.

TABLE OF CONTENT

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP	ii
APPROVAL SHEET	iii
LEGITIMATION SHEET	iv
MOTTO	v
DEDICATION	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	vii
ABSTRACT	ix
ABSTRAK	xi
TABLE OF CONTENT	xii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Background of the Study	1
B. Problem of the Study.....	8
C. Significance of the Study.....	8
D. Scope and Limitation	9
E. Definition of Key Terms	9
CHAPTER II REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE.....	11
A. Sociology of Literature.....	11
B. Marxism	14
C. Social Class.....	18
1. Class Divisions and Exploitation	19
2. Class Conflict and Ideology	20
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD	22
A. Research Design.....	22
B. Data Source	22
C. Data Collection	23
D. Data Analysis	23
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	24
A. Russ and Aurora's Early Encounter: The Encounter of Two Classes	24

B. Russ and Aurora’s Relationship Continues: Class Conflict.....	28
C. Reconciliation between Classes is Depicted in the Development of Russ and Aurora’s Relationship	35
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION	41
A. Conclusion.....	41
B. Suggestion	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY	43
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	47

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to the study. It begins by providing the fundamental aspects of the analysis. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the background of the study, the problems of the study, the objective of the study, the scope and limitation, and the definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Social class is a fundamental concept in the study of social sciences, particularly in the field of sociology, as it is used to understand how society is structured and hierarchically structured (Arifudin et al., 2021). This concept refers to the classification of individuals or groups within a society based on specific indicators, such as occupation, income level, and economic position. Through this classification, differences in social status can be seen, which influence lifestyles, opportunities, and individual access to various resources structurally present in the social sciences (Ibrahim, 2025).

From Karl Marx's perspective, problems related to social class are rooted in inequality within society. Marx explained that society is divided into two main classes: the upper class (bourgeoisie), who own capital and the means of production, and the lower class (proletariat), who lack the means of production and rely solely on labor for survival (Prasetya, 2022). The dominance of the upper class in controlling economic resources creates an imbalance of power, leaving the lower class vulnerable to exploitation and the demands of survival. This condition

ultimately gives rise to various forms of social injustice, such as wages disproportionate to labor expended and limited access to a well-being. As a result, the relationship between these two classes tends to be conflictual (an interaction marked by conflict/dispute), due to the existence of conflicting interests. This social conflict, according to Marx, is not a temporary phenomenon, but rather an ongoing process and a primary driver of structural change in society (Armansyah et al., 2024).

Social class remains a significant issue in contemporary society because it influences individuals' access to economic resources, healthcare, employment opportunities, and social mobility (Bathmaker et al., 2016). Although Karl Marx emphasized economic ownership as the primary basis of social stratification, contemporary scholars argue that social class is increasingly multidimensional, involving not only income and wealth but also occupational status, social networks, and access to technology (Sachan, 2024). Therefore, social class is understood as a complex social structure that shapes individuals' life opportunities and social experiences.

The phenomenon of social class can be observed in various countries with different characteristics. In the United States, social stratification is generally categorized into upper, middle, and working classes based on income, education, occupation, and wealth ownership. Although the American social system promotes the ideal of social mobility, empirical studies show that economic inequality and racial disparities continue to influence opportunities for upward mobility. Research

indicates that racial minorities, particularly African Americans and Hispanics, often experience lower levels of intergenerational economic mobility due to historical and structural inequalities.

In contrast, social stratification in India is strongly influenced by the caste system, which has historically shaped social status, occupation, and social interactions. Despite legal reforms and modernization, caste-based inequalities continue to affect educational opportunities, employment prospects, and socioeconomic mobility. Consequently, India is frequently cited as an example of a relatively closed stratification system where social mobility remains limited compared to more open class systems.

Meanwhile, Indonesia exhibits a unique pattern of social stratification shaped by historical, economic, and cultural factors. According to the World Bank, Indonesia's population can be classified into several socioeconomic groups, including the poor, vulnerable, aspiring middle class, middle class, and upper-income groups. The World Bank reports that approximately 45 percent of Indonesians belong to the aspiring middle class, a group that has escaped poverty but remains economically vulnerable and at risk of falling back into poverty. At the same time, the Indonesian middle class plays a crucial role in driving domestic consumption and economic growth.

In the digital era, social class inequality has become increasingly visible through disparities in access to technology and digital literacy. Individuals who possess greater access to digital resources, information networks, and technological

skills tend to obtain broader educational and economic opportunities. Conversely, groups with limited digital access often face barriers to social and economic advancement. Furthermore, social media platforms contribute to the construction of social-class identities by displaying lifestyles associated with wealth, prestige, and success. These representations frequently create social pressure, encouraging individuals to emulate lifestyles that may exceed their actual economic capacity. As a result, social media has become an important arena where social class is displayed, negotiated, and reproduced within contemporary society.

These realities demonstrate that social class is not merely an economic phenomenon but also a social and cultural construct that influences individual identities, relationships, and life opportunities. Consequently, the representation of social class in literary works becomes an important area of study because literature often reflects, critiques, and reconstructs social realities experienced within society. This issue is particularly relevant in Hannah Grace's novel *Wildfire*, which portrays characters from different socioeconomic backgrounds and illustrates how social class influences their interactions, aspirations, and personal development.

This social class case study can also be found in the novel *Wildfire* by author Hannah Grace. This novel presents a fun summer atmosphere, light comedy, and intense romance. The story begins when Russ Callaghan and Aurora Roberts meet at an end-of-year party at the Maple Hills campus. They engage in an intense one-night stand. Aurora, never one to linger with men, leaves before Russ can learn her full name or more information about her. However, they both meet again as

colleagues at Honey Acres, a popular summer camp popular with the upper class, to spend some time off. They both have personal reasons for escaping to this visit. Russ wants to escape a chaotic home life and family problems, while Aurora wants to rediscover herself and escape family drama. *Wildfire* focuses not only on romance, but also on the personal struggles of both main characters. Russ and Aurora are connected through the shared pain of a lack of affection from their parents (especially their fathers), which makes it difficult for them to trust others. This story highlights how they both help each other heal past wounds and learn to build a healthy relationship.

Wildfire is a young adult contemporary romance novel by Hannah Grace, the second book in the Maple Hills series, following the success of *Icebreaker*. Hannah Grace is a writer from Manchester, England. Initially self-published her first novel, she eventually gained widespread recognition through TikTok social media promotion. In the Maple Hills series, Hannah creates a fictional universe centered on a group of students at Maple Hills University. Her primary focus is on creating a world where male characters are supportive and “green flag”. Her signature writing style is writing lighthearted romance stories set against a campus backdrop with a strong touch of humor. Hannah is also known for writing characters with realistic anxieties or insecurities wrapped in witty dialogue. She also prefers to focus on developing relationships between characters rather than overly complex plots or heavy conflict (low angst).

The researcher also provides studies relevant to the research being conducted. Several previous works also demonstrate a sociological literary approach. For example, Dianiya (2020) and Krisnawati (2022) studied how social inequality is depicted in the film *Parasite* using Roland Barthes's semiotic theory. The results of the first study represent social class through five main points: ease of living, fashion, boundaries, body odor, and color. Meanwhile, the second study found that meritocracy in the film *Parasite* occurs in employment, education, and awards. This suggests that structural poverty and social class can be seen at their root. Poor characters believe that hard work will achieve success, while wealthy characters believe that relationships are more important than hard work.

Several previous studies also discussed social class. Putri (2025) discussed the representation of identity and socio-cultural conflict in Arafat Nur's novel *Lampuki* using Ralf Dahrendorf's social conflict theory. She then discovered an internal conflict influenced by the tension between traditional values and the modernization changes occurring in society. This, in turn, led to social change and cultural shifts that created clashes between individuals and groups, exacerbating social conflict. Devi (2024) discussed the representation of forms of social conflict, individual conflict, and conflict between social classes using the Miles & Huberman Model data analysis theory in Wregas Bhanuteja's film *Budi Pekerti*. The results revealed representations of forms of social conflict, including individual and inter-class conflict, as well as causal factors such as differences in personal and group interests, differences in opinions and feelings, and rapid and abrupt changes in values within society. Then, Fikri et al. (2022) analyzed the intrinsic elements of

Gadis Pantai and *Para Priyayi* using social class theory. They concluded that there are differences in the methods of attaining social status in the two novels.

Furthermore, the researcher also found previous studies that used Karl Marx's social class theory in both films and novels. For example, Nasution et al. (2021) examined the novel *Crazy Rich Asian*. Their research revealed that this gap influences the thinking of upper-class families who are unable to accept those of a lower class into their family. Dewi (2023) used the novel *Jejak Langkah*. Her research revealed the existence of social caste discrimination, the Marxist value of shared destiny, and the Marxist value of anti-capitalism. Gading (2025) examined the film *Snowpiercer*, exploring social class and highlighting themes of inequality and the human condition in a dystopian setting. Idris et al. (2020) highlighted the differences in social class in the film *The Help*, which led to discrimination between white and black people. Nurman et al. (2020) examined Ron Rash's novel *Serena*, which discusses class differences in the form of worker exploitation. Apriliastutik and Rahmayati (2022) analyzed the novel *Rahasia Negeri Osi*, finding social conflict categorized into eight social class categories. Last, by Subekti and Prihandini (2022), this study aims to analyze social and economic class in Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*. According to the findings, the novel addresses the topics of money, wealth, and class, which drive the story and reveal how the characters behave, think, and interact with each other.

Based on previous studies, researcher have not found any research that discusses social class relations in Hannah Grace's novel *Wildfire* using Karl Marx's

social class theory. Thus, this is a novelty in reviewing literary works. This study focuses on social class relations and provides a perspective that explains the relationship between the upper and lower classes based on Karl Marx's social class theory in the novel. This paper considers the text of the *Wildfire* novel as the main data source and does not consider adaptations of the source in other media.

B. Problem of the Study

Based on the research background explained above, researcher needs to formulate the main problem that is the focus of this research. Using Karl Marx's social class theory as a basis for Hannah Grace's novel *Wildfire*, the research question is as follows: How is the relationship between the upper and lower class characters depicted in Hannah Grace's novel *Wildfire*?

C. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to have a scientific impact for readers. This paper is useful both practically and theoretically for literary studies because it offers an analysis of the *Wildfire* novel using Karl Marx's social class theory. Practically, the researcher hopes that this research can provide new information and knowledge in understanding the *Wildfire* through the sociology of literature. Theoretically, this research is expected to help readers understand the plot within the novel, particularly as studied in the sociology of literature, in understanding the forms of social class that illustrate the differences between the upper and lower classes in the novel *Wildfire*.

Furthermore, this paper also offers an opportunity to compare the novel *Wildfire* with other works with similar plot structures. Such comparisons can provide new insights into how authors are able to present the same theme in different ways. Thus, it expands the topic of how Karl Marx's social class theory can be applied to contemporary novels, expanding the repertoire of knowledge.

D. Scope and Limitation

This research focuses on the social classes depicted in Hannah Grace's novel, *Wildfire*. This paper considers the text of the novel *Wildfire* as the primary data source and does not consider adaptations of the source in other media. The researcher attempts to explain the differences between the upper and lower classes based on Karl Marx's theory of social class. Furthermore, subjective interpretations and other reader responses are not examined.

Limitations were established to prevent the research from going beyond its scope. Rather, it is directed toward its intended purpose, which is to analyze social class theory through Karl Marx's approach. Given the researcher's limitations in exploring other aspects of this study, the researcher hopes that the shortcomings of this thesis can lead to new research in the future.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding of terms and clarify the definitions in this thesis, the researcher explains several definitions of keywords as follows:

1. **Social Class** refers to a group of people who share a similar position within a society based on economic resources, occupation, and access to power. According to Karl Marx (1867), social class is determined primarily by an individual's relationship to the means of production (Suseno, 2016). Marx divides society into two major classes: the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, and the proletariat, who sell their labor power in exchange for wages. Social class therefore reflects unequal distributions of wealth, power, and opportunities within society.
2. **The Upper Class** refers to individuals or groups who possess substantial economic resources, wealth, property, and social power. According to Anthony Giddens (2009), members of the upper class generally enjoy privileged access to education, healthcare, political influence, and economic opportunities (Toft, 2019). Their social position enables them to maintain and reproduce their advantages across generations.
3. **The Lower Class** refers to individuals or groups with limited economic resources, lower incomes, restricted access to education, and fewer opportunities for social mobility. According to Karl Marx (1867), this class is closely associated with the proletariat or working class, whose members depend on selling their labor to survive because they do not own the means of production (Manstead, 2018). As a result, the lower class often occupies a disadvantaged position within the social structure.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW ON RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher discusses theories related to the research topic and assists in analyzing the narrative under discussion. The researcher utilizes Karl Marx's theory of social class. In this section, the researcher explains Sociology of Literature, Marxism, and Social Class.

A. Sociology of Literature

Sociology is a scientific discipline concerned with the systematic study of society, social relationships, and social institutions. It seeks to understand how individuals interact within groups and how social structures influence patterns of behavior, belief, and organization. Sociology also examines how societies develop, maintain order, and undergo transformation over time. As noted by recent scholars, sociology can be defined as the systematic study of social life, including the analysis of social interactions, institutions, and processes that shape human experience (Giddens & Sutton, 2021). This definition highlights sociology's role in analyzing both micro-level interactions and macro-level structures, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of contemporary social life. In relation to cultural products, sociology also provides important insights into how human experiences are represented through artistic forms such as literature.

Literature is widely regarded as a form of artistic and cultural expression that represents human experiences through language. It encompasses various genres, such as prose, poetry, and drama, which convey meanings, emotions, and social realities. Contemporary literary studies emphasize that literature is not only an aesthetic creation but also a reflection of the social and cultural contexts in which it is produced. According to Eagleton (2020), literature can be understood as a body of written works that express ideas, values, and human experiences shaped by particular historical and social conditions. Thus, literature serves both as a creative expression and as a medium for exploring and interpreting the complexities of human life and society. From this perspective, literature can be further examined through theoretical approaches that emphasize its relationship with society.

In line with this perspective, René Wellek and Austin Warren (2021) argue that literature is a social institution that uses language as its medium and is closely connected to the society in which it exists. They emphasize that literature cannot be separated from its social context because it reflects and is influenced by the norms, values, and structures of society. However, they also stress that literature possesses its own intrinsic elements, such as structure, genre, and aesthetic value, which must be analyzed independently. Therefore, literature can be understood both as a social product and as an artistic construct with its own internal characteristics.

Building on this view, the relationship between literature and society becomes the main focus of the sociology of literature. The sociology of literature is an interdisciplinary approach that examines literature in relation to the social

conditions in which it is produced, distributed, and received. It views literary works as social products that are influenced by historical, cultural, and ideological factors. This approach also explores how literature reflects, reinforces, or challenges social structures and power relations. As Damono (2020) explains, the sociology of literature focuses on the reciprocal relationship between literary texts and society, emphasizing that literature both shapes and is shaped by social realities.

Similarly, Alwaqaa (2021) notes that the sociology of literature investigates how literary works relate to the social structures in which they are produced, examining texts from cultural, political, and economic perspectives. This highlights the interconnectedness between literature and social institutions, such as family, education, and economic systems, which often serve as sources of literary themes and meanings.

This perspective is strongly supported by the theory of René Wellek and Austin Warren (2021), who classify the study of literature into three main areas: the author, the work itself, and the reader. Within this framework, the sociology of literature is particularly concerned with the external aspects of literary study, including the social background of the author, the social content within the text, and the influence of literature on society. They argue that literature reflects social reality, but not as a direct imitation; rather, it is shaped by the author's perspective and artistic transformation.

Therefore, the sociology of literature provides a critical framework for analyzing how literary texts both represent and construct social realities. It not only

examines the relationship between literature and social structures but also considers the roles of authors, readers, and institutions in the processes of literary production, distribution, and reception. In this way, literature is understood as both a social product and an aesthetic construct that reflects and shapes human experience (Damono, 2020). This suggests that literature does not merely reflect social reality but also plays an active role in shaping social meanings and cultural understanding within society.

B. Marxism

Building on the understanding that literature is closely related to social structures and realities, it is important to apply a theoretical framework that specifically addresses issues of power, inequality, and social class. One of the most influential approaches in this regard is Marxism. Marxism is a socio-economic and political theory developed by Karl Marx, which focuses on the relationship between economic systems and social structures, particularly the conflict between different social classes. As contemporary scholars note, Marxism provides a framework for analyzing how material conditions and economic forces shape human society, social relations, and cultural production (Giddens & Sutton, 2021; Tyson, 2021).

The foundation of Marxist theory originates from Karl Marx's analysis of capitalist society and class relations. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels (2002) famously state that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." This statement emphasizes that social development is fundamentally driven by conflicts between dominant and subordinate classes

throughout history. Marx argues that economic relations form the basis of social organization, determining how power, wealth, and opportunities are distributed within society.

Furthermore, in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx (1904) explains that “it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.” This idea highlights the Marxist belief that material and economic conditions shape individuals’ beliefs, values, and social behavior. Therefore, social institutions, culture, and ideology cannot be separated from the economic structures that support them.

Marxism emphasizes that society is fundamentally structured by its economic system, especially the mode of production that determines how goods and resources are produced and distributed. Within this system, society is divided into two primary classes: the bourgeoisie, who control the means of production, and the proletariat, who sell their labor to survive. This division creates an inherent conflict of interests, as the ruling class seeks to maintain its dominance, while the working class struggles against exploitation and inequality. According to Eagleton (2020), Marxist theory highlights how economic inequality inevitably leads to class struggle, which becomes a central driving force of historical and social change. This conflict is not only economic in nature but also manifests in social relations, cultural practices, and institutional structures.

A central concept in Marxist theory is the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure. The economic base consists of the forces and relations of production, while the superstructure includes cultural, political, legal, and ideological institutions that arise from and support the economic base. Marxist theorists argue that the superstructure functions to legitimize and maintain the dominance of the ruling class by promoting ideologies that justify existing social conditions (Tyson, 2021; Storey, 2021). These ideologies often appear natural or unquestionable, thereby shaping individuals' perceptions of reality and masking underlying inequalities. As a result, individuals may unknowingly accept and reproduce systems of domination, which further stabilizes existing power structures.

In addition, Marxism introduces the concept of ideology as a crucial mechanism through which power is maintained. Ideology operates by constructing beliefs, values, and norms that align with the interests of the dominant class. Through institutions such as education, media, and literature, these ideological messages are disseminated and normalized within society. Consequently, literature can function as both a reflection of dominant ideology and a potential site of resistance against it. This dual role makes literature an important object of analysis within Marxist criticism, as it reveals the tension between conformity and critique within cultural production.

In the context of literary studies, Marxism provides a critical approach for analyzing how literary texts reflect and respond to social and economic conditions.

Literary works are seen not merely as artistic creations, but also as products of the socio-economic environment in which they are produced. As Tyson (2021) explains, Marxist criticism examines how literature represents class struggle, economic inequality, and ideological conflict, as well as how it may reinforce or challenge dominant social values. Similarly, Storey (2021) argues that literature can function as a site where ideological meanings are produced, reproduced, and contested. Through this lens, literature becomes a medium through which social tensions and contradictions are expressed, negotiated, and sometimes resisted.

Furthermore, Marxist literary criticism also considers the role of the author and the audience within specific historical and social contexts. It explores how an author's social position, economic background, and ideological perspective influence the creation of a text, as well as how readers interpret and respond to it based on their own social conditions. This perspective aligns with the sociology of literature, as it emphasizes the interconnectedness between literary works and the broader social structures in which they exist. In this way, literature is understood not as an isolated artistic product, but as part of a larger social and ideological system.

In this study, Marxism is employed to analyze *Wildfire* by Hannah Grace, with a particular focus on class differences, power relations, and ideological dynamics within the narrative. The analysis examines how economic conditions and social status influence the characters' interactions, opportunities, and conflicts, as well as how the novel reflects broader issues of inequality and social

expectations. In addition, this study seeks to identify how ideological values related to success, work, and social mobility are constructed and represented within the text.

Through this approach, the novel is understood as a site where class relations are both represented and ideologically negotiated. It not only reflects existing social realities but also participates in shaping readers' understanding of those realities. Therefore, Marxist theory provides a relevant and comprehensive framework for uncovering the underlying social conflicts embedded in the narrative and for critically examining how literature engages with issues of power, inequality, and social justice.

In addition to classical Marxist theory, contemporary developments have expanded the analysis of class and power. For instance, Antonio Gramsci introduces the concept of cultural hegemony, emphasizing how dominance is maintained through consent rather than coercion. Similarly, Louis Althusser highlights the role of ideological state apparatuses in reproducing social relations, while Pierre Bourdieu expands the notion of class through the concepts of cultural and social capital. These perspectives demonstrate that class relations operate not only at the economic level but also within cultural and ideological domains.

C. Social Class

Marxist theory posits social class as a fundamental division in capitalist societies, primarily between the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, and the proletariat, who sell their labor power. According to Amiin et al. (2025),

this distinction creates an asymmetrical relationship where the proletariat's social position compels them to enter the class position of workers, while the bourgeoisie's resources enable capitalist functions. In literary analysis, this framework reveals how novels depict class dynamics, exploitation, and potential conflict.

Karl Marx provides one of the most influential definitions of social class by relating it to ownership of the means of production. In *Capital*, Marx et al. (2013) argues that capitalist society is characterized by a division between those who own productive resources and those who must sell their labor power in order to survive. This economic relationship forms the basis of class distinctions and creates unequal distributions of wealth and power. Consequently, social class is not merely a matter of income differences but reflects structural positions within the economic system.

Karl Marx's foundational ideas, as applied in recent scholarship, emphasize class as rooted in economic relations rather than mere wealth disparities. As stated in Panigrahi (2025), supports viewing class as an essential feature of capitalism, best understood through materialist history. This perspective aids in examining literature's portrayal of class inequalities.

1. Class Divisions and Exploitation

In capitalist structures, the bourgeoisie control production means, leading to proletarian exploitation, as outlined in contemporary Marxist reconstructions. The social position of the proletariat compels them to sell their labour power, thus entering the class position of workers (Oversveen

and Kelly, 2022). Such divisions manifest in literature through character hierarchies mirroring societal power imbalances.

Marxist literary criticism subordinates aesthetic elements to social meanings, focusing on class reinforcement or challenge. According to Bashir et al. (2020), Marxist theorists use traditional techniques of literary analysis but subordinate aesthetic concerns to the final social and political meanings of literature. This approach highlights how novels like those analyzed sustain class distinctions.

Proletarian characteristics include low income, exploitation, and solidarity, contrasting bourgeois traits like capital ownership and cultural dominance. The Socs has five bourgeoisie social class characteristic; ownership of capital, control of the means of production, wealth, education, and culture (Amiin et al., 2025). Such markers inform representations in modern fiction.

2. Class Conflict and Ideology

According to Marx and Engels (2002), class conflict emerges because the interests of the ruling class and the working class are fundamentally opposed. The bourgeoisie seek to maintain ownership and control over production, while the proletariat struggle against exploitation and economic inequality. Marx and Engels argue that this conflict is unavoidable within capitalist society and serves as the primary force behind historical transformation and social change.

Class struggle arises from inherent antagonisms, driving historical change toward potential revolution. Marxist theory views ideology as a domination tool, masking exploitation in narratives. Sudirman (2025) states, “Utilizing Karl Marx’s Marxist theory as a theoretical framework, this study explores key concepts such as social class, ideology as a tool of domination, class conflict, and alienation.”

Literature often reflects these conflicts through character arcs and societal critiques. As stated in Puspita et al. (2023), class struggle is depicted as “the ongoing struggle for economic and political power between the capitalist and working classes.” This dynamic critiques capitalist inequalities in fictional worlds.

Alienation further stratifies classes, disconnecting workers from production fruits. Oversveen and Kelly (2022) argue Marxist analysis expands beyond economism to view class as a “struggle over the conditions of social development.” Novels embed this in interpersonal and structural tensions.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

In this chapter, the researcher describes the methods of this study. This chapter ensures that the data collected is relevant, the results can be accounted for. The researcher divides it into four sub-chapters, namely research design, data source, data collection, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

The researcher uses literary criticism, utilizing a literary work in the form of a novel, to answer the research questions. The writer then conducts an objective analysis, interpretation, and assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of a literary work. This thesis aims to analyze social phenomena related to social class in Hannah Grace's literary work, *Wildfire*.

Therefore, the researcher uses a sociology of literature approach and Karl Marx's theory of social class. The sociological approach was chosen as a key method in this research because the analysis focuses on the sociology of social class as illustrated in the novel.

B. Data Source

In this study, the researcher used the novel *Wildfire* by Hannah Grace as a data source. This novel is in E-book format with 353 pages long and containing 38 chapters. The researcher took data from a literary work in the form of a novel published in 2023 and written in English. This novel is the second in the *Maple*

Hills Novel Series published by Atria Paperback. This study utilized textual data contained in the novel, such as narration, dialogue, and description, based on narrative and character development. The reason for choosing this novel is that it has a very clear storyline and conflict that can be analyzed within Karl Marx's theory of social class.

C. Data Collection

In data collection, the researcher used several steps, including reading and taking notes. First, the researcher carefully read Hannah Grace's novel *Wildfire* to understand the story, which was useful for gaining general knowledge. Next, the researcher identified and marked the dialogue, narrative text, and sentence in the novel. The writer then classified the novel's sections, indicating the plot depicted in the form of conversations, sentences, and narrative texts. Last, the researcher classified key points based on Karl Marx's theory of social class to facilitate data analysis.

D. Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher collected data using a sociological approach to literature that discusses social class. In the initial step, the researcher identified the novel's text and analyze all data using reading techniques. Next, the researcher read the entire story and highlight key points to analyze the issues of the upper and lower classes in the novel. Next, the researcher classified and solved the problems based on Karl Marx's theory of social class. In the end, the analysis produce conclusions that cover the aspects discussed in this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher will provide a detailed explanation of the research questions attached in Chapter I. Furthermore, the main findings in this study discuss the social classes depicted in the novel *Wildfire* by Hannah Grace. Then, the researcher classifies the findings into three parts.

A. Russ and Aurora's Early Encounter: The Encounter of Two Classes

In the novel *Wildfire* by Hannah Grace, the perspectives of two characters, Russ Callaghan and Aurora Roberts, are used. The difference in the use of perspectives greatly helps researchers analyse the explanation of the beginning of how the two characters met. From Russ' perspective, he comes from a lower-middle class family. His father, who was a drunkard and gambler, made Russ' family's economy slump. Russ was forced to work hard to support his family by working in a bar. However, problems caused the bar to close, forcing Russ to look for another job. Then Russ worked hard to save money with a salary high enough to become a counselor at Honey Acres summer camp, a gathering place for children in upper-class neighborhoods to spend their holidays. Meanwhile, through Aurora's point of view, she is a picture of an upper-class family. Although from different classes, Aurora seemed attracted to Russ' stunning physical appearance from the first time she saw him. Their initial meeting was at a graduation party for a final year student. When Russ helped Aurora open a bottle of soda for her. As in the following quotation:

“The helpful stranger laughs and opens a bottle of soda, sliding it in my direction. He waits until I’m about to pour to answer me. “No, I live here.”” (p. 31)

The analysis of Karl Marx’s class theory in Hannah Grace’s novel *Wildfire* is very interesting because it shows how even personal interactions are inseparable from the structure of class power. For example, the character of Russ Callaghan is a symbol of the lower class or proletariat. His life is controlled by material needs. He must sell his labour, such as in a bar, then at a summer camp, to survive because his family’s economy is deteriorating due to the actions of his father, who is a drunkard and gambler. Marx calls this an existence determined by material conditions. In Marx’s theory, the proletariat is forced to sell their labor to survive. The text states that Russ’ help, namely opening a soda bottle, is a form of class struggle disguised as romantic interest. Unconsciously, Russ positions himself as a “service provider” where he continues to carry out his class role, namely serving the upper class to gain “recognition” or social access.

According to Marx, based on her ownership of the means of production, Aurora Roberts’ character symbolizes the upper class or bourgeoisie. She has the luxury of attending graduation parties and the Honey Acres neighbourhood without economic burdens and exists in an elite environment as a consumer. She enjoys the fruits of the economic system without having to experience the physical suffering of forced manual labor. Her existence is defined by consumption and easy access. Marx argued that in a class system, human relationships are often alienated. People no longer see other humans as whole people, but rather based on their function. The text states that Aurora feels that Russ’ existence is “insignificant as long as the problem is solved.” This is a clear example of social alienation. For the upper class,

the lower class often becomes existentially “invisible” and is only seen as a means to satisfy needs or solve practical problems.

The following data shows that Russ and Aurora come from different social classes, as shown in the staff meeting room. Upon arriving at Honey Acres summer camp, Russ meets Xander, his roommate. They then begin to discuss the Wi-Fi problem, which is difficult to find in their cabin, forcing them to go to the main building to get a signal. When they do, Russ receives several messages from his parents. His mother bids farewell and conveys her longing for Russ, while his father demands a fifty-dollar bill, prompting Russ to turn off his phone. The counselors are then asked to gather, and an elderly woman named Orla Murphy, the camp executive director, begins her speech. She then discusses several rules that counselors must obey, including the prohibition of alcohol and drug use, and the prohibition of romantic or socializing between couples. Staff members can still gather in the shared staff area but not in the cabin. The data below shows how Russ and Aurora perceive the rules from different perspectives, reflecting differences in social class. As the following statement:

“She finishes by explaining that all staff can hang out together in the shared staff areas, but not in each other’s cabins and a few other perfectly reasonable rules I’m going to have no problems keeping. The last thing I need is to be sent back to Maple Hills midsummer because I fucked up. Again.” (p. 75)

The data above shows Russ’ anxiety upon hearing the employee regulations. He was at the camp to work. Therefore, his relationship with the Honey Acres camp was transactional, with Russ dependent on his wages for his work. This was further reinforced by his father’s request for fifty dollars, a sum that appeared to put psychological pressure on Russ, leading him to turn off his cell phone. This

demonstrates the economic vulnerability typical of the working class, where uncertain wages are faced with financial demands. Russ' anxiety arose because he lacked the bargaining power to reject the regulations. He was forced to consider them "reasonable" for fear of losing his job and being sent back to Maple Hills. For the proletariat, being fired meant losing a livelihood and failing to improve their lot. Russ' anxiety reflects how the working class is constantly haunted by the threat of legal sanctions from those in power. Breaking the rules would mean the complete destruction of all their efforts.

Meanwhile, below is data that shows how Aurora behaves when faced with rules. Aurora herself has been attending camp at Honey Acres since she was a child as a participant until now she has registered as a counselor. Honey Acres is a meaningful place for Aurora's life because here she is closer to the people such as her closeness with Jenna. Her closeness with Jenna has been gradual for a long time, even Jenna accompanied Aurora when her first tooth broke, her first period, even her first kiss. Jenna seemed to know the relationship between Aurora and Russ until Jenna had to convince Aurora not to get involved in problems with the rules at camp. Then they returned to the group to continue the journey around the campsite. The surprising thing came when Clay was holding two bottles of beer, he smuggled it and said that he had done it before and was not caught. Clay had a physique that Aurora liked, but she was not happy with his gaze towards her chest. Aurora then wanted the beer and walked towards Emilia expressing her thoughts about the differences between Clay and Russ. This description is backed by the following quote:

"It's not his fault that my mind is elsewhere and I'm sure he's not used to women zoning out when he's trying to talk to them. He's attractive by conventional standards: tall, sharp jaw, nice eyes and smile. Not a huge fan of the amount of gel he uses to slick back his hair, but mainly because there's so much, I'm concerned there's going to be a pollution incident if he jumps into the lake. And I could do without the way his eyes drop to my chest when I'm talking, but he's not the worst guy who's ever tried to befriend me." (p. 83)

The text above shows that Aurora occupies a very different social class, namely the upper class. Aurora has been attending Honey Acres since childhood, indicating that the camp is a recreational institution that requires significant costs. Aurora's ability to attend since childhood indicates a family background that is economically secure. Under a Marxist lens, Aurora has a structural closeness to the ruling class. Aurora's very close relationship with Jenna, who acts as a mother figure, indicates that Aurora does not view camp authority as a threat. Furthermore, Jenna must convince Aurora not to get involved in trouble with camp rules. This indicates that Aurora has a natural tendency to ignore or underestimate these rules. She does not experience existential fear like Russ, who fears being fired and sent back to Maple Hills. Finally, when Clay smuggles beer, Aurora's response is not one of fear or anxiety about sanctions but, instead, a desire for the beer. This desire for alcohol amid strict prohibitions demonstrates a sense of class security. Aurora feels her position is secure enough to compromise by breaking rules for personal pleasure. This is a form of class superiority or comfort.

B. Russ and Aurora's Relationship Continues: Class Conflict

During the camp, Russ and Aurora seemed busy with their respective activities. This time they had to train the children for the talent show that would be held at the end of the meeting. Aurora was now training the children to play soccer, the only talent she might have. After that, Russ came with Fish to help Aurora.

During the break, they got into a conversation where Aurora told about Jenna's childhood and Russ was shocked when he just realized the fact that Jenna was the daughter of Orla Murphy, the owner of Honey Acres summer camp. As in the following quotation:

““What? Jenna is Orla's daughter. Did you not know?” I say. “I thought everyone knew that, sorry.”” (p. 129)

From the perspective of Marxist social class theory, the short conversation excerpt above actually contains a very interesting dynamic regarding how power, status, and information operate in a class society. The fact that Jenna is Orla's daughter highlights the core of the Marxist critique of capitalism: class reproduction through lineage. In a capitalist system, the bourgeoisie maintains its wealth, capital, and influence not simply through “individual hard work,” but through inheritance. This mother-daughter relationship ensures that Orla's privileges, assets, and social position will automatically be passed on to Jenna. This structure denies the working class (proletariat) the opportunity to compete fairly. The ruling class creates a norm where knowing one's family tree is a standard requirement. When the lower classes do not know, they are made to feel alienated or inferior. The conclusion is that the bourgeoisie is connected in a solid network of nepotism, takes its privileges for granted, and uses this social knowledge as a tool of division to maintain its dominance over other classes.

As it developed, Russ and Aurora's relationship grew closer as they both worked at Honey Acres. Incidents that showed their class differences in seeing the rules continued. Especially when they had to work together in a team, Russ had to restrain himself from getting too close to Aurora which could threaten her career at

camp. However, this actually made Aurora think that Russ did not like her. This misunderstanding was finally straightened out by Russ by telling Aurora honestly that what he did was to continue following the rules at Honey Acres so that he would not be returned to Maple Hills. When Russ was in the main room, his father sent another incoming message on his cellphone and asked for money again. This was quite stressful. Again, Aurora was seen breaking the rules by drinking Tequila until she was drunk and almost got caught by Jenna, but she was saved by Russ. According to Aurora, the rules made by the camp were not that important because everyone makes mistakes. Even Jenna, the daughter of Honey Acres' founder, Orla, had also made mistakes before. When Jenna reminded Russ about Aurora's habit of carrying a puppy everywhere, Russ felt compelled to remind Aurora. However, Aurora instead teased Russ just because of the rules that Aurora thought were unimportant. This is illustrated in the following quote:

"My jaw drops. 'I'm sorry, are you telling me that you're breaking rules?'"

"It was more of a suggestion . . ."

"It's a rule and you're rebelling. Oh my God."

"I'm not. I'm ju—"

"You're out of control, Callaghan. That's how it starts. One minute you're carrying a puppy then next minute you've crashed a boat you weren't supposed to be on into the rocks and are being threatened with deportation." His eyes narrow at my far too specific example. "Theoretically. Anyway, I'd invite you in but unlike you, I respect authority and apparently there's something about cabins and not dragging men and their comfort animal into them." (p. 130)

Due to their growing relationship, Aurora feels superior to Russ when it comes to rules. Aurora's sense of superiority reflects how the upper class, according to Karl Marx, operates. The ruling class is often unaware of the structural burdens borne by the working class. This is evident in Aurora's misunderstanding of Russ'

coldness. When Russ maintains a distance to comply with camp rules, Aurora assumes he dislikes her. Aurora cannot intuitively understand why someone would be so rigid in following rules. For Aurora, following rules is a “behavioral choice.” She does not realize that for Russ, following rules is a prerequisite for economic survival and avoiding being fired. Aurora also often normalizes violations such as blatantly breaking major rules (drinking beer and tequila until drunk) and ignoring minor rules (carrying a puppy). Aurora’s reason for disregarding rules is because she knows that Jenna, the daughter of camp founder Orla Murphy, has also made mistakes, and Aurora has a personal closeness to Jenna (a symbol of the capitalist dynasty). She feels “safe” and perceives the rules as elastic.

Meanwhile, Russ still tries to demonstrate compliance with the rules and encourages Aurora, who comes from the bourgeoisie, to follow the rules. What he does not realize is that he is demonstrating how the proletariat behaves in dealing with and implementing regulations and trying to remind everyone (including the bourgeoisie) to follow the rules. Russ is a true depiction of the proletariat whose lives are entirely dictated by material needs, economic vulnerability, and strict discipline imposed by the power structure. Russ does not have complete freedom over his body, actions, or even emotions in the workplace. He must discipline himself to remain considered productive and obedient by the owners of capital. For Russ, violating camp rules has fatal consequences: being fired and sent home. This fear shows that for the proletariat, rules are not just “moral appeals,” but rather coercive instruments that threaten their economic stability. The wages Russ earns from working in the camp are not only used for himself, but also become the focus

or target of financial blackmail by his family. This creates tremendous mental stress. Russ does not have the luxury of having fun or making mistakes, as he carries a real financial burden on his shoulders. Russ, who is in a very vulnerable position and deeply afraid of being fired, must take risks to save Aurora because he knows all too well the dire consequences of breaking the rules for a worker. However, because Aurora does not share his fears, Russ' protective actions are met with jokes and taunts. For Russ, rules are a matter of life and death (career, money, future). For Aurora, rules are a joke. When Aurora teases Russ, emotional alienation occurs: Russ' class anxieties are reduced by Aurora to mere "too serious" or "rigid" traits.

As Russ and Aurora's relationship develops into something more serious, the difference between their social positions becomes clearer. Their relationship is no longer only a romantic one, but also a place where class difference appears through their reactions to authority and consequences. Aurora tends to focus on the relationship itself and does not think deeply about the risk, while Russ is always aware that their relationship may affect his job and his future at Honey Acres. This shows that their romance is influenced by the class they belong to. The following data shows that Russ experiences intense fear when their relationship is discovered by Jenna, while Aurora tries to calm him down and treats the situation as manageable. This situation is captured in the following quote:

"His hands are shaking as he tries to put his sneakers back on and I navigate him to sit on the bed. I should be in more of a rush, so far I've only managed to get my shorts back on, but Jenna can stew in her anger outside if it means I get to soothe Russ." (p. 282)

Russ' shaking hands are a physical sign of fear, panic, and loss of control. His reaction reveals that he's not just embarrassed but terrified of what Jenna's

discovery could mean for his life at Honey Acres. This type of fear is very much related to proletarian insecurity from a Marxist perspective. The working-class lives under the pressure of instability, where losing a job can mean losing the means to survive. Therefore, Russ' panic is not simply personal weakness, it is a social condition produced by class position. In Marxist theory, the proletariat is the class that has to constantly calculate risk because it lives off of labor, wages, and obedience to the system that controls it. Russ' fear of being caught by Jenna is a representation of exactly this state. If he loses his job, he loses not only money but also the chance to keep a stable place in the social order. That is why he is so much afraid. For the proletariat, the threat of losing job is often the threat of losing everything, because a job is directly tied to survival and dignity. Russ' tremble thus exemplifies the insecurity of the lower class in a system that offers them little protection.

Aurora's reaction to the same situation is quite different. Rather than becoming terrified, she tries to calm Russ and treats the event as something manageable. This attitude is one of bourgeois privilege, since Aurora is not under the same degree of material threat. In Marxist theory the bourgeoisie is in a relatively secure position, because it has wealth, comfort and social protection. Simply means that the upper class does not have the same fear of problems as the working class. Aurora can still imagine that everything will be fine because her situation protects her from the immediate economic threat. She does not have to worry about one mistake ruining her livelihood like Russ does. Aurora's calmness also shows that privilege affects the way people interpret consequences. What feels

like a crisis to Russ may feel like a temporary problem to Aurora. This difference is important because it demonstrates that social class affects emotional perception.

Furthermore, this moment demonstrates how class conflict can appear inside intimate relationships. The conflict between Russ and Aurora is not expressed through direct political struggle, but through everyday fear, reassurance, and rule-breaking. This is a Marxist form of conflict because it shows how class relations enter private life and influence emotional behavior. Russ' fear is a proletarian insecurity, the fear of losing work, losing stability, losing the little security that he has. Aurora's answer is a bourgeois one, she is calm, confident, privileged. Their relationship therefore becomes a miniature representation of class division, where one person must always think about consequences while the other can afford to believe that everything will be fine.

In conclusion, the development of Russ and Aurora's relationship in this part of the novel confirms that social class shapes not only social position but also emotional experience and moral judgment. Russ represents a proletarian character, and the threat of the loss of his job haunts him as work is the basis of his survival. Aurora, as the representative of the bourgeois character, is calmer, since her privileged position makes her less exposed to the effects of these consequences. By this contrast, Hannah Grace presents class conflict as a reality even in romance and shows that love is still a product of power, insecurity, and social inequality.

C. Reconciliation between Classes is Depicted in the Development of Russ and Aurora's Relationship

Russ and Aurora's relationship continues to develop, especially when they both have to face Jenna for the mistakes they made. The arrival of Russ' father and Aurora's mother makes them confused whether they will be expelled or not. However, the arrival of Aurora's mother turns out to provide facts about Aurora's father's attitude who never liked her. The same thing happened to Russ and his father. His father apologized to Russ for always disrupting family life. Now they are open to each other and express their feelings. After meeting with the parents, Russ and Aurora returned to camp and begged Jenna not to be fired, as punishment they had to clean the horse stables for the rest of the week. As illustrated in the following quote:

““For now,” She waves me off with a hand. ‘And Russ, I have a million places to bury a body if you break her heart. We have acres you don’t even know about. They’d never find you.’” (p. 295)

This quote reflects how the bourgeoisie (capitalists) view space, law, and power in Marxist theory. This dialogue is not merely dark humor, but a manifestation of the ruling class's consciousness. The sentence *“We have acres you don’t even know about”* is at the heart of Karl Marx's critique of private ownership of the means of production. In both agrarian and advanced capitalist societies, land is one of the most fundamental forms of capital. The bourgeoisie not only owns land for subsistence, but also in such massive quantities that its limits are unknown to the lower classes. The sentence *“They’d never find you”* demonstrates the bourgeoisie's cynicism towards the formal legal system. The sentence refers to

police, detectives, or state law enforcement institutions, which are essentially mere committees managing the collective affairs of the bourgeoisie. Jenna realizes that with the wealth and physical privacy afforded by her land, she can be above the law. The law and state apparatus are considered powerless to penetrate the fortress of private property belonging to the upper class. Justice, in a capitalist system, can be bought or hidden within their assets. The threat to Russ, “...*if you break her heart... We have a million places to bury a body,*” demonstrates how even personal relationships are governed by class relations. Russ is positioned as a subordinate or party without space, without equal capital, and vulnerable to being “disappeared” without a trace. The structure of capitalism allows capital owners to dictate individual emotional relationships using the threat of material violence supported by their ownership of assets. This quote exposes the illusion of equal justice in the capitalist system. Through large-scale private property ownership, the bourgeois class has absolute privacy and power over the life and death of others, so much so that they feel able to bypass state laws with complete impunity.

The next day the counselors held a talent show, but in between it did not make Russ and Aurora change. They continued to meet secretly and make out. Then Aurora and Russ returned to the cabin to clean themselves. Aurora began to ask how their relationship would continue and asked if one of them had a secret. The problem escalated when Aurora suddenly answered a call from Russ’ brother who informed her of Russ’ father’s condition who had entered a gambling addiction rehabilitation program. Russ was furious when he saw Aurora holding his phone

and then thought Aurora was being too presumptuous in interfering in his affairs.

This is shown in the following quotation:

““Russ, please don’t shut me out. I’ve told you everything about my family and you know I get it.”

“You don’t get it,” I snap. “It isn’t the same thing.”” (p. 318)

The quote above indirectly shows that Russ displays the characteristics of the proletariat class, which is very concerned about consequences. Russ knows that his and Aurora’s social classes are very different, so he is angry and considers that openness about their family problems is not the same. Russ, who comes from a proletariat family, thinks that Aurora, who comes from a bourgeois family, does not think about the consequences of all behavior. Russ’ very angry response and consider Aurora too presumptuous is the culmination of the clash of class consciousness. This is in accordance with Marx’s theory that the sovereignty of the proletariat’s privacy is threatened. For proletariat like Russ, poverty and family financial disgrace (such as gambling addiction) are the greatest vulnerabilities that must be hidden. This secret is the last line of defense of self-esteem in the face of people from a higher class.

Meanwhile, Aurora, who comes from the bourgeois class, in this context, considers Russ too stubborn because Russ refused to accept her apology for answering Russ’ brother’s phone. From the beginning of the story, Aurora is shown as a representation of the bourgeois social class who does not care about rules and prefers freedom because of the treatment of the bourgeois class who feel everything can be resolved easily. However, in this story, Aurora now begins to understand that her mindset is shaped by the social class from which she comes, namely the

bourgeois class. In the Marxist lens, Aurora experiences privilege blindness. Aurora, who grew up in the comfort of the upper class, feels that in a relationship, everything must be transparent. She does not understand that for the lower class, revealing financial secrets and family shame means exposing their poverty and weakness. The act of answering someone else's phone without permission is also assumed to be bourgeois superiority. Aurora reflects the subconscious mentality of the upper class who feel they have the right to enter other people's private spaces. From a proletarian perspective, this is a form of intervention and arrogance of the rich who interfere in fragile domestic affairs.

At the end of the novel, Russ and Aurora's relationship becomes better because Aurora starts to understand Russ's situation. She begins to realize that her earlier way of thinking was influenced by her privilege as a child from a wealthy family. After they have a long discussion and Russ is given space to deal with his father and family problems, Aurora starts to accept Russ' point of view. She also understands that Russ needs their relationship and needs to be surrounded by people who support him. This is shown in the following data:

"This group dynamic is new to Russ too, but I can see why it's so important to him. This group is a family more than they're friends and they're so welcoming that it's impossible to not fall in love with every single one of them.

That's what we both desperately need, I think. To be surrounded by people who make us feel loved and wanted. We've spent the summer getting used to it with Xander, Jenna and Emilia . . . and the dogs, of course. My relationship with my mom feels like it's healing and Russ is on a path with his parents that will hopefully give him peace." (p. 339)

The data above is taken from Aurora's point of view. It shows that Aurora begins to understand that Russ is trying to escape from his class trauma. From a Marxist perspective, Russ' family condition can be seen as a form of proletarian

hardship. His father's gambling and bad behavior make Russ carry a heavy economic burden, so he wants to escape from that condition and find a better life. This is related to Marx's idea that the proletariat lives under material pressure and is often shaped by difficult economic conditions. As a result, Russ needs more than affection alone, he also needs emotional safety and steady support. He wants to feel accepted by the people around him, and that sense of belonging can help him heal from the stress caused by his family problems.

Aurora's attitude is an indication of how she's changed her mindset. She's still coming from a privileged background, whereas she is slowly beginning to know Russ quite better. She is no longer treats him only as a romantic partner, instead seeing him as a person who has had a hard life and needs support. This means that Aurora is growing up in her thinking. However, from a Marxist point of view, Aurora is still part of the bourgeois class, since her social position has not changed. For Marx, class is not a matter of feelings or personal development, but of the relation of the individual to the means of production and his economic status. So, while Aurora may become more understanding and emotionally open, she is still part of the bourgeoisie, due to her economic privilege.

The part of the novel also shows reconciliation between Russ and Aurora. Their relationship becomes healthier because Aurora begins to understand Russ' struggle, while Russ also feels more accepted by the people around him. The group of friends around them becomes important because it gives both of them a feeling of family and belonging. In Marxist theory, this can be seen as a reduction of tension between the classes on a personal level. But the class difference itself does not

disappear. Russ continues to be considered the proletariat, Aurora is still considered to be the bourgeoisie. Not their class position but their understanding of one another changes.

The results are also supported from Aurora's recovering attachment with her mother. It indicates that she is just starting to gain maturity emotionally and look at life in a more sophisticated way. However, this development in emotionality does not affect her class status. She may become more aware of Russ' difficulties, but she remains a bourgeois character because she still lives in a secure and privileged social condition. This means that the novel presents Aurora as an upper-class character who develops a better ideology and a more mature attitude, while still remaining in the bourgeois class economically.

In conclusion, this section shows that Russ and Aurora's relationship becomes better when Aurora starts to understand Russ' class trauma and emotional needs. As a proletarian character Russ is trying to escape from family problems and economic pressure. Aurora as a bourgeois character becomes more understanding and supportive, but her class position does not change. Regarding this development, Hannah Grace shows that reconciliation between classes can be personal, but class difference is still there in the background.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The final chapter contains conclusion and suggestion based on the research problems, discussion, and data analysis described in the previous chapter. The researcher also provides suggestions for further research that should expand the scope of the data and theoretical framework to explore social class theory more comprehensively across more complex contexts.

A. Conclusion

Based on the discussion and data analysis above, the researcher concludes that this study examines the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in Hannah Grace's novel, *Wildfire*. The results of the study indicate that social class in *Wildfire* is depicted through social aspects. The social conditions depicted in the novel show that the relationship between the upper and lower classes is fundamentally tense. The character of Russ Callaghan represents the proletariat class who are forced to work hard to survive. Russ' hard life involves economic factors, as he is forced to support his family. Meanwhile, Aurora Roberts represents the bourgeoisie class who are seen as possessors of power who can do anything to get what they want. The conflict stems from the bourgeoisie's ignorance (or indifference) regarding the proletariat's class struggle. However, in the end, for the sake of stable relations between the classes, the bourgeoisie learns to accept that the proletariat will continue to struggle with the support of the bourgeoisie. And this truly represents how the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are actually interdependent.

B. Suggestion

Research examining social class in Hannah Grace's novel, *Wildfire*, is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the social dynamics within the story and their relevance to the broader social context. Research on *Wildfire* has been limited to descriptions of social class, specifically the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This research clarifies this by describing how social class is represented in the novel.

It is hoped that future research can utilize social class theory to analyze literary works more systematically. With Marxist social class theory, future researchers can uncover the social relationships, tensions, and conflicts that arise in stories related to social class, areas that may not have been addressed in previous research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alwaqaa, R. (2021). Sociology and Literature: An Interdisciplinary Approach. *Journal of Liberal Arts and Humanities*, 1(10), 34-38. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353434692_Sociology_and_Literature_An_Interdisciplinary_Approach
- Amiin, I., Zamruddin, M. P., Sudirman, E. P. (2025). A Deconstruction Analysis on the Character of Mr. Pangloss in Voltaire's *Candide*. *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya*, 9(1), 79-88. <https://ocs.unmul.ac.id/index.php/JBSSB/article/view/14027/6627>
- Apriliastutik, A., & Rahmayati, R. (2022). Kelas Sosial dalam Novel *Rahasia Negeri Osi Karya Abinaya Ghina Jamela* (Kajian Sosiologi Sastra Karl Marx). *Jurnal Sapala*, 9(3), 1–10. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jurnal-sapala/article/view/48424>
- Arifudin, O., Juhadi, J., Sofyan, Y., Tanjung, R., Rusmana, F. D. (2021). Pengaruh Kelas Sosial, Pengalaman dan Gaya Hidup terhadap Perilaku Penggunaan Kartu Kredit. *Jurnal Manajemen, Ekonomi dan Akuntansi*, 5(1), 286-298.
- Armansyah, A., Noviarani, D., Rusyiana, R. (2024). Implementasi Sistem Pendidikan Dalam Mengatasi Ketidaksetaraan: Pengaruh Terhadap Stratifikasi Sosial. *INNOVATIVE: Journal of Social Science Research*, 4(3), 17235-17243.
- Bashir, T., Hussain, S. M., Mehmood, A. (2020). Marxism and Literature: Marxist Analysis of 'The Garden Party'. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 3(2), 141-149. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351422923_Marxism_and_Literature_Marxist_Analysis_of_The_Garden_Party
- Bathmaker, A. M., Ingram, N., Abrahams, J., Hoare, A., Waller, R., Bradley, H. (2016). Higher education, social class and social mobility: The degree generation. Springer.
- Damono, S. D. (2020). *Sosiologi sastra: Sebuah pengantar ringkas*. Jakarta: Editum.
- Devi, N. I. (2024). *Representasi Konflik Sosial pada Film "Budi Pekerti" Karya Wregas Bhanuteja* (Kajian Sosiologi Sastra). [Master's thesis, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang]. <https://eprints.umm.ac.id/id/eprint/13897/>
- Dewi, T. R. (2023). *Analisis Nilai Marxisme dan Diskriminasi Kasta Sosial dalam Novel Jejak Langkah Karya Pramoedya Ananta Toer*. [Bachelor's thesis, Institut Agama Islam Negeri Curup]. <https://e-theses.iaincurup.ac.id/4760/>

- Dianiya, V. (2020). Representation of Social Class in Film (Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes Film *Parasite*). *Profetik Jurnal Komunikasi*, 13(2), 212-224. <https://doi.org/10.14421/pjk.v13i2.1946>
- Eagleton, T. (2020). *Literary theory: An introduction*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Eagleton, T. (2020). *Marxism and literary criticism*. Routledge.
- Fikri, H., Syofiani, Setiwati, D. (2022). Theme, Characterisation, Background, Plot, and Social Class in the Novels *Gadis Pantai* and *Para Priyayi*: An intertextual Review. *KnE Social Sciences*, 7(6), 320–328. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i6.10635>
- Gading, M. P. (2025). Depiction of Social Class in Bong Joon-Ho's *Snowpiercer* (2013). *LITERA KULTURA: Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, 12(3), 41-50. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/litera-kultura/article/view/62530>
- Giddens, A., & Sutton, P. W. (2021). *Sociology* (9th ed.). Polity Press.
- Heinrich, M. (2019). *Karl Marx and The Birth of Modern Society: The Life of Marx and the Development of His Work*. Monthly Review Press.
- Ibrahim, M. (2025). Bahasa dan kelas sosial: Hubungan antara pilihan kata dan status sosial. *Proceedings Series on Health & Medical Sciences*, 7, 114-119.
- Idris, D., Wahyuni, Prautomo, A. (2020). The Influence of Social Class on Racial Discrimination in the Movie *The Help*. *Prologue: Journal on Language and Literature*, 6(2), 69-77. https://prologue.sastra.uniba-bpn.ac.id/index.php/jurnal_prologue
- Krisnawati, E. (2022). Meritokrasi dalam Film *Parasite*. *Komunikatif: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 11(1), 104-117. <http://jurnal.wima.ac.id/index.php/KOMUNIKATIF>
- Manstead, A. S. (2018). The psychology of social class: How socioeconomic status impacts thought, feelings, and behaviour. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 57(2), 267-291.
- Marx, K., & Engels, F. (2002). *The Communist Manifesto*. Penguin Publishing Group.
- Marx, K., Engels, F., Untermann, E. (2013). *Capital: A critique of political economy*. Cosimo, Incorporated.
- Marx, K. (1904). *A contribution to the critique of political economy*. C. H. Kerr.

- Nasution, A. U., Nasution, S. N., Pohan, R. A. R. (2021). An Analysis of Social Classes and its Impact in *Crazy Rich Asian* Novel by Kevin Kwan. *LingPoet: Journal of Linguistics and Literary Research*, 2(1), 72-85. <http://talenta.usu.ac.id/lingpoet>
- Nurman, M., Kuncara, S. D., Mujahir, F. (2020). Class Exploitation in Ron Rash's *Serena* Novel: A Marxist Criticism. *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya*, 4(3), 492-505. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30872/jbssb.v5i1.3144>
- Oversveen. E., & Kelly, C. A. (2022). Labour, Capital and the Struggle over History: Reconstructing Marxist Class Theory from the Standpoint of Alienation. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 26(3). <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/13684310221129981>
- Panigrahi, S. S. (2025). Beyond the Text: Marxism and the Social Context of Literary Creation. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 10(3), 92-96. https://ijels.com/upload_document/issue_files/15IJELS-104202573-Beyond.pdf
- Prasetya, L. T. (2022). Representasi kelas sosial dalam film Gundala (Analisis semiotika Roland Barthes). *Jurnal Audiens*, 3(3), 91-105.
- Puspita, E., Kuncara, S. D., Fatimah, M. (2023). Social Class Oppression in Ally Condie's *Crossed* Novel: A Marxist Criticism. *Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, Seni, dan Budaya*, 7(4), 1333-1346. <https://e-journals.unmul.ac.id/index.php/JBSSB/article/view/8295/5601>
- Putri, A. F. P. (2025). *Representasi Identitas dan Konflik Sosial Budaya Tokoh dalam Novel Lampuki Karya Arafat Nur*. [Master's thesis, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang]. <https://eprints.umm.ac.id/id/eprint/14230/>
- Sachan, B. (2024). A sociological investigation of the theoretical underpinnings and applied consequences of social stratification. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Arts, Science and Technology*, 2(8), 51-61.
- Subekti, F. M., & Prihandini, A. (2022). Kelas Sosial di Novel *The Great Gatsby*. *Mahadaya Jurnal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya*, 2(2), 187-196. <https://doi.org/10.34010/mhd.v2i2.7679>
- Sudirman, F. (2025). *Social Class Portrayal in Wonka: A Marxist Critical Analysis*. [Undergraduate's Thesis, Universitas Bung Hatta]. <https://repository.bunghatta.ac.id/id/eprint/1362/1/COVER.pdf>
- Storey, J. (2021). *Cultural theory and popular culture: An introduction* (9th ed.). Routledge.
- Sudikan, S. Y. (2007). *Antropologi Sastra*. Surabaya: Unesa University Press.

- Suseno, F. M. (2016). *Pemikiran Karl Marx Dari Sosialisme Utopis ke Perselisihan Revisionisme*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Toft, M. (2019). Mobility closure in the upper class: Assessing time and forms of capital. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 70(1), 109-137.
- Tyson, L. (2021). *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide* (3rd ed.). Routledge.
- Wellek, R., & Warren, A. (2021). *Theory of literature*. Princeton University Press.

CURRICULUM VITAE



Dhenisa Reshi Prestia was born in Pasuruan on May 18, 2001.

She graduated from high school at SMAN 4 Pasuruan in 2019.

During her school years, she had an interest in arts and culture, so she chose the Traditional Dance extracurricular to develop her

talents. After graduating, she continued her studies at the Faculty

of Humanities, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, majoring in English

Literature. During college, she took a concentration in tour guiding and had an

internship program at Jawa Timur Park 3 for forty days to gain practical experience

in the field of tour guiding.