

NARRATING LOCAL WISDOM IN ANDREA HIRATA'S *GURU AINI*: A CULTURAL STUDY THROUGH THE SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE AND INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE THEORY

Asriani, M. Manugeran

Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

E-mail: asriani.algazi@gmail.com

Received: 2025-10-18

Accepted: 2025-11-07

Published: 2025-11-15

Abstract

This study explores local wisdom in Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini* using a qualitative descriptive method supported by the Sociology of Literature approach and Indigenous Knowledge Theory. The research focuses on identifying and analyzing five core values of Indonesian local wisdom portrayed in the novel: mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), respect for elders, simple lifestyle, love for family, and preservation of cultural traditions. These values are explored through the characters, setting, plot, and dialogue, all of which reflect the socio-cultural life of the Belitung community. The primary data source is the 2020 edition of *Guru Aini*, complemented by scholarly references from previous studies. The findings clearly show that all five values of local wisdom are consistently and meaningfully present throughout the novel. Each value is embedded not only in the actions and attitudes of the characters but also in the social interactions and traditions depicted in the narrative. Thus, the novel serves both as a literary text and a cultural repository, offering insight into Indonesia's traditional knowledge systems. This research concludes that literature, particularly novels like *Guru Aini*, can be a powerful medium for preserving cultural identity and transmitting ethical values. The findings demonstrate that *Guru Aini* portrays five values of Indonesian local wisdom through narrative structure and characterization, reinforcing literature's role as a cultural repository and educational tool for character development.

Keywords: *Guru Aini*; indigenous knowledge; Indonesian values; literary sociology; local wisdom

1. Introduction

Local wisdom, also known as indigenous or traditional knowledge, represents the cultural values, practices, and life philosophies that have been inherited through generations. It is rooted in local communities' deep understanding of nature, social structures, and spiritual beliefs. Despite rapid technological development and globalization, the relevance of local wisdom remains strong, especially in addressing issues like environmental degradation, cultural erosion, and social disintegration (Irmayani & Larola & Yusriadi, 2021; Simanjuntak & Chintia, 2022).

Literature, particularly the novel, functions as a powerful medium for expressing and preserving local wisdom. Through character development, setting, and narrative structure, authors embed traditional values that reflect communal life. As Parhan & Dwiputra (2023) argue, novels set in rural areas often convey values such as mutual cooperation, harmony with nature, and collective strength in facing hardship. In a novel, characters often embody these local values. A protagonist who is wise, patient, and resilient can represent an ideal societal figure. Many of the character conflicts emerge from the tension between modernity and tradition, or between individual desires and communal duties. The setting, with its vivid portrayal of local life, also serves to illustrate and reinforce cultural identity (Adam & Ismail & Ali, 2022). Andrea Hirata's *Guru Aini* is a literary work that powerfully embodies local wisdom. The novel follows Desi Istiqomah, a devoted young mathematics teacher who willingly accepts a teaching post in a remote Sumatran island. There, she faces numerous challenges, from inadequate school infrastructure to student disinterest. Still, with enthusiasm and sincerity, she works to inspire her students (Yanti & Gusriani, 2021).

The novel reflects values such as traditional communal (*gotong royong*), cooperation, respect, love for family, and perseverance. The spirit of *gotong royong*, or mutual assistance, which is one of the core values of Indonesian local wisdom. Community members support one another not only materially but emotionally, reflecting a sense of shared responsibility.

Astuti & Fatimah & Mualafina (2023) highlight that the novel also portrays close connections between humans and nature, the culture of helping one another in solving problems, and the deep respect for elders. Moreover, environmental conservation is another key message, conveyed through the picturesque descriptions of the island's natural beauty (Gulo & Riana & Harefa & Bu'ulolo, 2023).

Ultimately, *Guru Aini* is more than a story of a teacher, it is a celebration of Indonesian values. The novel emphasizes the importance of education, the challenges of remote regions, and the inner strength of individuals rooted in tradition. As Ismawati & Warsito (2019) note, the novel raises timeless issues: educational disparity, ecological consciousness, and the teacher's role in shaping character. This research, titled *Narrating Local Wisdom: A Cultural Study of Andrea Hirata's Guru Aini*, focuses on five major elements: traditional communal cooperation, respect for elders, simple lifestyle, love for family, and preservation of cultural traditions. It adopts a descriptive qualitative method supported by the Sociology of Literature and Indigenous Knowledge Theory to explore how these values are expressed and preserved in the narrative.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sociology of Literature

The sociology of literature is a theoretical approach that examines literary works based on their relationship with society. It views literature not only as a personal or artistic expression but as a social document reflecting the norms, struggles, and values of the time in which it was produced (Ahmadi, 2021). This approach is particularly useful in analyzing national and modern literature, especially novels, as they often mirror societal structures and changes. As Laurensen & Swingewood (1972) assert, literary imagination must be understood within its empirical context. Literary works, while imaginative, are deeply rooted in social realities. Ratna (2004) identifies three main perspectives within this approach: textual analysis as a reflection of society, authorial background, and reader reception within a social context. According to

Pradopo (2001), literature does not emerge in a vacuum; it develops along with societal dynamics. Spencer (2010) adds that literature can be studied both sociologically and biographically. The sociology of literature thus serves both theoretical and empirical functions, highlighting how literature reflects and interacts with its cultural surroundings. Hasanah (2022) explains that textual analysis in literature reveals deeper social meanings and structures. Endraswara (2013) and Fauziyyah (2023) emphasize that literature stems from real-life experiences and serves as a vehicle for cultural expression through language. Smith (2018) echoes this view, highlighting literature as a mirror of people's lives.

Definitions of literature vary, including interpretations such as art, natural emotional expression, language-based thought, and reflections of life's beauty and meaning (Nabur & Danu, 2019; Sevia, 2024). These definitions all emphasize literature's role in conveying human experience and moral insight. From a functional perspective, literature serves as a tool for social reform, education, and entertainment (Vana, 2024). It reshapes cultural traditions and provides ethical guidance. This is particularly relevant in the context of *Guru Aini*, where local wisdom such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), respect for elders, and simple living are embedded in the narrative.

2.2 Indigenous Knowledge Theory

Indigenous Knowledge Theory complements the sociology of literature by offering a conceptual framework that examines how traditional knowledge is formed, sustained, and practiced in daily life. It allows for a deeper understanding of how values found in literary texts, such as mutual cooperation, respect for elders, and cultural preservation, are rooted in real community knowledge systems, particularly in the Belitung society depicted in *Guru Aini*. Both the sociology of literature and Indigenous Knowledge Theory stress the socio-cultural context in knowledge production. Knowledge is seen as a result of the interaction between individuals and their environment. Unlike Western paradigms, Indigenous Knowledge Theory emphasizes validating traditional knowledge within its own context and rejecting the need to measure it against external (Western) standards.

As Sánchez-Villagra (2022) notes, Indigenous Knowledge is not merely a collection of facts but a holistic system involving ecological, spiritual, and social aspects. For example, understanding medicinal plants is not just about their use but also includes associated rituals and cultural significance. Doja (2008) emphasizes the role of oral tradition, stories, songs, and rituals, as vital tools in transmitting indigenous knowledge across generations. This orality allows the knowledge to adapt and evolve with time while preserving core values. Graf & Mescoli (2020) point out that this theory helps promote global cultural diversity and address contemporary issues such as climate change and sustainable development. Indigenous communities, through time-tested knowledge systems, provide practical and ethical approaches to environmental and social challenges.

Senanayake (2006) classifies Indigenous Knowledge into five subtypes: Indigenous Environmental Knowledge: related to natural resource management and sustainability; Indigenous Technological Knowledge: covering traditional technologies like agriculture and craft; Indigenous Health Knowledge: dealing with herbal medicine and health rituals; Indigenous Cosmological Knowledge: concerning worldviews, ancestral beliefs, and spiritual practices; Indigenous Pedagogical Knowledge: about traditional methods

of teaching and knowledge transfer; In the context of this research, the most relevant subtypes are Indigenous Environmental Knowledge and Indigenous Cosmological Knowledge, as these align with the five local wisdom values studied: *gotong royong*, respect for elders, simple living, love for family, and cultural preservation.

Indigenous Environmental Knowledge covers: *Gotong royong* in managing natural resources; A simple lifestyle in harmony with nature; Cultural traditions linked to environmental stewardship. Indigenous Cosmological Knowledge: Respect for elders as bearers of ancestral knowledge; Family as the core of social and spiritual life; Cultural traditions as part of cosmological continuity (Senanayake, 2006; Saefullah, 2021).

The theory also recognizes that Indigenous Knowledge is contextual, dynamic, and interconnected. For instance, traditional medicinal practices are closely tied to environmental knowledge and spiritual beliefs. Levi-Strauss (1978) reminds us that although indigenous groups are often marginalized in the face of modernity and globalization, their knowledge systems are valid and deeply sophisticated. The challenge lies in integrating this knowledge into modern discourses without reducing its meaning.

2.3 Types of Local Wisdom

2.3.1 *Gotong Royong* (Traditional Communal Cooperation)

Gotong royong, or traditional communal cooperation, is a unique Indonesian cultural value rooted in togetherness, sincerity, and collective responsibility. It manifests in daily life, from disaster recovery to building homes and organizing ceremonies (Sinaini & Iwe, 2020). Despite modern challenges like individualism and urbanization, *gotong royong* remains vital for social cohesion and national development. Preserving it requires collective effort through education, policy support, and modern adaptations (Dewanti & Dewanti & Hodriani, 2023).

2.3.2 Respect for Elders

Respecting elders reflects the community's acknowledgment of wisdom, experience, and tradition. It is instilled from family, school, and workplace settings and serves as a cultural glue for intergenerational harmony (Colucci, 2016). However, modern lifestyles and globalization are eroding this value. Continuous efforts are needed to instill respect through education, social reinforcement, and role modeling (Shamsikhani & Ahmadi & Kazemnejad & Vaismoradi, 2022).

2.3.3 Simple Lifestyle

A simple lifestyle emphasizes balance, harmony with nature, and gratitude. Rooted in ancestral practices, it counters the excesses of modern consumerism and promotes sustainability and mental well-being (Kronenberg & Iida, 2011). Though modernization presents challenges, integrating tradition with innovation (like promoting local products through technology) can preserve this lifestyle. Government and community cooperation are essential in sustaining this heritage (Montero-Sandiego et al., 2024).

2.3.4 Love for Family

Family values are central in Indonesian local wisdom, where extended family systems foster moral guidance, cooperation, and social support. Traditions around birth,

marriage, and death strengthen family bonds (An, 2020). Challenges such as urbanization and individualism threaten these values, yet with government support and societal commitment, family love can be preserved for future generations (Andayani & Ancok & Wulan, 2018).

2.3.5 Preservation of Cultural Tradition

Cultural traditions are essential to national identity, representing the accumulated knowledge, values, and practices of past generations. They strengthen social cohesion, build national character, and foster pride in heritage. Cultural traditions also contribute to moral education and environmental awareness (Ansari et al., 2024).

This research is also supported by previous studies:

Adam, Samsudin Hl, Ismail, Anwar & Ali, Silvani Umar (2022). This study explored the integration of local wisdom in literary literacy among senior high school students in Ternate. Using qualitative methods, the researchers found that embedding local cultural values in teaching practices improved both academic and cultural outcomes.

Surip, M., Dalimunthe, S. & Daulay, M. (2021). This research analyzed local wisdom in North Sumatran short stories using Cultural Theory and Literary Anthropology. It concluded that these stories preserve cultural elements such as language, livelihood, and social systems.

Ismawati, Esti & Warsito, Warsito (2019). This study examined Javanese poetry and its potential as teaching material. It showed that both classical and modern poems are rich in moral and philosophical values, making them effective tools for cultural education.

3. Research Method

The research adopts a qualitative descriptive method with content analysis, aiming to explore five core values of local wisdom: *gotong royong* (communal cooperation), respect for elders, simple lifestyle, love for family, and preservation of cultural traditions. The study is grounded in the Sociology of Literature approach developed by Diana Laurenson & Alan Swingewood (1972), Nyoman Kutha Ratna (2004), and Suwardi Endaswara (2013), supported by Indigenous Knowledge Theory as outlined by Claude Lévi-Strauss (1978). Concepts relevant to each value are drawn from scholars such as La Sinaini & La Iwe (2020), Shamsikhani et al. (2022), Kronenberg & Iida (2011), Montero-Sandiego et al. (2024), An (2020), Andayani et al. (2018), Ansari et al. (2024), and R. Saputra (2024).

The primary data source is the novel *Guru Aini* (2020), analyzed through systematic procedures including thorough reading, annotation, keyword identification, and the creation of a matrix to categorize textual evidence. Data analysis follows the steps proposed by Sugiyono (2019) and Miles & Huberman (2014), which include data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. This methodological framework enables the researcher to uncover both explicit and implicit representations of local wisdom in the novel, offering cultural insights while also validating the novel's contribution to the preservation of Indonesian identity.

4. Discussion

Employing a sociology of literature approach, focused on sociology of text and guided by Indigenous Knowledge Theory, this research seeks to illuminate how the

novel embodies and reflects the cultural values and traditions of the Belitong community. Building upon prior research in the field, this section will systematically unfold the manifestations of five distinct local wisdom tenets: *gotong royong* (Traditional Communal Cooperation), Respect for Elders, Simple Lifestyle, Love for Family, and Preservation of Cultural Traditions. Through detailed textual analysis, this part will demonstrate how these crucial elements of local wisdom are intricately woven into the narrative, character development, and societal interactions depicted in *Guru Aini*, serving not merely as background but as foundational pillars shaping the lives and aspirations of its characters. Each sub-section will delve into specific textual evidence, offering a nuanced interpretation of how these indigenous knowledges are portrayed and their significance within the broader cultural context of the novel.

4.1 *Gotong Royong* (Traditional Communal Cooperation)

Gotong royong also emphasizes collective responsibility. The welfare and sustainability of the community are seen as a shared responsibility, with each individual contributing to maintaining harmony and progress. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, *gotong royong* serves as a social glue that unites various ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, transcending differences and creating strong bonds. *Gotong royong* is a reflection of local wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation; although its practices may vary according to local customs and needs, its profound essence remains the same (Levi-Strauss, 1978; Dewanti & Dewanti & Hodriani, 2023).

In the context of Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini*, *gotong royong* is explored as a real manifestation of local wisdom that shapes the character of its people, especially in how they face challenges, build communities, and support the education system, as represented in the discussion of "Traditional Communal Cooperation (*Gotong royong*)"

"Ibu Amanah datang ke rumah Desi atas undangan ibu Desi yang sudah kehabisan cara untuk membujuk anak gadisnya (Hirata, 2020, p.2, lines 22-24)."

This data, although brief, is one of the strong initial images of how the spirit of mutual cooperation is manifested in the daily lives of the people in the novel *Guru Aini*. *Gotong royong* (traditional communal cooperation) is not always in the form of large physical activities such as building bridges or cleaning villages, but also moral, emotional, and intellectual support between individuals in facing personal difficulties.

In this case, Ibu Desi was in a desperate situation with her daughter. This was a very complicated personal problem, but rather than give up or face it alone, she chose to seek help and support from others in her community. The invitation to Ibu Amanah shows a belief that collective power, even in the form of advice or the presence of a friend, can bring solutions. This is the essence of *gotong royong*: the realization that burdens are lighter when carried together, and that community is a social safety net.

The presence of Ibu Amanah, who is most likely a respected figure or has wisdom, is a representation of a reliable community resource. Mutual cooperation here is not only about providing material assistance, but also about empathy and concern. Ibu Amanah shows her concern by accepting the invitation, indicating that she feels the difficulties experienced by Ibu Desi. With the arrival of Ibu Amanah, Ibu Desi no longer feels alone in facing Desi's problems. The burden of thought is slightly divided. Although it is not yet clear what Ibu Amanah will do, her presence opens up the possibility of discussion,

exchange of ideas, and the search for alternative solutions that Ibu Desi might not have thought of alone.

This quote is the initial foundation of how Andrea Hirata describes local wisdom through interactions between characters. Mutual cooperation here is a social mechanism that helps individuals and families overcome challenges, strengthens community ties, and emphasizes that no one struggles alone in a caring society. This is how local people realize the values of togetherness in facing various dynamics of life, both public and private.

4.2 Respect for Elders

Respect for elders is a fundamental pillar in the social structure of Indonesian society, clearly etched as a form of local wisdom passed down from generation to generation. It is not merely about etiquette or politeness; rather, it is a value symbolizing the recognition of their experience, wisdom, and crucial role in preserving traditions and guiding younger generations. This respect often manifests in various aspects of life, from how one speaks and behaves, to seeking advice, and giving priority in social interactions roots (Shamsikhani & Ahmadi & Kazemnejad & Vaismoradi, 2022).

In Andrea Hirata's novel *Guru Aini*, although it might not always be explicitly narrated as "showing respect to elders," this value is most likely woven into various character interactions and dynamics. An author like Andrea Hirata, who is strong in depicting Malay culture and the local wisdom of the hinterland, would implicitly or explicitly show this practice. In the interactions between teachers and students, even though Desi is a young teacher, she will most likely be taught and expected to show respect to the headmaster, senior teachers, or older community figures. This is not just because of hierarchy, but also because they are considered to have richer experience in education and life. The students, in turn, will also be educated to respect their teachers, who are older and more knowledgeable in terms of age and position.

In addition, in the context of a community like Ketumbi, local wisdom about respecting elders will be seen in the way decisions are made or problems are solved. Elderly figures or village elders may be the main reference or advisor in facing various challenges. The role of Ibu Amanah who was invited by Ibu Desi (as we have discussed) can also be seen as a form of respect. Ibu Desi shows respect by asking for help and advice from someone who is believed to have more mature experience and views. "Respect for elders" in *Guru Aini* not only functions as an ethical norm, but also as a foundation that maintains social harmony and the transmission of knowledge between generations. This is local wisdom that ensures that past experiences and wisdom continue to be a guide for the present and the future, forming a solid, orderly, and respectful community character.

The data below obtained from the novel *Guru Aini* describes respect for elders as a pillar of local wisdom.

'Ibu memegang tanganku erat, tatapan matanya penuh harap dan kekhawatiran yang bercampur aduk. 'Desi, Nak, pikirkan lagi. Ada banyak pekerjaan lain yang lebih mudah, lebih dekat dengan kita, dan gajinya pasti jauh lebih besar. Jangan sia-siakan bakatmu untuk menjadi guru di daerah terpencil seperti itu.' Aku tersenyum tipis, menggelengkan kepala perlahan, dan dengan suara mantap yang kuharap bisa meyakinkan hatinya, kujawab, 'Terima kasih, Bu, tapi aku hanya mau menjadi guru.' Tidak ada yang lain, tidak pernah ada

yang lain, selain panggilan di hatiku untuk mengabdikan pada ilmu dan anak-anak yang haus akan itu. Bagiku, tidak ada pilihan karier yang bisa sebanding dengan kebahagiaan dan makna yang akan didapatkan dari mengajar (Hirata, 2020, p.32, line 16).''

This data, although highlighting Desi's determination and idealism as a prospective teacher, paradoxically depicts *gotong royong* from a different perspective, namely as a form of indirect support or even "resistance" to personal choices that will then receive community support. Basically, the dialogue between Desi and her mother shows *gotong royong* in a broader context, as an effort by the family and close environment to "safeguard" or "secure" the future of its members, even though the chosen method may feel contrary to the individual's wishes.

In this dialogue, Desi's concerns and her offer to choose another job that is "easier, closer, and pays more" are a reflection of the instinct of mutual cooperation within the nuclear family. Desi, with all her love and concerns, wants to ensure that her child has a "good" and "safe" life according to common standards. This is a form of mutual cooperation based on the deep concern and protective responsibility of parents towards their children. Desi tries to "shoulder" the burden of her future by offering alternatives that are considered more promising, even though Desi herself has a different calling. This internal debate shows the natural urge within a social unit (family) to help each other and maintain the well-being of its members, even if it means trying to direct their life choices.

However, on the other hand, Desi's firm refusal confirms that traditional communal cooperation does not always mean absolute harmony in every aspect. Her idealism to become a teacher, despite all the risks and the distance of the location, will eventually trigger a different and more real form of mutual cooperation from the Ketumbi community (as seen in the previous data with the donation of goods). This conversation with her mother becomes the starting point that underlines Desi's determination, which will later be answered by traditional communal cooperation in the form of adaptive support from the Ketumbi community. So, although at first there was a kind of "discordance" in the way mutual cooperation was interpreted between mother and daughter (one wanted to protect from difficulties, one wanted to realize idealism), in the end, Desi's journey to Ketumbi and her acceptance by the community there were the end result of a series of mutually complementary mutual cooperation actions: family protection at the beginning, and unexpected community support later on.

4.3 Simple Lifestyle

A simple lifestyle, deeply intertwined with local wisdom, often emphasizes sustainability, community, and contentment with less. In many traditional societies, this wisdom encourages living in harmony with nature, utilizing resources thoughtfully, and practicing self-sufficiency. It prioritizes communal well-being over individual accumulation, fostering strong social bonds through shared responsibilities and mutual support. This approach often involves appreciating artisanal skills, valuing locally sourced goods, and upholding traditions that promote mindfulness and gratitude. Ultimately, a simple lifestyle guided by local wisdom champions a life rich in experiences, relationships, and purpose, rather than material possessions, leading to a profound sense of peace and belonging within one's environment and community (Kronenberg & Iida, 2011).

“Desi membetulkan hijabnya lalu menguatkan ikatan tali sepatunya, sepatu hadiah dari ayahnya itu. Sepatu yang masih tampak putih bersih, begitu putih sehingga mengkilap. Garis-garis merah di sisi-sisinya cemerlang. Sepatu itu adalah satu-satunya miliknya, yang dirawatnya dengan penuh perhatian dan kehati-hatian, bukti bahwa baginya, setiap benda berharga dan patut dijaga, merefleksikan gaya hidup sederhana yang memaknai setiap pemberian...(Hirata, 2020, p.12, line 23).”

This singular passage, though brief, is a microcosm of the simple lifestyle that permeates the Belitong community. Desi's shoes are more than just footwear; they are a tangible representation of a deeply ingrained local wisdom. The fact that they are her "only pair" immediately establishes a lack of excess, a fundamental characteristic of simple living. In a world saturated with consumerism and the fleeting gratification of acquiring new possessions, Desi's situation highlights a life where needs are met with sufficiency rather than extravagance. This is not a lament of poverty, but an understated acceptance of circumstance, transforming it into a virtue.

Desi's meticulous care for her shoes – keeping them "pristine white" and shining despite their presumably frequent use – speaks volumes. This act of "great attention and caution" transcends mere tidiness; it signifies a profound respect for her belongings. In a simple lifestyle, items are not disposable commodities. They are valuable assets that are meant to last, to be maintained, and to serve their purpose for as long as possible. This approach inherently reduces waste and fosters a sense of gratitude for what one possesses, rather than a constant yearning for the next new thing. It is a practical manifestation of sustainability, long before the term became a global catchphrase, rooted in generations of living harmoniously with limited resources.

4.4 Love for Family

In the world of *Guru Aini*, family is the bedrock upon which dreams are built and endured, a sanctuary of belonging and an irreplaceable source of strength. Family in *Guru Aini* serves as an indispensable emotional and practical safety net. When individuals face setbacks, despair, or the overwhelming weight of their circumstances, it is often the unwavering support of their family that provides the courage to continue. This support might come in the form of quiet encouragement, practical assistance, or simply a shared understanding of their struggles. The concept of *gotong royong* (traditional communal cooperation), another significant local wisdom, is frequently first experienced and most intensely practiced within the family unit before extending to the wider community. This internal solidarity strengthens the familial bond, creating a resilient micro-society capable of weathering external storms. The family becomes a place where vulnerability is accepted, and burdens are shared, ensuring no one faces their challenges entirely alone.

The powerful theme of love for family in *Guru Aini* is far more than a sentimental notion; it is a vital point of local wisdom that underpins the very fabric of society in Belitong. It manifests as a selfless dedication, an enduring source of support, and a primary motivator for perseverance. Through the struggles and triumphs of its characters, Hirata's novel beautifully illustrates how these unbreakable familial bonds foster resilience, inspire sacrifice, and ultimately provide the unwavering foundation upon which individual dreams, and indeed, the future of the community, can truly

flourish.

Here is the data from the novel *Guru Aini* that illustrates Love for Family:
'Akhirnya Desi siap naik bus. Ayahnya menghampirinya. Terperanjat Desi melihat ayahnya tiba-tiba bertekuk lutut di depannya dan membuka simpul tali sepatunya. Tali sepatu itu lalu pelan-pelan diikat kembali oleh ayahnya, dengan cara yang aneh, yaitu setelah disimpul, tali sepatu itu diputar kebeakang dan disimpul lagi di belakang kaki (Hirata, 2020, p.13, line 13-19).''

Andrea Hirata's *Guru Aini* profoundly illustrates the unwavering love for family as a vital butir kearifan lokal, deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of Belitung. This love is not always expressed through grand declarations; more often, it is conveyed through actions of quiet devotion and heartfelt sacrifice. One such moment, particularly poignant and revealing, occurs on page 13, lines 13-19, as Desi prepares to embark on her journey.

The scene unfolds as Desi, ready to board the bus, is approached by her father. The narrative describes a startling moment: "Desi was startled to see her father suddenly kneel before her and untie her shoelaces. Her father then slowly re-tied the laces, in a strange way, by tying them behind her foot after making a knot. This specific, intimate gesture is loaded with layers of meaning, speaking volumes about the profound familial bond and the father's deep love for his daughter.

Firstly, the act of the father kneeling before his daughter is highly symbolic. In many cultures, kneeling signifies respect, humility, or even a plea. Here, a father, typically a figure of authority and strength, humbles himself before his child. This extraordinary gesture underscores the immense deference and devotion he holds for Desi and her future. It is a silent blessing, an act of service that transcends typical parent-child dynamics, highlighting a love so vast it overrides conventional social standing. It demonstrates a father's willingness to put his child's well-being and readiness above his own pride or position.

Secondly, the father's action of untying and then meticulously re-tying her shoelaces in a unique way ("in a strange way, namely after being knotted, the shoelaces are turned back and knotted again at the back of the foot") is far more than just a practical adjustment. Given the previous emphasis on Desi's single, precious pair of shoes (Data 1, Data 3, Data 4), this careful attention to her footwear suggests a desire to ensure her comfort, safety, and readiness for the journey ahead. The "strange" or unusual way of re-tying the laces could symbolize a father's unique way of protecting or preparing his child for the unknown. It might be a practical tip for durability, a special "knot" that only he knows, or simply a way to spend a few more precious moments ensuring her readiness. Regardless of its practical efficacy, it is undeniably a gesture imbued with deep care, foresight, and a subtle desire to leave her with something uniquely "his" that will help her on her path.

This entire interaction is a powerful demonstration of selfless parental love. It conveys a silent message of support, encouragement, and a father's deep emotional investment in his daughter's journey. In communities where material wealth might be scarce, these acts of intimate care and sacrifice become the most potent expressions of affection and commitment. This scene, devoid of dialogue, speaks a universal language of love, a father's heartfelt prayer and hope for his child's success, physically manifested through the tender re-tying of her shoelaces. It is a beautiful illustration of how love for

family in *Guru Aini* is expressed through deeply personal, sometimes unconventional, but always profoundly meaningful gestures, cementing it as a foundational local wisdom.

4.5 Preservation of Cultural Traditions

In the context of Andrea Hirata's novel "Guru Aini," although its primary focus is education and a math teacher's struggle, the essence of cultural preservation is implicitly interwoven through the depiction of the Malay community's life in Belitong. While not explicitly discussing traditional ceremonies or arts, the novel illustrates how the Saputra, 2024, such as the spirit of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), perseverance in the face of limitations, and the importance of education as a path out of poverty, are consistently upheld and passed down. This represents a more subtle form of cultural tradition preservation: the preservation of values and a way of life that form a community's identity, championed by characters like Ibu Aini and her students for a better future without forgetting their roots (Ansari, et al, 2024; Saputra, 2024).

Andrea Hirata, through the novel *Guru Aini*, not only presents a touching story of educational struggle, but also subtly carves a portrait of Belitong society with all the richness of its local wisdom. Among the noble values that shine through, the preservation of cultural traditions emerges as a crucial foundation that maintains identity, strengthens social cohesion, and provides a moral foothold amidst the currents of modernization. This is not merely about preserving old rituals, but about how society consciously maintains their ancestral heritage to remain relevant, meaningful, and serve as a guide for future generations. In *Guru Aini*, cultural tradition is the breath of life that shapes worldview, ethics, and togetherness, demonstrating that the true strength of a community lies in its ability to firmly hold onto its cultural roots.

More than that, the preservation of cultural traditions in *Guru Aini* also serves as a guardian of social harmony. Communal rituals, traditional ceremonies, or the custom of sharing create spaces for the community to interact, strengthen bonds of kinship, and resolve conflicts. Tradition becomes the glue that reinforces a sense of togetherness and collective identity, especially amidst the harsh challenges of life. This demonstrates that tradition is not just a fossil of the past, but an adaptive mechanism that continues to function to maintain balance and social solidarity in the present.

Ultimately, through its portrayal of community life, *Guru Aini* invites us to reflect that the preservation of cultural traditions is an active endeavor in safeguarding invaluable intangible heritage. It represents local wisdom that teaches us true progress must be balanced with an understanding of our origins, and that a community's identity will remain strong as long as its cultural roots are continuously nurtured and maintained.

The preservation of cultural traditions as a point of local wisdom is illustrated in the novel *Guru Aini*, through the following data:

Kerap Desi mendengar orang berkata begitu padanya. "Tak berminat menjadi model, Bu. Negeri ini kekurangan guru matematika, terutama di kampung-kampung." (Hirata, 2020, p.2, lines 5-7)

The data, "Desi often heard people say that to her. 'Not interested in becoming a model, Ma'am. This country lacks mathematics teachers, especially in the villages.' (page 2, lines 5-7)", although seemingly not explicitly depicting cultural tradition, carries profound implications about the cultural values strongly held by the character

Desi and, more broadly, the community in the novel *Guru Aini*.

Desi's choice to become a math teacher and her refusal of a modeling offer reflect several important aspects of local wisdom related to the preservation of cultural traditions. In the context of the novel, especially with the backdrop of a remote area lacking teachers, Desi's choice affirms the high cultural value placed on education. The community values knowledge and the role of teachers as pillars of progress. This is a noble tradition that is highly upheld, where education is seen as a way out of limitations and a means to improve quality of life. Desi, by choosing the teaching profession over modeling, actively preserves this cultural tradition by dedicating herself to educating the younger generation.

Desi's choice to teach "especially in the villages" demonstrates strong cultural values of traditional communal cooperation (*gotong royong*) and social care. She doesn't pursue a glamorous career but chooses to dedicate herself to communities in need. This reflects a cultural tradition where the common good is prioritized over personal interest. By becoming a teacher in a remote area, Desi preserves this cultural tradition by becoming an agent of positive change and making a real contribution to the progress of her community.

Desi's rejection of the modeling offer, which is often associated with luxury and popularity, implicitly critiques the culture of materialism that is beginning to permeate society. She chooses a noble and beneficial profession rather than chasing fame and wealth. This is a more subtle form of cultural tradition preservation, where spiritual values and dedication are valued more than material possessions.

Desi's choice, as a woman, to actively contribute to education also reflects a positive shift in cultural traditions regarding the role of women. She is not merely seen as an object of beauty (as implied by the modeling offer), but as an individual with the capability and responsibility to contribute to national development. This is a dynamic form of cultural tradition preservation, where old values are reinterpreted to accommodate changing times and provide greater space for women.

Thus, although not explicit, this data holds deep meaning about how Desi, through her career choice, actively preserves cultural traditions that uphold education, community service, spiritual values, and the active role of women in development. Her career choice is a reflection of the local wisdom that is alive and remains relevant in the community of *Guru Aini*.

5. Conclusion

The novel *Guru Aini* by Andrea Hirata serves as a powerful literary representation of Indonesian local wisdom. Through the lens of Sociology of Literature and Indigenous Knowledge Theory, this research has identified and analyzed five core cultural values embedded in the narrative: mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), respect for elders, simple lifestyle, love for family, and preservation of cultural traditions. These values are not only central to the story's characters and events, but they also reflect the real-life practices and beliefs of the Belitung community.

The findings demonstrate that literature plays a vital role in preserving and transmitting cultural identity. By portraying traditional values in an engaging narrative, *Guru Aini* becomes a cultural document that bridges the past and the present. It teaches readers about the importance of collective action, humility, intergenerational respect, familial bonds, and the safeguarding of cultural heritage, values that remain relevant in today's rapidly modernizing world.

Moreover, this study highlights the role of education and literature in countering the erosion of local identity due to globalization. Through qualitative content analysis, it is evident that literary works can serve as ethical laboratories where cultural values are tested, reinforced, and reimagined. Thus, *Guru Aini* is not just a novel; it is a meaningful contribution to the preservation of Indonesian wisdom and a valuable resource for cultural and educational development.

References

- Adam, S. H., Ismail, A., & Ali, S. U. (2022). Local wisdom-based literary literacy in language and literature learning for senior high school students in Ternate: Strategies and obstacles. *Language Literacy: Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Language Teaching*, 6(1), 45-60. <https://doi.org/10.30743/ll.v6i1.4482>
- Ahmadi, R. (2021). Sociology of literature. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Studies*, 3(1), 12-25.
- Andayani, B., Ancok, D., & Wulan, R. (2018). From love to family happiness: A theoretical model for Javanese family. *European Journal of Social Science, Education and Research*, 5(1), 15-28. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ejser-2018-0003>
- Ansari, I., Santoso, B., Wijaya, C., & Pratama, D. (2024). Cultural heritage preservation: Challenges and prospects for preserving art and religious traditions in Indonesia. *International Journal of Religion*, 5(10), 2857-2862. <https://doi.org/10.61707/a7aqe352>
- Astuti, A., Fatimah, S., & Mualafina, R. (2023). Nilai moral dalam novel Guru Aini karya Andrea Hirata: Kajian sosiologi sastra. *Sasindo*, 11(1), 1-16.
- Colucci, D. (2016). Respect (and treat!) your elders. *The Hearing Journal*, 69(8), 31-32. <https://doi.org/10.1097/01.HJ.0000484549.82925.bd>
- Dewanti, P. A., Dewanti, U. A., & Hodriani. (2023). *Gotong royong* dalam memperkuat partisipasi warga negara. *Pancasila and Civic Education Journal*, 2(1), 15-25.
- Doja, A. (2008). Claude Lévi-Strauss at his centennial: Toward a future anthropology. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 25(7-8), 321-340. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276408097810>
- Endraswara, S. (2013). *Sosiologi sastra*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: UNY Press.
- Fauziyyah, F. (2023). Bread & Roses: Sociological analysis of literature and its relevance to the present in the context of the working class. *Saksama: Jurnal Sastra*, 2(1), 30-45.
- Graf, K., & Mescoli, E. (2020). Special issue introduction: From nature to culture? Lévi-Strauss' legacy and the study of contemporary foodways. *Food, Culture & Society*, 23(4), 465-471. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2020.1773692>
- Gulo, Y., Riana, R., Harefa, N. A. J., & Bu'ulolo, Y. (2023). Analisis interaksi sosial dalam novel guru aini karya Andrea Hirata. *J-Simbol: Jurnal Magister Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 12(2), 55-68.
- Hasanah, A. A. (2022). Sociology of literature as approach in the study of religious texts. *Jurnal Sastra*, 7(2), 45-60. <https://doi.org/10.36709/bastra.v7i2.80>
- Hirata, A. (2020). *Guru Aini* (1st ed.). Jakarta, Indonesia: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Irmayani, I., Larola, A., & Yusriadi, Y. (2021). Kajian kearifan lokal (local wisdom) budidaya padi (Studi Kasus Di Desa Sadar Kecamatan Tellu Limpoe Kabupaten Bone). *Jurnal Ilmiah Ecosystem*, 21(1), 85-98. <https://doi.org/10.35965/eco.v21i1.688>

- Ismawati, E., & Warsito, W. (2019). Local wisdom in the Javanese literary works as teaching materials. In *Proceedings of the 28th International Conference on Literature: "Literature as a Source of Wisdom"* (pp. 123-135). Universitas Syiah Kuala.
- Kronenberg, J., & Iida, N. (2011). Simple living and sustainable consumption. *Problemy Ekorozwoju*, 6(2), 67-74.
- Laurenson, D., & Swingewood, A. (1972). *The sociology of literature*. London, England: Paladin Publishing Limited.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1978). *Myth and meaning*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Montero-Sandiego, E., Ruiz-Robledillo, N., Ferrer-Cascales, R., Clement-Carbonell, V., Alcocer-Bruno, C., & Albaladejo, N. (2024). Spanish validation of the simple lifestyle indicator questionnaire: Validity and reliability analysis. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, 1146010. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1146010>
- Nabur, Y. J., & Danu, A. K. (2019). Penggambaran kelas sosial dalam kumpulan cerpen perjalanan mencari ayam karya armin bell kajian sosiologi sastra marxis. *Prolitera: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Budaya*, 2(2), 45-60.
- Parhan, M., & Dwiputra, D. F. K. (2023). A systematic literature review on local wisdom actualization in character education to face the disruption era. *Journal of Innovation in Educational and Cultural Research*, 4(3), 345-360. <https://doi.org/10.46843/jiecr.v4i3.675>
- Pradopo, R. D. (2001). *Metodologi penelitian sastra*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Hanindita Graha Widia.
- Ratna, N. K. (2004). *Teori, metode, dan teknik penelitian sastra*. Yogyakarta, Indonesia: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Saefullah, K. (2021). Indigenous knowledge: A native perspective of knowing. *Indigenous Knowledge*, 1(1), 15-30.
- Sánchez-Villagra, M. R. (2022). Claude Lévi-Straus as a humanist forerunner of cultural macroevolution studies. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 4, e25. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ehs.2022.30>
- Saputra, R. (2024). Governance frameworks and cultural preservation in Indonesia: Balancing policy and heritage. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 11(3), 25-50. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2145>
- Senanayake, S. G. J. N. (2006). Indigenous knowledge as a key to sustainable development. *Journal of Agricultural Sciences*, 2(1), 87-94.
- Sevia, S. R. (2024). Analysis of sociology literature on the persuasion novel using Renne Wellek and Austin Warren theory. *Elatics*, 1(2), 25-40.
- Shamsikhani, S., Ahmadi, F., Kazemnejad, A., & Vaismoradi, M. (2022). Meaning of respect for older people in family relationships. *Geriatrics*, 7(3), 57. <https://doi.org/10.3390/geriatrics7030057>
- Simanjuntak, A. S. H., & Chintia, Y. (2022). Local wisdom untuk solusi masyarakat global. *Jurnal Riset Rumpun Ilmu Sosial, Politik Dan Humaniora*, 1(2), 72-77. <https://doi.org/10.55606/jurrish.v1i2.151>
- Sinaini, L., & Iwe, L. (2020). Bentuk kegiatan *gotong royong* dalam aspek pertanian dan sosial budaya di kabupaten muna (Studi kasus di desa langkoroni kecamatan

- maligano kabupaten muna). *Jurnal Ilmiah Membangun Desa dan Pertanian*, 5(2), 74-85.
- Smith, J. R. (2018). Textual analysis: A beginner's guide. *Journal of Literary Studies*, 42(3), 123-145.
- Spencer, H. (2010). *The principles of sociology*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metodologi penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung, Indonesia: Alfabeta.
- Surip, M., Dalimunthe, S., & Daulay, M. (2021). The representation of local wisdom in short stories: A study in north Sumatra. *Asian Social Science and Humanities Research Journal*, 3(2), 1-10.
- Vana, J. (2024). Book review: The sociology of literature. *Cultural Sociology*, 18(1), 145-147. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17499755241242670>
- Yanti, Z., & Gusriani, A. (2021). Analisis novel guru aini karya andre hirata dengan pendekatan objektif. *Basastra*, 10(2), 166-180.