



Social Stratification in Dian Purnomo's Perempuan Yang Menangis Kepada Bulan Hitam: A Max Weberian Sociology of Literature Analysis

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Article Info	Abstract
Received: 2026-08-31 Revised: 2026-10-06 Accepted: 2026-10-06 Keywords: <i>Max Weber;</i> <i>novel;</i> <i>social stratification;</i> <i>sociology of literature</i> DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v14i2.12487 Corresponding Author: Alfianto Manoppo manoppoalfianto@gmail.com Study Program of Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, Indonesia	<i>Social stratification remains an important phenomenon that shapes social life through differences in social class, social status, and power. These phenomena are not only evident in real-life communities but are also represented in literary works, including Dian Purnomo's Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam, which portrays the social life of the Sumba community through customary systems, social hierarchies, and unequal power relations. This study aims to analyze the representation of social stratification based on Max Weber's dimensions of social class, social status, and power, as well as to examine the role of social structure in shaping gender inequality. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a sociology of literature approach. The data consist of narrative excerpts, dialogues, and events in the novel that represent social stratification and gender inequality. The findings reveal that social stratification is represented through ownership of economic resources, access to education, social recognition and prestige, and dominance in power relations. The findings also indicate that social structure contributes to the perpetuation of gender inequality through customary practices, patriarchal culture, kinship systems, and unequal distribution of power, which position women in subordinate roles. Furthermore, gender inequality in the novel is not solely produced by patriarchal culture but results from the interaction of social class, social status, and power operating simultaneously within the social structure. Thus, Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam offers a critical reflection on social and gender inequalities within society.</i>

1. Introduction

Social stratification is a social phenomenon that places individuals and groups in different positions within society. These differences may be reflected in access to economic resources, social recognition, authority, and opportunities. According to Maunah (2015:19–20), social stratification refers to the differentiation of society into

hierarchical layers that place individuals or groups in unequal social positions. Weber (as cited in Rosadi, 2024:1–2) views social stratification multidimensionally through three dimensions, namely class, status, and power. Class is related to economic position and life chances, status concerns social honor and prestige, while power refers to the ability to realize one's will within a social relationship, even in the face of resistance. Thus, social inequality cannot be understood solely through differences in economic resources but also through social recognition and power relations.

Social stratification may also intersect with gender relations and contribute to the unequal positioning of women within society. Unequal access to resources, social recognition, and decision-making authority may place women in subordinate positions, particularly when such inequality is reinforced by cultural norms, customary practices, and unequal power relations. Literature provides an important medium for examining these social phenomena because literary works represent social relations, cultural values, conflicts, and inequalities through characters, dialogue, narrative events, and social settings. From the perspective of the sociology of literature, literary works can be examined in relation to the social realities and structures represented within them (Didipu, 2024:131). Therefore, examining social stratification in literary works can provide insight into how social positions, relationships, and inequalities are constructed within a particular social context.

Recent studies on Dian Purnomo's *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* have predominantly focused on gender, patriarchy, discrimination, resistance, and power relations. Damayanti and Ahmadi (2022), for example, examined patriarchal culture and women's resistance in the novel, while Fauziyyah and Sukardi (2023) identified forms of gender discrimination, including marginalization, subordination, stereotyping, violence, and unequal distribution of roles. Sagaravil et al. (2024) examined gender stereotypes and feminist dimensions in the novel, while Anggara and Pangesti (2025) analyzed power relations from Michel Foucault's perspective, particularly forms of control over women's bodies and thoughts in the context of *kawin tangkap*. These studies establish that the novel provides a significant representation of women's subordinate positions and the social structures that contribute to gender inequality.

Studies of social stratification in other literary works have likewise demonstrated that literary texts can represent social hierarchy through economic conditions, social status, and power relations. Setyarum (2016) found that social stratification in *Orang Miskin Dilarang Sekolah* is represented through economic differences that affect access to education and social opportunities. Firmansyah (2019) showed that economic conditions, education, social status, and power influence relationships among characters in *29 Juz Harga Wanita*. Lestaluhu and Latupapua (2021), meanwhile, identified social stratification in *Bumi Manusia* through ascribed and achieved status within the colonial social structure. These studies demonstrate the relevance of social stratification as an analytical perspective in literary research. However, the existing studies on *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* have not specifically examined social stratification through the interconnected dimensions of class, status, and power.

This limitation indicates a gap between existing research and the multidimensional perspective of Weber's theory. Previous studies of the novel have provided valuable explanations of patriarchy, gender discrimination, women's resistance, and power relations, while studies of social stratification in other literary works have generally

focused on particular forms of hierarchy. Limited attention has therefore been given to how class, status, and power operate simultaneously and interact with one another in constructing the social positions of characters in *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*. Furthermore, the relationship between these dimensions of social stratification and the formation and maintenance of gender inequality remains insufficiently examined. This gap is significant because economic resources, social prestige, customary authority, and power relations may operate simultaneously in determining the position of women within the social structure represented in the novel.

Based on this gap, this study addresses two research questions: (1) How is social stratification represented through the dimensions of social class, social status, and power in Dian Purnomo's *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*? (2) How does the social structure contribute to the formation and maintenance of gender inequality represented in the novel? Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the representation of social stratification based on Weber's three dimensions—class, status, and power—and to examine the role of social structure in forming and maintaining gender inequality. The novelty of this study lies in integrating Weber's three dimensions of social stratification into a single analysis of *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* while connecting social stratification with gender inequality. This approach provides a broader understanding of women's subordinate positions by examining not only patriarchal norms but also the interaction of economic position, social prestige, customary authority, and power relations within the represented social structure.

2. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design to analyze the representation of social stratification and the role of social structure in gender inequality in Dian Purnomo's *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*. The qualitative approach was selected because the data consisted of textual elements requiring interpretation of their social meanings. Sugiyono (2023:9) states that qualitative research examines objects in natural conditions and emphasizes meaning through inductive analysis. Creswell (as cited in Istiqomah, 2017:12) similarly explains that qualitative research is used to explore and understand the meaning of social phenomena through words and texts.

The research object was Dian Purnomo's *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*, published by Gramedia Pustaka Utama in 2020. The primary data consisted of words, sentences, dialogues, and narrative passages representing social class, social status, power relations, and gender inequality. The study employed library research, as literary research generally uses written texts as its primary source (Ratna, as cited in Setiadi, 2019:184). Secondary sources included scholarly books and journal articles related to sociology of literature, Weber's social stratification theory, gender inequality, and qualitative research.

Data were collected through reading and note-taking techniques. The novel was read repeatedly to identify relevant passages, which were then marked, recorded, and organized in a data corpus according to the research focus. This procedure is consistent with Tuloli (as cited in Silvana, 2023:30), who states that reading is an initial stage in literary analysis. The researcher served as the main instrument, while the data corpus was used to organize the collected textual data.

Data analysis involved four stages: identification, classification, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. Following Sugiyono (2023:321), qualitative data analysis is conducted throughout the research process. The identified data were classified into class,

status, power, and the role of social structure in gender inequality, then interpreted according to Weber's theory of social stratification and the sociology of literature perspective. The analysis was subsequently synthesized to draw conclusions regarding the representation of social stratification and its relationship to gender inequality in the novel.

3. Result

The findings reveal that social stratification in Dian Purnomo's *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* is represented through three interconnected dimensions of Weber's theory: social class, social status, and power relations. These dimensions are reflected in the characters' access to economic resources, social recognition, customary positions, and authority in social relationships. The findings also indicate that the social structure represented in the novel contributes to gender inequality by placing women in subordinate positions through customary norms, unequal authority, and social expectations. The results are presented in two main focuses: the representation of social stratification through class, status, and power, and the role of social structure in forming and maintaining gender inequality.

1. Representation of Social Stratification Based on Class, Status, and Power Relations

The analysis of social stratification in *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* reveals that social positions among the characters are constructed through three interconnected dimensions, namely social class, social status, and power relations. These dimensions are reflected in differences in access to economic resources, social recognition, customary authority, and the ability to influence decisions and social relationships. The findings are presented according to Weber's three dimensions of social stratification to illustrate how unequal social positions are represented within the social structure of the novel.

a. Social Class

Data 1

"Sebagai anak dari petani di kampung adat, yang bukan orang kaya raya di Sumba, Magi beruntung pernah punya pengalaman bepergian dengan pesawat. Pertama ketika dia berangkat kuliah ke Yogyakarta." (Purnomo, 2023:137)

"As the child of farmers in a traditional village—and not from a wealthy family in Sumba—Magi was fortunate enough to have the experience of traveling by plane. The first time was when she set off for university in Yogyakarta." (Purnomo, 2023, p. 137)

The representation of social class is reflected in the economic background and life chances of the characters. This is illustrated through Magi, who is described as the daughter of a farmer from a customary village and not as a member of a wealthy family. Despite her limited economic background, she has the opportunity to pursue higher education in Yogyakarta. The finding indicates that social class in the novel is represented not only through differences in economic resources but also through unequal opportunities available to individuals.

b. Social Status

Data 2

"Meski bertetangga kabupaten, Kodi buat sebagian besar orang Sumba Barat dianggap sebagai wilayah yang keras orang-orangnya kasar, dan banyak hal buruk lain yang mereka dengar tentang wilayah itu." (Purnomo, 2023:132)

"Even though it is a neighboring district, Kodi is considered by most people in West Sumba to be a tough area with rude people, and they have heard many other bad things about the area." (Purnomo, 2023, p. 132)

Social status is represented through collective social perceptions and evaluations of particular individuals or groups. This finding is illustrated by the negative perception of the Kodi community among people in West Sumba, who associate the region with a harsh character and negative behavior. The finding indicates that social status may be constructed through collective perceptions and stereotypes that influence how individuals or groups are socially regarded.

c. Power Relations

Data 3

"Kasus Leba Ali sudah resmi dihentikan prosesnya. Proses itu sudah SP3, tidak jadi naik ke kejaksan. Polisi beralasan tidak memiliki cukup bukti untuk meneruskan proses hukumnya.... Magi sendiri tidak pernah dimintai keterangan untuk di-BAP, padahal hasil visumnya menyatakan bahwa ada perlukaan di vaginanya." (Purnomo, 2023:108)

"The proceedings in the Leba Ali case have been officially terminated. An *SP3* order was issued, meaning the case did not proceed to the prosecutor's office. The police cited a lack of sufficient evidence to continue with legal proceedings.... Magi herself was never questioned for a formal police statement (*BAP*), even though the medical examination report indicated the presence of vaginal injuries." (Purnomo, 2020, p. 108)

Power relations are represented through unequal access to institutional authority and decision-making processes. This finding is illustrated by the termination of Leba Ali's case despite medical evidence of injury and the absence of Magi's statement during the investigation. The finding indicates that power operates through institutional processes that affect whose interests, voices, and experiences receive consideration.

2. The Role of Social Structure in Gender Inequality

The findings further reveal that social structure plays an important role in shaping gender inequality in *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam*. The inequality is represented through social norms, customary practices, family authority, and unequal decision-making that position women differently from men. Rather than appearing solely as individual experiences, gender inequality is embedded in social practices that regulate women's rights, roles, and choices.

Data 4

"Seperti halnya Rega, Dangu tidak pernah mendengar Magi bercerita kepadanya tentang Leba Ali terkait lamaran, apalagi belis (anak perempuan tak tahu menahu soal perjanjian kawin tangkap sebenarnya juga bukan hal yang baru)" (Purnomo, 2023:21).

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One of the findings is illustrated by the exclusion of Magi from discussions concerning her marriage, including the proposal, *belis*, and *kawin tangkap*. The statement that girls are unaware of agreements concerning *kawin tangkap* indicates that decisions regarding women's marriages can be made by family and customary structures without their involvement. This finding demonstrates that gender inequality operates through established social practices that restrict women's participation in decisions concerning their own lives

Data 5

"Pembicaraan adat sudah tuntas dua hari sebelumnya. Mereka sepakat dengan empat puluh ekor hewan yang akan diserahkan oleh keluarga laki-laki ke keluarga perempuan. Semua hewan itu diberikan langsung di hari yang sama." (Purnomo, 2023:254).

"Customary discussions had been concluded two days prior. They agreed on forty animals to be handed over by the groom's family to the bride's family. All the animals were delivered directly on the same day." (Purnomo, 2023, p. 254).

Another finding is represented through the customary marriage agreement involving *belis*. The agreement of forty animals between the two families illustrates that the marriage arrangement is determined through negotiations between families, while the woman's position is represented through the customary exchange. This finding indicates that customary practices can place women within a social structure in which marriage decisions are strongly influenced by family agreements and established social values.

4. Discussion

1. Representation of Social Stratification Based on Class, Status, and Power Relations

a. Social Class

Data 1 This finding is consistent with Weber's view that class position is related to an individual's access to economic resources and life chances. Weber explains that class refers to the opportunities available to individuals based on their position in the economic order, particularly their access to goods and resources (Weber, 2023:218). In Magi's case, her background as the daughter of a farmer indicates a relatively modest economic position. However, her opportunity to pursue higher education demonstrates that her life chances are not completely determined by her family's economic condition.

Magi's experience of studying in Yogyakarta therefore illustrates that education can expand the opportunities available to individuals from relatively modest economic backgrounds. Her access to higher education provides her with experiences and social opportunities beyond her customary environment. Thus, the novel presents social class not merely through the distinction between wealthy and less wealthy families, but also through differences in the opportunities accessible to individuals.

The finding consequently reinforces Weber's concept that economic position influences an individual's life chances, although it does not necessarily determine them absolutely. Magi's modest economic background places her within a particular class position, while her access to higher education provides an opportunity to broaden her social experience and potential social mobility.

b. Social Status

Data 2 The representation of social status in the novel can be understood through the way a particular community is socially evaluated by other members of society. The statement that Kodi is perceived by many people in West Sumba as a harsh area, whose people are considered rude and associated with various negative characteristics, indicates that social status is not always determined by an individual's economic position. In this case, the reputation attached to Kodi is constructed through collective judgments that influence how the community is perceived within the broader social environment. Thus, the social position of a group may be shaped by the recognition or negative evaluation given by others.

This finding is consistent with Rosyadi et al. (2026:6), who explain from a Weberian perspective that social status is related to the respect and prestige given by society to individuals or groups based on social evaluations that develop within a community. The perception of Kodi in the novel reflects this process because the community is socially evaluated through a collective image associated with toughness, rudeness, and other negative characteristics. The evaluation does not necessarily describe the actual character of every individual from Kodi, but rather forms a shared social perception that influences the way the community is regarded by others.

The finding therefore demonstrates that social status in *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* operates through social recognition and collective perception. A group may acquire a particular social position because of the reputation constructed around it, even when that reputation is based on generalized assumptions or stereotypes. This illustrates that status, in Weber's framework, involves more than material possession; it also concerns the social honor, prestige, or discredit attached to individuals and groups. In the context of the novel, such perceptions contribute to the formation of social boundaries between communities and influence how characters understand and position themselves in relation to others.

c. Power Relations

Data 3 illustrates that power does not operate solely through direct relationships between characters but can also function through institutions that possess the authority to determine the course of a case. The termination of Leba Ali's legal proceedings reflects an unequal position between those who hold institutional authority and Magi as the party directly affected by the incident. The decision to discontinue the case places the institution in a stronger position to determine whether the legal process will proceed.

This condition can be understood through Weber's concept of power. Sari and Nurhasanah (2022:118) explain that power is the ability of an individual or group to maintain their will within a social relationship despite resistance or the interests of other parties (Sari & Nurhasanah, 2022:118). In this context, power is evident in the capacity of those holding institutional authority to make decisions that determine the continuation of legal proceedings. Thus, an individual's position within an institutional structure influences the extent to which their interests and will can be accommodated in decision-making processes.

The finding further demonstrates that unequal power relations can affect an individual's access to justice. Magi occupies a weaker position because she is not fully involved in the examination process, while institutional decisions can nevertheless determine the outcome of a case directly concerning her. Power in the novel therefore does not appear merely as personal domination but is also embedded in positions and authority within the social structure. Accordingly, the power relation represented in this case demonstrates how institutional authority can influence the ability of subordinate parties to obtain recognition and justice.

2. The Role of Social Structure in Gender Inequality

Data 1 and **Data 2** are closely related in illustrating how gender inequality is sustained through the interaction of family authority and customary practices in marriage arrangements. Rather than functioning only as individual acts of domination, these practices indicate that women's subordinate positions are embedded within established social structures that regulate marriage and kinship relations. The normalization of women's limited involvement in such decisions suggests that gender inequality is reproduced through social expectations that grant greater authority to families and customary institutions.

This finding is consistent with Murniati (2020:156), who explains that patriarchal culture in traditional societies often places women in positions with limited access to family decision-making, particularly in matters concerning marriage and kinship relations (Murniati, 2020:156). From this perspective, the practices represented in the novel are not merely individual family decisions but reflect a broader social pattern in which customary expectations legitimize unequal participation between men and women.

The finding can also be understood through Weber's perspective on power. Weber (2023:236) emphasizes that power is related to the capacity of certain actors to exercise authority within social relationships. In the context represented in the novel, customary and family authority gains legitimacy through established social arrangements, allowing those who occupy socially recognized positions of authority to influence decisions affecting women's lives (Weber, 2023:236). Thus, the inequality does not depend solely on direct coercion but is maintained through the legitimacy of social and customary authority.

The novel therefore constructs gender inequality as a structural phenomenon rather than merely the result of individual attitudes toward women. When customary practices and family authority are repeatedly accepted as legitimate, women's limited participation in important decisions can become normalized and reproduced across generations. The implication is that such a social structure may restrict women's autonomy while simultaneously maintaining patriarchal relations within the community.

5. Conclusion

The findings demonstrate that Dian Purnomo's *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* represents social stratification through Weber's three dimensions: social class, social status, and power. Social class is represented through unequal access to economic resources, land, education, employment, and the ability to fulfill customary demands, which influence individuals' life chances. Social status is reflected in customary positions, occupations, education, reputation, prestige, and social recognition, which determine how individuals are respected and treated within society. Meanwhile, power is

manifested through customary authority, family authority, and gendered decision-making, creating relations of domination and subordination among the characters. These three dimensions demonstrate that social position in the novel is shaped not only by economic resources but also by social recognition and the distribution of power.

The findings further indicate that social structure plays an important role in producing gender inequality. Customary practices, patriarchal culture, kinship systems, and unequal power relations restrict women's ability to determine their own life choices, particularly in matters concerning marriage and cultural obligations. Thus, gender inequality in the novel is not merely an individual problem but is embedded in a broader social structure. The study concludes that class, status, and power operate in an interconnected manner in shaping social inequality and gender relations represented in the novel.

This study is limited to the representation of social stratification and the role of social structure in gender inequality in a single literary work using Max Weber's perspective and a sociological literary approach. Therefore, the findings should not be generalized to all literary works or to the social reality of the Sumbanese community as a whole. Further studies may examine *Perempuan yang Menangis kepada Bulan Hitam* or other literary works using different theoretical perspectives, approaches, or comparative objects to broaden the understanding of social stratification, power relations, customary practices, and gender inequality. The findings may also encourage readers and society to critically reflect on social practices that reproduce inequality and to promote more equitable and gender-sensitive social relations.

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