



## Social Criticism in Wa Mangku and Wa Buliga Folklore: A Literary Sociology Study

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of local folklore as a medium for expressing social criticism, focusing on the folktales Wa Mangku and Wa Buliga from South Buton, Southeast Sulawesi. While previous studies often emphasize folklore's cultural and educational value, limited attention has been given to its function in critiquing injustice. Using a qualitative descriptive method and a literary sociology approach, the research analyzes data obtained through document analysis and interviews with native informants from Burangasi Village. Thematic content analysis reveals various forms of social criticism, including environmental degradation, poverty, social stigma, abuse of power, spiritual manipulation, and unjust traditional practices. The Wa Mangku tale critiques authoritarian customs and societal passivity toward injustice, while Wa Buliga highlights slander, violence, and discrimination driven by collective prejudice. Both stories serve as cultural mirrors that reflect the lived experiences of marginalized individuals and the consequences of irrational tradition. The findings underscore folklore's potential as a transformative educational tool for promoting social awareness and critical thinking. This research contributes to the discourse on oral literature as a means of fostering empathy, moral reflection, and civic consciousness within local communities.

**Keywords:** *Abuse of Power; Folklore; Literary Sociology; Social Criticism; South Buton.*

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### INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant forms of oral literature that carries deep cultural and social meaning is folklore. As a narrative tradition transmitted orally from generation to generation, folklore not only functions as entertainment but also as a medium to convey collective values, preserve cultural identity, and express social criticism. It often reflects dissatisfaction with prevailing social conditions and highlights various forms of inequality embedded in community life. In the Indonesian literary tradition, oral literature plays a vital role in sustaining local languages and identities, particularly when introduced from an early age (Maricar et al., 2021; Mansyur et al., 2021; Mansyur et al., 2022; Mansyur et al., 2025).

Folklore itself is part of the broader domain of literature, which, etymologically, originates from the Sanskrit root *śas*, meaning instruction or teaching. Literature is understood not only as a medium for instruction but also as a reflection of human life expressed through language, encompassing thoughts, emotions, and beliefs (Salwa et al., 2025). In Indonesian, literature comprises both oral and written forms and is considered a mirror of daily life, shaped through storytelling by its creators (Aji & Arifin, 2021). Thus, folklore can be viewed as a literary form that simultaneously entertains and critiques, offering insight into the values, struggles, and aspirations of the community it represents.

The role of folklore in delivering social criticism is particularly noteworthy. Social criticism, in this context, refers to a conscious effort to assess and critique social realities that are deemed problematic or unjust. Within literary works, such criticism often serves to expose societal inequalities and provoke moral awareness, with the aim of upholding social justice (Putri Ziana, 2023; Wahid, 2023; Ghaisani, 2020; Oksinata, 2010). According to Soekanto (in Salim & Sukendro, 2021), the issues commonly addressed in social criticism include poverty, crime, population growth, environmental degradation, and religious or belief-related problems. These themes often emerge in folklore through symbolic characters, conflict, and narrative resolution.

According to Ferando et al. (2025), folklore reflects the customs, behaviors, and everyday realities of the communities from which it originates, making it relatable and accessible. Sumayana (2017) classifies folklore as ancient oral prose that not only preserves tradition but also mirrors societal norms and tensions. In this regard, the folktales *Wa Mangku* and *Wa Buliga* from South Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi, are rich with embedded social criticism. These narratives depict a wide range of social issues, including poverty, crime, family disintegration, environmental problems, stigmatization, and the oppressive nature of certain belief systems (Soekanto in Rohma & Qur'ani, 2022).

Previous studies have examined social criticism in folklore using a literary sociology approach. For instance, Angga (2020) investigated the Acehnese tale *Si Raja Parkit* and identified critiques related to crime and wisdom embedded in the cultural context. Similarly, Magfiroh (2023) analyzed Sujiwo Tejo's *Mbah Jiwo*, which reveals criticism of bureaucracy, crime, and environmental degradation. Both studies reinforce the idea that folklore functions as a mirror of society and a space to critique dominant power structures. However, specific studies on *Wa Mangku* and *Wa Buliga* remain scarce. Although both stories contain potent social critiques—particularly concerning prejudice, oppression, and communal injustice—scholarly attention to their literary and sociological significance has been limited.

This study, therefore, addresses that research gap by focusing on the social criticism embedded in the *Wa Mangku* and *Wa Buliga* folktales from Burangasi Village, South Buton Regency. Differing from previous works that examine tales from broader or unrelated cultural settings, this research centers on how these specific stories reflect the local community's lived experience. Guided by the literary sociology framework introduced by Damono (1978), which views literature as a reflection of societal realities, this study seeks to identify and analyze the various forms of social criticism represented in the two folktales. It also offers pedagogical implications by demonstrating how such folklore can be used as a medium for literary appreciation and critical thinking. Ultimately, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how local oral literature can be a vehicle for expressing resistance, fostering

awareness, and contributing to the preservation of social justice values within community life.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method that aims to describe and analyze data based on its context. Qualitative research is descriptive and emphasizes more on process and meaning, with a theoretical foundation as a guide so that the focus of research remains in accordance with the facts in the field (Ulfatin, 2022). Qualitative research aims to understand the experiences experienced by the research subject. This method is used to examine aspects such as the subject's behavior, motivation, attitude, perception, and actions (Moleong in Fiantika et al., 2022). This research is a combination of literature research and field research because folklore data is taken directly in the field, and some is obtained through available library sources. The folklore of *Wa Mangku* was obtained through literature research, whose data was sourced from written documents, such as theses, books, or manuscripts that had been documented beforehand. One of the main sources used is a thesis by La Cuna (2009) entitled *Intrinsic Elements of Wa Mangku Folklore Burungasi Village, Lapandewa District, Buton Regency*. The thesis documents in detail the storyline, characters, setting, and cultural values contained in the folklore. Meanwhile, the folklore of *Wa Buliga* was obtained through field research, which was sourced directly from the informant, namely the natives of Burungasi Village, South Buton Regency, who were 60-80 years old and fluent in telling the folklore.

The data collection method of this research uses various techniques that are commonly carried out in literature and field research. Collection of available library data using reading, listening, and taking notes. Meanwhile, for field data, it uses interview techniques, recording, and listening to informants' speech directly, as well as recording techniques to record and group important information (Moleong, 2012; Sudaryanto, 2015).

The data analysis method is carried out through three stages, namely transcription from recordings into written form, translation of stories from regional languages to Indonesian, and description and analysis of data. The data collected is in the form of texts or discourses that are analyzed in depth (Ratna, 2013). The research data is in the form of words, phrases, sentences, and discourses that contain social criticism in the folklore of *Wa Mangku* and *Wa Buliga*. The data that has been signed and translated, then identified, classified, and then given an explanation based on the theory of literary sociology. The identification process is carried out to understand the parts of the story that contain social criticism, and then classify according to the theme or type of social criticism, then an explanation of the existing social criticism is given, and then conclusions related to this study are drawn.

## RESULTS

### 1. Social Criticism in *Wa Mangku* Folklore

*Wa Mangku* folklore displays various forms of social criticism that reflect the inequality and problems that occur in people's lives. The social criticism that emerges includes important issues such as environmental problems, poverty, and limited resources that have an impact on people's welfare. In addition, this story raises evil

practices of witchcraft, crime, abuse of power, and social stigmatization that exacerbate injustice.

Wa Mangku folklore reflects a social reality that shows injustice due to the dominance of customary power. Wa Mangku is an orphan who finds a spring that can be used by the Community. However, ironically, she was actually a victim of the unilateral decision of the traditional stakeholders that made her as a *tumbal* (sacrificed person). The decision illustrates how traditions that should be the guideline of life are actually abused to oppress the weak. The people who actually realize the injustice remain silent because they are afraid of going against entrenched norms. Wa Mangku's act of sticking a stick before disappearing became a symbol of resistance to injustice that ultimately made the community lose the water source they needed. This confirms that unfair decisions actually have a bad impact on all parties.

The folklore of Wa Mangku contains a variety of social criticisms that reflect the complex dynamics of power, belief, and community behavior within traditional societies. Through symbolic narratives and character portrayals, the story raises critical issues that continue to resonate in contemporary social contexts. Each form of criticism embedded in the narrative illustrates how cultural norms, environmental hardships, economic marginalization, and blind adherence to tradition can lead to systemic injustice. The following analysis categorizes and explains the major forms of social criticism found in the Wa Mangku folklore, supported by textual evidence and sociological interpretation.

#### **a) Criticism of the Environment**

Wa Mangku's story contains criticism of the dry and barren environmental conditions, which have a direct impact on people's lives. It is said that "*The village is very arid. The land is barren, rocky, so it is very difficult to get water, residents only expect rainwater.*" This quote reflects the limitation of natural resources that make it difficult for people to obtain clean water, especially in the dry season. This condition indicates a serious ecological crisis, such as land degradation or a lack of sustainable environmental management efforts. In addition, the story also states that "*In the dry season, residents often have to walk long distances just to get enough clean water for their daily needs.*" This quote confirms the environmental impact that exacerbates the burden on people's lives, where their time and energy are drained just to meet basic needs. This critique highlights how the inability to effectively manage natural resources results in prolonged social and economic hardship.

#### **b) Poverty and Limited Resources**

Wa Mangku's story highlights the reality of poverty faced by the main character through a picture of a life full of limitations. It is said that "*Wa Mangku lived in a small hut. His daily life was so difficult that she only used firewood to sell to the community. The result is for daily use.*" This quote illustrates how difficult it was for Wa Mangku to live in scarcity, without access to adequate resources. Living in a small hut reflects limitations in meeting basic needs such as decent housing, while its reliance on firewood as the sole source of income indicates the absence of better economic opportunities. This indicates that Wa Mangku is in a circle of poverty that is difficult to break, where limited social and economic conditions keep her in a vulnerable situation. This critique of poverty highlights the social inequalities that make it increasingly difficult for resource-constrained individuals to get out of these conditions, reflecting how structural factors such as lack of access to education, employment, or social

assistance can exacerbate the poverty experienced by marginalized communities such as Wa Mangku.

### c) Evil Shamanism Practices

The story of Wa Mangku also contains evil shamanism practices through **shamans** who abuse their power to encourage immoral actions. In the story, it is stated that *"The shaman immediately said that the best tumbal is the one who has received water or Wa Mangku herself. Hearing the words of the shaman, the two saras thought that what the shaman said was also true."* This quote highlights how the shaman, who is supposed to play the role of a spiritual leader who brings goodness, instead uses his influence to convince others to commit a heinous act, i.e. to sacrifice one's life. The statement reflects an abuse of power, in which shamans manipulate public trust in order to achieve certain goals, albeit in a way that violates moral and humanitarian values. Such shamanistic practices reflect a misleading form of power, in which figures with spiritual authority actually use their position to justify dangerous actions. The social critique in this section highlights how society's reliance on a leader figure who is perceived to have spiritual power can lead to irrational actions that endanger the lives of others, reflecting the dangers of abuse of power in traditional social structures.

### d) Abuse of Power

Wa Mangku's story also highlights criticism of the abuse of power reflected in unilateral decisions that oppress the weak. In the story, it is stated that *"In the end, they all agreed that what we made tumbal is Wa Mangku, it is the last decision of the chief of traditional stakeholders."* This quote illustrates how indigenous leaders, who are supposed to be the protectors of communities, use their authority to impose unjust decisions. The determination of Wa Mangku as a tumbal was carried out without going through deliberation involving all parties equally, but based on an absolute decision that cannot be denied. This reflects an authoritarian form of power, where the leader's decision is considered an absolute truth that must be accepted without considering the rights of the individual who is the victim. This criticism highlights that the abuse of power not only creates social injustice, but also reinforces a culture of fear and excessive obedience, so that society does not dare to oppose decisions that harm the weak.

### e) Social Stigmatization

Wa Mangku's story also contains criticism of social stigmatization which can be seen from how society easily gives negative labels to certain individuals without a just reason. In the story it is stated that *"We think there is some truth too, who knows the day after tomorrow Wa Mangku will use his own water because the one who found the water is Wa Mangku, right?"* This quote reflects how Wa Mangku became a victim of social prejudice simply because he played the role of the inventor of the spring. The thought that Wa Mangku will monopolize the water shows an unfounded stereotype, where the positive actions taken by Wa Mangku are actually used as a reason to suspect her. This reflects the concept of social stigma described by Erving Goffman, in which individuals who are considered different or have certain characteristics are negatively labeled as excluded from society. In this context, Wa Mangku was stigmatized as a figure who had the potential to harm society, even though she never showed such intentions. This critique highlights how social stigma can create injustice, where someone who should be rewarded for his or her contribution is instead sacrificed due to the prejudices and misconceptions that develop in society.



**f) The crime of murder against Wa Mangku**

Wa Mangku's story also contains criticism of criminal acts in the form of premeditated murder committed by traditional stakeholders. In the story it is stated that *"All the traditional leaders have gathered again to determine when Wa Mangku will be slaughtered."* This quote clearly shows the existence of a deliberate and planned intention to sacrifice Wa Mangku, which not only reflects cruelty, but also highlights actions that violate moral and human values. The mention that the traditional rulers "gather to determine the time" indicates that the decision has been carefully considered, so that the act is not a spontaneous reaction but a form of organized crime. Ironically, the parties involved in this plan are traditional stakeholders, who are supposed to have a role as protectors and guardians of social norms. This criticism highlights how power that should have been used to protect is misused to legitimize actions that violate the law and human rights. The decision to sacrifice Wa Mangku without just cause reflects an extreme form of social injustice, where a person's right to life is deprived of the benefit of a certain group.

**g) The crime of indifference to Injustice**

Wa Mangku's story also highlights criticism of crime in the form of indifference to injustice that occurs in society. In the story, it is stated that *"The people in the village are not happy with the decision, but what is allowed for us to only be able to follow the people we consider leaders in our village."* This quote illustrates how the community actually realized that the decision to make Wa Mangku as a tumbal was an unfair act. However, even though they felt the decision was wrong, they chose to remain silent and follow the leader's decision without trying to oppose it. This passive attitude reflects the collective evil that arises from moral incompetence and fear of standing up to injustice. Society tends to submit to authority without considering the adverse impact it has on the individual who is victimized. This critique highlights how social indifference can exacerbate the practice of injustice, where silence and fear reinforce arbitrary power. In this context, society becomes part of an unjust system because it chooses not to take action even though they know that the decision is wrong.

**2. Belief in Oppressive Customs**

Wa Mangku's story also contains criticism of the belief in oppressive customs, which is reflected in the decision of the traditional stakeholders to make Wa Mangku a tumbal. In the story, it is stated that *"The traditional rulers firmly said that Wa Mangku must be a tumbal for the sake of the survival of the water found."* This quote shows how traditions that are supposed to serve to maintain social and moral balance have instead turned into tools of oppression. The decision not only reflects the rigid attitude in adhering to customs, but also shows how traditions that do not consider the human aspect can lead to injustice. The assertive attitude of customary stakeholders who reject other alternatives reflects an authoritarian form of customary rule, where traditional rules are applied absolutely without considering moral impacts or human values. This criticism highlights the danger of traditions being blindly executed, where customary norms that are supposed to serve to protect society have the potential to harm certain individuals, especially those in weak positions. This reflects that when traditions are carried out without room for critical thinking or adjustment to human values, customs that originally had a positive meaning can actually turn into tools of oppression.

### 3. Social Criticism in Folklore *Wa Buliga*

Wa Buliga's folklore highlights various forms of social criticism that reflect the reality of people's lives that are full of conflict and injustice. The social criticism raised in this story includes issues such as slander that damages a person's reputation, violations of applicable social norms, discrimination and injustice and violent crimes that cause suffering to the victim. In addition, the story also highlights the practice of slander used as a tool to bring down other parties, various forms of crime that threaten public order, and discrimination and injustice that exacerbate social conditions.

The folklore of Wa Buliga describes the tragic story of social injustice that befell a woman who was a victim of slander. Wa Buliga, who was known as a kind woman, was unilaterally accused of committing indecent acts with her brother. Without a fair investigation, the community immediately sentenced her to severe punishment by sinking her into the sea using *bubu*, a traditional fish trap. Nevertheless, Wa Buliga survived thanks to the ocean currents that brought her to the coast of Burangasi, where a fisherman named La Kawo helped and cared for her. Wa Buliga's life gradually improved until he got married, although he was not blessed with children. Before he died, Wa Buliga made a will to be buried where he was found and vowed to protect the descendants of La Kawo as well as sink a ship that used the Binongko language. This story reflects how slander and prejudice can destroy a person's life, as well as highlights the importance of justice and kindness as demonstrated by La Kawo and his wife.

Much like the story of Wa Mangku, Wa Buliga serves as a narrative vessel through which deep-rooted social criticisms are expressed. The story portrays the devastating effects of slander, stigma, and social exclusion, while also revealing how traditional communities may justify cruelty through distorted values and unchecked authority. Through its symbolic episodes and the fate of its protagonist, the tale offers a critical lens on collective behavior, moral failure, and structural injustice. The following analysis explores the key forms of social criticism embedded in the Wa Buliga folklore, supported by direct textual evidence and sociological interpretation.

#### a) The problem of defamation and violation of social norms

Wa Buliga's story contains criticism of the problem of slander and violation of social norms which is reflected in the baseless accusations addressed to Wa Buliga. In the story it is stated that "*Wa Buliga was accused of committing an indecent act with his own brother.*" This quote shows how slander can appear without clear evidence, but it is still believed and accepted by society. The accusation not only defamed Wa Buliga, but also violated social norms that uphold the values of truth and justice. This kind of slander reflects a phenomenon where people tend to easily believe bad news without first verification. As a result, Wa Buliga became a victim of social stigma that resulted in psychological and social suffering. This criticism highlights that slander that is allowed to flourish without fair clarification can damage a person's reputation, worsen social relationships, and create a climate of distrust in society. This is a reminder that healthy social norms should require people to seek the truth objectively before believing or disseminating information that could harm others.

#### b) The problem of violation of societal norms

Wa Buliga's story also contains criticism of the violation of societal norms which is reflected in the unjust actions received by Wa Buliga. In the story it is stated that "*The villagers, who feel that their self-esteem is tarnished, believe that if Wa Buliga remains alive,*

*then one day he will have offspring that bring disgrace to them.*" This quote shows how the public easily dropped accusations against Wa Buliga despite the lack of clear evidence. The accusation reflects a violation of the norms of truth and justice, where a person is punished solely on the basis of prejudice and rumors. More than that, the actions of the community that finally drowned Wa Buliga showed a more serious form of violation of social norms, namely vigilante actions that violated legal and humanitarian norms. Violation of norms occurs in two aspects: first, the community violates the norms of justice by accusing without valid evidence; second, they violate moral norms by committing violence against Wa Buliga without going through a fair process. This critique highlights how unchecked social prejudice can fuel cruel acts that go against human values, creating injustices that harm individuals who are supposed to be protected by society.

### c) Crimes of Social Violence

Wa Buliga's story also highlights the criticism of the crime of social violence shown through the heinous actions committed by the community against Wa Buliga. In the story it is stated that *"They put Wa Buliga in the bubu and tied large stones on his left and right sides so that he would sink quickly."* This quote describes acts of violence that are carried out in a planned, cruel, and inhumane manner. Such acts not only reflect physical brutality, but also show how social pressures, prejudices, and mistaken beliefs can encourage society to commit acts that violate human rights. This event reflects how a person who is a victim of social stigma can lead to inhumane treatment, where society feels entitled to judge and punish without regard for justice and human values. The decision to drown Wa Buliga in such a cruel manner highlights how social violence can thrive when people allow prejudice and emotions to control their actions. This critic warns that without strong moral control, social norms that are supposed to maintain harmony can turn into a trigger for criminal acts that tragically take a person's life.

### d) Criticism of Crime

The story of Wa Buliga also contains criticism of the crimes shown through the heinous actions committed by the community against Wa Buliga. In the story it is stated that *"Without mercy, they took the bubu to the waters between Wanci and Runduma villages, and drowned it in the sea."* This quote reflects the planned and conscious physical violence, which leads to an attempted murder. This act not only shows the cruelty of a society affected by prejudice and emotions, but also reflects a gross violation of moral and human values. Wa Buliga, who was previously a victim of slander, finally also became a victim of extreme violence which showed the absence of empathy and justice in the community. The act of drowning Wa Buliga without due process of law highlights how social forces based on anger and prejudice can turn into crimes that take a person's life. This criticism asserts that this kind of crime not only hurts the individual victim, but also creates a culture of violence that undermines social values that should uphold justice and humanity.

### e) Discrimination and injustice

Wa Buliga's story also contains criticism of discrimination and injustice reflected in Wa Buliga's statement: *"If any ship passes by using the Binongko language, I will sink it. But if they are descendants of the La Kawo family of Burangasi, I will grant whatever they ask for."* This quote describes the discriminatory attitudes that arise as a result of traumatic experiences in the past. Wa Buliga, who had experienced injustice, then generalized the entire Binongko community as the guilty party, without considering the individual



personally. The statement reflects unfair behavior, where a certain person or group is treated badly simply because of their identity, not because of their actions individually. This action shows how unresolved social wounds can give birth to dangerous discriminatory attitudes. This critique highlights that discrimination rooted in grudges and prejudice actually prolongs the cycle of injustice, which ultimately undermines social values that should uphold justice, empathy, and fraternity.

## DISCUSSION

The folklore of Wa Mangku and Wa Buliga is a strong reflection of the practices of social injustice that often occur in the lives of traditional people. The story not only highlights individual issues, but also raises broader social issues, such as the abuse of power, social inequality, and the negative impact of traditions that are carried out without rational consideration. In the study of literary sociology, Damono (1978) emphasized that literary works are the result of social reflection that represents the reality of people's lives in their time. Literature not only functions as entertainment, but also as a medium to convey social criticism that reveals various deviations that occur in society. In line with this view, Solihat (2017) emphasized that literary works play an important role in identifying injustice through the presentation of conflicts and moral messages that can arouse readers' awareness of unjust social realities.

The most striking social criticism in Wa Mangku's story is the injustice in customary decisions that place Wa Mangku as a victim of slander and unjust sacrifice. Wa Mangku, who has contributed to finding a source of water for the community, was actually used as a scapegoat due to the decision of the traditional stakeholders. This decision shows how those in power often abuse their authority to protect the interests of certain groups. According to Hasmah, Masnani, & Nur (2023), literary works function as social criticism by reflecting social realities through characters and storylines, revealing conflicts, and presenting social criticism and moral messages. Social conflicts arise due to the inequality of power and opposing interests. Social injustice often arises when the ruling group dominates and imposes its will without considering the value of justice that should be upheld. Azizi, Basid, and Rahman (2022), stated that power relations are something that makes people obey. In this story, the traditional rulers use their influence to convince the community that the sacrifice of Wa Mangku is the right action, even though the decision is not based on rational evidence. In addition, Wa Buliga's story highlights the destructive impact of social stigma and baseless slander. Wa Buliga became a victim of slander who accused her of bringing disgrace to society in the future, so the community decided to drown her without concrete evidence. This event reflects how social stigma can destroy a person's life even if the accusation has no solid basis.

Aranda et al. (2023) highlight that social stigma not only causes suffering for the individual who is victimized, but also plays a role in shaping norms that perpetuate discrimination in society. In the case of Wa Buliga, the widespread slander succeeded in shaping public opinion that influenced people's behavior until they felt entitled to judge Wa Buliga without due process. This story reminds us that when misinformation spreads without clarification, innocent individuals risk becoming victims of unjust actions.

The stories of Wa Mangku and Wa Buliga also criticize traditions that are carried out without considering rationality and human values. Traditions that require tumbal

in traditional ceremonies are symbolic of how illogical norms can harm certain individuals. Sulaiman (2016) emphasized that traditions and social norms created by society often serve to perpetuate the power of the dominant group. In *Wa Mangku's* story, tradition is used as an excuse to justify unfair decisions. Similarly, in the story of *Wa Buliga*, people's belief in unproven prophecies causes them to normalize violence against an innocent person. This phenomenon shows how social practices carried out without ethical considerations can cause suffering that should not occur. The story also features criticism of society's indifference to the injustices that occur around them. In the story of *Wa Mangku*, most of the people realize that the decision to make *Wa Mangku* as a *tumbal* is an unfair act. However, for fear of going against the traditional rulers in power, they chose to remain silent and accept the decision. Kamahi (2017) explained that power is not only repressive but also able to shape people's mindset so that they accept unfair decisions as something natural. In this context, *Wa Mangku's* story highlights how a culture of silence can exacerbate social injustice. When society refuses to oppose tyrannical decisions, they indirectly perpetuate practices that harm weak individuals.

The folklore of *Wa Mangku* and *Wa Buliga* contains a profound moral message, namely the importance of collective awareness in fighting social injustice. Syahril & Rahayu (2024) emphasized that social resistance is an important key in opposing unjust power domination. Through this story, readers are invited to be more critical of social practices that harm certain groups, especially when the policy is based on prejudice, slander, or irrational traditions. The story also teaches that individuals who dare to stand up against injustice play an important role in creating better social change. As a literary work, the story of *Wa Mangku* and *Wa Buliga* succeeds in conveying social criticism that is relevant to various social phenomena that occur in the real world. This critique highlights how injustice can occur as a result of abuse of power, social prejudice, and traditions that are carried out without considering moral and humanitarian aspects. By presenting a story full of suffering due to unjust behavior, this story not only serves as entertainment, but also serves as a reminder that society has a responsibility to oppose all forms of oppression and fight for social justice. Therefore, oral literature can be a good educational medium for the community (Mansyur & Suherman, 2020; Mansyur, et al., 2021).

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study highlights that the folklore of *Wa Mangku* and *Wa Buliga* functions as a medium of social criticism that reflects various societal problems, especially related to criticism of the environment, crime, poverty, violations of societal norms, religion and belief, as well as slander and social stigmatization. In the aspect of crime, this story highlights the injustice in customary decisions, where *Wa Mangku* who has meritorious is actually made into a *tumbal* without fair consideration. *Wa Buliga* became a victim of social stigma that led to unfair collective decisions, highlighting the dangers of prejudice and slander. From the aspect of poverty, this story reflects social inequality, where *Wa Mangku* lives in hardship despite having provided great benefits to society.

The barren environment and lack of resources emphasizes the limitations of the community in meeting basic needs. Meanwhile, in terms of religion and belief, this story criticizes the abuse of power by traditional leaders who sacrificed *Wa Mangku* without gratitude for his services. The attitude of the people who follow tradition

without considering a more just and humane alternative is also criticized in this story. This study shows that folklore not only serves as entertainment, but also as a mirror of social reality that teaches the values of justice, empathy, and critical awareness. The implication is the importance of preserving folklore as part of the history and culture of the local community which still contains relevant values in arranging a harmonious socio-cultural life. Therefore, this study also emphasizes the importance of folklore as an educational medium that is able to increase understanding of relevant social issues to date.

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