

The Prolonging Imageries of Mentawaian Women in Niduparas Erlang's *Burung Kayu*

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ABSTRACT

*This research aims to discuss the imageries of Mentawaian women in the novel *Burung Kayu* by Niduparas Erlang and their comparison to modern women. The novel talks about conflicts between tribes and the government alongside the differences between the image of Mentawai tribal women which are very obedient to their husbands and customary rules and its contrast to modern women who come to Barasi to become doctors for the Mentawai tribes. Through qualitative method and explorative approach, this paper underlines the comparisons between two entities by the concepts of feminine images of women beings. In analysis, this novel shows different patterns of thoughts and behaviors between Mentawai women and the midwives who come in physical, psychological and social elements. This novel is not only about tribal conflicts, but also matters of imageries of women who must stay obedient but have desires to grow further. In conclusion, imageries of tribal and modern women accentuate matters of conflictual yet contradictory indications of womanness in which patriarchal structures are still within.*

Keywords:

Burung Kayu; Feminine Beings; Imageries of Women; Niduparas Erlang

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a depictive exploration of events experienced directly or indirectly by the author. In many cases, the occurrence of these events comes from the world and a small scope such as the people's circumstances. Literature becomes a tool to describe, expand, and even deepen events that have taken place or are still going on and packaged with imaginative and creative stories (Dell, 2022; Wagner, 2023). Literary works produce works about events, experiences, ideas, and social problems about personal life in society. Literary works are also matters of expressions for writers to express ideas, ideas, criticisms and vents about events experienced by writers in society. Literary works can be both literary and written as reflections of what is happening in the world, although fictionally, literary works succeed in describing and reflecting the state of the world through written writing and narrative (Dell, 2022; Wagner, 2023).

Literary works contain all events in society, such as culture and images of ethnic diversity and customs. Therefore, a literary work, which means fiction, is a work based on the original creation of social and cultural life as a reference during the creation process. Literary works can contain all descriptions of social and cultural life, so the concept of literary works can be seen in aspects or values in social and cultural life (Gardiner, 2020; Nurlian, et al., 2021). The creation of literary works always takes aspects of social life, so that a literary work can be a reference as a picture that contains a variety of values in it. Literary works are not only such kind of writing, but also as a form of educational media that contains information and knowledge about something in society (Dell, 2022; Wagner, 2023).

One of the most popular forms of literary work is the novel that captures imaginative pictures of the content or problem. One of the issues being apprehended by novel is woman beings. Women have been underestimated and upheaved as those who are mentioned important in society (Daniel & Peck, 2022; Gardiner, 2020). It is already known either that feminism is one way to approach such ideas of woman-ness in everyday life as reflected in literary works.

Feminism is the study of women as the position of women is insignificant and is always second to men. Women often experience unfair things, they are considered second only to men, and are considered women's opinions and decisions are not important compared to men (Daniel & Peck, 2022; Gardiner, 2020).

The image of women is a form of depiction of women's expression, behavior, and spirituality. A picture of the existence and role of women in society and family is the image of women is the existence of women in everyday life. In novels, many women's stories are depicted from men's perspectives, and consider women as secondary. Women are often fed weaker than men, this shows stereotypes that have been ingrained for a long time in society. For instance, in a gender society that does not follow rules such as working not according to their gender, doing hobbies that are different from the general thing is strange and abnormal in the view of society (Kim, et al., 2021; McComb & Mills, 2022; Saputro & Andriyanti, 2022). In society's view, women who are going to work, hunting or foraging for food is taboo, and considered strange, this is what fosters gender-adapted stereotypes. Those are also opposed by the existence of feminism and its further development.

Burung Kayu by Niduparas Erlang is an ethnographic novel set in a tribe in Mentawai. This ethnographic novel published in 2020 tells the story of a conflict between two uma or two tribes competing with each other because a pig that becomes a dowry to marry a daughter from another tribe (Assyifa, 2023; Dika, 2023; Erlang, 2020). The novel tells the story of inter-tribal conflict and the customs of the Mentawai tribe. This story tells the life of the Leugeumanai family. It tells the story of the beginning of the conflict between the Leugeumanai family and the Uma across the river. The family history story about the first ancestor known as the Sura' Boblo Tribe clashed with the Tunggul Kelapa Tribe, regarding the first murder committed by his ancestor Baumanai (Assyifa, 2023; Erlang, 2020; Nurjanah, et al., 2022).

Not only about tribal conflicts, the novel *Burung Kayu* also tells the story of women, women who could not do anything, women who when making decisions have to wait for men, and all policies are in the hands of men (Assyifa, 2023; Dika, 2023; Erlang, 2020). In this novel there are also two types of women, namely native Mentawai women and urban women who work as midwives. Women from the Mentawai tribe are reluctant to make decisions first because everything is arranged by men. Men in the Mentawai tribe described in the novel *Burung Kayu* have a dominant role than women as they also have greater things to anything than women (Assyifa, 2023; Dika, 2023; Erlang, 2020; Salmah, 2022). Mentawai tribal women are very obedient to the rules and customs that are described by the cultural rules. They even obey and dare not argue because it is related to their beliefs about spirit that will punish if they do not obey the rules of their ancestors.

This study aims to compare the existence of Mentawai and modern ones. The differences between them two are related to such freedom indicated in the novel. The Mentawai women are bounded by their customs and cultures (Dika, 2023; Erlang, 2020; Salmah, 2022). Meanwhile, modern women are also bonded by their eagerness to go furthermore to progress. Both traditional and modern women are interesting to be researched, especially in this novel, since the narratives of it are depiction of women's existences in various space and time.

METHOD

This research uses explorative and qualitative research method using a feminist approach, meaning that the results of the analysis obtained are based on sentences, dialogues, and narratives on a novel entitled *Burung Kayu*. Online and offline scripts are derived from books and journals to understand shown matters. The data analysis includes attaining sources, reading sources carefully, comparing with other issues, quoting into paper, and writing down in references. Each of them is read then broken down into its every particular element.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Feminism and Imageries of Women Beings

The image of women is how actions that portray women in the psychological and physical aspects of women are collected, associated, combined with values that prevail in social society. Women with actions that do not conform to the values of society are considered unfilial women, bad women, and women who do not respect the values of society (de Wet, 2020; Loos, 2020; Ramdini, et al., 2022). Women often do not have freedom of themselves, sometimes they rebel just to take away things that have been restrained by husbands, society, and even customs.

By understanding such stereotype, feminism would like to push women get out of their comfort zone and start a new one as individuals who are free where they can argue, inspire, and socialize with other or

new societies (de Wet, 2020; Loos, 2020; Ramdini, et al., 2022). The image of women who must obey, maintain beauty, and obey the family is a picture of a good woman in traditional aspects. Meanwhile, each woman being could define who she really is by shaping her own understanding of identities. Later on, it is matter of identities that are actually intact in the personhood of women beings (Kim, et al., 2021; Loos, 2020; Ramdini, et al., 2022). Simply put, their identities are not by themselves, but by further social values that bind them altogether.

Furthermore, it is matter of gender roles that are related to women's social roles in society. The gender part goes beyond her sexual aspects. The sexual one is quite stable but gender is actually flexible. In this case, gender is not from the biological aspects of women or men, but from how society sees people act. In other words, being a woman is the action she does every day, not what is attached to her (Butler, 2014; Kim, et al., 2021; Loos, 2020). It is seen more flexible since it is related to the idea of gender performativity. It is defined that male or female sex is not a reference as a sign of someone's gender, but how a person behaves in his or her life that shapes gender itself. The more it is practiced, the more it is shown and even getting stronger. In further sense, modern aspects used to see how women in their activities are always the second entity, both in society and in the state of decision (Nurjanah, et al., 2022; Ramdini, et al., 2022; Sugihastuti, 2002). That value is actually derived, or even continued, from traditional value in which all decisions and others are always made by men, and women do not have the right to decide something with their own will.

Women are also individuals who have reason, feelings, and inspiration. However, in certain cultures, many women cannot define their own selves thoroughly. Sometimes the culture curbs the abilities because it is considered not in accordance with the customs and culture that is believed (Gardiner, 2020; Ramdini, et al., 2022; Sugihastuti, 2002). In this sense, any kind of thing that women do must always in line with customary matters. They could not do anything by themselves since they are only known to be defined by the sameness of culture. Furthermore, women are told as those who cannot live without gender because gender itself is intended to explain the differences in characteristics and roles between men and women and also forms of culture in society (Ramdini, et al., 2022; Sugihastuti, 2002). In social matters, gender equality is often used as an excuse for men (husbands) not to fulfill their obligations to women (wives). Feminism then raised the theme of women's dual roles as an effort to resolve the injustice felt by women from the separation between the public and domestic spheres which gave birth to the concept of dual roles (Mawarni & Sumartini 2020; Ramdini, et al., 2022; Sugihastuti, 2002).

The image of women can be seen from aspects of physical, psychical, and social roles in society (Mawarni & Sumartini 2020; Ramdini, et al., 2022; Sugihastuti, 2002). The physical aspects are known as women are God's creations that have beauty, but this beauty is misused by men. The physical aspect of women is women who have beauty, attractive appearance, and can make up themselves. Women are individuals who have sentimental appearance as women often try hard to keep looking attractive (Dell, 2022; Wagner, 2023). The physical aspect can be seen from experiences that have never been experienced by men, such as breastfeeding and others. Certain experiences that are only experienced by women such as breastfeeding, childbirth, and rupture of blood membranes are physical aspects that can be seen from women's experiences (Mawarni & Sumartini 2020; Ramdini, et al., 2022; Sugihastuti, 2002).

This physical aspect is also biological since it emphasizes matters of physical appearance of women beings. In this sense either, the idea of woman is a being, not becoming. Women are told to have such bodies that work for themselves and societies. They could not do anything freely regarding their own bodies (Butler, 2014; Dell, 2022; Wagner, 2023). This is such stigma that relies on various cultures for many times. Their existences are only indicated through how they behave in concordances with the expectations of societies. this is also what prolongs women as the second sex as their indications are merely known as static sexual beings, not flexible gendered ones (Butler, 2014; Dell, 2022; Wagner, 2023).

The psychical aspects underline that women have feelings, aspirations, and individuals who can think. Women are actually free individuals and equal to men. Women's opinions also have the same value as men, what women think is also the same as what men think (Butler, 2014; Dell, 2022; Wagner, 2023). However, the view of society towards women will remain the same, that they are weak and should not be treated the same as men just because they are created with smaller bones and bodies. Because of that, they will still be considered weak even though they have proven through their work and the impact they have made. There is also a very inherent understanding in Indonesian society that women are not as great as men where women must always serve and obey the orders of men. They say that it what they learn from their religion

even though they are only looking for ways how they can degrade and regulate women (Butler, 2014; Dell, 2022; Wagner, 2023).

Thus, the image of women should not be seconded by the rules that mark that all thoughts, aspirations, opinions, and decisions in men. Based on this description, this shows that the stereotypes that exist in society are wrong about how society views women. Women are told as those who should not argue, propose, and even aspire in society (Butler, 2014; Sugihastuti, 2002; Wagner, 2023). Cultures that embrace noble values mostly number women more than men as all decisions are in the hands of men.

In the novel of *Burung Kayu* by Niduparas Erlang, it is described how when a woman who had a seriously ill child did not want to take her to the medical center even though she was forced by the midwife. She did not dare to make a decision and she chose to wait for the husband to negotiate what to do with the child (Dika, 2023; Erlang, 2020; Salmah, 2022). Unlike other women who are in a state of urgency, they choose the best path. Culture is the most important role in the formation of images, stereotypes, and gender in a cultured society and customs, but somehow it could also stop women to think more about any goodness they could embrace.

The social aspects of women beings are shown in how they embrace social roles. In this sense, they are not considered in their sexual aspects, but the gender ones. Nevertheless, women's image in the family is women who are busy with housework (Fitriyan, 2021; Ibrahim & Pasopati, 2024). A good woman is a good housewife. Even the bachelorette must always think of marriage in which later she becomes the doer of all domestic chores. The responsibility for children is also work for women, breastfeeding, feeding and others. Sometimes men underestimate the housework done by women, with their thoughts based on the fact that they are the ones working hard to earn a living outside, while women only work at home (Fitriyan, 2021; Ibrahim & Pasopati, 2024).

Women are used to be considered strange if they work outside. This stereotype indeed restricts women to go further. Women must work at home and their freedom is largely constrained by the values, rules, and culture of the society they believe in and adhere (Ibrahim & Pasopati, 2024; Wijaya, et al., 2023). Women are often confined to the home and are not allowed to have social contact with people or society, this is due to stereotypes. In this sense, the social aspects of women beings are only defined within housework aspects. This kind of thing degenerate women beings. They actually are in the same level, but they are always undermined by men (Ibrahim & Pasopati, 2024; Wijaya, et al., 2023).

The Imageries of Traditional and Modern Women in *Burung Kayu*

The novel of *Burung Kayu* is not just a literary work in ethnographic style. It contains such ideas of differences between the existence of traditional and modern women. There are various implied meanings of women confined by the author. The women are not neutral in this novel. They are bonded by cultural norms, both in their traditional and modern norms. Even if women are considered free, they must still need to define their own values.

In this discussion, the researchers divide the image of women into three sub-chapters regarding physical, psychical, and social ideas. Those of them are clearly indicated in the novel as the existence of women beings. The physical one is about how such women and society define the bodies of the women. The psychical pays more attention to the aspects of thoughts and the souls of women. The social one is about the interactive aspects from and towards women in this particular novel.

First, in its physical aspects, Mentawai women are depicted who are beautiful, obedient, and virtuous towards customs and ancestors. The women of the Mentawai tribe are also famous for their beauty that can attract the opposite sex from the opposite *uma* (Dika, 2023; Erlang, 2020; Salmah, 2022). The author indicates that beauty is something that every woman has. Indeed, it is such advantage that belongs to woman according to the body that she owns.

"Ia seolah tak tahu kehadiran Bagaiogok yang matanya terbelalak yang menatap sekujur tubuhnya yang basah, buah dadanya yang nyaris mengkal sebandar buah kelapa muda, pinggangnya yang ramping berbelit laha merah yang juga basah."

"He seemed to be ignorant of the presence of Bagaiogok whose wide-eyed eyes were staring at his wet body, his breasts that almost stretched as round as a young coconut, his slender waist was twisted in red lava that was also wet." (Erlang, 2020)

The depiction of Taksilitoni by the author gives a picture of the beauty reflected in Taksiliton's body. Bagaigok saw the beauty of Taksilitoni's body through the narrator who described it. The beauty of women is often told in literary works and makes additional points for the aesthetics of the literary work. Improving appearance is one of the physical aspects that portray the image of women (Mawarni & Sumartini 2020).

Women's appearance is an added value to the implied image. In this quotation, the imageries of beauty are natural since it shows the nakedness of the body. It is also indicated that traditional women are more natural than the modern ones. They should not do much to gain more attractions since the beauty is enough for them (Dika, 2023; Erlang, 2020; Salmah, 2022). The traditional women are used to be compared with the nature itself. Therefore, the implying message of the quotation also indicates the situation and condition of bodily imageries are also direct reflections of nature beings.

“Nen! Sebagai istri, barangkali bajou di tubuh Bai Legeumanai memang begitu kuat memikat-menjerat Saengkerei.”

“Nen! As a wife, maybe bajou in the body of Bai Legeumanai is so strong that may attract Saengkerei.” (Erlang, 2020)

Saengkerei are men who are considered to have different spiritual powers, they are considered closer to the spirits of the ancestors and the spirits of hunted animals. Bai Legeumanai is a beautiful woman when it comes to men who have the role or title as Saengkerei. Her beauty can attract many men who are not even ordinary men. In literary works, women become the focus as the object of imagery because women have aspects of beauty that make men crazy (Mawarni & Sumartini 2020). Women become objects that are very described in detail when talking about literary works, so women become the focus to beautify the existing atmosphere. However, this becomes negative when considering that in hetero society women are weak.

Meanwhile, the beauty is differently applied to modern women. It is also known that most modern women will compete to improve their appearance for the sake of adoration or just the ideal to always look attractive. Nowadays there are many aspects added as individuals who must look attractive for special needs such as work, views, and in social society (Butler, 2014; Kim, et al., 2021; Loos, 2020). Attractive appearance makes added value for society, even women competing in competitions make themselves always look attractive, but this can bring bad aspects also for women. Women who feel themselves unattractive and have tried hard to look attractive but failed, become inferior and *insecure* because of the added value that exists, this indicates that the image is important but also has a negative impact on society.

In society, half of people judging woman who put too much effort for their own appearance which is make up and outfits as narcissist, hungry for attention or also called as *pick me*, even the actual means were far different. Most of it happen because they feel envy to those women, those people who feel unattractive, can also came from men who feel insecure or got rejected then start bullying women just because they feel lose compete with them (Butler, 2014; Kim, et al., 2021; Loos, 2020). In the worst case, people who harass women then blame them as their own fault because of their appearances. However, on other side, half of people also supporting those women, or people called as *girl support girl*. Mostly because they understand how toxic and bad the effects from the beauty standards of the attractiveness and most of them also feel the same way as them (Butler, 2014; Kim, et al., 2021; Loos, 2020). In the end, images woman's attractiveness also come with the negative side.

“Legeumanai mengenangkan lagi Maria Saroro yang jelita. Maria Saroro yang pernah amat disukainya ketika ia masih remaja dan tinggal di asrama di Dusun Muara. Maria Saroro yang malah menghancurkan harapan orang tua dan menghancurkan perasaannya yang menggelora.”

“Legeumani remembered the beauty of Maria Saroro that was really beautiful. Maria Saroro was the one he really liked when he was a teenager and lived in a boarding house in Muara village. Maria Saroro then killed the hopes of his parents and diminished his fiery heart at that time.” (Erlang, 2020)

“Tapi gadis itu, Maria Saroro dari suku-batang-langsar itu, tak pernah benar-benar menamatkan pendidikan karena telanjur menanggung malu: bunting—entah oleh angin atau oleh seekor anjing—sebelum disunting dengan kain panjang dan seperangkat alat toga, sebelum dipestakan dalam pangureijat atau diberkati gereja.”

“But that girl, Maria Saroro from the tribe of batang-langsar, never finished her education because she was ashamed in being pregnant—by wind or even a dog, no one knows—before bonded in marriage in long clothes and graduation clothes, before any ceremonial marriage in church.” (Erlang, 2020)

Both above quotations show how women’s bodies are actually not neutral, but constructed by social values. The physical senses of their bodies are never totally belonged to their own selves. The word of “jelita” is not intrinsically shown, but constructed by any label beyond beauty. It is in line with the concept of “bunting” or pregnant. Once a woman gets pregnant, she is restricted to go further, including to reach her better education. Somehow, in this sense, women’s bodies are such limitations for them to go forward. It is quite different from how men could easily define their own bodies regarding their roles who work and become the head of the family.

Second, the psychological aspects are about how women think in the literary works. The idea is about to indicate whether women beings are the ones that could decide anything for themselves or not. By stating so, it is clear that the thought of women beings is shown by and for themselves as well. On a hand, they could decide anything depends on what they choose. On the other hand, indeed they are bounded by values of societal norms. The tensions between them two poles are the intriguing factors that keeps women as important beings individually and socially as well. In hetero societies men stand on top when it comes to women, this has been the case since ancient times. Men will be the key to all the confusion of choice, so it seems that only they can determine a decision. In family life and social society, male dominance is still inherent even though times have begun to modernize.

“Bai Legeumani bermenung dan barangkali merasa beruntung. Ia tahu bahwa tak banyak yang berubah bagi Perempuan-perempuan di dusunnya, sejak tinggal di uma keluarga suami di hulu sampai menetap di barasi. Segala Keputusan tetap mesti dirundingkan oleh laki laki.... Sementara Perempuan hanya boleh mengikuti segala Keputusan keluarga suami.”

“Bai Legeumani thinks and may assume herself lucky. She knows that not many have changed for women in her village, since living in uma and barasi. All decisions must be discussed merely by men... while women could only follow anything decided by the husband’s family.” (Erlang, 2020)

“Bai Legeumanai dan Bu Dokter saling menatap dan tersenyum dan bersalaman. Bai Legeumanai seolah ingin berterima kasih karena Bu Dokter berkenan mengunjungi Bai Sanan dan bayinya yang sakit, sebagaimana permintannya siang tadi. Dan Bu Dokter seolah mengerti tatapan Bai Legeumanai”

“Bai Legeumani and Mrs. Doctor stare at each other and smile and shake hands. Bai Legeumanai feels that she needs to thank Mrs. Doctor for visiting bai Sanan and her sick baby, as what she requested last afternoon. And Mrs. Doctor seems to know the meanings behind the stare of Bai Legeumanai.” (Erlang, 2020)

Normally, women who have soft feelings are good women in the eyes of society. It is indeed in contrast to women who have bad behavior that deviates from values, is considered a strange or even bad as well. In this case, in many cultures, women are considered as the ones that should obey. They are given the rules and must always move inside the terms and conditions. Meanwhile, modern women are in reverse since they could even shape their own understandings of various assumptions regarding their existences.

“...betapa berat duka perempuan janda. Bahkan, anak lelakinya akan direnggut diceraikan darinya”

"...how heavy is the grief of widowed women. In fact, her son will be snatched away from her." (Erlang, 2020)

It is told how hard it is to be a Mentawai woman in the *Burung Kayu* novel. When her husband died while defending *uma* who felt humiliated by the *uma* next door, indeed it makes her a widow and all her identities are stripped away from her. According to customary rules, Taksilitoni had to return to native *uma* and give up his son and all of her husband's inheritance are given to her son. In this sense, the culture used to see women merely as such complementary to the husband.

"Air muka Bai Legeumanai mengeras. Beku dan cemas. Meski ia tahu, sangat tahu, bahwa suami dan ipar-ipar dan bajak-bajak-nya mesti membalas bunyi tuddukat dari *uma Seberang*..."

"Bai Legeumanai's facial expression is in worry. Cold and worried. Even he knows, she really knows that, her husband and other siblings must respond to the sound of tuddukat from other *uma*..." (Erlang, 2020)

"Hatinya bukan hati seekor babi semahan: hatinya tak terbaca, entah bergurat kelabu bersilang atau malah bersilang-sengkarut dan kusut. Ia cemas, tapi menunggu."

"Her heart is not as cold as a pig: her heart is unreadable, even clouded by various things. She is worried, but waiting." (Erlang, 2020)

In the quote above, it is a form of a wife's anxiety when she sees her husband on the battlefield. Aman Legeumanai installed bird-shaped wooden carvings to signify that their *Uma* was brave when facing *Uma Seberang*. The sound of the *Tuddukat* or trumpet signals a challenge. The irregular feelings of anxiety experienced by Bai Legeumanai indicate that women have tender feelings. A woman is actually a person who feels and prioritizes feelings. (Aji, et al., 2021; Nurlian, et al., 2021; Salmah, 2022). Depictions of women are often described based on problems in the lives of women in general. This shows that the women have soft feelings and prioritize feelings and aspects of their psyches. This shows that Bai Legeumanai is a gentle and feeling woman, she was anxious when she saw her husband climb a tree to install a wooden bird as a symbol of their *Uma*'s courage to face *Tuddukat* from *Uma Seberang*. Women have much deeper feelings than men, especially when it comes to their families. However, various customs show that women should only be loyal to families. In a sense, it is good to indicate the role of women. Meanwhile, women are also figures who have thoughts, feelings, and aspirations (Fitriyanti, 2011; Mawarni & Sumartini 2020). They should also be given such freedom to choose, even if they have to live by their own ways.

"Di puskesmas terlalu banyak roh orang mati" kata Bai Sanang."

"Bai Sanang takut disalahkan keluarga suaminya jika bertindak tanpa sepengetahuan suaminya. Segala keputusan tetap dirundingkan oleh para lelaki."

"There are too many spirits of the dead in the health center," Bai Sanang said.

"Bai Sanang is afraid of being blamed by her husband's family if she acts without her husband's permission. All decisions are still negotiated by the men." (Erlang, 2020)

Women actually have feelings and aspirations, but in the novel *Burung Kayu* there is an image of a Mentawai woman who obeys the rules and her husband. Women's aspirations such as opinions and decisions are all in the hands of the husband or man. In emergency, even women do not have the right to make decisions (Aji, 2021; Fitriyan, 2021; Ramdini, 2022). The image that came out of Bai Sanang alone depicted a woman who was entangled in customary rules, thus making her unable to aspire even though her aspirations were good aspirations. These women have good feelings because they are obedient to their culture and husband, but the lack is that they do not have time to inspire, argue, and even make decisions (Aji, 2021; Fitriyan, 2021; Ramdini, 2022). It is very different when there are modern women who enter the tribal area of *nyawai*.

"Bu dokter menatap satu persatu perempuan di sapou itu. Sebagai pendatang, ia cukup paham dengan kondisi di lembah ini. Dan tak ingin membandingkan kehidupannya dimedan,

pendidikannya yang memadai, dengan kehidupan dan pendidikan perempuan dilembah ini. Apalagi membandingkan dan memaksakan dunia medis kepada mereka ... Menunggu keputusan lelaki yang akan menentukan hidup mati sang bayi.”

"Mom, the doctor looked at the women in the sapou one by one. As a migrant, he is quite familiar with the conditions in this valley. And do not want to compare her life in the field, her adequate education, with the life and education of women in this valley. Let alone compare and impose the medical world on them... Waiting for the decision of the man who will determine the life and death of the baby." (Erlang, 2020)

The striking difference is how Mrs. Doctor as a newcomer, who has education and modern life, is different from valley women who live in *barasi*. This can be concluded how aspiration becomes difficult when all depends on men (Fitriyanti, 2011; Salmah, 2022). There is no justice that occurs or that they are every devoted to their husbands and customs so that they remain silent about his aspirations.

The idea in that quotation is that even there is difference between traditional and modern women, the interruptions are invisible. The main indications are that both women still live by their own rules. One aspect could not easily define another (Fitriyanti, 2011; Salmah, 2022). It is true that modern women are freer, but people may not know any bad things that may come to traditional women. Even traditional cultures are used to defend women as well. Those two aspects may be synchronized, but both are different in its essences and existences as well.

“Ia sadar bahwa dunia disekililingnya telah berubah, meskipun perempuan perempuan di dusunnya tak mampu menjadi perempuan perempuan yang boleh mengambil keputusan sendiri. Sebagaimana istri Guru Baha’i atau Bu Dokter yang murah senyum ini. “

"She realizes that the world around her has changed, even though the women in her hamlet are unable to be women who can make their own decisions. Like Guru Baha'i's wife or Mrs. Doctor who smiles generously. “ (Erlang, 2020)

The lack of voiced women's aspirations refers to the unfairness of gender equality, the comparison between those who live in valleys with those who are in school, educated, and have opportunities for aspirations makes a difference in the way cultural societies view women (Aji, 2021; Fitriyan, 2021; Ramdini, 2022). Those who are not provided with knowledge and education can only be silent and obey the rules, or this is a feeling of loyalty and obedience to their husbands so as to harbor a sense of aspiration of their own opinions.

In family and social life, male dominance is still inherent even though the times have begun to be modern. Men are still the dominant role in the family and society, they are the ones who have opinions, aspirations, and decisions that should be universal, and both women and men have the opportunity (Aji, et al., 2021; Nurlian, et al., 2021; Salmah, 2022). In modern aspects, it is prolonged by the idea that men are the ones that work outside. Meanwhile, traditional rules could not be exactly said as the opposite of it. There are still specific values that indicate the values of women as well. When women do not have voices, people could not judge that they are voiceless.

Third, the social aspects are more underlined through ideas of interactions. This is matter of take and give in which everyone has roles to do. Women in society are seen how they obey their husbands, obey the norms and rules of existing cultural customs (Aji, et al., 2021; Nurlian, et al., 2021; Salmah, 2022). In cultural life, it has an important role in arranging coexistence between communities, both individual and social. Social views women as a second figure and dominates men more as people who are considered powerful, powerful, and have everything. This shows how social treats women as second choice, Women are often seen as weak figures and must obey the rules of cultural customs that apply. Women are often described as weak and pessimistic individuals (Nurlian et al., 2021). Many literary works portray women as weak and make them second in both the family and society, this is related to the culture they believe in and obey.

“Ambulan akan segera kesini.”

“Terima kasih, Bu Dokter. Tapi kami harus menunggu Aman Sanang”

"The ambulance will be here soon."

"Thank you, Mrs. Doctor. But we have to wait for Aman Sanang." (Erlang, 2020)

In the family, the woman is number two and the husband is number 1. In this case, the woman seems to have no opinion. In a family, women are required to obey the rules made by their husbands (Mawarni & Sumartini, 2020). The social imageries of women are defined through how women coexist with others by existing rules, rules and norms, customs and culture. It is commonly known that a woman only exists if she could obey the rules. She needs to maintain stability in a family. Indeed, the stigma of it underlines that it could only be done if women always nod to the structured rules (Butler, 2014; Rokhmansyah, 2016).

"Maka, di bawah temaram bohlam yang menggelayung di tengah ruangan. Para lelaki kembali berunding dan berunding hingga larut malam. Sementara para perempuan hanya menunggu menunggu dan menunggu."

"So, under the dim light bulb dangling in the middle of the room. The men again conferred and deliberated late into the night. While the women just wait, wait and wait." (Erlang, 2020)

In the Mentawai tribe depicted in the novel *Burung Kayu*, it can be seen how the figure of a man is very dominating even when negotiating. They will only negotiate with other men than his own wife, this shows the awkwardness and injustice between genders. The male figure becomes important when this happens, the dominance that exists makes women can only stay and wait with the decision that will be given by their husband to what will happen (Butler, 2014; Rokhmansyah, 2016). Men's dominance is so strong that women cannot change it and can only surrender. In society, there is a system that describes women as obedient, devoted, and culturally obedient. However, this makes them look weak and have no power over themselves (Aji, 2021; Fitriyan, 2021; Ramdini, 2022). Women in society are looked down upon because they cannot compete with the role of men.

CONCLUSION

With this research, readers are expected to take insight and knowledge about the image of women. Culture does give birth and is arranged to make human life better, but in culture there are many aspects that need to be corrected and added such as about the role or image of women. In the novel *Burung Kayu* the image of women is sure that social image, physical image, and psychic image are clearly depicted. Women can also take justice in society and get their voting rights to inspire, argue, and make decisions like men. With the thinking of Mentawai tribal women in the novel *Burung Kayu* with the nuances of customs and culture that are still thick, the image of women is also depicted as a second figure, as wives, and as weak women, even though basically women are figures who feel, think, and aspire like men, but in the novel *Burung Kayu*, they still obey the rules of culture and their husbands.

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