

WILD PIG HUNTING IN PETUNGKRIONO

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ABSTRACT

Anthropologists have been studying hunting from the economic, ecological, and symbolical perspectives. The third perspective has been used to comprehend the hunting activities among the farmers of Petungkriono who have used hunting to show masculinity. Further investigation has revealed that the arena is created as a compensation for the fragile position of the local male inhabitants in the household social economic condition as connected to the matrilineal land inheritance system.

Key Words : hunting, Petungkriono, masculinity

ABSTRAK

Berburu oleh para ahli antropologi biasa dipelajari melalui perspektif ekonomi, ekologi, serta simbolik. Di sini perspektif ketiga yang dipakai guna memahami kegiatan berburu di kalangan petani Petungkriono yang ternyata menggunakan berburu sebagai arena unjuk maskulinitas. Penelusuran lebih jauh mengungkapkan bahwa arena tersebut dibuat sebagai kompensasi atas rapuhnya kedudukan lelaki di dalam sosial-ekonomi rumah tangga sehubungan dengan sistem pewarisan tanah yang matrilineal.

Kata Kunci: perburuan, Petungkriono, maskulinitas

INTRODUCTION

As the night dissolved, from outside *tang-ting-tung, ting-tang-ting-tung* the sound of *gamelan*, the Javanese percussion orchestra, could be heard playing *Banyumasan* song endlessly accompanying whoever dancing with the thickly face powdered ronggeng dancer from Wonosobo. Perhaps it was Wakhiri, whom I mostly see at the terminal of mini-trucks used as vehicles to move people and things, locally called *doplak*, in front of the Mudal health center. From earlier this afternoon it was surely Wakhiri that over and over got onto and off that stage, consciously putting thousand rupiah bills one by one into a transparent plastic jar. Luckily the

tradition of putting the money directly into the ronggeng dancer's cloth wrap that covers her breasts is no longer practiced. Otherwise, Wakhiri's fingers would be glued forever onto the ronggeng's breast. I have heard about the Garung village's *ronggeng* dance to celebrate the village earth giving ritual for the last few days. As soon as I and my students arrived at Tlogopakis village, Asro, the ex *bahu*—hamlet chief—Garung has spread a message through another head of hamlets that I need to come to the ronggeng dance later that night. It is certainly the tradition of this upland farming district of Petungkriono—Petung hereafter—in the southern part of Pekalongan regency, for

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the months of Sura and/or Legena for every hamlet to hold a *nyadran bumi* rite, to say gratitude to Mother Earth. If the economy is booming, this rite can be completed with the ronggeng dance.¹ Surely this is not a bizarre happening, since ronggeng which is danced by men and woman is a clear metaphor for sexual contact, the symbol of fertility that are important cultural themes for the Javanese farming community.²

Petung people, men and women, old and young, enjoy the ronggeng dance event as an entertaining arena where they can collectively laugh at themselves. People would give silly words of advice to the men that got up on the stage. "What ... Dude, that's like a lame cow," if there is a guy that is nervous and he doesn't move his body except for back and forth. "Dude, watch out, here comes your wife..." the moment Darso, who wears black glasses, gets up on stage. Darso's intimidating wife will indeed drag Darso from the stage if he is bold enough to dance with the ronggeng, and since this is village life, all of the neighbors are aware of this menace to come. "Don't just keep chomping, mister..." when Sergeant Rohiman from Koramil keeps aggressively slanting his mouth trying to kiss the cheek of the ronggeng dancer. "Don't expend your desire, gramps... you'll faint unconscious", when Grandpa Waslan whom ever since he was younger would dance ronggeng by moving in a robotic stop-fast fashion such as done by a *pencak-silat* fighter.

I only watched the ronggeng dance for a few moments. Shortly I left the stage, and walked to Asro's home with the intention to sleep there. I thought Asro was watching the ronggeng, too. However, the moment I came into the middle room I saw him sitting near the fire place in the kitchen with Bahu Rowo and two others. I directly joined them, the kitchen smelled of wood smoke and scent of the incensed cigarettes. We directly talked. I asked if this ronggeng event was also for *nyadran kemongkong*, the rite de passage of the wild pig (*Sus scrofa*) whisperer. Bahu Rowo said no, because now there is no longer anyone who wants to become a *kemongkong*, wild pig

whisperer, in Garung or the surrounding area. "The condition is grave ... no one is willing to become *kemongkong* anymore". I heard Ahmad, Asro's younger brother who is now the head of Garung hamlet and has before been a *kemongkong*, but now no longer wants to be one. I also heard Rasno, of Dranan hamlet, who has been a *kemongkong* for more than 30 years has now asked to quit. From all the hamlets of the district that I visited these two weeks, the only *kemongkong* left was Darno from Kalibening district who married a woman from Totogan. That was only because he was forced to do it by the Bahu Totogan, "Darno asked to quit but I refused to permit it".

Because there aren't anymore *kemongkong*, Bahu Rowo explains, now people no longer carry out *gedhig*, *en masse* wild pigs hunting. From Darji and Sahlan in Dranan hamlet I also heard that the hunters are now rarely hunting wild pigs with dogs too. According to Bahu Rowo, as people are no longer interested to hunt wild pigs now he invents a new method for coping with the wild pigs with a snare made from used rope of fishing nets that he bought cheaply at Kajen market. "Every 8 meters of rope is priced at 15,000 rupiah and you can make 6 nooses. If people want to contribute another 2,500 rupiah, I can make as many nooses as they need". The snare, thus Bahu Rowo explained, is a kind of lasso but its end is tied to a wooden staff of half a meter long. The noose is coiled and directly put into the path that a school of wild pigs usually takes. Later if a wild pig takes that path his head will go into the circle of the noose, and the noose, together with the wooden staff, will go with the wild pig as he keeps moving. The feel of the staff and noose will make the pig's feet kick and as a result the noose will get tighter. The tighter the noose, the more the wild pig panics, and it tightens around his neck even more as he tries to run further. If then the staff stick to trees or boulders the ill-fated wild pig isn't going to be able to go anywhere, his neck locked into the noose, he will squealing madly, then it will be dead. That's the theory. I asked whether this particular method has been successful. It

definitely has, said Bahu Rowo steadfastly, there have been three wild pigs caught and killed in the middle of the field. "But sadly, people don't want to support this method", he complained. Asro and Bahu Rowo kept talking about the greatness of the wild pig hunters, like old soldiers reminiscing about their bravery during the war. All nostalgia, because Asro, Bahu Rowo or even the people of Petung have already ceased doing this for a long time. This nostalgia disturbed me, what made wild pig hunting so important in this farming district of North Serayu Range that people regretted its disappearance? This study, I do hope, will shed more light to understand socio-cultural changes that is going on in rural Java, an area and field of study that since the mid of 1980s have been abandoned by researchers as they shift their attention to urban and political-economic studies.

ECOLOGICAL AND SYMBOLICAL APPROACHES TO HUNTING

Hunting is one of the classic topics of anthropology. The early work of this scientific discipline was mostly directed to hunter and gatherer societies. In the study of classical anthropology hunting is seen as the ultimate mode of production that influenced the society's socio-cultural characteristics so much that it differentiates it from other societies (see Lee and de Vore, 1968; Barnard, 1983; Myers, 1988; Testart, 1988). Without neglecting the importance of their theoretical contribution, those studies generally tend to neglect hunting activities among the non-hunting gathering societies.³ Meanwhile with the decline of hunter and gatherer communities, it is exactly among the non-hunting gathering societies that we will most likely find the hunting activities.

As an activity that can directly fulfill subsistence need and is effective for delimiting farm predators, hunting definitely has an element of what Marshall Sahlins (1973) called as a practical action.⁴ However, this reason is not the dominant one for the case of hunting in Petung. The majority of people in Petung are

now Moslem and thus do not eat pig meat, meaning that the subsistence role of hunting here is very marginal. The farmers clearly understand the agro-ecosystemic effect of the hunting effort on their farming lands. Explicitly, they always say that the wild pig is hunted because they ultimately ruin their corn fields and they have empirical experience how hunting makes the wild pigs aggression towards their fields wane (Geisser and Reyer, 2004: 943). But, the agro-ecosystemic effect mentioned above is actually not the ultimate target of their work. The farmers of Petung not only hunt if the wild pig population is too large and thus is ruining their fields, but they hunt whenever they can. Other than that, in the agro-ecosystem of Petung, which is dominated by the cultivation of rice, corn, and vegetables, the wild pigs are not the only ultimate pests. From his observation in the mid 2008 in Kambangan hamlet Arwan (2008) found out that the most dangerous pest to Petung's farming business is insect, not wild pig, as it's population has already reached the level of outbreak. *Lurah* Suntung, the head of the Tlogopakis village, also accentuated that the pest that affects the corn plant is actually the ferocious monkeys that descend upon the fields in huge groups.⁵ But of all the pests above, wild pigs are the most discussed and the ones that special plans are carried out against by the farmers.

The discussion above indicates that hunting at Petung is laden with motives other than to achieve a practical goal of fulfilling subsistence need or to gain any agro-ecosystemic effect. In this work I will argue that hunting is basically a symbolic event intentionally staged by the farmers to communicate certain message. To answer the question why hunting has started to disappear in Petung, then, it is necessary that we unveil the message this activity want to convey.

From his research with the Hualulu at Seram Island, Valerio Valeri (1994) came to the opinion that the hunting of wild animals—mostly wild pig, deer and cassowary birds—is basically a structural permutation from giving sacrifices to

the supernatural power, that is believed by the society to be the holder of the power of life. Following the norms of reciprocity, this sacrifice to the supernatural power is returned with the giving of permission to those that sacrificed it to be able to take something that usually they are not allowed to take because it is extremely sacred, that is life, the soul. Hunting, by such, presents an explanation to the Huauluan as to why the taking of a soul of another creature—animal or ultimately human—is culturally acceptable, permissible. Cultural permission for taking the life of another human is essentially part of the Huaulu society. As slash and burn farming, the economic backbone of the Huauluan, is connected directly with availability of land, that—until the Colonial control came—was protected from claims from people of other villages and expanded by taking the land of other villages with the tradition of hunting their adversaries' heads (Vayda, 1969: 215).

Valeri's symbolic commentary that strikes an essential connection between animal hunting and head hunting is very inspiring, but lost its explanation efficacy when confronted to Petung case because in Petung people did not have the tradition of head hunting (Valeri (1994: 116). At least since the end of the first millennium the society of Petung had been integrated with the state level politics, and the problems of land have been taken care of through buying and selling or as seen fit by the politicians orders (Christie, 1983: 5). When we look at wild pig hunting in Petung as a way to express a certain message, then this symbol has to be connected with a social practices that actually exists there.

There are two methods of wild pigs hunting that are usually used in Petung. The first is *gedhig*, namely hunting under leadership of a *kemongkong* and involving all inhabitants of a hamlet. The second kind is the regular kind of hunting that is done by a group of people who are capable to hunt. Both *gedhig* as well as regular hunting have the same roots, which are thick with sexual metaphors and conducted by the group of men as an arena for the competition of bravery between humans and wild pigs, with

the repertoire of the human having to win and the wild pig having to lose. Hunting is a social arena for a group of men to exhibit their masculinity (cf. Luke, 1998; Newall, 1983; Moore, 1994).

Gedhig

Wild pigs are not the only wild animal hunted in Petung. But even with forest chickens, porcupines, deer, monkeys, even pythons, wild pigs sit in a place by themselves as the most important adversary in competition. To the people of Petung wild pigs are not just ordinary creatures. I rarely, if not never, heard a person from Petung say the word *celeng*, from the old Javanese term *celang*, to mention wild pig. They said *kemin* or *andhapan* instead. In vernacular Javanese language *celeng* has become the most vulgar insult—and the friendliest. They also envision the wild pig as an animal that has many human-like qualities; grouping socially, smart, strong, and brave. Wild pigs are a social animal that lives in groups with an emphatic structure. Every group is lead by the dominant male, a batch of females, young males, and offspring. They go to find food together in their own territory, the dominant male in the front, the females and younger males behind. Wild pigs are very smart, 'not wanting to pass through a path that has snares or that is littered with poisoned baits.⁶ They stay in a nest, *sudhung*, that is so sophisticated that it looks like it could not be made by a creature that does not have hands—in the shape of braided dome of underbrush and small trees that are held in place by pieces of wood branches, the floor is clean and covered with dry grass (Ickes, 2001: 682). Wild pigs are wanderers of the forest without comparison; they penetrate many kinds of terrains not caring if it is flat or steep, crossing bogs, slogging through swamps, even swimming across rivers. They are brave. In the list of hunted animals by the people of Petung, only wild pigs have never been able to be killed easily without attacking and endangering the lives of the hunters. Wild pigs never run, until they feel they have to. If they meet humans, their mostly pretend they

don't care. As an adversary in competition for bravery, wild pig is a first rate adversary—if you win the competition you will gain a good name, if lost you don't succumb to embarrassment.

More than all of that, wild pigs are a “godly” animal. They were coming from gods and owned by gods. In research conducted earlier in the 1980s, grandfather Sanom of Dranan told me a story about how wild pigs were originated as a god. In the olden time of gods, such as in fairy tales, the God Siva had a naughty grandchild, who was monstrous and loved to disturb the quiet countryside. One day Kala Gumarang, the naughty grandchild, became infatuated with and chased the Goddess Sri, wife of God Wisnu. Wisnu and his friends were mad to see Kala Gumarang's misbehave and condemned him into becoming a wild pig. In his form as wild pig kala Gumarang descended to earth and kept chasing after the Goddess Sri. He destroyed the rice field of a farmer. Batara Wisnu then made a lance from a stick of bamboo stump, *pring pugag*. The lance was speared to the wild pig. *Kala Gumarang* received a horrible wound, blood that spread from him metamorphosed into became insects that ruin rice fields, his intestines came out, and as he jumped into a river they became thousands of fish. There was a group of these fish that jumped to the shore and changed again becoming deer (Raffles, 1982, Vol. 2: App. H.; Suyami, 2001: 307). Grandfather Sanom didn't tell this version, but it is said that part of Kala Gumarang body was spread around before going into the river, and that became ancestors of the wild pigs are there now.

In line with this myth of origin, the people of Petung also believe that the wild pig was the flock of the Goddess Srenggi, a stunningly beautiful female god but with the legs of a wild pig. They were overseen by supernatural herdsmen, named Baju Wulung or Diparota, and Kyai and Nyai Dermalung, that sometimes people meet up with; “An old man, clothed completely in black, with a herdsman's hat”, said Grandfather Sanom. Because wild pigs are reputed not to be an indiscriminate animal, thus

the farmers prohibit the arbitrary killing of them. If it turns out you have to kill a wild pig, you are bound first to get the permission of Goddess Srenggi and then it must be conducted by someone who is authorized to do so, namely a *kemongkong*, the wild pig whisperer, and not any random person can become a *kemongkong*, because the process is very difficult. To become *kemongkong*, a man has to acquire the guidance from an existing *kemongkong*. After that he has to provide offerings of flowers, meals, women clothes, face powder and a wooden dildo for Goddess Srenggi, and observe 3 days in a row fasting. Every night of the fasting days he has to sleep naked and curled up like a wild pig on top of a plaited bamboo winnowing tray, *tampah*, which is placed right in the front door of the house. In the morning of the last night, without other people knowing, he has to purify himself by washing his body and hairs—in the way of someone who has just had sex according to the laws of Islam—in a river (Ibni Ahmad, 1961: 31). After the fasting of the *kemongkong* nominee, the society has to hold a *ronggengan kemongkong*, which signifies the ending of the initiation.

At *ronggengan kemongkong* bandstand, the *kemongkong* nominee becomes the first person to go up on stage and dance with the *ronggeng* accompanied by a special song called *Gending Ontolowok*, and then the *Gending Yellow Corn* (Suharyanto, 1993: 46-7). *Gending Yellow Corn*, clearly is a tribute to one of the main crops in Petung that also one of the favorite foods of the wild pig. The *Ontolowok* is different though. In this dance the *kemongkong* nominee has to dance with his head down, eyes cast to the ground, mimicking the motions of a wild pig without touching the *ronggeng* dancer. This title of this song from the *gamelan's* repertoire, which illustrates the sounds of a wild pig “*ting, tang, ting tung ... nggrok ... nggrok ... ting, tang, ting tung ... nggrok ... nggrok ...*” does not have a clear meaning. The term *ontolowok*, as well as *ontol* and *owok*, is not found in any Javanese dictionary (see Poerwadarminto,

1939; Zoetmoelder, 1982). In my opinion, the term most likely originated from *kontol* and *bawok*, penis and vagina, that once put together means coitus.⁷ Following this line of thinking, the Ontolowok dance is an illustration of sexual relationships between the *kemongkong* and the Goddess Srenggi, as a social expression that the *kemongkong* now is a man, a husband, of the wild pig goddess. Appropriate with this, Gending Ontolowok is ceremonially played the moment the nominee officially becomes a *kemongkong*, who now has the ability to make the wild pigs calm, not bite. This in a paralel with a Javanese custom that a husband is reputed to be the *guru laki*, male master, the holder of the power whose wife must go along with everything he says.⁸ In exchange of this power, a *kemongkong* is bound by the prohibition of not killing a wild pig with his own two hands. Every few years this rite is performed again to renew the "contract" between the *kemongkong* with the Goddess Srenggi.

I have before witnessed the expertness of a *kemongkong* in Dranan hamlet in 1986. Some weeks before rice harvest season began, a farmer reported to grandfather Sanom who is an expert tracker, *penitik*, that overnight a group of wild pigs got into his fields. This wasn't the first time that old man Sanom received reports of this kind, and thus after making a count of the days and consulted with Rasno the *kemongkong* of Dranan he was under the opinion that this was the perfect time for a *gedhig*. Sanom together with a few *penjahir*, the helpers of *kemongkong*, then followed the tracks of the wild pigs until they entered into the underbrush at the slope of Nyarman hill, north of the village. Around 11 o'clock one of the *penjahir* went home to the village to meet with Rasno, to tell him that they already found the place where the wild pigs are grouped: "There are 7 wild pigs. Four *genjik* (offspring), two *biang* (females) and one *bandot* (alpha male)". Rasno departed with handful of dirt from his land. He went until he was adjacent to the bush that according to Sanom was the place that the wild pigs were gathered, Rasno recited

his mantra, to put the wild pigs into a sleep and then tied tall, *alang-alang* grass into a bundle: "To muzzle the wild pigs so that later they won't bite".

One *penjahir* then hit the wooden gong with a fast tempo of *titir*, an agile cadence, and all of the inhabitants of Dranan came to Nyarman. Men and women, old and young, big and little, everyone came. Adult men brought their spears, sickles, or cleavers. With the orders of the *penjahir* around 150 men stood encircling the place that the wild pigs were lulled to sleep. They chopped coppice amounts of underbrush and succeeded in curling and weaving the chopped and stacked wood so that it became an enclosure of sorts. The people stood inside the enclosure with around 1 to 2 meters between them and the next person—enough room to use their weapons without having to worry about the person next to them, but still enough room to confine a wild pig that tries to run away. For this moment, the women gathered at higher elevation and the children climbed up trees. Evidently *gedhig* among the people of Petung is a show, much like the *rampogan macan* (tiger killing) in the circles of Javanese aristocracy and rulers in the 19th century, and royal hunting in the 14th century (Prapanca, 1995: 61). The difference with a *rampogan* is that that the competition is between human and tiger, for a *gedhig* the tiger is substituted with wild pig. But both have a similarity, which is the competition between the ability of men to bridle their fears with ferocious wild animals who fight for their lives.

After the siege has taken shape, Rasno goes out of the circle of the *gedhig*, and one of the *penjahir* barks loudly to arouse the group of wild pigs. Just then all the people start screaming and making racket and watch as one by one the wild pigs appear from the other side of the bush. At first the wild pigs slowly move confused, like they have just woken up, wandering here and there. Then, suddenly, their movement becomes quicker because they are surprised with curtain of people screaming loudly, they turn, trying to get their bearings,

meeting a curtain of people again, they turn again. The longer they search, the more panicked they get, moving wildly, searching for a hidden way out, taking off trying to get out again with high speed looking for the way out from the siege. If a person doesn't see it for themselves, they would not believe that wild pigs can move that fast and agilely on a steep slope full of underbrush.⁹

There is an unwritten rule for the members of the *gedhig* that states if the panicked wild pig bolts in their direction, no matter how they have to hold their position and attack the wild pig with the weapon they brought. They are not allowed to jump to the side or to jump back, they are not allowed to turn and run, because the wild pig will definitely escape free and this measure will point, for one thing, at them losing their bravery. From daily conversations they know that main weakness of wild pigs is his muzzle, and that's the part that needs to become the bull's-eye for their sickle or dagger. The use of a sickle or dagger in the body of the wild pig will only superficially wound the wild pig, not kill him, and will make the wild pig run wild. The body of a wild pig is objective for those carrying a lance, that has a handle of one and half arms length and the lance head is wider than the palm of an adult's hand. Because of this lance bearers hold the lance with two hands and jam it into the body of the wild pig and once they have made contact they should not let go. That's why the head of the lance made hooked and the staff of the lance is made from strong wood of *nagasari* or mountain *akasia* which will not break at the critical moment. The moment the lance hits, the thruster will engage in the competition of death and life with the wild pig. If the thruster is strong, or if he is helped by other hunters, then the wild pig is going to bleed to death. If the wild pig is stronger, and the thruster lance is taken out of his hands, then the reverse can happen. The wounded wild pig will run amok, and instead of speeding away, he will turn and attack.

I have never heard of a story about someone who was hurt much less killed by a wild pig during a *gedhig*. Some people say that

because wild pigs have already been muzzled by the *kemongkong*, thus they won't bite. This simple fact is probably why people say that the *gedhig* is not a risky activity, but still from the participants' psychological point of view the *gedhig* is not something that is easily done. Natural human instinct tells the moment you face a wild animal is to feel scared and to dodge, even though that is taboo in the *gedhig*. Instead of dodging the participants have to attack with the weapon in their hands. Definitely this is not an easy thing, to face a panicked and mad wild pig is an experience that takes a lot of guts (see Knapp, 1935: 84). As the wild pig gets exasperated, his gaping muzzle flaunts a rack of teeth partnered with sharp tusks that could lacerate your stomach, their hairs on their hind sticks up, their eyes squint ferociously showing no signs of fear, and everyone knows that a wild pig will never turn around and retreat. Once he sets his sights on one direction, he will charge almost blindly. Only those who have most courage will be able to keep calm and ready in their station. Even in that instance the courageous men still need an exceptional expert to chop or thrust the wild pigs who in the blink of an eye could escape to the outside the siege.

Seeing the wild pig running in an unknown direction trying to get out of the circle the women and the children outside the *gedhig* join in the screaming, with even more fervor than the men that are facing the wild pig themselves. "*That ... that ... Whaaaaa ...*". "*That... there ... that ...*". "*Whooooaa ... that again ... watch it there's the genjik ...*". "*Whaaaaaaaaa ...*". The quiet environment of the underbrush truly is stirred up, almost even to the point of hysteria, when there is a wild pig gets close to the human fence of the *gedhig*, trying to run away. "*Whaaaaaaaa dead Dude ... dead ... here ... come here*". "*Come on guys ... come on ... come on....*". "*Slash it guys ... slash it....*". At the critical moment, though all are full of spirit, not all the men are able to display the dexterity they hoped for. Many of the men's outlooks are shifting between excited, wanting to be brave, and even anxious. The moment a wild pig comes close to them they don't slice the steed with their

dagger but instead scream panicky "Whoa ... whoa ... whoa". If then the wild pig is quiet and turns direction, it's definitely not because they were hit by the dagger but because they were surprised by the noise of the two-footed creature in front of them.

The commotion at the slope of Nyarman ended with heavy disappointment. Right after the time of *Ashar* prayer the last wild pig, like the six before it, succeeding in escaping. I don't know if it was their smarts or their survival instincts or both, the pigs that were already trapped on the slope were able to find a weak spot in the human fence of the *gedhig*, where the man could only scream but weren't powerful enough to hold the wild pig. When the wild pig was charging and getting more and more frustrated, it was the exact moment the men at the eakest part of the fence dodged out of the way. Quickly the wild pig bolted and squealed loudly to celebrate his freedom. Just as the wild pig run free, there came a flood of sexist remarks from the women who were watching as well as from the participants from other sections of the *gedhig*. "Gosh- that guy can't do anything right" "His penis is shrinking" "He doesn't have any balls" Gone was the self-respect of the man who allowed the wild pig to escape. More unfortunately of the men of Dranan, this event repeated itself at different spots along the human fence. Maybe because they are very panicked and not thinking, but the mockery at the participants of the *gedhig* by the women was rose to relentless proportions—since even the little baby wild pig whose posterior was still striped light and dark, that isn't any more dangerous than a lamb, was able to escape. For months after this ridiculous event they still talked about it with the magnitude of ridiculousness becoming even more exaggerated, and for all that time the above mentioned man could only laugh embarrassingly, as he became fodder for the women's jokes.

BEDHAG

The second kind of hunting, *bedhag*, is done by expert hunters at the time of rest or

after the crop is harvested. Their total number is not many. In every hamlet there are probably 4 or 5 people. They use the help of village dogs that have been trained to recognize the scent of the wild pigs and aren't afraid to face them. Since the time when they were little they have been made to compete with the *genjik*, the piglets, which were caught alive, as well as giving the dogs wild pig carcass to sniff the smell. Sometimes the hunters go out hunting in small groups of 3 or 4 people, sometimes they go out in big groups that involve the village youth, depending on how big or small the group of wild pigs that they will hunt is, which is found out from the reports from the farmers that have seen the wild pigs or their tracks. The hunting terrain isn't chosen randomly, but instead they head in the direction in the jungle that the group of wild pigs chose to make their nest, that seen from far away looks like a normal net of undergrowth. A trained huntsman is able to estimate whether the nest is inhabited by checking density of the wild pigs' tracks in the surrounding area.

Expert hunters equip themselves with a big spear, while the village youth that don't own a spear, arm themselves with a sickle or a dagger. From their village this group of hunters directly goes to the place where the nest is. At a distance of about 100 meters from the *sudhung* the dogs will be ordered to get in front, that distance is close enough for the dogs to get the wild pigs' scent and they will run off towards the nest barking loudly. When the wild pigs, which are resting since they use the nighttime to search for food, hear the loud barking of the dogs they will try and break free from the confines of the *sudhung*. The jungle that is usually calm and quiet is immediately disturbed by the clamorous barking of the dogs, the crunching of undergrowth under the hunters' feet, and the yelling of information to communicate. Hunting is not a light activity. It's hard to run following the dogs along the forest paths with steep terrain up and down. Mostly the dogs cautiously try to catch the big wild pigs and leave the baby wild pigs run confusedly in

circles as they are left behind by the adult wild pigs. If they come across with the hunters, the poor baby pigs are taken alive, their feet and muzzles are bound and directly shoved into gunny sack or hanged up side down under tree branches to be taken later on or sometimes just kicked around or sliced at randomly.

Because the majority of groups of wild pigs make their nests in the underbrush adjacent to farmlands, thus usually the wild pigs that are being chased by the dogs fast or slow will be forced into the field—which gives a technical advantage to the hunters as the field is open without any hiding places for the wild pigs. The job of the dogs while hunting is to flush out and chase the wild pigs until the pigs *mogok*, standing still out of tiredness. While the job of killing is still with the hunters. However sometimes since the dog is only interested in one or two of the members of the wild pig group, there are other members of the group that aren't being flushed out by the dogs, so the job of the hunters is also to chase and flush out these wild pigs unless they want to see some of the wild pigs go free. It is in this kind of context that a young Asro, in July 1985, solidified his position as a hunter among the people of this mountain district. The story has it, after the dogs and hunting party succeeded in flushing out a group of wild pigs from the Tedeng forest into an open field, there was one adult wild pig that broke free from the chase of dogs and ran away. Without thinking Asro directly started chasing, throwing his lance and jumping onto the back of the wild pig. The wild pig was so surprised and panicked that a person would dare to get on his back that he bolted in an unknown direction. At that moment Asro couldn't do anything other than hold tightly around the wild pig's neck, while yelling at his friends "Come on... come here hit him... hit him" The other hunters could only witness Asro's craziness without being brave enough to do anything, because these experts were afraid of hitting their friend. Just then the wild pig lunged in the direction of Dasir who was armed with a sickle. So Dasir's bravery grew because he was directly

confronted with the wild pig, with all his strength he slashed the sickle in the direction of the wild pig's stomach. Unfortunately, he missed the target. Instead of hitting the wild pig stomach, his sharp farmer's sickle landed at Asro's right calf inflicting a gaping wound like a crocodile mouth. Struck by the pain, Asro let go of his grip and thrown away from the wild pig's his back. Maybe because the strange sensation on his back vanished, the wild pig stopped running, turning his head left and right, and that moment a hunter thrust a lance into the wild pig's stomach. The quarry was talked that afternoon by all the inhabitants of Petung. Asro who had lost a lot of blood went directly to the health clinic of Mudal. By Paramedic Kusnan his injury was given teen of stitches.

Another time, after a group of wild pigs that they were hunting were killed one by one, all that was left was the dominant alpha male of the group, that was being chased by Asro and a few youths until they reached Telaga fields, where the alpha male, whose long tusks were crooked, was cornered at the edge of the dry field. Concerned the animal was going to run away, Asro moved closer and threw his lance into the wild pig's stomach. Direct hit. With the spear lodged in his stomach, the wild pig raged, and descended upon Asro. Bleeding profusely, his intestines coming out. Without a weapon, Asro could only dodge here and there yelling to the youth that carried a dagger to strike the wild pig. But they just became more scared seeing the craziness of the wild pig. Seeing no other path, Asro became desperate. Without dodging away but instead charging towards the wild pig, he grabbed the lance that was still sticking in the wild pig and thrust it further into the wild pig's stomach. Then it was a competition of strength and will, between wounded animal and his determined human adversary. After a long while the wild pig fell over, bleeding to death. Seven wild pigs were hunted and killed that day, two were delivered to Sergeant Rudolf at the Mudal police office, two were sold at the Kasimpar hamlet whose inhabitants are Christian, and the last three were

sold to *Babah Coan*, a Chinese store owner in Sibepek.

Both in *gedhig* as well as *bedhag*, the farmers of Petung like to mix the dread of hunting wild pig with laughter. When it was known that a group of wild pigs made their *sudhung* in the Larangan forest, Bahu Rowo immediately made a plan to get rid of them. The moment the group of wild pigs came out of their nest, they were forced to run north along the Larangan River that later ended at the stone ledge of Gedong. The two wild pigs at the very back were killed with lances, and the 12 other wild pigs who were panicking ran as they were chased by dogs and hunter. The moment the group of wild pigs reached the stone ledge they stopped. The hunting party also stopped, immediately they pretended to retreat to the south, giving the wild pigs some room to move and return slightly southward. When they reached the south, they charged again to the north, pushing the wild pigs closer to the brink. Then they did it again, pushing and pushing, the party of huntsmen laughing as they witnessed the confused pigs move backward and forward. Eventually, they kept pushing until they were forced to the ledge of the brink, jump for tens of meters and died at the base of the ledge. In another different hunt, a wild pig that had already mad bolted in the direction of Tarjani. Luckily that youth of Dranan could prevail over his fears, he lifted his dagger high into the air, turning the position of his body to the right, when the wild pig passed his dagger hit exactly on the wild pig's muzzle. The wild pig immediately screeched, as his muzzle was just cut off. Without his main weapon, his muzzle, he could only squeal in pain, running scared in circles. Seeing this scene, the other huntsmen forgot about their targets and instead just watched the unlucky muzzle-less wild pig and laughing. Twenty years later, this tale of the wild pig without a muzzle keeps being told every time people get together, and always they laugh and laugh—about imagining the wild pig running around crazily confused.

Description above indicates that wild pig hunting in Petung is dripping with symbolic aspects as a social theater for the community of men to prove their masculinity (cf. Luke, 1998). This is why it's obvious why no one is enthusiastic about *Bahu Rowo's* notion of catching wild pigs with snare, because wild pig hunting isn't just about killing the pigs, but about proving one's masculinity with how one kill them. Snaring clearly is not masculine. The question then is why do the men of Petung feel like they have to prove their masculinity? There are two explanations that I put forth here. First, the geographic condition of Petung is very difficult. Until the early 1980's the connections between all the hamlets of Petungkriyono were steep rocky dirt paths. Only in 1987 were cars able to penetrate to Petung, and up till now there are still some hamlets that can not be reached by cars. Until that moment, wherever people went they walked and goods were carried by carrying stick or put on shoulder, or strapped to back with a piece of cloth on back—the first two ways by men the last by women. To earn cash, Petung farmers had to bring leeks, *selong*, the success of their crop, to the Doro market 23 to 30 kilometers away, along steep mountain paths. The men carry as much as 40 to 60 kilograms of *selong*, the women carry about half as much. They depart from home before the 8 o'clock in the morning and arrive at Doro market around four or five in the afternoon. They sleep overnight at Doro, in the market stalls or at an eating stall they frequent, at 7 in the morning they go home carrying their shopping—salat, salty dried fish, *tempe*, dried noodles, or even rice—up the steep hills. How heavy this trip is can be seen by the fact that the 23 kilometer walk down the mountain takes them 8 hours, meaning they could only walk slowly not more than 3 kilometers per hour. Life in an environment like this clearly requires great physical capabilities—the ability to walk for a long time carrying a heavy burden. Thick skin on both shoulders of male farmer's of Petung as well as shape of Petung's people feet that become disproportionally wide and flat, are

clear evidence of this hardship. Until the year 1987 these abilities were shown off in competitions for Independence Day, of cross country run through 6 kilometers of nature without shoes—because the youth of Petung at that time never wore shoes—from Tlogopakis at the lowest elevation until Mudal at the top of the hill. From this perspective, hunting can be seen as delivering a message about importance of physical prowess of men.

The second answer is connected to the Petung's system of inheritance. As far as I can tell, from every corner of present time Java only the people of Petung and some of the surrounding districts does the lands is inherited according to women lineage and is owned by the women, matrilineal and matrifocal—not just inherited along the women's line but controlled by the brothers of the mother (Istikomah, 2002). Women are the *pohok*, owners of the farmland and house, that is one day going to be inherited again by the daughters. If a household does not have a daughter, then the family is forced to give the inheritance to their son, but the next generation has to go back to the inheritance of his daughter. As children, the boys of Petung often are cynical of their worth feeling like only step-children that have no inheritance from their parents. Their only hope is that in the future they will get a wife who owns a wide lands. Actually even this hope is brittle, because if it is true they obtain a wife with large fields then their status as a husband is as the person that is just staying there, who possess a right to cultivate the land and stay in the house but doesn't own it. "Men have the right to cultivate, however it is women who have the right to sell", such is the saying there (Munawaroh, 2002). The male inhabitants of Petung's economic reality is really unstable, if they end up being divorced by their wives they will become derelicts that don't own anything, except their penis and their labour. Other economic assets that are owned by men, if actually they can get them, are wild palm trees that grow in the jungle and whose flower sap can be processed for sugar. Even in this way men are not truly independent, because the processing of the

sugar is done in the kitchens by the women. After more than 10 years of being married, Jatno divorced with his wife and no longer has a place in the hamlet of Wanadadi. The house and the farm land are owned by his ex-wife. Jatno immediately went home to the his hamlet of origin, Dranan, but there he also didn't have anything. The dry fields, wet fields, and the yard of his parents were already inherited by his sister. Thus, Jatno stayed over at his little sister's house, helped farm her land, and hoped to find another wife.

In the context of a household economic like this, it is easily understood why then the men of Petung feel like they need to create an arena of expression, a theater, in which they can prove their masculinity. Ronggeng *kemongkong* and the exercise of hunting are the manifesto of the men of Petung to say that somehow they are still the rulers of the women—even though only at ritualistic level. Hunting, in other words, is the symbolic expression of the men as an answer to the real economic strength of Petung's women who are protected by the matrilineal inheritance system. Even though this fails to better their position economically, hunting still strengthens their name and their self-worth, such as is said in the Javanese adage: "*Better to die with a pride rather than to die with sleepy eyed*".

But it seems the women don't want to allow the men obtained their name and self-worth rather easily. They come along to the *gedhig* for chance to mock the men's ridiculousness. One can understand now why wild pig hunting, from the stage of the *kemongkong's* rite of passage up to the *gedhig* are full with sexual metaphors. Obviously it is due to the fact that between wild pig hunting, household economy that the hunting is addressed to compensate for, and sex all share a similar base: they all are territory fought over between men and woman. That's how terms operated in these three activities can be interchanged without making people confused to grab its meaning. I don't think we would be surprised, if in an intimate environment a Petung woman whispers

to her partner "hoe it hard" like in the corn fields or "spear it deeper" like in hunting, just like we are not surprised to see in the initiation rite of the *kemongkong* that Dewi Srenggi the Goddess of Wild Pig asked to be *ontolowoked*, by the *kemongkong* nominee. Anyone clearly understands what a woman hinting at when in watching *gedhig* she hysterically screams "Spear it man... spear it". "Come on ... Spear it deeper ... come on"

CONCLUSION

Discussion above show us how, when anything else fails, significance of symbols may be found in their relation to the existing everyday practice. An implication of this step is, symbolic world must be seen as potentially subjected to historical changes just like everyday social practices do. Now we can see why older denizen of Petung lamented regretfully on the wane of wild pig hunting. They do so, not only because they worries about ecological consequence of the wane of the hunting, but more importantly for the losing of symbolic arena to express their masculinity. To the despair of Bahu Rowo and the old hunters whenever they invites the youths to join them in hunts, the youths only come with their motorcycles. They say "Don't worry. We're ready if the wild pig comes this way." Of course the wild pigs will do their best to avoid the paved road, as there is no place to hide over there. Apparently, the youths, who are only busy with showing off here and there carrying their daggers along the paved road, are more interested in riding motorcycles rather than in hunting wild pigs.

an expression of the unity between God and man that is a central theme in Javanese religion.

¹ The cost for this *Ronggeng* dance was 2.5 million rupiah which was divided equally among the 50 households that inhabited Garung. This is not an insignificant amount, still every time there is the *nyadran bumi* the inhabitants of Garung always manage to hold the *ronggeng* dance as a symbol of their prosperity, and also as a hope that the future will remain prosperous. In the year 1972, the village of Garung burnt to the ground.

² Behrend (1995: 291) even confirms that more than a fertility symbol, sexual contact in literature and arts is

³ Of course there is always an exception, for example Ingold (1974); Newall (1983); Moore (1994); and Valeri (1994).

⁴ For cases of swine population control connected to both protecting the agricultural fields from being more destroyed and to an examination of social conflict Rappaport (1968). See also Sweizer *et. al.* (2000: 541).

⁵ Notwithstanding such, Arwan says, the farmers still insist that the wild pigs are a huge threat that they wish to abolish. To comply with this wish he went to the Jogjakarta Zoo, to get the urine of a tiger, and then to take it to the laboratory. This urine compound was then sprayed onto the path that is usually used by the wild pigs. "If the pigs have met the tigers in the area then they know the scent of their urine. If then at some place they smell the urine the wild forest pigs will definitely stay away," was his explanation.

⁶ According to Arwan [Personal communication] the wild pigs sense of smell is so strong that it can smell from far away the sweat and body fat of humans on items that the humans have previously touched.

⁷ The closest word that I could find in Zoetmulder's dictionary (1982) was *untu*, tooth, and *uwuk*, attack; the two words together *untu-uwuk* can mean to attack with teeth—one thing that sufficiently is linked to wild pigs, that there ultimate weapon of attack is their teeth. While in the dictionary of Poerwadarminto (1939), the closest words are *ontoh*, to hold, and *owol*, to take a big pinch and directly spread it out like if a person spreads cotton in from a bag. *Ontoh-owol*, thus the definition is the action to hold and to spread something directly in big pinches. Manu Jayaatmaja from Javanese Literature Department at UGM believes that *ontolowok* is a different pronunciation from the Banyumasan dialect for the word *otokowok*, the title of a playful *gending* song, that means *adul-adulan*, when something is not neat like clothes taken from a wardrobe and thrown about on the floor or like hair that is all over the place like the *wayang* character who's hair is never cut or combed, and his hair is left wild here and there [Personal communication]. Thus, *ontohowol* or *otokowok* is connected with wild pigs, that is usually they spread the ground to look for worms or tubers, or also the hairs and the part of the wild pigs are all over the place. The word *owol* also can have sexual context. A young person from Petungkriyono that actually became a worker on a farm in Jolotigo, I don't know if it was intentional or not, saw Sinder Marijan having a hot personal session with tea picker Sri in a hidden corner of the factory: "Whooaah ... Sri is finished, she was *owol-owoled* by Sinder Marijan", he said.

⁸ Like verbal language, dance can also be a cognitive mode that is sometimes more effective than giving an

order (Hanna, 1979: 316), and one order that is often given in the form of dance is expression of the relation of power (Reed, 1998: 505). The Javanese concept that a wife has to be subservient to her husband is explained in the book on how to be a good wife entitled, "Serat Piwulang Estri" (Andrianie, 2004: 80).

- ⁹ In the community of German hunters there is a saying that "Wild pigs that escape from hunters are as slippery as a chicken fox and as fast as a hare" (Knapp, 1935: 84).

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