



# ***Bukak klambu: A Virginity Auction as a Ratifying Ritual for Becoming a Dancer***

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Bukak klambu* is an important ritual for being a ronggeng, as depicted by Ahmad Tohari in his *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* novel. The ritual is elaborated as a significant artefact in the traditional dance as the subculture in Javanese. This study aims to describe the symbols found in the novel, especially those related in the ritual to reveal the meaning behind. The result of the analysis reveals three important symbols there: the naming of *bukak klambu* (net-mosquito opening), *ranjang putih* (white bed), and *sayembara* (competition). “Bukak” (opening) means here is the first opening, and “klambu” is the virginity hymen. In other words, it is a process of “devirginization” done by a man who won the competition by paying the highest price to the shaman. He would deprive the ronggeng’s virginity. The virginity here was also symbolized by the white-bed, meaning the girl was untouched and pure. In normal situation, a girl would serve her virginity to her husband, as the pride of a Javanese woman who could keep her sanctity to her marriage. For the patriarchal culture, the competition here symbolizes the power of man over women and to other men, because the winner had proved their masculinity in terms of wealth and sexual prowess.

**Keywords:** *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*, Virginity, Culture, Javanese *Ronggeng*, Dancer

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Women and virginity have always been an intriguing topic to be discussed because the two are related. Instead of talking about women physically, it brings along with the social and political background. In some countries, namely Turkey, Zimbabwe, Georgia, India, the Magreb, Sub-Saharan, the southern region of the United States, and the Middle East, the social notions of honor and shame serve as the foundation for gender-based violence and virginity control. The culture of honor is a carefully constructed political, social, cultural, and economic ideology designed to dominate and govern a helpless and socially backward segment of society based on gender [1] [2] [3]. As a result, virginity is no longer only a biological or physical issue; it has strengthened into a critical component in gender power dynamics. It is incongruently showing women's subordination and autonomy [2].

As quoted by Awwad [1], a man's and a woman's honour, are very distinct forms of behavior. The loss of a woman's virginity results in the loss of her dignity;

this does not happen to men. The man has a duty to protect the reputation of his family and deal with negative feelings of shame. Shame is a "feminine attribute," and it is the responsibility of women to keep the family honorable by protecting chastity and avoiding actions that would bring shame to the family. Due to patriarchal norms, female virginity is prioritized over male virginity in terms of sexual purity [4] [5] [2].

A woman's sexual orientation is specified in the marriage contract in Egypt, for instance, and has an impact on the bride price that is offered [6] [2]. While in the Shona, Zimbabwe, there is a culture called *mombe yechimanda* [7] [2], a cow given to the new spouse's parents as a symbol of the bride's virginity and as a token of appreciation for helping to keep the young woman's virginity protected [4] [7] [2]. From pre-colonial periods until the present, this culture has been preserved [2]. Some countries, like Egypt, Iran, and Georgia, want their fiancée's virginity to be medically verified [8] [6]. In order to seem like virgins, even some Iranian women have hymenoplasty surgery. If they don't,

they risk facing negative social repercussions like divorce, rejection, and hostility [3].

Skandrani investigated how members of the Maghrebine minority, valuing virginity plays an important role in their identity [9] [10]. According to interviews with young women of Maghrebine heritage in France, virginity rules are an essential tool used by women in the Maghreb to navigate intergenerational ties and negotiate Maghrebine-French identities. This viewpoint can interpret virginity as evidence that these young women and their families are "truly" Tunisian, Algerian, or Moroccan. The standard serves as a metaphor for the division and barrier between Maghrebine migrants and the rest of French society. In order to keep the group together, this value serves as a symbolic identification that separates the in-group from the out-group. Amer compared the views of practicing and non-practicing British Arab Muslim women in relation to depictions of virginity, much like Skandrani did. They discovered how virginity represented a "Arabness" in British society [11]. Declaring oneself a virgin was more than just an act of honor for them; it served as a crucial cultural marker that reinforced their sense of identity.

Apart from the previous studies which interpret virginity as the symbol of identity to differentiate between the in-group from the out-group (colonizer), Hymenoplasty was described by Ahmadi as a covert act of defiance against the prevailing sociocultural order in Iran, which forbids young women from having sexual relations without parental consent and only permits sex in state-approved unions [3]. The narratives and discourses that have arisen claim that hymenoplasty is a veiled form of resistance to socioculturally imposed sexual inequality that confines women to the social domain of premarital virginity. By leveraging the medicalization of virginity, women unwittingly challenge gendered categories that label them as either the deviant woman who engages in premarital sex or the typical woman who maintains her virginity until marriage. The traditional norms of respect and shame led to hymenoplasty among Turkish and Iranian women [1].

An integral part of this construct is the social construction of femininity and masculinity, which makes women weak while also erecting and sustaining an effective system of social control aimed at dominating, taking advantage of, and, in the worst cases, killing women. In addition to the concepts of gender and social standing, honor and shame are also closely related to these. Because of this, honor is a social position bestowed upon individuals and social groups of all sizes, including families. Honor and shame are social notions that have a double standard since they are closely tied to ideas of femininity and masculinity. As it happened to women in Zimbabwe, Matsewetu [2] exemplified how

cultural norms are created, as well as how sexual double standards are used to create sexuality and females' subordination. Teenagers actively invest in and exploit virginity as a status symbol, even if they are not just suckering for cultural standards, according to our hypothesis. In keeping with the adolescent experience of and ideals surrounding virginity, there is a large amount of ambivalence where early adolescent men's virginity is shocking yet expected of females.

Likewise, the case occurred to Srintil, the protagonist of *Ronggeng Dukung Paruk* novel (referred to as RDP) by Ahmad Tohari (AT), a distinguished Indonesian writer. Srintil is a *ronggeng* dancer, a traditional dance that mostly lived in Java (Indonesia), before the pre-colonial to the present time, whom the "bukak klambu": "opening of the mosquito net" is required [12]

*Bukak klambu* is a type of competition open to all men. What they compete for is the virginity of the candidate wishing to become a *ronggeng* dancer. The man who can pay the amount of money determined by the dancer's trainer may take his pleasure with this virgin (51)

Though what was experienced by Srintil is just fiction, as said by Sharma 2020 [13], literature "has been more or less, a mirror of society". It has always been a close relationship between the two in all languages and at all eras. She further confirmed how poets, playwrights, novelists, and essayists are all products of their periods and how society influences their works directly or indirectly. Thus, it can be said that what happened to Srintil is a reflection of how a woman virginity is valued and interpreted in her society.

Stepping on to the previous studies that were experienced by women in different places, what happened to Srintil somehow had something in common with those women. Even though the causes and customs vary, each culture regards an intact hymen as a sign of virginity, symbolized by the bleeding during the first intercourse on the wedding night. The hymen has socio-cultural value as a symbol of purity and upright womanhood, even if bleeding during the first sexual experience does not prove a woman is virgin [14] [8] [6]. The appearance of blood on the wedding night determines the dignity and disgrace of both the male and female families. Museka & Machingura as quoted by Matsewetu at al [2], by connecting virginity to the bride riches paid by the prospective husband to the woman's family, the significance of virginity for young women is further emphasized.

For Srintil case, it does not dedicate her virginity to the husband of which the husband and family will give

reward or highly prized to the bride's family [15] [16], instead of to the man who can pay as determined by the dancer's trainer as her foster parent since she announced as the future *ronggeng* of the hamlet. At this point, Srintil's experience was like that of women in several places in terms of how virginity was perceived from a social, cultural, and economic standpoint.

This research will focus on the symbolize meaning of *bukak klambu* ritual to reflect how society interprets the culture of which virginity is seen as the commodity, pride and shame of the patriarchal as revealed by Tohari in RDP novel. The work's scientific innovation is in figuring out the significance of symbolic objects used in the ceremony. This research will apply to Geertz's work *The Interpretation of Cultures* to display the symbolic meaning of the *bukak klambu* ritual. As stated by Geertz, culture is a set of rules, plans and guidelines used by humans to regulate their behaviour. Meanwhile, Williams defines culture as more of a universal approach that refers to shared meanings--culture "way of life". In line with Williams, Storey believes that the concept of culture is not something that refers to high art (*avant-garde*) but as a text and the practice of daily life [17]. Culture is broadly the process of everyday life, from actions to ways of thinking. From the above definitions, humans become the main keywords of the culture itself. These keywords include "ideas, actions, works, ways of thinking, rules, plans, behavior, common meaning, ways of life, texts, practices of life", all of which are tied to "humans" as the primary subjects. In short, culture is about humans and the study of humans as a group.

According to Geertz [18], culture is a "public document". As a public document, it can be read and understood by the culture owner [19]. It will also be a similar text for non-members who want to learn the document (culture); one has to interpret the cultural artefacts' codes, both objects and activities. As Geertz explained, all behavior (culture) is coded, because it refers to a complex and multi-faceted mutual symbol system that may involve translation and clarification. Human acts derive their definitions from a culture marked by tradition, beliefs, and perceptions [20]. The key informants for breaking the codes are of course members of society located between them share the members of community as part of the cultural owners. Although we can also "guess" the codes based on the experience of cultures similar to the culture we are studying. Of course, this "guess" should not be taken as the truth until it is verified with information from the creator and the culture owner [21].

Thus, Geertz [18] suggested the "thick description" approach of culture. That is, a cultural approach through the deep and comprehensive interpretation of culture through the systems of symbolic meaning from the perspective of cultural practitioners themselves, "If you

want to understand what science is...you should look at what the practitioners of it do." Through this approach, readers (non-member of the cultural owner) can be led to interpretive theories about culture. Geertz's definition of "thick description" as interpretive activity is well illustrated in his closing essay, *The Interpretation of Culture*, entitled "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight". Based on his research, a cockfight is a symbolic event; it is a cultural process or text that needs to be interpreted to understand Balinese society. Geertz provides a commentary on the Balinese village life through a detailed summary of the cockfight. More specifically, the Balinese cockfight's thick definition shows "a Balinese reading of a Balinese encounter" but is still open to further interpretation [20]. Based on that point, one can interpret the reason, background, benefits, functions and goals of a person or group of the cultural owner, practicing existing cultural elements. Hence, it is not just a matter of "guessing" using methods, selecting, describing and interviewing, but it needs interpretation and being "the member" of the culture owner to understand and "break" the codes of the culture itself.

As stated above, *bukak klambu* is one of the rituals to become *ronggeng* (a dancer). It has a function as a means of entertainment and a ritual. This ritual which was "collective memories" of cultural activities in Banyumas society, afterwards well-recorded in RDP novel, which has been translated into many languages: Dutch, German, Japanese and Chinese [22]. AT portrayed the *bukak klambu* ritual as a part of cultural products of becoming a *ronggeng* in Banyumas society. As part of society members, AT also becomes the cultural representation (culture owner) of where he lives.

The *bukak klambu* ritual that is reflected in the narrative of literary texts can also be considered as "practices" or as a "way of life" which manifests in the tradition of "being *ronggeng*", or as the third definition of culture according to Williams [23]. Williams explained that cultural analysis aims to "clarify meanings and values, both implicit and explicit in a particular culture".

Since this research is a literary study thus, the owners of culture were the characters involved as actors and direct observers of the event as informants to understand the culture — all of which were presented in AT's RDP as narrative, monologues, and dialogue. In order to comprehend the significance of conceptualization of the idea behind the symbolic items depicted in the RDP novel, this research intends to describe the symbols surrounding the *bukak klambu* ritual.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The research focuses on revealing the symbolic meaning of *bukak klambu* ritual as one the tradition to

inaugurate the prospective *ronggeng*. The theory of The Interpretation of Culture proposed by Clifford Geertz will seek the symbolic meaning of the ritual. The data source was the novel's character narration, monologues, and conversations, which relate to the research problem—seeking the symbolic meaning of *bukak klambu* ritual. However, for practicality, the data were quoted from its English version, *The Dancer* (from now on referred to as TD), translated by Rene T.A. Lysloff. Reading, taking notes, and documenting the data were used as data analysis tools to discover the conceptual underpinnings or deep structure of the notion behind the symbolic artifacts of *bukak klambu* that were mirrored in the novel.

**Figure 1** The method of collecting the data

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After reading the novel *TD* Tohari [12] especially in the narrative, monologue, and dialogue related to the *bukak klambu* ritual, it can be identified that there were three main symbols which became the main elements in the ritual. The three symbols were: the term *Bukak Klambu* itself, the *Contest* and the *White Bed*. The interpretation of these symbols is carried out by adopting the thought of Geertz [18] that culture is semiotic, meaning that culture has open symbols - these symbols are known and enforced by the community as owners. The basis for the interpretation of these symbols is that the community is the owner of the culture itself or is emic, not ethical [24] [25].

#### 3.1. *Bukak klambu*

*Bukak klambu* or "opening the mosquito net" is the name of a ritual to inaugurate a *ronggeng*, without which she is unable to carry out her profession or role as a *ronggeng* (a dancer and a singer), "The people of Paruk believed that Srintil still had to fulfill one more condition before she could be a paid performer" [12]. By getting through this ritual, she can collect payment whenever she performs on a stage she is taking. The *bukak klambu* ritual it is not only contesting the *ronggeng* virginity, it also become the pride of the shaman *ronggeng* as well as the villagers. *Ronggeng* for Dukuh Paruk's society is a kind of identity. *Ronggeng* is obtained through mystical spirit called *indang* which only endowed to the chosen one. So, becoming *ronggeng* is not obtained through learning but it depends on the *indang* who can enter anyone desired.

In the hamlet there was a powerful belief that a true *ronggeng* dancer was not the result of teaching.

No matter how she was trained, a young woman could not become a *ronggeng* dancer without being possessed by the *indang* spirit. In the world of *ronggeng*, the *Indang* was revered as a kind of supernatural godmother. (8)

From the quotation above, it can be seen how Dukuh Paruk villagers treat *ronggeng*. For them having *ronggeng* in their village is a kind of pride and dignity, though at the same time she always been associated with a negative image and well respected. Apart from being a dancer, a *ronggeng* is also a dignified prostitute who is legalized by the culture where she lives. It seems that for this second role, the *bukak klambu* ritual has more meaning and role. The cultural facts in the *TD* narrative can be seen clearly from the following quotation.

The last ritual was called *bukak klambu*: "opening of the mosquito net." My hackles rose when I learned what this requirement was about. *Bukak klambu* is a type of competition, open to all men. What they compete for is the virginity of the candidate wishing to become a *ronggeng* dancer. The man who can pay the amount of money determined by the dancer's trainer has the right to take his pleasure with this virgin. (51)

*Bukak klambu* is a kind of grand opening for a *ronggeng*'s "virginity", after which it will become a commodity open to the public. Her virginity will be publicly available to anyone who can "purchase", as determined by the shaman *ronggeng*. As a fitness center, *ronggeng* "body" is a fitness device that can be used by any user as long as he has "paid" the rent. *Bukak klambu* is an event for the commencement of the "body" being marketed to the public.

Structurally, the *bukak klambu* ritual has been in the minds of the people of Dukuh Paruk ever since they knew that there would be a new *ronggeng*, because a crucial part of becoming a *ronggeng* is the *bukak klambu* rite. For the reader (non-member of the cultural owner), *bukak klambu*, will perhaps interpret only as ritual to become *ronggeng*, but for Dukuh Paruk's people, it is interpreted differently. Thus, Geertz by borrowing an example from the British philosopher Gilbert Ryle, he suggested interpreting culture using "thick description" approach rather "thin description". He further gave an example at someone who rapidly contracting her eyelids. For "thin description" blinking the eyelids has the same meaning with a wink or a twitch. Whereas for "thick description", the wink can be interpreted as a mode of communication, while twitch has no connotative meaning, "The wink is, then, a symbol because its meaning stands for something other

than simply the blinking of eyelids. Multiple levels of meaning are at work and need to be ascertained.” [20]. So, for Dukuh Paruk people, *bukak klambu* is not merely to inaugurate the *ronggeng*, it means that a prospective *ronggeng* can charge a fee for her services or her performance after that. So, after passing through many stages of becoming *ronggeng* ritual, the public understands and knows that the *bukak klambu* ritual will definitely happen (as the peak requirements of becoming a *ronggeng*) or it must happen as a custom of the tradition.

The manifestation of the *bukak klambu* ritual is an open “white bed” (a bed covered with a white sheet) which is deliberately displayed in shaman *ronggeng*'s house, so that it can be seen easily by the public as the consumers. For Dukuh Paruk's villagers who live in poverty, to sleep in a mattress covered with the sheet is only an unattainable dream. Thus, when shaman *ronggeng* displayed the bed for Dukuh Paruk villagers, they curiously come to see and hoping that they will be in that place someday if they were endowed with the *indang ronggeng* as Srintil did. *Indang* was revered as a kind of supernatural godmother [12]. Just three days before the inauguration, the *ronggeng* shaman, previously, promoted the *ronggeng* to the society. The promotional material contained "time" and "price" when the ritual would be performed, and what "price" must be paid for those who wanted *ronggeng*'s virginity. The *bukak klambu* exhibition would be carried out for 3 days before the D-day of the ritual.

Three days before the ritual evening an oil lamp burned brightly in Kartareja's home. The door to one of the rooms remained open so that the new mosquito-netted bed could be seen by people from outside the house. (52)

Publication of “bed” is certainly not a common thing in everyday life. Usually, a bed is placed in a part of the room that is not properly seen by “other people”; it can only be seen by its owner as privy chamber. The room is in the most enclosed part of a house, so it cannot be seen or viewed by anyone except the owner of the house. However, in the *bukak klambu* ritual, the closed bed norm is actually “opposed” and even published as a marketing medium for “virginity” commodities. “Bed” then, becomes an index of “activity toward virginity contest” for the public as the target market, at a very fantastic price.

Three days before the ritual evening an oil lamp burned brightly in Kartareja's home. The door to one of the rooms remained open so that the new mosquito-netted bed could be seen by people from

outside the house. The bed had been freshly made up with clean white sheets. For the villagers, who usually slept on simple bamboo pallets, such a sight was most unusual. That evening, many of the village women and children came to Kartareja's home just to see the magnificent bed. (52)

It can be said that the “white bed” is a symbol for a reference to the cultural events of the *bukak klambu* or both of which are interactive and interrelated. In fact, both can be a syntagmatic sequence that is much easier to understand, “a white bed with an open cover”. At the end of symbols and references, there lies a meaning or concept, namely the main purpose behind the symbol's form or activity. *Bukak klambu* means that a *ronggeng* is “legalized” to work for the neighborhood. This service is no longer a service that can be obtained for free, but a price that must be paid. Services, of course, relate to her natural talents, dancing, and for those who have money can “buy” her services, in terms of biological services for men.

### 3.2. Contest

*Bukak klambu* is mainly marked by a contest for a wealthy man and is willing to pay the “price” set by the shaman. As stated previously, the “virgin matter” is not talking merely physical, but it also deals with power, cultural, social and even economic. With his power of being the *ronggeng* shaman as the holder of the culture and Srintil's foster parent, Kartareja has the right to determine the “price” of the *ronggeng* virginity. This virginity “price” also practiced by several countries, namely Zimbabwe which has *mombe yechimanda* [7] [2], a cow presented to the in-laws as a symbol of the bride's virginity and as a token of appreciation for helping to preserve the young woman's virginity. In Turkey, Egypt, Iran and the Middle East, women virginity constructs based on the honor and shame values. Thus, maintaining the female virginity having greater importance than male, in returns, it will be paid by honor and in terms of economic values. In Srintil's case, the price set was a piece of gold coin, which was equivalent to three big buffaloes. This contest, then, was a symbol in the *bukak klambu* ritual. Of course, this contest, seen from a capitalist economic aspect, was an attempt by a shaman to raise capital of his own. Besides, the “price” that required by the shaman was the “prestige” or “self-dignity” of the shaman *ronggeng* or even the self-respect of the Dukuh Paruk community. They also enjoy the pride that their *ronggeng* was sold at exorbitant prices.

Winning the *bukak klambu* contest did not only involve passion, nor was it simply about the celebratory rite of passage of a young girl. It was a

matter of pride for the winner. Dower's main objective was for people to talk about him: "Dower's isn't just anybody, you know, he's the young man who won the *bukak-klambu* contest over the *ronggeng* dancer, Srintil." (57)

And of course, as men participants, who did not only come from the Dukuh Paruk community, the price given by the shaman *ronggeng* was a kind of exhibition of wealth, without which, a man would not be able to get the "*ronggeng* virginity". The men who could fulfill Kertareja requirements, a gold coin that was equivalent to three big buffaloes were Dower, who came from Pecikalan village, and Sulam (the son of a rich headman from a neighboring village). Both of them not only contesting Srintil's virginity, but they were contesting their pride as a wealthy man.

*"If that's the case you must have the gold piece with you," Kartareja replied.*

*"That's an insult, You don't seem to know who I am. Of course, I brought the gold piece: not silver coins or an ox," retorted Sulam, glancing scornfully at Dower.*

*Stung by Sulam's words, Dower glowered back at him.*

*"Sulam! You can boast all you want, but not to me. My offer to Kartareja is worth a lot more than a gold piece." Dower turned to Kartareja. "And, you, you'd be stupid to reject my offer and take Sulam's." (73)*

The man who can "pay" Srintil's virginity will not only increase his prestige, but also the village where the man is from. The contest, is a form of male self-esteem in the context of the *ronggeng* culture. He is considered as a dignified man (rich and wealthy) unlike those who later enjoy *ronggeng* services. According to Mernissi, in a society where injustice, scarcity, and the utter enslavement of some people to others strip the community as a whole of the one true human strength: self-confidence, virginity, like honor, is primarily a masculine obsession. The ideas of honor and virginity place a man's status between a woman's legs [1]. This is because the "virginity" of *ronggeng* is a very rare commodity; it is not just an ordinary "virginity", but a *ronggeng*, a dignified dancer, whose existence can be very rare and will appear decades later after the *ronggeng* has died and is replaced by a new *ronggeng*. Thus, men's pride in this competition is not only a matter of wealth, but also a matter of opportunity, luck to obtain a rare commodity. It is like the Cock Fight in Balinese society, explained by Geertz. According to him

the Cock Fight is not only contesting the cock, but it is more like contesting dignity, pride, power as well as caste that existed in the culture. Hence, the character of culture is very contextual, it has multiple interpretations. As Vendra [20] proposed in type to Ricœur's example in the meaning of raising one arm. He observed that raising arm was not just moving the arm (physical motion), it can be interpreted as a greeting, hailing a taxi and so forth. We do not understand "the act" unless we are acquainted with the culture aim and the contextual setting.

### 3.3. White Bed

The *bukak klambu* ritual which is thick with plucking "virginity" is of course closely related to its "virgin" owner, Srintil. However, Srintil's virginity is not only a dignity for herself but also for the shaman who determines the price of "virginity. As many other patriarchal countries namely: Zimbabwe; Egypt; Turkey; Iran and Middle East countries; Javanese culture where the stories took place; also shared the same norms. A girl is valuable if she can keep her virginity until she married. The virginity of their fiancées is being verified by a doctor in Egypt, Iran, and Georgia [8] [6]. Before the wedding, potential grooms, their families, and occasionally the bride's family may ask gynecologists or *pezeshke ghanooni* (legal forensic medical examiners) to certify the woman's virginity by providing a *govahiye bekarat* (virginity certificate). Even some women undergo hymenoplasty, a kind of procedure used by some Iranian women to verify their virginity. In addition to being called hymenoplasty, hymenorrhaphy, or hymen reconstruction/repair surgery is a hidden operation that reconstructs or synthetically replicates the hymen to simulate the virginal state and cause bleeding when the membrane is ruptured (occasionally by inserting a gelatin capsule containing a material that resembles blood) [3]. These procedures are carried out in an effort to avoid social repercussions such as divorce, rejection, and hostility if they are not virgins.

One of the ways to prove that a girl is still "virgin" or "remain untouched" is by spreading a white sheet on the mattress. If the white sheet has blood spots on it, it can be concluded that the girl is still a virgin. This controversy persists despite the fact that the hymen is not a reliable indicator of prior sexual experience. [26] [27] [28] [29] [30] [3].

The bed had been freshly made up with clean white sheets. For the villagers, who usually slept on simple bamboo pallets, such a sight was most unusual. That evening, many of the village women and children came to Kartareja's home just to see the magnificent bed. (52)

Thus, the "white sheet or blood spots" is a reference to virginity. It means that if the white mattress has blood spots on the night when her virginity is taken, then, she is saving her "career" as a *ronggeng* in the *bukak klambu* ritual. For Javanese women, surrendering "virginity" to those who deserve (a husband) is a kind of "norm" that should be obeyed. This "norm" is also associated with the religion practiced by the people in the society. For Javanese of which most of them are Muslims, keeping the virginity is a must, otherwise she is labeled as a sinner. This is the same as the virginity test for newlyweds that occurs in several countries. One of them is in Maharashtra, West India. The virginity test occurs in Maharashtra is the same as what happened at the *bukak klambu* ritual. A village institution supervised by the panchayat, a powerful village institution, can cancel a marriage if it is found that there is no bloodstained on the white sheets of their beds. This of course is very embarrassing and humiliating not only for the girl but for other family members. The similar case experienced by women in Iran, Zimbabwe and Turkey as well. Because they will be ostracized from their village and become a bad stigma for the girl's sisters. The white cloth with blood spots thus became not a mere symbol of a girl's virginity but the honor and shame at the same time.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis, three symbols were identified in the Javanese rituals: the labelling of *bukak-klambu*, competition, and the use of white bed at the night.

4.1. The naming of *bukak-klambu* which is closely related to third symbol white-bed, as the *klambu* here is the cover of the white-bed. "Bukak" or opening means the initiation of two points: the *ronggeng*'s service as the cultural prostitute, and her services for other cultural and domestic affairs. However, here the first meaning is dominant. It means a night in which *ronggeng* would have her first intercourse to a man, or "devirginization".

4.2. *Sayembara* or the contest/competition is the symbol of male dominance over the female. With his money or wealth, a man can buy a virginity of any woman, including a *ronggeng* as the pride of the community. The winner would get his ultimate pride to be the one who took off *ronggeng*'s virginity.

4.3. As mentioned before, the white bed itself refers to a sacred color of the *ronggeng*, meaning the girl has never been touched by any man. She was a true virgin. That is why she deserved a high value. In a normal situation, she would give her sanctity to her husband—a man she loves as her pride as a Javanese woman.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The study was financially sponsored by UMP. In its implementation, I have been directed through meaningful

guidance and valuable critics from my supervisors in UNS. Without them, this work would be impossible to be.

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