



Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education

## **ANAK HUTAN**

Relationships to the West in Bukit Lawang and the effects of tourism on the masculine identities of young men.

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## Introduction

This project started with the intentions of understanding women's roles and identities in the village of Bukit Lawang, on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. I wanted to explore what life is like for women in what is a male-dominated tourist industry. As can sometimes happen, this plan did not come to life, to my real disappointment. What did flourish, however, is something equally interesting and valuable with respect to getting a glimpse of life lived in parallel, and sometimes in response to tourism. The young men who work as guides have grown up in an environment that is simultaneously rural, traditional and religious, and also international, touristic and complex. These guides are influenced by, have impact on, and depend on tourism in a plethora of ways, alongside carrying with them their identities that are partly rooted in a culture of faith and poverty, and importantly, a kind of masculinity. What the following will aim to portray are the ways in which tourism in Bukit Lawang impacts these men, with specific focus on three individuals. Tourism, and in this context ecotourism, is of course highly relevant and necessary to include, but this is not an ethnography about tourism. What will be foregrounded are the ways in which these men form their identities, conceptualise their masculinities, and the relationships they have to tourism as a concept, as a job, and as an avenue of connecting to people who are from outside of their own traditions and culture. I wish to do these men justice in their sentiments and experiences, as well as the way in which they grasp what they call the Westerners. Therefore, this thesis is for the purpose of representing *one* way of being a man in Bukit Lawang in the face of change and cultural difference.

In the theoretical context of tourism research, the majority of work has placed emphasis on understanding the effects of tourists on a society or a community, the relations between host and guest, and the way in which the tourist's gaze (Urry 2002) impacts the performances and behaviours of the host (Stronza 2001). Though this thesis serves as a further understanding of the impacts of tourism on locals or hosts, it is less about the political and economic aspects, and more to do with the rooted sentiments that are involved in being in a co-dependent network with tourism and tourists. The following will not present the perspective of the tourists, nor will it dive into major historical issues that govern the relationship many third-world countries have to tourism. It will, however, give way to the emotional perspective and

the aspects that alter and shape specific masculine identities in a very specific context. Rupert Stasch outlines the necessity and importance of anthropological work that focuses on the host perspective, as it was largely lacking up until recently: “The documentation of hosts’ experience has been the deepest contribution of anthropological work on tourism to date.” (2017: 11). Therefore, my motivations are clear. I argue this subject is interesting and valuable insofar that it deals with very real conditions, expectations and feelings surrounding what it is to identify as, firstly, a jungle guide, secondly, an Indonesian man, and thirdly, as a person in a relationship with someone different from them.

I have outlined extensively the methodological reflections and experiences I had during fieldwork, with filming and documentation, as well as post-fieldwork during the process of editing and analysis. Most importantly, however, my methodological reflections serve the purpose of outlining the interest I have in the studies I have done. Reflexivity is, to a large degree, a vital part of the ethnographic endeavour, and I hope to demonstrate this reflexivity in the coming chapters.

The issues that arise from the time spent among these men in Bukit Lawang are how they relate to themselves, to each other, and to people from a very different background and lifestyle. Given the background and context of the place, as both a physical location (and destination) and as a space in itself, I wish to explore the ways in which these men handle the exposure to a very different set of ideals and expectations than that of their own local Indonesian one. When encountering Bukit Lawang and the people who live there, you are met with an clear sense of faith being important in everyday life; however, the contradiction I also observed was that these young men who work directly in tourism are very much not devoted in the way much of the surrounding society is. This ethnographic exploration hopes to show that it is perhaps *because of* the exposure to tourism that they do not find themselves as pious as their neighbours. They live in a small place – and space – wherein there are norms for how to behave and identify as Indonesian and as Muslim, yet also in this small locale, they have a steady influence from ‘outside’, namely that of tourists who do not follow the same way of piety. Furthermore, I hope to address the very poignant issue of how these men deal with the impact of forming relationships (romantically and professionally) to tourists, and how this affects their embodied masculinities and identities. Their notions of themselves as Indonesian and Muslim are counteracted by notions of the West – as they understand it. The concept of a

‘Westerner’ will be explored in the way it has been represented to the men and in turn, the way in which they pass judgement on and form their opinions of what it means to be from the (elusive) West – it will conceptually be a form of Occidentalism.

The following chapters are structured in a specific way that I hope gives a full picture of the anthropological, theoretical, and ethnographic contexts. With the aforementioned in mind, I present these guiding thoughts as a beginning:

*How the young men, who sometimes refer to themselves as anak hutan (‘jungle boys’), relate to the West, and what the West means in this context.*

*Understanding how the identities of the informants are shaped and performed in relation to the situations they are in and the people they encounter.*

*How a crossroads of Indonesian Islamic influence and tourism influence affects their masculinities, and in what way these masculinities might be threatened, challenged, or part of a larger evolution.*

## The Ethnographic Context

### Place

Bukit Lawang is a small village on a border to the Gunung Leuser National Park in North Sumatra. The village is closely connected to a series of other villages that stretch from Bukit Lawang and follows a single road to the next big city around 65km away. The surrounding land, stretching far and wide, is occupied by palm oil plantations, rice fields and rubber tree plantations. Government-owned palm oil land borders the tourist village and comes to an abrupt end upon entering the village. The Sumatran rainforest is a UNESCO World Heritage site, therefore any government or private owned agricultural land is strictly exempt from the rainforest borders and land. During the 1970s, Bukit Lawang was host to an orangutan rehabilitation centre that provided care and feeding for orangutans that would eventually be released back into the wild within the national park. This rehabilitation centre closed down in the 1990s, yet the orangutans remained central to the future of tourism in Bukit Lawang. The ecotourism is thus largely based on and around the sightings of these semi-wild orangutans, though tourism did not pick up until the mid-2000s. As it stands now, the village lies the banks of the Bohorok river, with tightly placed guesthouses and hotels littering both sides. There is a population of roughly 2000 people living in the area, though in the tourist village, the locals make up approximately 300. There are fairly clear high and low seasons for tourism in Bukit Lawang, high season being usually from June through August. Low season is generally considered everything outside of those three months. Low season also tends to have slightly more rain, though this is minimally different to high season – Bukit Lawang is, after all, on the border to a vast rainforest, so rain is to be expected. What is contrasting, however, is the extent to which the people are able to maintain their livelihoods during high season compared to low season. With less tourists, income is decidedly scarce for many of the local guides.

The image below (Fig.1) highlights three distinct but highly connected parts that make up Bukit Lawang. Enclosed in the green area is where the main tourist area ends, and the local village begins. In this area, people go to school, go to work, eat and live, with much less exposure to tourism. However, there is still an impact of tourism to be seen there, too, as many



of those who live there rely upon tourists coming. In a chain of events, guides and trekking companies will often order food from *warungs* (family-run food stalls and restaurants) in this area to bring on treks for tourists. Some tourists do, as well, venture out beyond the boundaries of what is considered the ‘tourist village’ in search of more authenticity and local food. The red area represents what is known as *perumahan* (housing complex), a tight network of small houses where many families live. *Perumahan* was subsidised and built by the Indonesian government in 2003 after a serious flash flood hit and devastated the village along the riverbanks, effectively wiping out a huge amount of homes and families. Many of those who live there are related to or work directly with tourism. It represents an area that would have been scattered along the riverbanks prior to 2003. However, tourists do not live there when they visit, nor do they regularly pay visits to the area for the simple reason that within are private homes.



Fig. 1 – Aerial view of Bukit Lawang. Source: [www.maps.google.com](http://www.maps.google.com)

Finally, the blue area depicts that which is the tourist village, a short stretch of land that holds many guesthouses, inns, hotels and restaurants. A very large proportion of these buildings were established during the past 15 years. This is the most idyllic and scenic areas

of Bukit Lawang. Locals live here too, at least the ones who work directly with tourists and, in some ways, *for* tourists. They run the businesses, host tourists, and serve higher-priced food fit for Western consumption (effectively, Indonesian dishes with far less chili). Many of the young men who work in tourism sleep in this area too, often at the place of their employment or in small rented rooms and studios scattered discretely around the area.

To describe the atmosphere of Bukit Lawang would be to depict a way of life, more than anything else. There is a great sense of relaxation, calm, and serenity when you are in the bubble that is the tourist village. As a visitor (or tourist, or anthropologist) you are encased in a safe and quiet environment where most things are catered for you in an understated and yet performative way – this particular way of life and performance will be dealt with later.



Fig. 2 – A view down the river, guesthouses on both sides.

Surrounding the buildings are vast amounts of vegetation and effectively shades of the colour green. The river also provides a beautiful backdrop to the village and serves as an easy way to cool off for tourists who are not adapted to the humid, equatorial climate. Most importantly, the river is an integral part of the livelihoods of the locals, using it to *mandi* (bathe), wash clothes and dishes, and relax.

## Religion

Like most of Indonesia, Bukit Lawang is almost entirely Muslim. There are four mosques in a two-kilometre radius, and most of the people (those not involved in tourism) practice their faith daily. The intriguing exception are the young men who work as guides and at the guesthouses for tourists. A large part of the identity of the village and its inhabitants is deeply rooted in being pious – one example being that women dress according to the values of Islam, covering their hair, arms and legs (past the knee), whilst men are commonly freer to dress as they wish. All of the small roadside cafes, food stalls and *warungs* serve halal food, people regularly go to prayer, and women and men are rarely seen together, especially not in any capacity that is considered inappropriate or private. However, Bukit Lawang is also a place of getaway for domestic tourists from the nearby cities, and on Sundays, families, couples and groups of friends arrive in bulk to enjoy a break from the busier and denser city life.

Islam's role in Indonesian society runs deep and is historically (and presently) a large factor in national identity and politics. In Bukit Lawang, the customs and traditions of society are also governed by Islam, though it is not as restricted as in the northernmost province of Aceh on Sumatra, where Sharia law governs. From the tourist perspective, the influence and impact of Islam is not so heavily felt, as visitors spend their time mostly in the tourist village. Though it is not hidden nor avoided, tourists are effectively free to be as they are in a space that has adapted to the influences of a more Western mindset and accommodate the imagined standards, wishes and options that Western people come to expect when travelling.

The locals who work with and in tourism in Bukit Lawang are also therefore not obviously pious. There is a juxtaposition between maintaining local faith and tradition, whilst also establishing a sense of ease for tourists who may not be used to a more restricted dress code and sensibility in regard to public displays. The tourists are, in my observations, generally respectful, sensitive and insightful to these different norms, however, and do not often present any problems for the society. Though, notably, they are effectively given a space where the lines are blurred between cultures, religions and behaviours. The young men who work as guides – the focus of this research – are the embodiments of this blurred boundary between religious life and a mimicked Western lifestyle. As they grow up in and adapt to tourism in

a very limited physical space, they have come to represent their own category of a young person living in a globalised world. In effect, their Muslim identities are almost taken for granted, being part of who they are from birth, but in my experience with them, never questioned.

## People

As I have already begun describing above, the people of Bukit Lawang are varied and mixed, though all who live and work there are Indonesian and almost all are of Islamic faith. I did not spend much time with, nor in conversation with, those who live and work outside of tourism. My fieldwork was conducted in the tourist area and for the majority of the time, in close encounters with the young men who work as guides and in various tourist establishments.

However, I experienced a great sense of hospitality and warmth from many locals outside of the tourist village. Finding myself practicing *bahasa* Indonesian, I was met with smiles, shyness and exclamations of, '*Bule! Dia berbicara bahasa Indonesia!*' ('White tourist! She speaks Indonesian!'). Indonesian people are to my knowledge and in my experience polite and kind, and also quite shy (something that my main informant, Iruel, displays too, during an interview). They are, in this area, also very hardworking, family-oriented, and pious. As the surrounding area is covered with palm oil plantations and rice fields, many who live in the area work in this agricultural sector. It is a low-wage and high-labour business, and almost always worked by men. With the traditional and religious values that so heavily prevail in the area, family life consists of women, for the most part, as home-carers and mothers, whilst the men work and feed the family. As per Islamic law, a couple must be married to engage in romantic and sexual activities, and there are deep-rooted values of having large, fruitful and healthy families. Thus, many people living in Bukit Lawang are married young, and experience the balance of family and work by their mid-twenties. Once you step inside the arbitrary and invisible border to the tourist village, however, these aspects of more traditional life fade away and are instead replaced with what many young men who work as guides call 'freedom'. The majority of the guides are unmarried. There are some, of course, who have families just as there are some who live in this tourist area who also lead lives like that. However, upon entry into this small area, we are met with the first contradiction



of daily life as it traditionally is understood in rural Indonesia: many are not married, many live what they deem 'freer' lives, and there are less restrictions to what one can and cannot do in the tourist area, according to Islamic norms and rules.

### *Anak hutan*

*Anak hutan* roughly translates to 'jungle boy' – a term sometimes used by the young male guides to describe themselves in a characteristic way that suggests a partly joking manner but also a denomination linked to the 'beach boys' (*anak pantai* in Indonesian) of Bali and other Indonesian coastal towns and areas who work in tourism. Being an *anak hutan* signifies a certain level of 'wildness', freedom and self-irony, and a particular kind of masculinity. As far as identifying themselves as such, they depict a specific type of local who sets himself apart from that of a local living and working without tourism. Though the *anak hutan* are not as intense as the 'Kuta Cowboys' (of Bali), there is an element of comparison to some parts of the lifestyle that cannot go unnoticed (ref. Dahles and Bras 1999, a study of tourist guides in Yogyakarta and Lombok and their status as 'entrepreneurs in romance').

The young men who work as guides are on average in their late-teens to early-thirties, and most are born and raised in Bukit Lawang or the surrounding villages. On a daily basis, these men spend much of their time interacting with each other and tourists, and in conditions that suggest a sort of performance. They will almost always call out to tourists walking past where they are sitting together, which comes across as a polite form of 'cat-calling'. Some of the common things they say are, *where are you going? Hello, welcome tourist! Join us. You need guide? Welcome back from your trek!* Needless to say, it was always entertaining to observe the kinds of responses they would gain from the tourists passing by on the walkway; some would completely ignore them, some would smile and awkwardly say hello back, and some were more forthcoming with their replies. Friendships (and more romantic relationships) are formed in this manner, mostly because of the efforts and approachability of these guides. Much of their time, when not trekking, is spent playing guitar, singing, smoking *ganja* (marijuana) and what can only be described as 'hanging out'. They all refer to each other as

*bang* or *dek* (slang for older brother and younger brother), which is common amongst almost all Indonesians, but comes across strongly with these particular men as a deep sense of comradeship and brotherhood.

My three main informants, amongst many young men, are Iruel, Amin and Muss. Iruel was my initial contact before the fieldwork began, providing help when needed to establish myself in Bukit Lawang. During the course of the alteration of my plans in the first part of the fieldwork, I realised he would be an ideal participant to understand the *anak hutan*. Iruel is 27 years old, is born and raised in Bukit Lawang, and comes from parents and grandparents who also worked in tourism. In 2003, the village was hit by a flash flood – a ten-metre wave that destroyed most of the tourist village and killed up to 400 people. Iruel’s parents were among the victims, thus at the age of nine he was orphaned, as well as losing his two younger brothers. Having been raised by extended family and lived on his own since finishing high school, Iruel is an independent and positive person, who thrives off of people’s happiness. He has worked as a guide for five years, mostly affiliated with the Hotel Orangutan. He has a Western girlfriend, they have had a relationship for two years, and he maintains that as long as “she is nice to me and I am nice to her” (quoted from an interview), they have a future together. He is Muslim but rarely practices any rituals or praying. His visit to his relatives during Idul Fitri at the end of Ramadan is one of the few times in a year where he sees his maternal aunts, uncles and cousins, something which usually amounts to an emotional reconnection.

Amin is Iruel’s paternal first cousin, and they have remained close for many years. Amin’s entrance into my project was mutually enthusiastic, as he was eager to be part of the filming. Amin works as a guide, not for a specific company but as a freelancer – he takes guiding jobs from various friends and colleagues and does longer tours with groups of tourists around the province of North Sumatra. He is 28 years old and is also born and raised in Bukit Lawang, though none of his nucleus family members were victims of the 2003 flood. He is a highly engaged and active participant of the community, taking part in various eco- activities and NGO-supported centres (such as an English Trust school run mostly by Western volunteers). From a previous marriage, that began when he was still in high school, he has two children who live with their grandparents in Bukit Lawang; a girl aged 6 and a boy aged 7.

The marriage ended five years ago, and the woman (from Bukit Lawang) is currently not very involved in their lives, living in Malaysia where she works. Though he was reluctant to discuss this relationship on camera, he shared this story with me in a conversation off-camera and gave me permission to use it for the purpose of understanding his history. Since his divorce, he has had a few relationships (short- and long- lasting) with Western tourist women and is currently in a very complicated situation with his current girlfriend. Amin is a character who takes on new projects energetically and wants to make something more of himself in Bukit Lawang. When I asked if he had any ambitions or dreams of moving away, to Europe for example, he maintained that he wants to stay where he is, as his dreams are more that of providing business and jobs for the local community. Amin has two older siblings, both of whom are married. He comes from a quite devout Muslim family, meaning that his views on life and the importance of religion are slightly more prominent than that of Iruel.

Thirdly, Muss was my neighbour during my fieldwork, and someone I therefore encountered and got to know on an almost daily basis. During the initial period of my fieldwork, he was simply a new friend, but as my project began changing, I realised the role he could play in the film and research. Muss is 23 years old and runs his own small modern craft gallery, selling products that are hand-carved and hand-made by him and his uncle and father. He opened the gallery a few days after my arrival to Bukit Lawang, which coincided with my first social meeting with him and many of the mutual friends there. Amongst the group was also Amin and Iruel, as well as Muss' then-girlfriend from Australia. He has told me on various occasions that they are no longer together because of estrangement and many differences in mindset, but she was (and still is, ultimately) a part of the creation of the gallery. As Muss does not have many means of his own, she was the financial backer and partly designer of many of the products as well as the designer of the gallery space. Though they have their differences, Muss maintains that the gallery is equally hers and it is his, even though he produces everything sold there and is the only current worker for this small gallery. Other than being a trekking guide too, he is creative and skilled and often sits outside his gallery in his workshop making jewellery from wood, resin and ink, and small carvings. Muss is someone who wants a future for himself in the gallery but is young and wants to one day be able to explore more of the world. He has told me that he has the gallery partially because he feels obligated to financially help his family, something that is normal in the society. Many people like Muss work not only for themselves and their own means, but also in support of

their relatives. He is Muslim, too, but rarely speaks about what that means to him. His mindset and opinions concerning local society mixed with tourism culture is openminded and fresh, as many of his fellow *anak hutan*.

## Guiding

Taking tourists on guided treks through the jungle is the main source of income and sustenance that the *anak hutan* can gain. They go through an educational period where they train to become licensed guides, and thereafter, are permitted to enter the national park with tourists. The job of guiding is like most tourism-catering jobs and involves a great deal of responsibility and pressure to ensure the guests are safe and happy. Bukit Lawang, in itself a geographically small place, has approximately fifty different companies that offer more or less the exact same thing: one-day or several-days treks, rafting, a trip to another nearby river for relaxing and having a BBQ, and other activities. Most companies offer the same prices, too. Though this suggests a high level of competition, I have not observed any feelings of resentment or jealousy when one guide gets a trekking job over another. The *anak hutan* are mostly in a sort of brotherhood and therefore support each other in many ways.

The trekking day begins with the guides gathering all the necessary food, equipment and permits before the trek commences. On a daytrip, guests are offered a fruit break and later a lunch break – all in the space of roughly six hours. The guides carry watermelons, pineapples, a large quantity of bananas, and other fruits, as well as usually three or four litres of water, plus the *warung*-bought lunch packs (usually the staple *nasi goreng*, or ‘fried rice’). In a backpack or two, this is ultimately very heavy. The fruit is presented on a make-shift platter in the middle of the jungle, whereby the guides will collect big leaves to use as a surface to place the fruit. They cut the fruit in artistic and aesthetic ways, always ensuring a pleasant response from the guests. Throughout the trek, guides are eager to remind guests to not leave any trash behind, and they are careful to collect any before they continue on the trek. A daytrip usually ends with rafting back from a point upstream and back to the village. The ‘rafts’ are rubber tubes that are roped together on site and captained by the guides and a co-worker who



carried the tubes up the river earlier in the day. The men who carry the tubes are often seen balancing up to five on their heads and necks, and they walk for up to one hour upstream.

On one- or several-nights treks, there are campsites that are scattered further up the river, where shelters with mattresses, blankets and mosquito nets are provided for the guests, as well as a large amount of food (dinner, breakfast and lunch). The cooks, who are also the ones who carry the tubes, thus transport bags of food and cooking equipment up to the camps. There is an entire process involved that requires many people, just to provide tourists with a night in the 'wild'.

I participated on a few treks with Amin and Iruel, as well as other guides, and each time I experienced a service that had been tailored for fun, safety and a memorable time. On a three-day trek with an older Australian woman, I witnessed the guides' incredible patience and commitment to effectively getting this woman up and down the steep muddy hills in the jungle, as she was not a very confident walker. At certain points, the two guides had to lift her past tricky points and treacherous roots, yet at no point was there any indication of them being tired or frustrated. This form of service shows the extent to which guiding in Bukit Lawang is taken seriously and the standards that are kept allowing tourists a trek they probably will not forget. The treks do not provide a lot of income, however, for the guides. If the guides are working for hotels or guesthouses, they get a smaller percentage than they would if they were independent. From a one-day trek, a guide will earn around 300,000 Indonesian rupiah (IDR; equal to approximately NOK 200) plus possibly tips. This income is delivered in cash and is often quickly spent on food, cigarettes, beers (on Saturday nights) or petrol for their motorbikes. During the high season, income is steadier as there is a heavier influx of tourists. However, during low season, the guides can go without money for weeks on end, unless they have familial support, savings, or other part-time occupations. Life becomes very tough for the guides – like Iruel, for example – when they cannot afford to feed themselves. This poverty is not so easily recognised, though, from a fleeting tourist's perspective. A certain level of trust and friendship is required before most of these young men are willing to admit their vulnerabilities.

## Relationships

All three of my informants, as well as many other of the young men in Bukit Lawang, are involved with or have been involved with a female Western tourist. They consider it something beyond what they know of women from where they live, and that Western women are free- and open-minded, bringing with them education and different life views. However, these relationships are difficult to maintain for many of the men because they only experience it when the women come back to visit. Amin has expressed a feeling of being stuck there, not because he does not wish to live there, but because the Western women “come and leave as they want” (quoted from an interview). The most interesting part of these relationships is also the opinions and sentiments formed by these men and how they relate to the ‘world out there’. What Amin, Iruel and Muss know of the ‘Western world’ is what they have encountered and experienced in a very small and specific context – namely, that of tourists travelling and passing through. From a Western woman perspective, I know that the attitudes and freedom that many people feel when travelling to far-away places and experiencing new exciting cultures, are often remote from what these people are like when they are at home in the West (see also Rupert Stasch’s writing on tourism, 2017). But to the young men in Bukit Lawang, they learn from what they see, and what they see are tourists. Of course, when they form and maintain relationships with these women, they begin to understand that life is not as carefree as they imagine it to be for the women when they are not travelling. Iruel has expressed he knows much more of what his girlfriend has told him of her life when she is at home, working and living her regular life. Muss’ past relationship has made him feel that it is difficult to maintain such a relation when mindsets are different, and opinions about how life should be are not connected. However, Muss has also stated that he finds the focus is more on people themselves – who they are and what they think and believe – rather than where they are from.

On Saturday nights, tourists and guides are found in the few bars by the river, drinking beer, singing, and dancing. These events are comparable to most places in the world, as the context of ‘going out’ is similar in many places. For the *anak hutan*, these nights are opportunities to have fun, get drunk, flirt with girls, and even sometimes end up with a girl at the end of the night. Young travellers have often been characterised as carefree and

sexually adventurous, which stands opposite to the norms of Muslim culture. Pre-marital relations are generally strictly avoided in many Muslim societies, as it is believed to be sinful to engage in sexual activities before being married. However, in Bukit Lawang, this strictness is not observed and the *anak hutan* feel free to behave as they wish, and as they imitate the behaviour of the *bule* (white tourists). Not all nightly encounters between local boy and tourist girl become longer relationships, though many are seen to continue their flirt throughout the stay of the tourist.

Relationships to tourists are not limited to romance, however. Many guides stay in touch with friends they have made, as these friends return to their home countries. Furthermore, some men in Bukit Lawang gain partners and investors in projects that they dream to build. Amin, for example, is currently managing a project that will see the building of a new bar (and potential yoga centre). During the fieldwork, these negotiations were still in the early stages. Amin's investors are a couple from the UK who were his guests on some treks in the beginning of the high season. Shortly after leaving, they stayed in touch and began planning this new business together. The couple are investing their money into it, whilst Amin is more of the face and overseer of the development. The result of such relationships with tourists in Bukit Lawang is (often) a prosperous long-term solution in terms of income and stability for the guides. Much of the community elsewhere is also based on a commitment between foreign charitable and non-governmental efforts, and local entrepreneurs. Bukit Lawang is therefore built upon these relationships between the tourist and the local, in numerous ways. The focus in the following will of course be on the relationships the *anak hutan* have to Western women.

## The Anthropological Context: a theoretical approach

### A social space

Reidar Grønhaug defines a social field as “a relatively bounded interconnexion system stretched out in socio-space. [...] A social field is an aggregate of social relationships which are sets of complementary roles. Social relationships are interconnected in the social person in the sense that a number of roles are combined in the person that is part of the totality of fields making up his society.” (1978: 118). When I discuss ‘culture’ and the field within which the *anak hutan* are situated, I do so in the context of Grønhaug’s social fields. The same applies in relation to the Western tourism culture that is witnessed there. Both fields and spaces are entwined together, both representing ideologically different settings, but as a fusion – it is this fusion that is interesting. Bukit Lawang as a tourism centre and within that the *anak hutan*, is the social field where specific social relations occur and develop. As Bukit Lawang hosts both locals and tourists, the social field becomes a result of host meeting guest, or, the *anak hutan* guide meeting the Western woman. What outcomes and consequences (positive and negative) that arise from this meeting (from the social field and its implications) are the focus of this thesis, from the perspective of the *anak hutan* and in a theoretical context of masculinity and identity.

The meeting point between these spaces are regarded not in a dichotomising fashion, as has been common in the past in anthropological endeavours, but in a way of “[problematizing] the unity of the ‘us’ and the otherness of the ‘other,’” – in this case, ‘us’ being the *anak hutan* and the ‘other’ as Western tourists (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 14). The idea of a social space in anthropology has been meaningful in the dichotomising way, and finds its theoretical roots in the time of Durkheim (ibid.), but rather than considering the gap between the social spaces as distant and caused by a form of rupture, I argue it can be represented as a method of fusion in the case of Bukit Lawang.

## Tourism

Tourism studies within anthropology have a relatively long history, with much focus previously given to the notion of the Tourist and what tourism signifies on a global scale, with local impacts. Anthropological tourism literature outlines various ways of defining the Tourist, what their travel means – socially, economically, and culturally – and the motivations for studying tourists and tourism in the first place. In his work on Bali, Yamashita posits that, “Just as rites of passage bring about a change in status or circumstances, tourism is the experience of a change.” (2003: 18). This change and the reasons why people travel are of course interesting, but do not apply to my research. Rather, the change can perhaps be studied from the perspective of those who are hosts.

Rupert Stasch has written extensively on tourism and specifically on the Korowai of Indonesian Papua. In understanding tourism, he relates it back to the beginnings of the ‘leisure class’ of the nineteenth century, during the Romantic period (2017). The influence of Romanticism meant a widespread idea of travel and experience, amongst “intellectual artistic elites”, with finding purpose in travel as “[getting] out of regular routines.” (2017: 2). Of course, anthropological research into *why* people travel is valid in and of itself, but in relation to the host perspective, it is interesting to bear this context in mind as an understanding of how such rupture in regular routines is met by those who host visitors. In addition, Stasch is critical to reducing the meeting and desires between visitors and the visited, arguing that “it is a widespread irony of structures of working misunderstanding” in assuming that each side wishes to be more like the other (2017: 11). This is important to note, as it cannot be simply assumed that in any given place, the visited desire the same lifestyle chances and options as those who have the means to travel. Dean MacCannell, who has devoted his academic life to understanding the ethics and structures of tourism and tourists, suggests locals or hosts are not always adamant in maintaining their own cultural and societal norms, as tourism, in some ways, disrupts the ‘regular’ life of the locals (2011). This is important in considering Bukit Lawang, as we find many of the *anak hutan* are more disconnected from what is ‘traditional’ (despite tourism prevailing for many years there), and more inclined to be influenced by different perspectives and mindsets (of Western people travelling there).

John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* (2002) lays out a comprehensive understanding of tourism from the perspective of the tourist and the economy. I regard his work relevant here insofar that it establishes the context for how tourism is conceptualised and how it is theoretically experienced as a 'gaze' from the host's perspective. To link this to the context of my fieldwork would be to link it to how the gaze affects the hosts, and how they in turn, perhaps, return that gaze (specifically in the romantic relationships that are formed between a guide from Bukit Lawang and a Western woman). A quote from Urry states, "the tourist gaze is structured by culturally specific notions of what is extraordinary and therefore worth viewing" (2002: 59). What happens when we can flip this gaze and what the tourists understand as 'worth viewing', and see it from the host perspective?

It is furthermore important to consider the behaviours and attitudes of specific people in the relationship between host and guest, and roles they have to play or perform. The next section will deal with the idea of performance, but in terms of tourism, there is little doubt that it brings forth certain roles and ways of being. Salazar writes of this role as "the typical behaviour and attitude of a person in a particular position", and within this role, there is an ongoing "mutually negotiated relationship between producers and consumers" (Salazar 2008: 212). In understanding the roles of the hosts (or guides), such theorisation is vital when considering how a host and a host society adapts and comports themselves in the face of tourists and tourism as an industry. Salazar further argues, "The best guides are those who know the tricks of the trade and have found a healthy equilibrium between their own interests, those of their clients, their employer, and the local people they interact with while touring. This implies continuously shifting between roles, for example between one deemed appropriate when dealing with tourists, and another that conforms better to local norms." (2008: 213). This equilibrium, though perhaps not always equally maintained, is easy to analyse in most places with tourism, and especially in the context of Bukit Lawang. The curious thought, I suggest, is what happens when these roles are misunderstood and when norms between locals and tourists are muddled – are the boundaries as easily discernible in the people they affect the most?

## Performing

In Erving Goffman's critical work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), he argues all individuals in any given society and social situation will perform their roles as if to an audience, and this audience impacts and influences the performer. Though this summary is brief, it presents an overview of important keywords: *role*, *performer*, and *audience*. A role refers to a predisposed performance that an individual will 'play' depending on the situation they are in. The performer is the individual – the actor, the social being to which roles are supposed and impacted. The audience is, in effect, everyone else, the 'other' to the performer, and they represent a reciprocating and influential relation to the performer. Goffman's theory is explicitly laid out as a structure, in which he clearly defines the parameters and conditions for performing oneself.

Judith Butler is opposed to Goffman's theory of performance that the self is constituted by 'roles' to be played in a game (1988). Rather, she argues that gender is exterior and public, to be created in the discourse of society and regulated (ibid.). She posits, "gender is made to comply with a model of truth and falsity which not only contradicts its own performative fluidity, but serves a social policy of gender regulation and control. [Performing one's gender] well provides the reassurance that there is an essentialism of gender identity after all." (ibid.: 528).

Judith Butler's countless and endless important works on feminist, gender, and philosophical theory are highlighted here because of the impact she has had – and continues to have – on the theoretical understandings of the complex issue of gender. Though I am academically indebted in many ways to her feminist writing, I cannot assume to apply her work in full to my thesis and thus my themes. However, she is worthy of mention in the context of her essay on performative acts in gender identity (1988). She writes, "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*." (1988: 519). I do not project Butler's gender identity and performance theory onto a

theory of *tourism* performance, but I believe they can be interlinked in this thesis' context, as the themes of tourism, performance and masculinities are central. In understanding a specific kind of performance in a given context and also a specific way of being masculine, Butler's idea of gender reality and social performances of gender are important. Acting in a certain way in the face of an 'audience' is socially constructed and inscribed, and for the *anak hutan*, this is something they comply with as they themselves grapple with their identities as men. Butler argues, "Actors are always already on the stage, within the terms of the performance. Just as a script may be enacted in various ways, and just as the play requires both text and interpretation, so the gendered body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives." (1988: 526). These pre-existing directives are found in any given society, as well as in the expectations of Bukit Lawang, but there is a less clear boundary and far less clear directives there, and for the *anak hutan*. It is the theory of an individual acting according to his 'existing directives' and cultural expectations, whilst also adapting and maintaining a performance for those that are from without the society (like tourists). An individual's identity (masculine and otherwise) is more hybrid, then.

### Masculine identities

In *Dislocating Masculinity* (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994), the foundation of masculinity as it was psychoanalysed in the past is broken down and understood from the perspective that there are *multiple* masculinities, and these are never reduced to a single notion. Sex and gender roles are constantly rearranged and represented based in and off of the surroundings and social norms, and many factors are involved in shaping what any given masculinity might entail. Cornwall and Lindisfarne's work is exemplary, and though of course not the most recent, remains vital in the theorisation and conceptualisation of how masculinities are understood.

R.W. Connell predates Cornwall and Lindisfarne's theories of masculinities and has had an equally vital influence on the literate world of masculine studies. In her book *Gender and Power*, she outlines the basis for biological sex and socialised gender (1987). On the formation of gender, she argues, "The new-born child has a biological sex but no social gender. As it



grows older society provides a string of prescriptions, templates, or models of behaviour appropriate to the one sex or the other. Certain agencies of socialization – notably the family, the media, the peer group and the school – make these expectations and models concrete and provide the settings in which they are appropriated by the child. [...] The result is a gender identity that in the usual case corresponds to the social expectations for that sex.” (1987: 191-2). Most importantly, I note that Connell’s time for writing was over thirty years ago, which means the topic and conversation of gender and sex has since evolved. On a foundational theoretical level, however, her theory that it is through socialisation that most human children and young adults become who they are is relevant. What we learn externally has a great impact on what we process and how we process it. Today, masculinities are much more complex and complicated than assumed and lived in the past. There remain places and people all over the world who have certain styles and expectations for gender and sex – particularly masculinities. In a Muslim context, and so also in Bukit Lawang, gender and sex roles are very much segregated and, in comparison to the conceptualisation of the West (Occidental views), is far less open to dispute or cross-cutting. Masculinities in such a context mean that men perform and expect in specific ways, that have been socialised into them from the beginning. The interesting point is to what extent the *anak hutan* masculinity is disturbed and disrupted with the appearance of a Western mindset, and specifically, in relationship with a Western femininity (and perhaps feminism of today).

Malam critiques Dahles and Bras’ (1999) accounts of how masculinity and identity of tourist workers are defined and understood. Having done extensive research in a small peninsula on Koh Phangan in southern Thailand, she presents an analysis of the bar workers (young men) as constantly “negotiating their identities through the complex social geographies of Koh Phangan.” (2004: 468). As Dahles and Bras’ argue that the workers are “marginal characters, exploiters or victims” (Malam 2004: 468), Malam suggest that they are instead fluid and shifting men who challenge conformed and constrained identities, particularly in a context of hegemonic and heterosexual masculinity and tourism. She argues that spaces (or ‘social geographies’) are essential in understanding how these men negotiate their identities, and that each identity is reliant upon the space they are in (2004). The same can be argued for the *anak hutan*, to the extent that they have roles and identities in the *plural* depending on where they are and with whom they interact.

On a final note, I wish to briefly mention Eduardo Archetti, whose interests lie in the conception and socialisation of masculinity from a heroic and athletic framework – that is, he considers the impact of sports and ‘heroism’ in masculinity on men (1999). On a broader level, he argues that the “idealised masculinity is not just about men, it is a part of a cultural system for producing differences.” (1999: 216). This suggests that how masculinity is conceptualised and formed is not wholly dependent on men and their actions or behaviours but is equally dependent on a plethora of factors that produce differences in how men are perceived and how they view themselves.

### Occidentalism

In terms of literature, there are numerous sources that are available that grapple with the reverse of what Edward Said coined as ‘Orientalism’ (1978). Occidentalism can be understood as the belief that, just as “a nationalist believes that a nation is to some meaningful extent a homogeneous formation, [...] a fuzzy set of States and nations called ‘the West’ or ‘Western countries’ has enough internal coherence to exist as a meaningful whole.” (Johuki and Pennanen 2016:2). This is to say that to those who live outside of the arbitrary West, the West is a place where people are living a certain lifestyle and conforming unitarily to a specific mindset that sets them apart from the rest of the world. Furthermore, to call the West a cultural category insinuates a form of coherence that “has a true meaning for people and practical ramifications both in the West and outside of it.” (ibid: 5). Occidentalism and Orientalism as thought processes within anthropology stem from a history of critical thinking against an older, traditional form of anthropology – this form involved imagining societies as different and separate from each other and most importantly, in stark comparison to the West (Carrier 2003). A question I wish to raise is the importance of the anak hutan themselves dichotomising them and ‘us’ (or the ‘West’). The West and thus Western people become the Other for them, though these boundaries are blurred when mindsets meet.

Sandra Nasser El-Dine writes comparatively of youth from Syria and Jordan and upon their reflections and thoughts of the West (2016). Such a study situates us presently in the notions of how the ‘East’ regards the West and how, notably, Muslim youth defines relationships in comparison to what they imagine them to be like in the West. Nasser El-Dine is critical in her arguments about how we approach “concepts such as ‘tradition’, ‘modernity’, ‘Muslim culture’, and ‘Western culture’” as well as understanding that these voices are the result of a changing landscape in the Arab world (and elsewhere to the East) about gender practices and conformity, rather than a “[conceptualisation] as ‘Westernisation’.” (2016: 27).

By opposing the West to the East, I am not reducing the complexity that is involved in a comparison between the Western world and more specifically, the Asian one. It is artificial to do so, as there are “multiple fault lines that crosscut this cultural binary: nationality, ethnicity, race, class, gender, et cetera.” (Salazar 2008: 218). Effectively, I hope to establish the *anak hutan* as their own gendered class and specific mindset that can be, perhaps not compared, but at the very least thrown into the mix. When I imagine ‘West meets East’ in the context of Bukit Lawang, it is very literally in the sense of a Western woman meeting a man from Bukit Lawang (which is, granted, ‘East’ for the Western woman). Of course, it can never be presumed that the *anak hutan* will refer to themselves as ‘Eastern’ (as opposed to Western). Yet they themselves refer to tourists who visit Bukit Lawang as Westerners, thus effectively dichotomising themselves, and othering the tourists.

With these theoretical approaches and concepts in place, the following is this thesis’ research question. I remain wary of actually answering it, in the literal sense, since I do not think it is possible to answer it in its entirety, or through every potential avenue, in the following pages. However, it serves the purpose of guiding us through the complexities of the lives of the *anak hutan* in Bukit Lawang, and therefore aims to be answered to the degree that it allows.

**How do ideas of the West and of tourism impact the masculinities and identities of the young men in Bukit Lawang?**

## **Methodological reflections**

### Accessing Bukit Lawang

First and foremost, I had been to Bukit Lawang on a few separate occasions prior to choosing it as a fieldwork location. From these visits, I observed a few aspects of life there that made me curious. But the most important aspect of these visits – which were not in an academic capacity – was that I gained friends and contacts there, people with whom I developed a relationship and found that I wholly enjoyed my time there amongst. With that in mind, I realised that Bukit Lawang as a choice of field would be ideal in many ways; my access to it had already developed, as had my relations with some of the people there, meaning that as far as gaining the initial access and contact goes, I had already accomplished this. Secondly, I found that I could expand my curiosity and my understanding of who these people are in a much larger capacity when there for fieldwork. Thus, my access to the field began last year, evidently without a camera. When I was there last time before the fieldwork, I had played with the idea of going there for filming and I suggested this idea to a couple of my contacts. As expected, it was met with ease and enthusiasm – I believe their exact words were, ‘follow your heart, not your ticket’. When communicating my ideas of coming back for four months to film and understand the women’s lives, my contact – Iruel – was positive that it would not be a problem at least to stay there and undertake research.

### A change of project plans

This project began with full intentions and hopes to underline the aspects of being a woman, or girl, in Bukit Lawang. My project descriptions, the meetings I had with my supervisor, and all the discussions I had concerning Bukit Lawang revolved around finding out: where do the women go? As far as my planning went, I was under the impression that once I got to the field, I would take a little time to adjust and settle, thereafter I would find avenues to approach and come in closer contact with some individual women working within the guesthouses in Bukit Lawang, as well as someone external to it. I was eager to confront the questions of where the women are when they’re not working; how do they maintain their lives in a distinctly male-dominated eco-tourism location; and what roles

and responsibilities do they have and encounter *as women* on a daily basis?

After about one month of attempting to get more insight into the lives of the women without a camera, I had a stressful realisation that I might not actually be able to continue with my original plan. I found it difficult to really get closer to some of the local girls and women. It was not a case of them being unfriendly or uninviting, it was more a matter of them not ever truly saying anything. In the case of one young woman, she proved not to understand the reason for why I would want to film and chronicle her life for a few months, and despite many attempts to explain it, motivate her and myself with the idea, and ask her questions to ease her into the situation, I decided it would not be feasible to continue. Furthermore, with most of the girls here, the issue of access during the evenings was far more disrupting than I thought it would be. After finishing work for the day, these girls would go home, back into the village, and you rarely see them during the nights in Bukit Lawang. When I discussed this with my contact person, he explained to me that if I really needed to get access, I would have to go and live with the family of one of the girls. However, this would have been something to achieve in the beginning of the fieldwork, had I known, but over one month into it, gaining that sort of access would be far too difficult. I had, as time showed me, no relevant role to play for these women, something that I did not allow enough prior insight and consideration before attempting to access.

The next step was therefore to reorient myself and my questions towards the *anak hutan* – the local guys who work in tourism. These young men are around constantly, which is the opposite of the women I had intended to understand. The focus shift centred around a look at being a young man and guide in this particular context, and how these men are raised in and influenced by tourism culture. As far as I had understood up until that point, they represent a peculiar kind of hybrid of local traditions, religion and behaviour, with that of ways of being and talking that are more common to the ‘Western’ culture. The access I had already established with a few of these guys came in handy for me and was partly the reason why I chose this new idea. Having friendships and contact with some of them, I was able to discuss the idea of filming with them much more easily than with the women. Therefore, in terms of access and trust, I felt more relaxed with this new shift, especially after over a month of little- to-no activity with the women.

## Hanging out with the *anak hutan*

I spent time in the first week deciding how I would attempt to angle this focus: whether it would remain a gender-specific study, which of the guys I would approach for the filming, and what would the main research inquiries be. The day after Ramadan finishes, it is tradition for Indonesians to return home and spend time with the family, celebrating the end of a month of fasting. I felt it is comparable to the feeling of returning home for Christmas, a quiet and peaceful and joyous time, with copious amounts of food. Iruel had told me he was going to meet his aunts, uncles and cousins, to eat traditional beef *rendang* and sit and talk. He invited me to come along for this day, as he was beginning to understand what sort of documentation I wished to have and what sort of experiences I wanted to witness from his life and those like him. However, he was not open to the idea of filming yet and felt it would be strange to explain my presence with a camera to his entire family, so I did not film this day. I joined him at his aunt's house first, where I was introduced to the family as a friend, and we stayed and talked for a while. My language skills were by no means of a high enough level to converse easily with his family, and most of them spoke little-to-no English. With some of his family, we drove to another member's house, where we were served food and tea. In the traditional sense, I was seated with his female family members, and in the adjoining room, Iruel sat with his patriarchs.

The impressions I got from that day, and the willingness of Iruel to let me into his world and begin to understand family life in Bukit Lawang, gave me motivation to go ahead with the project change. This change involved kind of 'beginning again', though my access was already established. My biggest achievement in June was therefore gaining a deeper trust and friendship with some of the men, which gave me insight into their lives and how they themselves interact with one another. They were aware of my presence and intentions there, and so this gained trust was the most important to me for the project – after all, without trust, nothing would work here. Mid-June I began filming Iruel and Muss, another participant, when they were sitting together outside Muss' gallery and workshop. Muss runs a small carving and hand-craft gallery, wherein he creates jewellery pieces and wood carvings and sells to tourists. This day was a start for the process, as I was able to visualise how Muss works and concentrates, and how the two friends are around each other.

As I knew from before, the seasonality of work in Bukit Lawang makes it very difficult for some of the people there to sustain a stable life throughout the year. June, July and August are normally high season for tourists and trekking, but this year proved slower than usual, meaning with the added impact of Ramadan and few tourists, Iruel and some of the other guys were struggling to make ends meet – ‘ends’ being providing food (and cigarettes) for themselves every day. Although I had understood this on a lesser level beforehand, I was beginning to truly see the way Iruel, in particular, deals with such a livelihood. Remarkably, or perhaps not, he is immensely positive, and generally the guys there are open, happy and friendly at all times. They are resilient and optimistic in the face of a quite substantial poverty. Beginning to observe this, I was gaining an understanding of how these guys sustain their lives with friendship, meeting new people from different countries, and going about their days as if they were the happiest people on the earth. In many ways, this was the way I instinctually comprehended them: genuinely happy. I also came to understand the complexity and ambiguity of what it is to be a ‘jungle boy’ – to what extent they perform their roles ‘on- and off-stage’ (in front or not of tourists), and how they manage the dynamics of their society and the one they work in.

As a reflection, I need to address the ‘elephant in the room’ – namely, my role as an ethnographer but also as a Western woman. I think the interest in me as a Western woman was more pronounced in my previous visits to Bukit Lawang, before returning for fieldwork, as in those times, I was a tourist, and a young European female one at that. To truly know if my gender had any impact on my success or failures in the field is difficult to judge, though I do think it was an advantage, since it automatically gave me the chance of being approached and talked to. More importantly, though, are the relations I formed on my previous visits. Spending longer periods of time there – as many others do in Bukit Lawang – I transcended the invisible boundary of simply being a potential conquest or woman of interest and gained the trust and friendship of many of the young men. Once I established myself during fieldwork as someone who was not there for romantic or ‘escaping the routine’ reasons, I experienced a breakdown of barriers to getting to know them. Myself being a Western woman was, ironically, never an issue nor a topic of discussion between my informants and myself. In retrospect, perhaps it should have been, as it could be an additional layer to the complexities of the relationships between the *anak hutan* and Western tourists. As it stands, this was never my intention, however, to leverage

my gender and, in their mind, my ethnic background in exchange for trust and friendship. Though it may have inadvertently been so for them, or at least a helping factor, I never set out to define myself as another Western woman and tourist just for the sake of insight.

### The effects of the camera

Using the camera as a tool and as an extension of myself during my fieldwork was simultaneously revealing and difficult. In the most obvious ways, the camera could capture and reveal expressions and behaviours, thus represent a reality of the lives of the *anak hutan*. The difficulty in using the camera lay in a combination of elements – both personal, as the ethnographer, and subjectively, for those who took part. The camera was an intrusive, foreign object being introduced into the daily lives of some of the people, yet it held intrigue and interest as something to experience. As I began my fieldwork, I did not use the camera since I assumed it would be intrusive and perhaps counter-productive to gaining trust and insight into some of the women's lives in Bukit Lawang. My intentions were, as stated, to focus on women and how they live in parallel to the male-dominated tourist scene. My plans were changed after a month or so of failed meaningful contact with a few select women, realising that I was limited in time and therefore productivity when trying to achieve my plans for an ethnography centred around women.

When the camera was introduced, it was with the *anak hutan* in mind: I was allowed to film Muss and Iruel as they sat in Muss' workshop outside his gallery. Muss was working on a miniature carving project, and Iruel was attempting some carvings of his own for fun. This was an eased way to begin filming people, since I was merely observing and recording the work, not interfering with any processes. I did experience a sense of trepidation when starting the recording, as I wanted to make sure it was acceptable and what I filmed was somehow relevant. After some time, Amin joined the project, encouraged and willing to be filmed. I experienced filming him as the most performative. It was a struggle in the beginning to remind him that this was not filmed in the way an online 'vlog' is, and his greetings of, 'hey guys' to the camera were awkward for me and unnecessary. Simultaneously, however,



I knew that his performance for the camera was a way of expression and perhaps a way of coping with the pressure of the red recording light being pointed at him.

I have previously written about the use of the camera and the reflexivity that must be involved in the work anthropologists do. I believe my previously written words encapsulate the stress that must be placed upon positions of power between filmmaker and subject(s), as these positions are constantly fluctuating and fluid. As I experienced with Amin (most out of the other informants), he held a great deal of power in how the shots were filmed and what was granted and said. I, in turn, had power over when to record and what to record, as I physically had the camera. But in between these powers are small nuances that are constantly under negotiation, most likely unacknowledged at the time of filming, between me and the informant. On this authority and reflexivity, I wrote,

“Methodologically and in the current emphasis on reflexivity, Charlotte Davies situates ethnographic filmmakers in the importance of being accountable for their roles in the lives of the people they film (2008). Effectively, ethnographers must be made visible and reflect upon their authority and the authority of the participants during the process of fieldwork. The ‘reflexive turn’ occurred during the 1970s when anthropologists began to realise the importance of their positions of power and humility in the field, as well as understand their relationships to and with their subjects and informants. Reflexivity enforces accountability, and as Davies writes, “studies of others must also be studies of ourselves in our relationships with those others.” (ibid: 13).” (Dybwad 2019: 4).

My relationships to my informants were the result of previous visits, as aforementioned, thus my study of them was done under acknowledgement and awareness of my position as not only an ethnographer and a filmmaker, but also as a woman who is from the West. My relation to these men was vital in what I achieved in filming. I believe that without this established contact and friendship, it would have perhaps been more difficult to gain insight into their lives, particularly during the interviews I conducted. I found that Iruel was open to being interviewed and presented a dualistic side of himself that ultimately became central in the final film. He was both informant of his own life and emotions, as well as a conductor and

narrator of the way of life on a general level for the *anak hutan*. The camera served as a gateway of insight, but I argue also a method of release and representation for Iruel. As we progressed in the fieldwork and the filming, his willingness to share became more natural and open than in the beginning. Of course, this is in large part due to him becoming accustomed to the camera and the meaning of me filming. Upon reflection, I think he gained a role of representation of himself and of some of the ways of life for the *anak hutan* that he found pride in. Though he was forthcoming with me off-camera too, I noticed an increasing openness in expressing himself to the camera, to an ‘audience’ and to an unknown. I experienced his openness as freeing and articulate.

This expressiveness relates to the idea of the camera being a vessel and tool for showing that which cannot otherwise be heard through talking. When I looked back on my original footage, especially during post-fieldwork and film editing, certain body languages and nuanced moments became important in understanding Iruel’s – and the other informants’ – motives and emotions. Though I will come back to this later, it is important to note here that the camera serves this purpose of revealing perhaps parts of a person that are not self-evident when simply communicated in writing or talking. What one says can be contradicted, supported, or highlighted by a simple shrug, facial expression or otherwise.

## A Visual Approach

As the editing of the film began, I was not aware of what main themes would appear. I struggled for a time in understanding my footage and finding the narrative thread, and much of my focus lay in presenting the ‘everyday’ of the informants, or collaborators. As aforementioned, Iruel, Muss and Amin all presented different aspects of what it is to be an *anak hutan* and live in Bukit Lawang. Much of the footage included in the final cut is taken from deep interviews that I had with Iruel where he narrated this lifestyle, but also enacted it. What shapes the film are themes of masculinity and tourism, and indeed Occidentalism – to the degree that this can be interpreted. The written word grapples with analysis on a very different level from what can be heard in the film, in the sense that as I write, I contemplate every nuance in their singularities more-so than I would in the film. However, the film has the advantage of presenting subtle movements and expressions beyond any capability that I can accomplish here in writing. David MacDougall writes, “Film can never replace the written word in anthropology, but anthropologists are made conscious by their field experience of the limitations which words impose upon their discipline. We are beginning to discover how film can fill some of the blind spots.” (MacDougall, 1998: 195).

There are moments in the film where Iruel expresses doubt, confidence, and reassurance that are better watched than read. One example is when he informs us that drinking beer is usually considered inappropriate and *haram* (forbidden) for Muslims, yet he and his friends drink beer with tourists because non-Muslim Westerners do not consider beer *haram*. He states, “we break the rules” and then shrugs. His expression is that of defiance, yet he comes across also as if this fact is inconsequential and simply the way things are there. Though I analyse it here, it is witnessed in a much more effective way in the film.

In another moment, when he and I discussed how it is to grow up in tourism, Iruel explains that Westerners present a more open-minded approach to life than what is customarily expected of Muslims, which influences the *anak hutan* and makes them, in turn, more open-minded. At the end, he says that although he grew up in this environment, he is

“still Indonesian”. He looks away from me and the camera, and nods to himself, in the sense of affirming to himself that he is always going to feel Indonesian despite the outside factors. This action shows the film audience that he is almost making himself believe his own words, to feel them, despite being in the face of tourism and, effectively, myself as a Western woman.

Narratively, the film is not a linear timeline and does not conform to an episodic editing style. Rather, it is *suspended* in time, wherein this element of time is not as important as what is being said and done. I argue it gives the characters a timelessness and fluidity that would perhaps have been limited if I had edited along the lines of presenting time passing by. As I have previously written, “Tarkovsky advocates for film being a “means to take an impression of time” (1987: 62), which I believe is fundamental. By capturing moments on film, you are in effect immortalising those moments of someone’s life.” (Dybwad 2018: 3).

A common film for research in visual anthropology, as well as in tourism studies, is Dennis O’Rourke’s *Cannibal Tours* (1988). As far as his film depicts “the incongruity of two cultures meeting, or not meeting in this particular context” (Lutkehaus and O’Rourke 1989: 427), it is comparably distinct from this ‘meeting’ in my film about the *anak hutan*. I mention it here for the sake of understanding, however, as it remains an important insight into interactions that may take place between tourists and hosts, as well as how either side experiences these interactions.

The process of going from planning, to fieldwork, to post-fieldwork analysing, then to editing, was a long one, that was broken up over many months. I found the order of things useful, as the organisation of my footage was a vital first step before the actualisation of the editing and the film could take place. When I returned to the editing studio after writing drafts of this thesis, I had gained a perspective of what I could pick apart and piece back together again during editing. With due consideration of my themes and looking closely at what the informants had to say, editing was at first painstaking. I felt lost in the process, but editing visual material allows the freedom to revisit and reconsider many aspects that might have been missed the first, third or even tenth time looking at material. In the end, I found a story in what

I had learned and in what the *anak hutan* expressed through the camera's lens.

Narrative and decision-making in editing is an epistemological conundrum (Henley 2006), since we are telling a story and representing someone's very real life. What I experienced in the field to what I edited for the film, and thus what made the final cut, are different matters – the narrative of the film depicts what was chosen, preserved and eliminated, with truthfulness and a sense of time as vital components. What the audience sees is, as best hoped for by an ethnographic filmmaker, closest to the people's reality as possible (ref. previous written work during this degree, Dybwad 2018).

## An Empirical Analysis

Being an *anak hutan* is a complex matter, as they are influenced and impacted by surrounding social implications and factors that shape who they are and who they wish to be. These men are living in a society where tourism is sometimes the only source of income and work, therefore Bukit Lawang becomes a meeting ground for tourism performances, Islamic tradition, and a perspective of the West. How they thus present and represent themselves is an indicator of how they perceive and act out their own masculinities. Such masculinities are at risk and are turbulent in the face of their own expectations, their societal expectations, and the expectations of the tourists. The following is an analysis of moments and spoken words from Iruel, Muss and Amin, with an insight into how it can be related to the wider anthropological understandings of specific themes.

### Occidentalism, or the *anak hutan* perspective

Although I do not assume nor imagine the *anak hutan* in Bukit Lawang calling themselves Occidentalists, there is a certain level of truth to the matter that the experiences they have had and the Western people they have met form a category in their minds which they utilise in understanding their ‘Other’ (the tourists). It is further complicated by the closeness and relationships formed between them and the tourists, as what they understand of the West comes full circle when their expectations of Western behaviour are met regularly. For example, as Amin has expressed, Westerners (notably, women) come to Bukit Lawang “for fun, and then they leave” (quote from an interview). This sentiment is based on many encounters with situations where this is, in most likelihood, the literal case. Many young travellers from the West experience a freedom when travelling, a notion that has been conceptualised and theorised in many different literate accounts (see Stasch 2017; Yamashita 2003; MacCannell 2011; Urry 2002). What I witnessed, as well, was a behavioural tendency to be romantically involved with the locals, something I argue is a direct result of being in the liminal state of tourism and travel. In terms of the sexual activity that takes place, this is not something new nor ground-breaking, since there are clear ethnographic examples from

other parts of Indonesia (see Dahles & Bras 1999; the documentary *Cowboys in Paradise* by Virmani 2010). From the perspective of the locals, thus the *anak hutan* (Amin, particularly), this can easily be witnessed as promiscuous, a way of thinking that stems from not a male perspective, but an Islamic one. Amin stated during an interview that he is “a strong-blooded Indonesian” man, indicating that his identity and mindset is heavily influenced by where he was raised, and especially with a set of Islamic values. Iruel has given the impression of not being as shaped by his faith, though he does insist that a ‘Western mindset’ is something to value, as it is judged to be freer and more open. Amin’s expectations that Western women come and go as they wish and consider no consequences is reinforced each time when these women merely leave to go back home or travel elsewhere. There is a clash of expectations when one side sees this as non-dependable and the other side sees it as a way to escape their regular behaviours and lives. Though Amin has himself engaged in a few such relationships, as well as a longer-term one, he maintains a sentiment of resentment towards that freedom. During a conversation, he told me, “they just come to have fun, then they leave, and we are just stuck here.” The impact of those words left me with a sense of understanding for Amin, in effect that he is caught in a comparative state of mind where he imagines what life must be like for these women regularly, and his situation of not having similar opportunities and means to do the same (travel, live abroad, have less societal expectations – as he imagines it). Of course, it is important to remember that he also remains autonomous in his actions and decisions in relation to Western women.

Muss, who has been less discussed here and is less present in the film, shared with me details of his past with his ex-girlfriend from Australia. He maintained a very casual and non-binary opinion of why their relationship didn’t work, stating that, “most people have big egos...if no one can calm down, it doesn’t work.” He contends that differences in personality are more important factors to consider in a relationship, and not as much as where a person is from. Ultimately, I argue different cultures and financial backgrounds has a large say in how a romantic relationship plays out, but to Muss – as far as is known – he means his relationship failed because she expected too much and he has the important (and culturally traditional) role of providing what he can for his family. When I asked him about his views on dressing appropriately in Bukit Lawang, he said, “every religion is the same. They want you to be a good person. It doesn’t matter what you wear. You can be naked and still be a good person.” He posits it is a matter of respect when you are visiting the local

village, but in Bukit Lawang, “this is ecotourism, people want to be free. They can do whatever they want.”

In an article about Arab youth and their perspectives on the West, Nasser El- Dine presents a comparative case: young men and women in Syria and Jordan of two opinions, namely more traditional perspectives relative to Islamic culture, and perspectives in more favour with Western ideals (2016). She defines Occidentalism as “like its counterpart Orientalism, [...] related to processes of Othering, defining images of the self vis-a-vis imagining the Other.” (2016: 12). She dives into the complexities of modern Islamic subjectivity (from a Middle Eastern context), presenting various young adults who follow certain Islamic customs (in relationships), mixed with certain Western perspectives that suit a more globalised generation. On one hand, the *muhafiz* youth (those who hold more traditional standards and beliefs) often understand the West “as synonymous with the complete absence of restrictions on sexual encounters.” (ibid: 16). Furthermore, these youth believe that women in the West are promiscuous and available, characteristics that do not hold up in their eyes as proper formations of relationships (and family) for them in the Middle Eastern and Islamic culture. What Nasser El-Dine discovers is that “the negative images of Western sexual liberty and its side-effects which were presented are integral to justifying the gender segregation practices of the authenticated Islam of the *muhafiz* youth, as the West functions as a warning example of what happens when these practices are abandoned.” (ibid: 18). On the other hand, the *munfatih* youth (those who are more open-minded and liberal) think of the West as a place in which relationships are not restricted to religious norms and customs, and in which “positive features of idealized modernity, such as freedom, independence, and personal growth” are encouraged (ibid: 25). In the case of Bukit Lawang, where the young men are faced with similar behaviours and perspectives of the West, there is perhaps less shunning of Western culture and more acceptance and integration, in the sense that the *anak hutan* are dealing with and meeting tourists (mostly from the West) regularly. Of course, what was clear in Amin’s words was of a comparable perspective to that of the *muhafiz* youth, about the West and particularly Western women.

Iruel has a more positive orientation when discussing his views of the West. Over the course of many conversations (on and off camera), I gathered that he understands that even



*time* as a concept and as a physical indicator of a society, is different in the West compared to in Bukit Lawang. He said,

“In Europe it’s more strict. They have more hours there – not like here. Here, we have *rubber time* – we promise at one [o’clock] but we go at two [o’clock]... That’s maybe the difference, the work systems. Because we’re not in a hurry here. But it’s nice if you have a strict time to work, it makes you more independent, more professional. You learn from that, too, in not wasting time. You have time to use [efficiently], I think that’s good.”

This independence he talks of, as a Western concept and characteristic, is also one that belongs to the Western women he meets, as well as his girlfriend. He understands local women as constraining, at least in the sense of needing to court and be granted permission to be with a local woman before a relationship can properly take place. However, “Western girls are free – free in a good way”, according to Iruel. This mindset is definitely shared by other *anak hutan*.

#### A relationship to tourism

In Amanda Stronza’s article, ‘Anthropology of Tourism’ (2001), she gives an explicit insight and critical overview of what has been covered and what has been neglected in the anthropology of tourism subfield. She argues succinctly for the problematisation of how host cultures lose their ‘identity’ in the face of tourism - though she lays this out, she is critical of the extent to which this has been covered, analytically, and that it is not necessarily the case in any given place. She writes, “local hosts may feel empowered by interactions with outsiders to redefine who they are and what aspects of their identity they wish to highlight or downplay.” (ibid: 273). Furthermore, Stronza highlights the importance of acknowledging that hosts “play a role in determining what happens in their encounters with tourists” (ibid: 272). This is fundamental in the context of Bukit Lawang because it builds on the theory of how these men form relationships with women from ‘outside’ their original society. It is not simply the tourists who impact the hosts, but in some cases more than others, hosts play a vital role in the manipulation of an encounter, and of a relationship. They do, in effect, perform their roles as guides, as locals, and as prospects for a relationship with a woman. Though perhaps rather positively, I do not presume that many of the *anak hutan* are manipulative and opportunistic to the point of forming a relationship to a Western girl in the hopes of gaining

something other than romantic attachment. Amin expressed several times in conversation that he has no intention of leaving Bukit Lawang for this kind of ‘opportunity’. Though his relationships with Western women have been unstable and he has been financially dependent upon at least one of the women, his dream is ultimately to build a business for himself in Bukit Lawang: “I would like to give jobs to local people, our friends. I want to take people [who don’t understand the proper way to get money] and work with me, and give them education.” With the building site on his land that he is currently overseeing (that has been financially backed by a British couple), it is easy to believe him. To my knowledge, these men in various ways form these relationships based on an attraction to a different mindset and background. Though it can be exploited as opportunistic, some men like Iruel are committed to maintaining, although not a regular one, a relationship despite the efforts and consequences of such a relation. In an interview, he said, “you will know because you have feelings...you have chemistry...you know their character. If that’s wrong, then why do you go on? Because it’s going to hurt in the end.”

However, in the comparable cases of street guides in Yogyakarta and Lombok in Indonesia, there is a pattern to be seen of ‘romancing the tourist’ in direct relation to giving oneself more opportunity for the future. Dahles and Bras (1999) present ethnographic fieldwork that spanned over a few years in both of the aforementioned places. The system they observed was one of local street guides, or in Lombok, ‘beach boys’, decidedly and strategically encountering tourist women in order to gain opportunistic relationships, or simply to flirt their way into gaining a commission from whatever establishment they managed to bring the tourists to (like souvenir shops or hotels) (1999). Coining them as ‘entrepreneurs in romance’, Dahles and Bras argue that these specific men characterise and present themselves in a uniform style, representing a certain lifestyle and ‘coolness’ that can attract women (ibid). The authors claim that those working as street guides in Yogyakarta and as beach guides in Lombok are mimicking the ‘golden standard’ of the ‘Kuta cowboys’ (in Bali) “Their lifestyle is an imitation - not of western tourists - but of the Kuta cowboys, who lead the fashion in the world of guides.” (ibid: 282). Furthermore, they observed a relentless strategy of knowing exactly how to attract and please tourists, or Westerners, for their advantage. By forming relationships to Western women, the Kuta cowboys are given access to – though sometimes short-lived – money, travel experiences, and sometimes even ‘tickets’ out of Bali (ibid). They also sometimes engage in multiple relationships at once, to

safeguard the chance of one single relation falling through; however, this “can lead to complicated situations whenever those female 'true-lovers' plan their holidays in the same period.” (ibid: 284).

Amin is an example of a situation like this, at least to the extent of having two relationships at the same time. Whether or not his intentions were opportunistic or not, he maintained that “it’s complicated” when asked about it, due to an long-term on-and-off-again relationship to a woman in Switzerland, whilst also at the time being involved with another Western woman who he has been seeing for the last year or so. Over the course of the fieldwork, and over time as our friendship and trust built, Amin conveyed to me the depth of his complicated relations and that he, in matter of fact, wants to be ‘free’. However, his attachment to both women remained as he did not seem willing to part with either, not knowing what the consequences might be for his future. In some cases, and perhaps partially in Amin’s case, “Tourists enact the dream of Western consumerism and hold the promise of a ticket to a better life.” (ibid: 289). Amin also has stricter Islamic values, however, and maintains these in his aspirations for the future, too. Having two young children from his previous marriage, Amin expressed an unwillingness to part from Bukit Lawang. In this sense, tourism has a dual effect for Amin: he sees the chances that working in tourism can give him in terms of business and prosperity, which is often funded by tourists and due to relations with tourists there; but at the same time, he presents a resentment towards the cultural category of the West (and specifically tourism) when his expectations of how these relationships are played out, are not met. In showing concern for his situation of not having ‘control’ and being ‘stuck’, he rests his livelihood and chances on the shoulders of the Western tourists – whether that be women or generally – rather than making his own decisions irrespective of the tourists. Of course, Bukit Lawang and its inhabitants in the tourism part rely heavily on tourism and it is therefore inescapable to not place some responsibility on the tourists.

The local gaze, and specifically the anak hutan gaze, is dependent upon predisposed assumptions about Western women. In a way, it is a cognitive template that is imposed on most tourists (and women) they meet. This is not meant harshly, nor as a criticism, however, as they are not averse to how women from the West sometimes behave. As I have noted before, they presume based on what they already know, which is based on previous experiences of how Western women have acted towards them. For tourists, as aforementioned, traveling is a

break from routine and the everyday. As MacCannell writes, “The lines tourists cross are marked or unmarked boundaries between normative differences. Tourists travel to places where taken for granted, everyday routine behaviour is somewhat or very different from the way things are done back home. [...] Tourists are attracted to difference, or to otherness.” (2011: 212). Perhaps the tourists (particularly the Western women) who arrive to Bukit Lawang are offered such a difference and otherness that it is an idealised and romanticised notion. I cannot speak beyond this for the tourists, however. Insofar as I am a Western woman and was once a tourist in Bukit Lawang, this study aims to reflect the position of the young men who are guides there. But since there is undoubtedly a difference to be found for both sides (though perhaps less so for the locals, as they are used to dealing with and handling tourists and the ‘culture’ they bring with them), I argue the difference or ‘otherness’ that MacCannell discusses is further heightened and exotic to tourists when the young men of Bukit Lawang play their hand of romance. So far removed from what is normal and regular in their lives ‘back home’, it is not difficult to understand why some might find a fresh experience and excitement in being romantically involved with someone very different from themselves, and someone very different from what they have witnessed and experienced at home. From the *anak hutan* perspective, I believe they have experienced enough times through generations of guides that such relationships bring benefits, opportunities, and – to remain less critical – a new mindset that is just as differing and othering to them as they themselves are to the tourists.

I do not think Bukit Lawang has suffered under the influence of tourism, and as far as my fieldwork went, the *anak hutan* do not believe the impacts to be wholly negative, either. Tourism, as much as it is lucrative and affects everyday life for those who work in places like Bukit Lawang, is not fully responsible for all possible impacts. Yamashita is critical in this view in concluding his writing about tourism on Bali: “it is insufficient just to criticise tourism for bringing about these serious negative changes. Nor is it true that the development of tourism is the only factor giving rise to cultural and social change and environmental collapse. [...] A theoretical model of traditional culture changing under the influence of modern civilisation cannot explain the dynamism of culture.” (2003: 150). Though it is impossible in the remaining pages to develop this theoretical model and all the possible cultural and social changes in Bukit Lawang, it remains poignant food-for-thought.

## Masculinities at risk

Indonesia as a nation has been through intense changes, reforms and nationalist re-awakenings since independence 75 years ago. During the New Order, under General Suharto's dictatorship, Indonesia saw a rise of gendered and patriarchal weight being placed on the importance and strength of the Man and the subordination and softness of the Woman (Clark 2010). Post-New Order Indonesia has thus shown a shift away from such regime and, "coupled with ongoing economic disappointment and the resulting feelings of disempowerment and frustration, has driven many Indonesian men to seek solace in Islam" (ibid: 23). Therefore, on a national level, there are different masculinities that are visible, shaped and empowered by differing reactions to a post-Suharto era. Although the *anak hutan* are perhaps not a case of 'solace sought in Islam', they do still have, as part of their identities, a strong Muslim background. Pam Nilan has discussed the three main characteristic and popular masculinities that are presented publicly and encouraged on a national level: the devout Muslim with anti-Western demonstrative sentiments, the 'cool but sensitive' urban man, and the machoistic thug and aggressive man (2009). Nilan argues that all of these Men are reactions to and results of a globally mediated hypermasculinity that circulates imagery of virility, and that the "western, sexualised 'playboy' ideal of masculinity now plays very strongly in Indonesian urban male culture" (ibid: 336). When comparing the devout masculine form and the urbanised 'trendy' form, it is possible to distinguish the differences that arise from how much Islamic norms play a part or not. For the pious Islamic man, most things outside of Islamist conformity is considered weak, Western and irrelevant, thus essentialising the necessity for divine guidance and strict rule-following. The devout man will not, in theory, smoke, drink or have sex outside of marriage – they stand to follow the guidance of the *bapak* ('father') New Order masculinity, which was patriarchal and hegemonic to a huge extent (Nilan 2009). The Islamic man should be virtuous, hard-working, and a leader of the family. The modern young Islamist is not fully like the *bapak* masculinity during the New Order, but he stems from the roots of such masculinity (ibid). On the other hand, the urbanised young man today represents a much more comparably Western lifestyle – "He has one wife, well-educated children, servants, a 4-wheel drive vehicle, widescreen television and a new house in a secure outer suburban residential complex." (ibid: 331). Though smoking is traditionally considered a negative behaviour, it is advertised in Indonesia as a strong masculine and secular activity,

something that will boost his image and promote a sense of independence outside of the family economy (ibid). I observed this on several occasions during my fieldwork: cigarette advertisements portraying a hypermasculine man who wears a leather jacket, drives a motorbike and has near- superhuman strength. A quick Google search of Djarum (one of Indonesia's leading cigarette companies), you will find video advertisements of an ethnically non-distinct, hypermasculine man walking in slow motion with a voice narrating, "I own the game. I lead the pack. I rule the world." (Djarum 2018). Such advertising supports Erving Goffman's theorisation on gender advertisement (1979).

The men in Bukit Lawang all smoke – everywhere, whenever and whatever they like, including marijuana joints. They have ambitions of becoming independent and maintaining a lifestyle similar to that of the nationalised masculine Urban Man, though also having certain aspects of Islamist traditions. In the case of Amin, he expressed, "here, man is the king, and the girl is the queen" in the household, and that "the queen should be comfortable at home" (quoted from an interview). This patriarchal mindset suggests that he, whilst also conforming to other masculine forms, finds truth in the devout masculine man, too. The *anak hutan* represent a unique masculinity in the sense that it is hybrid: having influences from both sides, as it were, and finding a middle ground where such identities can rest. Iruel, amongst other men, has hinted at a feeling of lack of control and dependency upon his Western girlfriend, in that he knows she can afford a certain lifestyle that he is for now only dreaming about. Though he is positive and openminded to the differences that such a relationship brings, I observed a kind of identity crisis in which his idealised and the societal masculinities are at risk with the emancipated and independent, self-sufficient women from the West. The *anak hutan* are constantly renegotiating and reaffirming their unique masculinities in the face of the kind of Westerners they meet.

There is a third masculine form that can be identified in the men of Bukit Lawang, too. Because of the closeness to tourism and working with (and for) Western people, the *anak hutan* develop an imitation of the masculine style of the 'Kuta cowboys' (see above). Just as the men in Kuta present themselves specifically in result of and in relation to tourism, so too do the men in Bukit Lawang. This specific masculinity is, as evidence has shown earlier, a way of living and manipulating their ways into the lives of those who are, albeit perhaps a

little naïve, by chance ‘richer’ than them. Once again, the *anak hutan* are not of the same entrepreneurial cunning as that of the Kuta cowboys, but they do have tendencies to mimic the style (clothing, attitude, flirting, etc.).

In the edited volume *Dislocating Masculinity*, Cornwall and Lindisfarne (1994) set out an understanding of multiple masculinities through the lens of ethnographic inquiry, and that rationalising or reducing ‘maleness’ to being patriarchy is not appropriate. They state that, “relations of power are an aspect of *every* social interaction.” (ibid: 3). Furthermore, they are adamant in their belief that hegemonic discourses are not enough to describe and understand how masculinities are formed and identified in context-sensitive cases (ibid). Within such a framework, it is important to notice the kind of ‘whole’ the *anak hutan* form in their similarities and identities – I believe it goes beyond simply understanding “the ways in which men distinguish themselves and are distinguished from other men” (ibid: 19). By being *anak hutan*, they are categorically a sort of ‘brotherhood’ (also calling each other ‘brother’ in most interactions) that is founded on a similar lifestyle – guiding, tourism, weed-smoking and relationships to Western women. An interesting aspect of their version of masculinity is partially based on the concept of metonymy – namely, “associating men with images or instruments of power” (ibid: 21). Almost all of the *anak hutan* have motorbikes and are particularly invested in them, which can be observed in their discussions about the bikes, the care and maintenance that they invest, and the way the motorbikes are symbolic and representative of their identities. All three of my main informants have their own motorbikes – Amin also has a motocross bike – and each one is distinguishable from the other. This means it is easy to identify a driver simply by his bike (the colour, the sound, or another interesting feature). Cornwall and Lindisfarne argue that “metonymic associations often reveal the kind of ‘commodity logic’ which typifies capitalist formations. Thus, masculine identities may be located in possessions which can be acquired or lost.” (ibid: 21). I wish to be careful in not reducing the *anak hutan* to a unitary category of ‘man’ or masculinity completely, nor basing them directly in opposition to women. Each guiding man in Bukit Lawang in this context is constituted differently, and though they may share commonalities and factors that can identify them as a group, they are not unitary in every sense. However, though they themselves see and understand each other as unique and different on an individual level, they do also claim to be men in the direct sense that they are *not* women. We must accept their dichotomy as such, because it forms part of their own identities. In using Marilyn Strathern’s

theory, Cornwall and Lindisfarne support ‘replication’: “In experiences of replication [amongst people of the same sex], ...the excluded sex is always there by implication. Thus, if activities are locally interpreted as the arena of one sex, the other sex is there as cause.” (ibid: 43). The *anak hutan* also present themselves as uniform in the sense of calling themselves ‘jungle boys’, or even on occasion ‘Tarzan’, suggesting a sense of belonging to a category of maleness and masculinity that is distinct from others in the society.

In an ethnography about masculinities in an Anatolian village, Kandiyoti writes about different recognised age groups for men in the society and the roles that those age groups represent (1994). She explains, “*Delikanli* (literally meaning ‘those with crazy blood’) referred to adolescents and young unmarried men, who enacted a version of masculinity valorising the untamed and undomesticated” (ibid: 210). Though the *anak hutan* are not necessarily ‘adolescent’, they are mostly unmarried young men who sometimes refer to themselves as ‘wild’. There are, to my knowledge, not the same kind of categorisations or labels for different ages in Bukit Lawang, but the *delikanli* of Anatolia can be compared to the period in an *anak hutan*’s life when he feels himself as ‘young, wild and free’.

When I asked, ‘what does it mean to be a man in Bukit Lawang?’, the question was met with trepidation and uncertainty by Iruel. Of course, it is a deep and complex question, and in most likelihood, not something that has been given much thought. Throughout the fieldwork, I have had to deduce and pick up on subtleties that depict how they perform their masculinities. It is not something that is blatantly obvious, once one sees past the obvious answer, simply that they are biologically male. In an interview at the end of the fieldwork, Iruel and I returned to some topics of discussion, like dreams, comparisons of West and Bukit Lawang, and of the effects of tourism. He mused about the differences in lifestyle, particularly in an Islamic perspective, between living as a local in the village (outside of tourism) and living in the central place where tourists and *anak hutan* occupy the space. If he lived in the village, he states he would be prone to being more pious, including praying more and following Islamic values and customs more. However, as he notes, he has grown up in Bukit Lawang, amongst tourists and a culture influenced by tourism, and therefore he doesn’t follow these customs as much. When I directly asked him why, his instinctual response was, “I don’t know, I guess I’ve kind of changed my mind...”.



## Conclusion

I named the previous section ‘masculinities at risk’ because of the role of masculinity in Indonesia, as well as in a global context of constantly renegotiating masculinity and gender in today’s world. Whether the *anak hutan* masculine identities are at risk directly because of tourism in Bukit Lawang is too presumptuous of me to answer within the confines of this thesis. I argue their masculinities are identified in the cross-section of embracing a Western influence from tourism and retaining a national and cultural identity within the framework of traditions and religious values in rural Indonesia. It is clear from my research, filming and conversations, that the young men of Bukit Lawang are indeed impacted both culturally and behaviourally by the lives they lead amongst tourists, and far more so than the less visible and more reserved local women. The *anak hutan* have been born into a context of tourism and have had it, in varying degrees, imposed upon them from a young age. Tourism in Bukit Lawang is not something new and did not suddenly appear in the lifetime of these young men. Therefore, they are adapted and adjusted to a mix of influences, social behaviours and societal norms.

I set out with the intention of answering *how do the ideas of the West and of tourism impact the masculinities and identities of the young men of Bukit Lawang?* This thesis in itself is not enough to supply all possible answers, nor has it covered the complexities of masculinity and identity to their full extent. Given the scope here, I have argued for an understanding that the *anak hutan* are affected by the way in which they have come to understand the West, which in turn is reinforced by the behavioural patterns of the Westerners when they visit Bukit Lawang. These experiences and perceptions of the West shape how the *anak hutan* interact with tourists, and particularly Western women, and furthermore, what they come to expect. It is not enough to say that their masculine identities are in a liminal phase, as this reduces their lives to a semblance of fleetingness. Their experiences and reactions are not liminal, but fluid and in the context of continuous evolution and across generations.

Filming the *anak hutan* raised certain questions of performance and representation, some of which were answered as time went on during fieldwork. My initial aim of filming the women of Bukit Lawang failed, but this failure opened up the avenue of insight into the lives perhaps most influenced by tourism. My curiosity is even more piqued, however, as to where the women are in Bukit Lawang, but more so what they themselves feel about the *anak hutan*. I think any ethnographic research that is left open-ended and not easily answerable is all the more interesting namely because of the doors it may open to other questions concerning a given society. I am left with additional inquiries still as to the *anak hutan* and their lifestyle: how do they relate to their peers? How do they relate to the other generations and genders of their local society? And as a result of the *anak hutan* behaviour, and the impact of tourists, do women get left behind? Are there tensions to be explored? The *anak hutan* and their masculine identities are a gateway to a much larger intrigue concerning the complexities of being from Bukit Lawang.

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