

MAN AND TIGER RELATIONSHIPS IN CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN LITERATURE

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Abstract

Media reports on recent attacks by Sumatran tigers in February and March 2024 have framed the man-tiger relationship as being one of conflict. Implicit in this reporting are on the one hand, the threat to the villagers who live proximate to parks and on the other hand, preserving an endangered animal. It has led to officials paradoxically setting traps for tigers in the sanctuary set aside for its preservation. Putu Fajar Arcana (2024), in reference to this conflict examines this relationship from different perspectives. He observes that man's relationship with the tiger has been shaped by earlier belief systems; one that has venerated the tiger. He observes this tiger-man relationship in literary works which portray man's tiger-like savagery and moral baseness and the tiger also seeking revenge against humans. To date little research has been undertaken on this man and tiger representation in contemporary Indonesian literature. This research has a compelling context, the Sumatran tigers is a critically endangered animal. The aim of this paper is to examines the representation of the tiger-man relationship in contemporary Indonesian literature over the New Order and post-New Order periods. It draws on the theory of narratology and selects literary works (short stories) from the New Order period and post-New Order periods. It examines the man and tiger relationship from the perspectives of beliefs, economic development and the environment over two political periods: the New Order and post-New Order periods. It finds that in literary works man's economic activities depict a subjugation of myths and beliefs shaping values of respect and conservation of the tiger and its habitat.

Keywords. Tiger-man relationship, development, environment, Indonesian literature

INTRODUCTION

Media reporting of tiger attacks in Sumatra in early 2024 portray a man-tiger relationship in conflict. A *Kompas* newspaper report in March 2024 describes three tiger attacks (two fatal) against villagers in the period February to March villagers' violent reactions (Oktavia, 2024). The villagers reacted by burning down the Environmental Conservation and Protection Office and the village head demanded the wild beast (the tiger) be captured. The sites for the attacks were in the victim's vegetable gardens. The local authorities responded by attempting to trap the tigers in the conservation area.

Putu Fajar Arcana (2024) in an opinion piece related to man-tiger conflict comments on the man and tiger relationship in myths, language and literature. He notes that there is a wisdom in local myths about the man-tiger relationship however, they been forgotten, giving way to the logging of forests and the diminution on the tiger's habitat to serve man's needs. Arcana also finds in literary works a narrative of man abandoning reason to base desire so becoming indistinguishable from the tiger

found in Lubis's (1975) *Harimau! Harimau!*) and a narrative of tigers seeking revenge against humans depicted in Seno Gumira Ajidarma's short story (2020) "Macan".

William Marsden (1811), a British citizen who worked in Bencoolen (now Bengkulu) in South-west Sumatra in the late 18th century, in his natural history of Sumatra, observes a man-tiger relationship in conflict but moderated by villagers' respect for the tiger. He characterises the tiger as destructive of human and animal life with large numbers of villagers being killed and "instances of whole villages being depopulated by them." (pp. 184-5). He goes on to note however, that the villagers do not routinely kill the tiger despite a large reward offered by the British India company for killing them. The threshold for reprisal is having "sustained some particular injury in their own family or kindred..." (p. 185). He ascribes this reluctance to kill tigers as being linked to beliefs found in popular stories (pp.185, 292).

The man-tiger relationship he stated is found in the idea of metempsychosis, that the soul of the departed are within the tiger. He observed how this relationship is expressed in language, exemplified by the word 'ancestor' ('nenek') as a referent for the tiger. Marsden also noted the belief in the transformation of man into a tiger and described the belief about a tiger village with its own court and own form of government. Villagers seeking to preserve their relations with the tiger, he recorded, will gather near a tiger trap set by a European to show the tiger they are not a party to killing them (p.292). Implicit in Marsden's descriptions is the villagers' respect for the tiger's life which can be linked to a kinship relationship.

Sastri Sunarti (2020), in her study of the West Sumatran traditional poem the *ba-ilau* describes how the poem and its traditional performance represents a man-tiger relationship of mutual respect, and punishments for human and tiger infractions. In the *ba-lai* tradition Sunarti argued, it contains a message of tiger conservation (exemplified by the respectful term 'inyiak') by forbidding the villagers from killing it. In the *ba-lau*, if the tiger is judged to have committed a wrong ('bersalah') then the tiger is summoned by means of reciting the *ba-ilau* which it is said, invokes a sacred promise between man's and the tigers' ancestors to respect one another. On hearing the *ba-ilau* being sung with its sad intonation, the tiger would also feel sadness (p.23). The captured tiger, Sunarti stated, is not killed but instead returned to its habitat or given to a zookeeper (p. xii). Sunarti (2020) found in the *ba-liau* poem a man-tiger relationship based on a belief in an agreement between human and tiger ancestors of not doing wrong to the other.

Sunarti (2020, p.9) noted that the tradition was last performed in the late 1990s and (consonant with Arcana's (2024) observation of the erosion of knowledge of myths) the tradition faces extinction a fate shared too by the tiger. With the decline of the tiger population in its habitat the *ba-ilau* she argued is no longer performed because it is no longer needed. The fate of the myth and the tiger described by Sunarti is not dissimilar to the 'adu rampok' ceremony in the courts of Java. Lestari et al (2023) observed that the 'adu rampok' tradition, related to the tiger-man relationship has died with the extinction of the

Javanese tiger. The tradition itself involved the public killing of tigers in events organised by Javanese royalty. However, unlike the man-tiger relationship described by Sunarti in West Sumatera, Wessing (1992, pp.229, 303) argued the tiger symbolised chaos and a threat to order and its killing represented a restoration of order held at the end of the fasting month.

Ninawati Syahrul et al. (2024) observed a commonality in beliefs about the tiger-man relationship across ethnic groups in Sumatra which are found in stories (myths, poems, and rituals). The concept of 'bersalah' in the tiger-man relationship found in the peoples of the West Coast discussed above is also found among in the Aceh, Kerinci, Mandailing and Bengkulu peoples. For the Acehnese if man does no wrong to the tiger, then he will not be harmed. For the Kerinci people, tigers which enter the village do so because people have done wrong in breaking customary laws. For the Mandailing people tigers enter the village because the villagers have committed a wrong while the Bengkulu people believe that if a tiger enters the village the villagers have committed an offence (pp.331-3).

Implicit in language and belief systems is a view of the tiger-man relationship based on respect for the tiger. Syahrul (2024, 332) in a study of the language used for the word 'tiger' instanced many words that invoke a filial relationship and acknowledge the authority and position of older people. These words include 'Inyiak' (Grandfather), 'Inyiak Balang' (Striped Grandmother), and 'Inyiak Rimbo' (Grandmother of the Jungle). The authors also noted the people of Kerinci, West Sumatera believe the tiger ('Imaw Srobat') keeps them safe by preventing wild animals from entering the village. A way of showing respect to the tiger is by not saying its name in the forest (Syahrul et al., 2024, p. 331).

Bakels, (2003, p. 73), like Sunarti's finding of a tiger-man ancestral agreement on the west coast of West Sumatra, observed that for the Kerinci people further inland, in myth and ritual there is also a respect for the tiger expressed as a pact. "This pact bound the people of the village to the gods (now the Islamic god), to each other, to the spirits of the forest, and to the wild animals, especially the tiger." Syahrul et al. (2024, 332) note a dead tiger too is shown respect by the Kerinci in the 'Ngagah Harimau' dance to keep the village and the tiger at peace. For the Batak there is the legend of 'Babat Setelpang' about a tiger showing kindness to an abandoned mother and child in the forest which is now returned by the locals by asking permission to enter the forest.

Syahrul et al (2024, p. 334) also examined the representation of the tiger-man relationship in what they call the "incarnation event or transformation" from man into tiger. The transformation they note it is known by various names and appears in various forms namely, "Tapadrawanya (West Java), Cindaku (Jambi), Mandraguna (North Sumatra), Hadatuon (North Sumatra), Magi Putih (West Sumatra), or Kanurangan (Bengkulu). This form can be a White tiger and Black Tiger (Aceh), White Tiger (West Java), half-tiger man (Minang, Jambi, Bengkulu, Riau)..." (p.334).

In the myth of Prabu Siliwangi, related to the end of the Hindu period and Islamisation of West Java, Prabu Siliwangi transformed himself into a man-tiger after rejecting his son's efforts to convert him to Islam (Wessing, 1993, pp.1-2.) There is a belief the King ('Prabu') and his men went to live in

the mountains and forests of West Java as white tigers ('Maung Bodas') (Syahrul et al., p.335). Bakels (2003, p. 76) recorded also a Kerinci myth of tigers appearing in human form 'orang bakung' as a 'nenek' or grandmother who helps deliver a human child. The child then learns 'silat harimau' (tiger martial arts) from the tiger. Syahrul et al. (2024, pp. 335–6, 340) observed in another Kerinci story the tiger-man relationship illustrating a close relationship. The tiger ('tingkas') are ancestors of humans ('cindaku'), and preservers of the forest which can assume human form if entering a cindaku village.

Syahrul et al. (2024, p.333) linked economic development with the erosion of local knowledge (found in stories) and the threat to the survival of tigers in Sumatra, the last island in Indonesia where tigers live in the wild. They stated (consonant with Arcana above) that "Unfortunately, this local wisdom has begun to be eroded by the times and economic needs so that tigers are threatened."¹ Sunarti (2024) in a discussion with this researcher attributed the diminishing tiger population to loss of habitat caused by land clearing for palm oil plantations. Luskin, Albert and Tobler (2017, pp.3, 6) found that the Sumatran tiger faces a high risk of extinction because of ongoing deforestation noting that in the period 1990-2010 some 37.7% of Sumatera's primary forests were lost. In the period 2000-2012 the tiger population in Sumatra declined by 16.6% leaving a population of between 290 to 618. The authors stated that it is continued oil palm expansion, forest degradation, and poaching which threaten the residual tiger populations on the island.

Professor Satyawati Pudyatmoko, a researcher in forest science, wildlife management and forest resource conservation at Universitas Gadjah Mada (in Grehenson, 2011) at a university seminar in 2011 stated that the tiger population had declined from around 1200 in the 1970s to between 400 – 500. He forecast it could follow the path of the extinction of the Javanese and Balinese tigers unless managed conservation areas are increased noting only 29 percent of the tiger habitat is designated as conservation areas.²

Andrian Novita (2023) provided an overview of the extinction of the Javan and Balinese tigers in the 20th century. In Java the clearing of forest for agriculture in the 1800s led to tiger-man conflict and large-scale hunting. A picture consonant with Marsden's observations in 1811 in Sumatra discussed above. Novita, citing the Special Region of Yogyakarta Forestry and Environmental data, in the 1940s there were an estimated 200-300 tigers, in 1950 around 25, and by the 1980s the Javan tiger was deemed extinct. While in Bali, the tiger was deemed extinct in 1938 caused by a loss of habitat and hunting.

PROBLEM

The tiger-man relationship is expressed in language (names for tigers) and oral literature (myths and legends) with common elements of a kinship and respect for the tiger. However, centuries of relentless

¹ Sunarti "240826–Diskusi – Ibu Sastri Sunarti [Discussion with Sastra Sunarti on 26 August 2024]"Sunarti one of the authors of this paper stated the term local wisdom is a common misconception about local knowledge and prefers the latter term.

² At the time of writing the Department of Environment and Forestry has yet to complete its survey of tiger population which the department commenced in 2019.

land clearing for economic development and shrinking tiger habitats has led to ongoing conflict. Loss of the tiger and its habitat have also meant the end of traditions such as the performance of the *ba-ilau*. A tradition too that came under pressure from Islamic leaders where it came into conflict with Islamic teachings. The problem to be examined is how are the man-tiger relationships are portrayed in contemporary Indonesian literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Wessing (1992) made a general observation that in the context of the Javanese tiger-man relationship the value of stories show changes in society in periods and relationships. Sunarti (2020, 2024) observed there are conservation messages in tiger-man myths that give them a strong contemporary relevance. Syarul et al. (2024, p. 333) observed the Sumatran tiger myth of the man-tiger have inspired the literary works such as Motinggo Busye's (2015) novel *7 Manusia Harimau!* Graf (1995), based on an analysis of the Mochtar Lubis literary works including *Harimaul Harimaul* (1975) found that there has been a process of *demagification* of the forest with an Islamisation of remote areas and the scientific approach that contested traditional beliefs. Biyantari (2009) (not dissimilar to Aracana (2024)) found there is a moral dimension in *Harimau! Harimau!* with the tiger being a metaphor for man's immorality. Duile (2022) examined the representations of the man-tiger relationship (using the term 'ecologies') in Lubis' (1975) *Harimau! Harimau!* and Eka Kurnawan's (2004) *Lelaki Hari Mau*. He found there are three different relationships ('ecologies'): the religious/rational, mythical, and actual in Lubis's work with the religious/rational being dominant while it is the mythical that is dominant in Kurnawan's work.

This literature review of the man-tiger relationship in contemporary literature show literary studies have focussed on the representation of *the nature of man* in relation to the tiger which describe depictions of man's violent tiger-like nature in literature. There are related findings too of moral messages for mankind in the portrayal of man's base (tiger-like) nature. The gap in the research is a study of man-tiger relationship in contemporary Indonesian literature in terms of the relationship between older myths and beliefs, religious teachings *and* the impact of economic development on tiger habitat. The literature review also finds that the research is focussed on novels published between 1975 and 2004. The identified gap is the study of the short story genre over a long period (from the commencement of the New Order period to the present).

AIM

The aim of the study is to examine the representation of the tiger-man relationship in contemporary Indonesian literature over the New Order and post-New Order period.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The paper addresses the following questions:

1. How are man-tiger relationships depicted in Indonesian contemporary literary works over the period 1966 to 2024 (New Order and post-New Order)?

2. Why is the relationship depicted in particular ways?
3. Have there been changes in these depicted relationships between man and tiger over the two periods (New Order and post-New Order)? If so, how?

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology (theory) used to study the man-tiger relationship is narratology. The study draws on key concepts in narratology (Bal 2017) to address the research questions listed above. Using this theory, the data selected (short stories) are viewed as narrative texts which comprise inter-related elements that form a cohesive structure. The study examines four key elements found in the narrative related to the man-tiger relationship. Firstly, the events and links between events ('fabula') related to this relationship. Secondly, the narrators' and characters' beliefs about tiger myths expressed in comments or dialogue or description of characters. Thirdly, ideological viewpoints articulated in narratorial comments, or in depicted in the opposing viewpoints of characters about the man-tiger relationship. Lastly, descriptions in the narrative about man's use of the environment and its impact on events relating to the man-tiger relationship.

METHOD

The research examines in turn the key elements in the narratives, described above, found in six short stories relating to the man-tiger relationship and its related myth and belief described in the background. The sample selected (see Table 1 below) is over the period 1970 to 2021 and has been sourced from a cultural journal (*Budaya Jaya*) and a newspaper (*Kompas*). The findings from each short story is compared with other short stories and associated myths and beliefs to look for changes in the man-tiger relationship.

Table 1: Details of selected literary works³

Title	Author	Original source and date of publication
"Tersesat" ("Lost")	Unbara	<i>Budaya Jaya</i> , 1970
"Belantara di Musim Hujan" ("The Forest in the Wet Season")	Junus Mukri Adi	<i>Kompas</i> , 1970
"Masih" ("Still")	Fadli Rasyid	<i>Kompas</i> , 1980
"Liang Harimau"	Gus tf Sakai	<i>Kompas</i> , 2008

³ Translations of titles and quotations from these short stories are the researcher's

("The Tiger's Grave")		
"Harimau Belang"	Guntur Alam	<i>Kompas</i> , 2014
("The Striped Tiger")		
"Tragedi Menjelang Lebaran"	Chudori Sukra	<i>Kompas</i> , 2021
"A Tragedy near the End of the Fasting Month"		

DISCUSSION

The discussion that follows argues that in the earlier literature (New Order period) the belief in a transformative myth of the man-tiger is represented as leading Muslim's astray from a virtuous path. The belief of an ancestral relationship between man and tiger and its respect for the tiger too has been eroded. The tiger is seen as an object and a threat. In the post-New Order period the ancestral man-tiger relationship is depicted in the belief system of a traditional ethnic group but rejected in mainstream, rational society. Pregnant women as depicted as remembering older beliefs of respecting the tiger (and pregnant animals) but their narrative has been subordinated to economic exploitation of the tiger's habitat.

"Tersesat" (1970)

The short story "Tersesat" ("Lost") written by Unbara (1970), begins in an actual location in West Java then moves to a mythical man-tiger village surrounded by jungle. The main character is a young man, Ki Agus Naim who has been disappointed in love and leaves his kampung. A senior public official and aristocrat ('Bendara Wedana') marries the woman Ki Naim loves. Ki Naim decides rather than suffer by seeing the one he loves in the kampung he will leave immediately. He crosses the Tjisanggarung River and after a steep climb rests at a food stall ('warung') at a village which is on the way to his destination, an Islamic boarding school ('pesantren').⁴ Naim is unable to understand that the people at the warung are indirectly referring to man-tigers who live in the village called Nunukdjenuk located to the south.

In the warung, the conversation reflects the mythical filial man-tiger relationship with man forbidden to speak the tiger's name. For the locals in the warung one must have wisdom ('berisi') to counter these man-tiger's powers who kill through charms if slighted. Those without this wisdom are 'empty' people and if they incur the tiger's wrath will be killed through the man-tiger's magic. The warung owner, who is without knowledge of the supernatural, believes he is protected by God. He urges Ki Naim to continue to seek truth in the pasantren and by doing good so he too will be protected by

⁴ There are several indications the setting is in West Java, the Tjisanggarung River (or Ci Singgarung is a river that marks the border between West Java and Central Java and flows in the Sea of Java). Sundanese forms of address are used for characters including 'ki' ('aki') (grandfather), 'emang' or 'mang' (uncle), and 'ujang' (male child). The use of the word 'macan' indicates the setting is on Java.

God. A man-tiger later enters the warung who addresses Naim and says Naim should make his former rival, Bendara Wedana afear of him and to this end he will teach the skills and knowledge to become powerful. Naim decides to return to the man-tiger's village to study these arts with the view of seeking revenge. In the village he learns a mantra to make him immune to harm which is later tested. In this test he is slashed twice with a knife and he is able to recover immediately from the wounds.

The next night he returns to his village where a villager raises the alarm by shouting 'Macan! Macan!' ('Tiger! Tiger!')⁵ and seeks to scare him away. Ki Naim is confused and disbelieving that he has transformed into a tiger. It is something which the Man-Tiger leader did not tell him would happen. He then seeks out a 'ronggeng' (a female entertainer) in another village but again is chased away. He flees into the forest and falls asleep. The next morning he is woken by a hunter who gives praise to God ('pupujian') and Ki Naim feels his humanity return but also a regret for what he has done. The hunter asks why he has slept in this place to which he responds that he had lost his way ('Tersesat')

In "Tersesat" the man-tiger is represented as the keeper of dangerous arts whose characters are vengeful and deceitful. The man-tiger is represented as a 'dukun' who use their mantras and magic against men who cross them. They invite Naim to do the same. In this story the main character is transformed into a man-tiger through reciting a mantra, a feature of Sundanese myth noted by Syahrul (2024, p. 334). For Naim, a consequence of becoming a part of the man-tiger village (and embracing its practices) is he loses his religion "What was most strange, the knowledge of religion which he had studied since a child vanished totally annihilated, not even a spec of dust remaining." (p. 58). At the end of the story the mantra that turned him into a tiger is counter-acted by an Islamic recitation that restores his humanity. The story's narrative expresses an opposition to traditional dukun practices and beliefs which are linked to man-tiger myths which challenge belief in God.⁶

"Belantara di Musim Hujan" (1970)

Adi's (1970) story "Belantara di Musim Hujan" ("The Forest in the Wet Season") is about a husband and wife who live in an isolated state-owned teakwood forest in the area of Rogodjombangan Hills.⁷ In the forest there are tigers and deer and outside the forest is a village. The husband is a forestry worker employed to look after the forest which is to be logged and its timber exported. In the village is a dukun who has powers over the tigers in the forest. Conflict arises between the wife, Rodiyah and her husband, Ikrom when the husband kills a tiger (for sport) then a pregnant deer (for food). The wife states there will be severe consequences as it transgresses local beliefs, and her own unborn child could suffer

⁵ In the story the Javanese word for tiger is used.

⁶ According to a Sundanese informant (2024), males in her family would summon the white tiger-soldiers at times of need. It was believed too that the white tigers-soldiers were watching over them and would come to help at critical times. However, they now regard these practices as 'syirik' (against Islam) and no longer practice the rituals associated with these myths.

⁷ Rogodjombangan (Rojojombangan) could be the place with the same name in Central Java; the dukun also however, the Javan tiger as discussed earlier was at the verge of extinction in the 1970s in Java.

through the dukun. The dukun visits the couple's house, there is a fight and Ikrom overpowers the dukun, spares his life then allows him to return to his village. The husband returns to his house only to find that his wife and unborn child are dead.⁸

As described above, Ikrom's relationships with others are in conflict because of differing perspectives of relationships with the tiger and other living creatures. The forestry worker cum hunter views the forest as state property whose value lies in its wood which will be exported. He also sees its creatures in a similar way, as a commodity, a source of food, or to be hunted for sport. In contrast Rodiyah sees a connectedness between herself, as a pregnant woman, and other living creatures in the cycle of life. She says to her husband "That creature is pregnant. Try and relate it to me." (Adi, 1970, p.25). Ikrom rejects this inter-connectedness and ascribes this view to just being feelings and suggestions from old people (Adi, 1970, p.26).

Rodiyah tells her husband, Ikrom that the local village dukun would harbour a grievance against Ikrom after he killed a tiger under the dukun's control. She feels that the dukun will deliver his revenge upon her and her unborn child. Ikrom does not feel he needs to justify his actions to those who keep a tiger in the jungle. He sees the tiger as inconsequential and the property of the state. The dukun in his confrontation with Ikrom states that he is angry with Ikrom for killing the tiger and deer because it caused other villagers to lose faith in his sacredness ('kekeramatan'). The dukun in this confrontation reveals more about his own human qualities; his concerns about losing his job and his reputation (Adi 1970, pp. 27-31).

The ending appears to fulfill the prophecy of the wife that the dukun will take his revenge upon her for the killing of the creatures of the forest including the dukun's tiger. Implicit in this prophecy is her belief that the dukun has the power to deliver this retribution. However, in the events in the narrative the dukun is portrayed as having no power over Ikrom nor over the creatures in the forest. In this narrative however, it leaves open that Ikrom is punished for his disrespect of the tiger and other living creatures with death of his wife. An event that is in keeping with the beliefs (in West Sumatra) of man being punished for wronging a tiger.

"Masih" (1980)

Fadli Rasyid's (1980) short story "Masih" ("Still") is set on a plot of land high up on the edge of a forest on the slope of a high mountain where corn and tobacco are grown.⁹ The main (human) character is a farmer who works this small plot of land. It is night and it is cold and the farmer is standing guard over his crop of corn to prevent it being consumed by forest pigs and monkeys. On this night, as he is guarding his corn crop, he hears a rustling sound in the corn field. He suspects it is a single pig which

⁸ The analysis of this short story draws on some aspects of an earlier analysis by the researcher, Rawson (2023) and is indicated in the text. This analysis focuses on the man-tiger relationship.

⁹ While the location is not stated there are indications that it is Java. The Javan tiger is extinct by this time and the threat is represented as coming from other apex predators.

he is ready to kill with his spear and machette. He enters the corn crop and looks for the source of the rustling and encounters a black panther ('harimau kumbang') which he then fights and kills with his machette. As he returns to his shelter wounded and exhausted to continue the watch he then sees a herd of pigs enter his field.

The narrator describes the nature of farmer's relationship with the land. It has been a life-long relationship with his field "he has known the plot since he knew life itself" (Rasyid, 1980, p.389).and being a farmer is his life's work. He understands soil properties and the signs of failing crops and values the toil in tending his land above other types of work. The farmer however, in looking at his crops also experiences alternating feelings of hope and anxiety about the harvest. He has experienced the vagaries of the weather; drought, floods and strong winds that have impacted his crops (Rasyid, 1980, p.389).

The farmer also faces another source of threat to his crops namely animals, wild boars and monkeys. He sees this relationship with this animals as a contest. He observes the animals becoming bolder because they sense he is getting older. For the farmer the boars are the more destructive and he has attempted to eradicate them having killed dozens over the years. The contest is also seen in terms of human ownership over the cultivated land and says, "They don't consider me as the owner of the crops.", "I am the legal owner of this land..." and "On this land, I am the one who is in control..." (Rasyid, 1980, p.391-2).

The farmer perceives these creatures as a threat to his safety and so it must be killed. This encounter is his third fight with a tiger ('harimau') these being a panther ('harimau kumbang') and the other two encounters were with leopards ('harimau tutul'). In this third encounter the narrator comments how both see each other as a threat and says "There was no other choice, except one had to kill the other." (Rasyid, 1980, p.396). In the narrative the event of killing of this apex predator by man then makes it safer for the pigs to consume the crop.

The narrative of the man-tiger relationship (in this case the panther and leopard) is represented as being a relationship in conflict with man instinctively killing these apex predators. Man is depicted as insisting on borders between his land and the forest, a border which is not recognised by the tiger. As discussed in the background, the belief in tigers protecting man (in West Sumatra) is absent in this depicted relationship. Yet there is an irony, a counter narrative in the story's portrayal of tigers keeping populations such as boars in check and so protecting man.

"Liang Harimau" (2008)

Gus tf Sakai's (2008) story "Liang Harimau" ("The Tiger's Graveyard") is set in the forested area of the Badui traditional people in West Java, a tribe who shun development and technology and prioritise the preservation of the environment.¹⁰ The main character, Sadim of the Badui traditional people worked

¹⁰ In the story the locations mentioned such as kampung Cibeo correspond to physical locations in West Java in Badui areas.

for an outsider named Rasikun. He has however, been charged with Rasikun's murder. The police maintain he has killed his boss over a pay dispute. In the trial Sadim denies this interpretation of events and claims he had killed a tiger who had attacked him. For Sadim, the event triggering the murder is Rasikun's refusal to allow him to participate in a compulsory ritual in his village the blessing for the clearing of new land for their crops ('Ngasep Serang').

The character Rasikun has appropriated a part of Badui land known as Liang Harimau (in the local language Liang Maung) and has cleared it for planting crops. Sadim feels troubled working on this land because it is where his ancestors are believed to have been buried and return these ancestors return from heaven to play (depicted later in the story to be in the form of a tiger). Sadim, however has little choice because he is forced to find work outside of his village as his own plot of land has become barren and has not produced a sufficient amount of rice to meet his family's needs. In contrast, he observes that neighbouring (non-Badui) ricefields are planted year round by using fertilisers and irrigation systems compared to Badui shifting agricultural practices.

Rasikun objects to releasing Sadim for the ritual, 'Ngasep Serang' because he believes this ceremony can proceed without Sadim. For Sadim there are severe consequences for not attending believing he will make the land and the crops angry. He remembers the words of the village astrologist "All of nature and its elements will be opposed, will become the enemy of the people, seeking you out at every moment." (Sakai, 2008).

He sees a tiger watching him at Liang Maung on dusk and when he recounts this to Rasikun he sees this as possible as the area is densely forested. On his way home he senses the tiger is following him. The tiger reappears the follow evening. Sadim on trial for killing Rasikun, in recounting this event to the court narrates that this tiger ('maung') that he stabbed was in self-defence. It is testimony which the judge rejects.

In the story there are two narratives about man's relationship with the tiger. The appearance of the tiger invokes the myth that an ancestor has returned because customary law has been broken (see Syahrul (2024) above). This narrative finds a counter narrative in the mainstream rational narrative that a tiger was seen but it was a man that was killed. The police advance the rational narrative that Sadim killed his boss over a pay dispute. It is the rational, legal narrative that prevails over the traditional one of a man-tiger seeking vengeance.

"Harimau Belang" (2014)

Guntur Alam's (2014) short story "Harimau Belang" ("The Striped Tiger") is set in a village in Sumatera. Proximate to the village are a rubber plantation, coal mine, paper mill, and a forest.¹¹ The relationship between man and the tiger is in conflict with a tiger first taking goats and a calf from the

¹¹ The story gives the location as Tanah Abang which likely corresponds to Tanahabang South Sumatera.

village and later a child (the first time in the history of the village). This leads to the men in the village decide they have no choice but to kill the tiger. Menot, a female character in the village seeks to dissuade her husband Nallis from participating in the hunt arguing it violates the man-tiger relationship prescribed in tradition. Nallis decides he must follow the village's decision and leaves her in the house. Menot then goes to the river to bathe and encounters the tiger.

The wife, Menot explains the system of local beliefs about the man-tiger relationship in the village of Tanah Abang. Menot describes the belief system to her husband, she states the tiger is a sacred animal and an incarnation of their ancestors. Tigers are called 'puyang' and must not be hunted or killed and if passed in the rubber plantation or in thick bush, the tiger is allowed to pass.¹² When a person is passing through the forest and comes upon a tiger, then one needs to ask its permission. Menot, who is pregnant reminds her husband that there are consequences for her and the children if he causes harm to the wildlife. She also fears for his safety as the tiger is a savage animal. (Alam, 2014, pp. 10-11, 13).

Menot understands the link between the appearance of the hungry tiger and the loss of its habitat. She observes its shrinking habitat as a consequence of the logging of the forest to supply the paper mill. This logging has left large areas of land denuded of cover, a situation that is getting worse. The mill, located upstream of the village, it is also linked to water pollution in a nearby stream. Menot no longer bathes there because its polluted water irritates her skin.

Menot is critical too of the nature of this economic development for the people in the village. She observes that although the companies have brought employment to the area, the villagers are only employed in unskilled areas as they lack higher education. She also knows she has no power to change the situation. She understands it is a patriarchal system, men will not listen to her and moreover, the mining and logging companies will not stop their activities.

The analysis of the structure reveals a dominant narrative of man's exploitation of resources that has put the man-tiger relationship into conflict. In the structure the female is the keeper and narrator of the narrative of respecting the tiger and tells how it is a relationship that has now been lost. The tiger's habitat similar to "Belantara di Musim Hujan" ("The Forest in the Wet Season") has become commodified or owned by man similar to "Masih" ("Still"). The final event in the story suggests that another human life will be lost in a relationship that has turned into conflict.

"Tragedi Menjelang Lebaran" (2021)

Sukra's (2024) short story "A Tragedy near the End of the Fasting Month" is set in the village of Karangasem.¹³ Hamidah is nine months pregnant and encounters a tiger which is also heavily pregnant. The event takes place by the river's edge in a secluded area. The tiger who is also heavily pregnant is disinterested in Hamidah. It is more interested in making a nest for itself in this secluded area. Hamidah

¹² The name 'puyang' is used by the people of Bengkulu in Sumatera for tiger (Syahrul et al., 2024, p. 334).

¹³ Karangasem corresponds to a village in South Sumatera Province.

then swims across the river to her village and tells her mother of the encounter with the tiger. The story spreads quickly through the village and causes panic then a call to hunt and kill the tiger. Hamidah requests to the village head that tiger not be hunted because it did not threaten her. Her mother however, urges the village head to kill the tiger. A group is formed to hunt and kill the tiger. The tiger who has given birth to twins is shot that night. Hamidah also gives birth to twins following the shooting. The tiger twins which are found after the shooting are later sold to a circus.

Hamidah in her thinking introduces a religious element to the man-tiger relationship and says that on this night of 'lailatul qadar' when God grants forgiveness to man so man should forgive the tiger for its intrusion and do it no harm it. Her narrative of an affinity with the tiger is contested by the mother's conception of a relentless tiger threat. This narrative then spurs the men of the village into action (not dissimilar to Marsden's account above). The argument of sparing of the tiger (linked to religious beliefs) is faintly redolent of the myth of not doing harm to pregnant wildlife while one's own wife is pregnant (seen in the story "Masih" ("Still")). However, in this story it is the bond between pregnant creatures which is emphasised.

CONCLUSION

In the portrayal of man-tiger relationships in the New Order period the traditional dukun-tiger relationship is represented as contrary to religious doctrine and rational perspectives. In the religious narrative it warns of losing faith by following man-tiger beliefs. In this period too there is a rejection of the dukun's power over tigers and other creatures. The dukun is also depicted as weak and self-serving in maintaining a narrative of having a special relationship with the tiger. However, it is the woman who is depicted as remembering earlier beliefs and understanding the consequences of killing pregnant wildlife and tigers. The role of women in preserving traditional beliefs about the man-tiger relationship resurfaces in post-New Order short stories. Religious teaching depicted by a female character also resurfaces in the New Order period but serving as a belief system to extend forgiveness to the tiger and so preserve life.

The female-tiger relationship stands in contrast to the male-tiger relationship over both periods. Women, significantly pregnant women, over both periods are characterised as having a special understanding and feeling for living creatures. Female characters are presented as custodians of beliefs based on respecting the tigers and draw upon them to try and influence the men not to kill the tigers. However, in patriarchal village structures, the female narrative of heeding myths and so conserving the tiger become subordinate to the male perspective. The man (male)-tiger relationship, in contrast to the female-tiger relationship, is characterised by conflict with the male portrayed as the hunter of the tiger and protector of women. A female character invokes an Islamic teaching of forgiveness and so urges the protection the life of a pregnant tiger. However, the dominant narrative of the tiger as a threat prevails.

Man's economic activities feature significantly in the stories over the two periods and its impact on the relationship with tigers (and other apex predators). Farming on the forest edge brings man into conflict with tigers however, the role of tigers in keeping an ecological balance in nature has been forgotten. Traditional ethnic groups who live in harmony with the environment have come under threat from economic development with their land being appropriated and belief systems eroded. In the post-New Order period Exploitation of forestry resources has led to a diminution of tiger habit and continued man-tiger conflict. In both periods man's respect for the tiger found in myth and tradition and its conservation messages based on respect for the tiger have become subordinated to narratives of economic development.

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