

Minangkabau Traditions, Islamic Reform and Women's Rights in Two Films Set in Late Colonial West Sumatra

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Many of the most significant Indonesian filmmakers have long valued the making of films in regional areas. However—largely for reasons of expense and the difficulties of shooting a feature film away from Jakarta—this ideal and aspiration has not often been realized. Nevertheless an important and innovatory regional film was made in West Sumatra within three years of Indonesia becoming an independent nation, Djayakusuma's *Harimau Tjampa* ('Tiger from Tjampa', 1953), and this film is often mentioned as the first Indonesian regional film. Shot on location in West Sumatra, and set in matrilineal villages in the Minangkabau highlands in the late colonial period, this film explores and portrays the role of the West Sumatran martial art, *pencak silat*, in Minangkabau culture, and particularly its relation to Islamic values of self restraint. About twenty five years after the appearance of *Harimau Tjampa*, another fine regional film, based on a West Sumatran story set in the mid 1920s, was shot with extensive location work in West Sumatra, this time in colour and widescreen, and dealing with known events of international significance in Indonesian history, the communist rising of the Dutch in 1927 in West Sumatra, as well as with regional debates within Islam. This film *Para Perintis Kemerdekaan*, ('Pioneers of Freedom', 1978-1980), was written and directed by the Sumatran born poet, film writer and director, Asrul Sani. At the heart of this film is the story of a woman whose husband refuses to support her, though he also refuses to divorce her, and this leads her into a quest to obtain her rights under Islamic religious law. This film was in turn based on various writings by the Sumatran born writer, Hamka (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah).

In this essay I will explore both of these films, the first in terms of its representation of aspects of the regional culture and traditions of villages in West Sumatra, and the second in terms of its representation of issues in Islam in Sumatra, and of West Sumatran history.

West Sumatra as a region is best known for its Minangkabau culture. Minangkabau society and culture, and changes within it, have been discussed at length in two excellent essays by the Indonesian historian and social commentator, Taufik Abdullah. Traditionally Minangkabau culture is matrilineal and centres on the mother: inheritance laws transmit the matrilineal communal house (*rumah gadang*) and inalienable subsistence farming land from mother to daughter, while the mother's eldest brother (known as the *mamak*), is regarded as the head of the family "responsible for the maintenance of inherited property (*harato pusako*) and the welfare of his sister's children, and is the representative of the family in suku affairs".ⁱ The tension between the matrilineal *adat* of the Minangkabau region, and patriarchal Islam, has also been discussed at length by Abdullah, himself a Minangkabau. Abdullah argues that rather than there being an inherent and irresolvable conflict between matrilineal *adat* and patriarchal Islam, there is an inbuilt tension between the two, in a society that historically seems to have demanded some inbuilt conflict to achieve integration.ⁱⁱ One of the issues explored by Abdullah in both essays is the question of how change occurs in conservative, traditional Islamic Minangkabau society, and here Abdullah examines both historical changes in Minangkabau society and changes in the role of Islam there, noting that at a certain point, the strengthening of Islam in Minangkabau society consequent upon the end of the Padri wars in 1837, meant that in some parts of West Sumatra, as well as tension, there was a strong identification between Islam and the core *adat*, the inheritance law, which itself was pre-Islamic.ⁱⁱⁱ

Both Abdullah and Kahn have discussed ways in which in the nineteenth century the Dutch changed “traditional” Minangkabau society, Kahn arguing that so-called “traditional Minangkabau society”, as it exists today, is really the result of considerable Dutch intervention, particularly as a result of the introduction of taxation by forced labour, and the way this was organised to be administered by the village heads and the councils of mamaks.^{iv} The issue of what matrilineal adat means for women in a Minangkabau village in the 1980s and 1990s has recently been addressed at length by Peggy Reeves Sanday.^v

Harimau Tjampa was directed by Javanese born Djadoeg Djayakusuma (1918-1987), almost all of whose films (and whose public life as an artist and intellectual) were concerned with exploring ways in which aspects of the traditional culture of regional areas, and in particular, village life, could be rendered in a modern medium such as film.^{vi} The film was produced for PT Perfini, the company established by the West Sumatran born writer-director, Usmar Ismail, regarded as a pioneer in the early years of the Indonesian film industry after independence, and the script developed with help from Alwi Dahlan, also from Sumatra. The film was not directed by Usmar Ismail, however, because he was given the opportunity to study in Hollywood just at the time that the film was to go into production. Most of the exteriors for *Harimau Tjampa* were shot on location in West Sumatra, and the interiors were shot in a studio in Jakarta, using as extras West Sumatran people living in Jakarta.

Harimau Tjampa is set in a Minangkabau village area in the highlands of West Sumatra, in the late colonial period, and no reference in the film is made to the coastal trading town of Padang, nor even to the highland fort town of Bukittinggi. The film’s main place of reference is a *nagari*, the basic village community, with its irrigated rice fields, matrilineal houses of residence with the distinctive rising buffalo horns shape at either end, and nearby rice storage buildings, and the village itself with its central mosque and public bathing place, and its warungs and coffee shops, and with administrative buildings for the *penghulu* (chief of the *nagari*). The Islamic presence in the village is augmented by a nearby *surau* (school) which specialises in the teaching of pencak silat, where students live together with their teacher, who stresses Islamic values in his teaching of silat. Communal bonds in the village and the presence of a wider community is suggested by four events in the film: a communal working day; a horse race at a race track; a village market day with traders coming from elsewhere; and a wedding, at which traditional dances are performed.^{vii} The milieu of all four events are established with external shots of a documentary kind, showing for example, the communal preparation of food; crowded groups of local people, including matriarchs, dressed in rich garments that signify their status and the respect accorded them; and shots of a celebratory performance of *randai*, with young men dressed entirely in black performing this striking circular dance. Music in the film is entirely derived from the West Sumatran region, in particular the use of the *talempong* at moments of excitement or ritual in the film, together with a sung ballad that introduces the film and punctuates it intermittently, and the various songs accompanying the dances.

Synopsis of *Harimau Tjampa*

Lukman, a newcomer to the *nagari*, is bent on avenging his father's murder. He hopes to do this by seeking to learn pencak silat with a local silat master, Datuk Langit, who is also the village head (*kepala nagari*) and who is described by an informant in a subversive conversation in a coffee shop as having many wives. Rejected by the exploitative Datuk Langit as a suitable student, because he cannot pay him by giving him a buffalo, Lukman becomes the pupil of Saleh, whose own practise of pencak silat is connected with Islam, and who insists in all his teachings that pencak silat is in the first instance a form of self defence, and that one must learn patience (“*harus sabar*”). Saleh is played in the film not by a professional actor, but by

a leading West Sumatran exponent of pencak silat at the time, Malindo Maradjo, and the film includes scenes of instruction in silat and of silat combat.

Datuk Langit regards Saleh as an enemy. Lukman becomes embroiled in this conflict, but also makes an enemy of Biran, Datuk Langit's henchman, especially when he asks for the hand in marriage of Biran's younger sister, Kiah, who shows overtly she is attracted to Lukman. Lukman is repeatedly warned by Saleh about the need to maintain self control in his dealings with other men in the village, both as a principal of pencak silat which is essentially a defensive martial art, and as a survival stratagem in the village. Lukman eventually has to leave Saleh's school, because it is clear he is unable to follow the advice of Saleh regarding his aggression. Later Lukman accidentally kills Biran in a fight over a gambling game. In prison Lukman learns that it was in fact Datuk Langit who ordered his father's death, and he escapes from prison in order to challenge the Datuk, who is now forcing Kiah to become his fourth wife. Before he confronts Datuk Langit, Lukman visits Saleh, who recognises that Lukman has matured, and blesses his quest to expose the Datuk, saying he has now become the "Harimau Tjampa". Lukman defeats Datuk Langit in hand to hand combat and the Datuk is now exposed for his crime. Lukman voluntarily returns to prison to serve out his term, with Kiah vowing to await his return to the village. The film concludes with a chorus singing a ballad on the soundtrack, the final lines of a song with which the film began.

While the plot of *Harimau Tjampa* might relegate the film to being a conventional martial arts revenge story, the film has numerous inventive and unique features. Rather than emphasising the melodramatic potential of the story, the film itself narrates its story in a matter of fact and restrained way, with an almost sardonic view of the village community, even as it incorporates and celebrates a range of village traditions. The film opens with a ballad, as documentary style shots establish the milieu, and verses from this ballad are sung nine times at various points by a chorus on the soundtrack, introducing the film as set in colonial times when life was hard, and punctuating the film with philosophical reflections and dividing the story into sections. Secondly the first scene is located in a *lapau* (coffee house) where Lukman as a newcomer, is informed by a local regarding the power elites in the village, headed by Datuk Langit who, we are told, lives in the house of his newest wife. While the village is matrilineal, under Islam a man is entitled to have more than one wife, and the wealthy Datuk Langit takes advantage of this right, even attempting—against her will and against the will of his third wife—to marry a further woman (Kiah) before the end of the film. Abdullah describes the *lapau* as a place frequented by people from outside the nagari, mentioning that it is also known as the *balai randah* (lower council), a place for criticism of the elites in the village.^{viii}

In the coffee house scenes, both staff and customers engage in a constant banter, even using Malay pantun (rhyming couplets) to do so. For example, here is Sidin responding to the repartee of a young woman serving coffee:

Kalau Sidin ada uang, ya, Sidin sayang,
Kalau tidak ada uang, Sidin melayang.

[If Sidin has money, then: "I love you, Sidin, dear".
But if Sidin has no money, Sidin can just disappear!] [my translation]

The capacity to excel in Malay pantun is regarded as a skill in this region, with pantun competitions being held regularly in West Sumatra, even today.

Saleh *If your hand involves you in something,
Then your shoulder must bear it.*
Don't run away from your responsibilities, Lukman.

Lukman Do I have to give myself up... and let Kiah be snatched away?
Throw out the water, when you have some!
If you don't know when the rain will come!
That's what a madman would do!

The fact that the Minangkabau pepetah adat are primarily spoken in the film by the devoutly Islamic teacher of silat, Saleh, and by an old man imprisoned with Lukman and finally by Lukman himself once he has gained wisdom, but not by the head of the nagari, Datuk Langit, the villain of the film, indicates both the increased centrality of Islam in colonial society and also a certain sense in which this film partakes in disrespect for the penghulu.

More clearly, however, in the circle surrounding Saleh, the film displays the intense spirit of community that underlies educational practises in Islam, and perhaps in an Islam practised in a society which still preserves the communicative and educational practises of what was an oral culture. Education occurs within a group that lives together and studies together as a group rather than individually. At the same time the charismatic nature of the teacher, and his availability to and closeness to the students, makes this an educational institution rather different from what is usually found in a bureaucratised educational institution in a developed Western society.

The issue of the importance of restraint is not confined to statements by Saleh, but is part of the dramatic structure of the film. One may ask the question what is the main conflict in the film: is it the conflict between Lukman and Datuk Langit, or is it the conflict between *guru* and *murid* (teacher and pupil) Saleh and Lukman, over Lukman's inability to control his involvement in conflictual situations and the way in which this conflicts with fundamental principles of the philosophy behind pencak silat? The connection insisted upon between *pencak silat* and Islamic submission and restraint introduces new concepts and de-emphasises the revenge plot around which the action is organised. Each time that Lukman infringes the interdiction on lack of self control (and hence goes against fundamental codes of *silat* as taught by Saleh), this becomes an issue which is taken up directly by Saleh in the group, and leads eventually to Lukman's expulsion from the group. The repeated conflict central to the film's narrative, which consumes much of the dramatic time of the film, and from which the audience may be expected to learn, is thus not the conflict between Lukman and Datuk Langit, but between Lukman's teacher of silat, Pak Saleh, and Lukman, over Lukman's lack of self control. In fact it should be considered that the plot contains a double conflict, and that the conflict with Datuk Langit is only pursued and resolved after the conflict with Saleh is resolved, once the wisdom achieved by learning self control has been attained.

Note that in *Harimau Tjampa*, for all the emphasis on teaching and instruction and on following the codes that the teacher enjoins on one in the intensely focused guru-murid relationship, the final movement is a movement away from the teacher and the teacher's influence; and a willingness on the part of the student to attempt something that the teacher cannot encompass within the framework of his teaching.

- Lukman Do you think I am afraid of facing Datuk Langit? No, Pak! I will not be afraid when I face Datuk Langit! Even if I am not expert in silat, still this is my way of being a man, Pak! ...
- Saleh Right then! You have now become a Tiger, “Harimau Tjampa”! You can do whatever you like. Whatever happens, you're the one who'll bear the consequences.

In this dialogue, the rebellion against the teacher seems to be proposed by the film as an important stage in the student's development and is recognised as such by the teacher even though it also provokes some anger in the teacher.

Recent scholarly research reports that training in silat has long been connected with a belief in tiger spirits. The “Tiger King” was regarded as a patron of silat students, and the aura surrounding this legend signified a range of moral values. At the final stage of silat training (*putus kaji*), skill was arrived at in a fight with the Tiger King. In Hindu-Buddhist times there was an emphasis on an inner force (*tenaga dalam*), learned from nature, and silat moves are often named after the movements of particular animals. With the coming of Islam there was a shift in emphasis and a new silat approach developed, known as *Silek Ulama* (silat of the wise man) which concentrated on the establishment of sustainable relations with fellow humans: enemies were not to be sought out.^{xi} The film *Harimau Tjampa* exemplifies most of these features of pencak silat.

It has been argued that *Harimau Tjampa* not only richly incorporates numerous traditional elements of Minangkabau regional culture, and some of the roles of Islam there, but appears to locate them in a specific historical nexus, that is understood by the film's scriptwriters in terms of changes to that culture brought about by colonialism, even as the colonial presence is not emphasised in the film.

In the next film under discussion, *Para Perintis Kemerdekaan*, set in the mid 1920s, the presence of colonialism and colonial authorities in Minangkabau society is directly addressed. In the pre-credit preface to *Para Perintis Kemerdekaan* there is a written statement that, in all the dark years of colonialism, the first ray of hope for the occupied countries of Asia was the Japanese defeat of Russia at Port Arthur in 1904, showing for the first time in modern memory that an Asian power could defeat a Western power. This is followed by a succinct and effective montage of black and white historical photos of the late colonial period, showing Sumatran leaders, but also Sukarno and other leaders in Java, accompanied by orchestral music strongly imbued with a Sumatran Islamic feeling.

Synopsis of Para Perintis Kemerdekaan

The film opens in Padang, the chief coastal town of West Sumatra in the mid 1920s, with a scene in which a revered Islamic preacher, Haji Jalaludin, is arrested and later sentenced to prison by Dutch colonial authorities for sedition in his sermons. A young woman from Padang, Halimah, who is sympathetic to the Haji's views, is present at the trial, as is Hamid, a student, whose late father was a Haji persecuted by the Dutch.

Oppressed by her husband who refuses to live with her or to support her, but will not divorce her, and receiving no help from a local religious authority in Padang (who in fact endorses and supports her husband's behaviour by imposing a *nusyuz*), Halimah seeks help from an Islamic preacher in a highland area, Haji Wali, at Padang Panjang, whose religious

school Hamid has joined as a student. Haji Wali's students are involved in underground anti-Dutch activities, and publish a newspaper, and some even are attracted by communism. Despite opposition from Dutch authorities, Haji Wali calls a meeting at his mosque in Padang Panjang to discuss the case of Halimah, and numerous religious leaders attend, despite the presence of the police outside the meeting. By this stage near to despair, Halimah in Padang goes to her village mosque to publicly renounce her religion (for such an act will dissolve her marriage), on the way encountering hostility from the villagers who have heard that she is going to do so. At the point at which she announces to those gathered in the mosque: "There is no God!" she experiences a mystical vision, and completes the statement thus: "There is no God, except Allah, and Muhammad is his Prophet!" At the very same moment the meeting convened by Haji Wali in Padang Panjang concludes, and pronounces in favour of Halimah's rights, declaring her marriage dissolved.

In seeking to define her own role within Islam, Halimah has entered a complex political world where issues of women's rights and religious reform are connected with anti-colonialism and social revolution. The film traces Halimah's gradual but thorough radicalisation, both as a women's emancipist (who organises meetings for village women despite opposition from her own village head) and as a nationalist political agitator. It also outlines an array of political forces emerging at the time, climaxing with the short-lived communist rebellion of 1927, which is ruthlessly put down by the Dutch, and which involves even some of Haji Wali's former students. The film ends with Halimah, now being tried for sedition, making a speech in the court room before being sent to prison.

While *Pioneers of Freedom* was scripted and directed by Sumatran born writer-director, Asrul Sani (1926-2004) it was based in turn on various works by the Minangkabau writer, Hamka. Scripted in 1977 and completed by 1980, the film has received very little distribution in Indonesia. According to Krishna Sen, *Para Perintis Kemerdekaan* was not allowed to be released until after the 1982 elections, because the film has as its backdrop early anti-Dutch nationalism inspired by Islam, and this was regarded as an image of Islam favourable to the election campaign of the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (Islamic Party).^{xii} It might be noted that the religious issues regarding the rights of women are very directly stated in the film, and that the communists depicted in the film, while seen as historically mis-timing their rebellion, are not seen in a particularly unsympathetic light, though they are represented as misguided, and most of Haji Wali's students pointedly refuse to take part in the rebellion.^{xiii}

Comparison with Sources

The credits to the film state it is based on *Dibawah Lindungan Kaaba* ("Under the Protection of the Kaaba"), an early novel by Hamka published in 1938.^{xiv} This novel narrates the story of the love of a young Minangkabau man of insufficient means (Hamid), for a neighbouring girl from a moderately well off family (Zainub), a love which is never fulfilled and in effect results in the death of both. Hamid goes to Mecca to avoid interfering with the hopes of the girl's parents regarding her marriage, and she pines away, and he dies in Mecca on hearing of her death. Only two character names (Hamid and Zainub) and about one scene from this novel are taken over into the film, although the screenplay of the film, archived at Sinematek Indonesia in Jakarta, was given the title "Dibawah Lindungan Ka'bah". In fact the film is really based on four pages from a section entitled 'Nikah Si Kani' (Kani's Marriage) in Hamka's *Ayahku*, the lengthy biography of his father, the West Sumatran Islamic teacher Dr

H. Abdulkarim Amrullah (known by his students at Padang Panjang as Haji Rasul), a biography first published in 1950.^{xv} In a Foreword to his screenplay, Asrul Sani relates how by chance he met Hamka in the Cultural Centre in Jakarta (TIM) some years before he wrote the screenplay, and how he suggested to Hamka that perhaps he might rewrite his novel *Dibawah Lindungan Kaaba*, for the background to the story and events that occurred in West Sumatra in that period were much more important than its central story.^{xvi} Commenting that Hamka smilingly replied that it was up to he (Asrul Sani) to rewrite the novel, Asrul then goes on to say that there was much in Hamka's *Ayahku* he had used in writing the film's scenario. Indeed not only does the screenplay differ greatly from the original novel, but the completed film differs considerably from the screenplay, both of them showing an increasing interest in telling the story of the annulment of the marriage of Kani/Halimah, which is adapted from *Ayahku*, and presenting a broad portrait of the relationship between Islam and anti-colonial politics in West Sumatra in the 1920s.

This "Nikah si Kani" section of *Ayahku* deals with how his father, the Islamic teacher Haji Rasul, by that time a respected religious teacher in Padang Panjang, intervened in the case of a young woman, Kani, who had been subjected to the Nusyuv by a local *Kadi* (Islamic judge), at the request of her husband, and of interventions he made in similar cases.^{xvii} The Nusyuv was a judgement passed on a woman at the request of her husband, making it legal for her husband not to support her financially nor to live with her, but still giving him power over her and not requiring him to divorce her and so set her free. In relating this incident in his father's life, Hamka backgrounds the general situation thus:

Frequently women would become quite crazed as a result of a judgement such as this and would become resolute and would go to the mosque and would declare to the assembled congregation that at that moment they were renouncing Islam, did not believe in God, nor in the prophet, and that the *Koran* was a lie. For by taking this path of renouncing their religion, this in itself would cut their marriage bonds with their husbands. There were even uneducated women who inevitably would lose their way, as a result of years of being married without any meaning to the marriage. They would then marry with another man, but were always harassed by their first husband, who still wanted power over them but would not support them. And the *Kadi* always decided in favour of such men. What was their intention in making a plaything of the power of religion, if not from a lust for revenge and a feeling of hatred—perhaps sadism?^{xviii} [my translation]

While reputed to be very strict, and even disputative on many matters involving women (for example women's clothing) Haji Rasul regarded the issue of the power that religion gave men over women in cases such as Kani's as a serious problem in the society. He eventually formulated a clause in marriage contracts which enabled women to buy their way out of unsatisfactory marriages, and this clause, so the biography claims, was subsequently adopted by the whole district in which he had influence.^{xix} As we see from the above quotation, the narrative of the original incident speaks not only of "a woman", but of women frequently going to the mosque to renounce their religion. So the extraordinary scene in the film of Halimah going to the mosque to renounce her religion, was not exceptional in the first half of the twentieth century in Sumatra, and indeed was often carried through fully, without the woman quickly then withdrawing her disavowal of her religion, as Halimah does.^{xx}

Mufakat and Islamic Reform in the Film

One further difference between the film and the biography is that the story of Kani is a story of a woman obtaining personal advice from her religious advisor, Haji Rasul, who appears to resolve the matter quickly, after having put to Kani a number of searching questions. But while Halimah in the film gets advice initially from Haji Wali, effectively a surrogate for Haji Rasul, in the film Haji Wali affirms to her, from their very first meeting, that ultimately the decision waits upon a meeting of a number of local progressive Islamic teachers. In the film more than a dozen ulamas participate in this meeting, and the process by which the annulment is arrived at appears to be a process of group consultation which involves re-reading the Koran and arriving at a consensus. Hence this meeting takes the form of a *mufakat*, a traditional form of decision making found both in Islam and in the village councils of West Sumatra.^{xxi} This suggests that the film's director is more interested in celebrating such processes of consultation, rather than identifying Haji Rasul and recreating strictly his son's account of the incident, wherein Haji Rasul simply personally counselled Kani. It is in the delay before this *mufakat* is convened that the film creates the tension and crisis for Halimah, leading to her attempted renunciation of Islam at the mosque in Padang. Using parallel montage, the film intercuts this scene of attempted disavowal in the mosque in Padang with a scene of the *mufakat* taking place at the same time in the mosque at Padang Panjang.

Other differences are that in the film the Dutch are shown as siding with the older generation of Islamic teachers and with the Kadi supporting the husband. The meeting of the progressive religious teachers at the mosque in Padang Panjang is depicted as being regarded by the Dutch as potentially subversive, and the mosque is shown surrounded by native police. In Hamka's biography, since there is no public meeting, there are no police or military involved. However it is reported in the biography that a Dutch advisor on religion in the region, Dr Hazeu, engaged with Haji Rasul subsequent to his decision to dissolve Kani's marriage becoming widely known. Here Hazeu is reported to have argued that on the basis of books such as *Fat'hui Qarib*, and the Shariah book, *Badjuri* (both books referred to in the film by Haji Wali's opponent, Haji Makmur), Haji Rasul's decision was wrong. Haji Rasul replied to Hazeu in a small open letter, using as his source the Koran, and the Hadith, hence rejecting later texts from Shariah law in favour of the earliest Islamic texts, written prior to the codification of Shariah law. So *Pioneers of Freedom* may be seen as celebrating the values of the Islamic reform movements in West Sumatra in the early part of this century, a reform movement which began in the early 1900's and prioritised a return to the Koran and early Islamic texts and their reasoned interpretation. Taufik describes this movement:

By the second decade of the century these young religious scholars, ulama, began to denounce traditional religious experts for relying in their judgements solely on *naql*, the established religious authorities. They argued that belief (iman) based on *taqlid* (unquestioning acceptance of religious teachers) was not valid, because the real sources of law were the Koran and hadith, the Prophetic Traditions. With this appeal to return to the original sources, the young reformers propagated *idjtihad*, the striving to attain truth by using akal (reasoning)... The purification of religion from deviations and the rejection of taqlid were seen as the first steps towards the rediscovery of the real ethics of religion... to prepare the ground for social change...^{xxii}

In the film, Haji Wali, played by Asrul Sani himself, begins the meeting of the progressive religious teachers regarding Halimah's rights, by quoting the opening lines of Verse 223 from "Al Baqarah", the second Surah (chapter) of the *Koran*: "Women are your fields. Go then

into your fields, as you please. Do good works and fear God". However while the film emphasises the momentousness of the issue of Halimah's rights, it does not show the discussion of the ulamas at the meeting, nor the actual grounds on which the decision in Halimah's favour is reached.

These two films made about late colonial West Sumatra in many respects present differing but complementary portraits in this culturally unique and intellectually vital region within Indonesia. As a film made shortly after Indonesia achieved independence, *Harimau Tjampa* was intended to open up the possibility of an Indonesian regional culture being the subject of an Indonesian feature film. Its emphasis is therefore on the core location of the regional culture, the village nagari, and the traditions that could still be found there of interest to audiences at the time. *Harimau Tjampa* emphasises traditional martial arts (and posits a close connection between them and Islam), traditional music and dance, and even frequently foregrounds the distinctive uses of language in the region: pantun and pepetah adat. It also provides the viewer with remarkable documentary images from this society as it was 1953, and dramatises, in its unusual doubly conflicted narrative structure, discourses about restraint in conflict, which might be seen as highly relevant to cultural values of some groups within that society, as well as important throughout Indonesia. To some extent a-historical, though set in the 1930s, implicitly in the film there is also a scepticism with regard to the traditional culture in the context of partial collaboration by village authorities with the colonial government. *Para Perintis Kemerdekaan*, with its theme of women's emancipation, located in the interaction between religious teachers (and their radical students) and conservative village communities at a particular historical moment of increasing social turmoil in the 1920s, can be seen as highly relevant historically. This historical relevance pertains not only to its portrait of the past but to the ways such a portrait constituted an intervention in the late 1970s. The film deepens a viewers' sense of the complexity of West Sumatran society, not only for its brief glimpse into aspects of the 1927 communist rising, but because it is prepared to show the interrelationship between Islam, Communism and Nationalism in West Sumatra in the 1920s, and moreover, to show this even in 1980, when Communism was anathema to the Suharto regime. Most importantly, Asrul Sani's film presents a strikingly lucid portrait of the resistance of many Islamic peoples to the presence of colonial occupiers, at the same time equally showing deep divisions within Islam over the treatment of women and over collaboration with the Dutch. While stressing the indignities to which women can be subjected, and their resistance to this, neither *Harimau Tjampa* nor *Para Perintis Kemerdekaan* explores in any detail the matrilineal aspects of Minangkabau society, which is there at best as background only.

FILMOGRAPHY

Harimau Tjampa ("Tiger from Tjampa", 1953). Original story by Nazic Naib, with adaptations by Alwi Dahlan. Screenplay, production and direction by Djayakusuma for Usmar Ismail's company, PT Perfini, 93 minutes. 35mm prints held by Sinematek Indonesia, Jakarta. Distributed on DVD by Between Three Worlds DVD, Monash Asia Institute.

Website: www.monash.edu.au/mai/films.

Para Perintis Kemerdekaan ("Pioneers of Freedom", 1978-1980). Written and Directed by Asrul Sani for PT Tati and Sons Jaya Film, 120 minutes. 35mm print held by Sinematek Indonesia, Jakarta.

ⁱ Taufik Abdullah, "Modernization in the Minangkabau World: West Sumatra in the Early Decades of the Twentieth Century," in *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Claire Holt, Benedict Anderson, and James Siegel (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 194.

ⁱⁱ Taufik Abdullah, "Adat and Islam: An Examination of Conflict in Minangkabau," *Indonesia*, no. 2 (1966), p. 3.

ⁱⁱⁱ Abdullah, "Modernization in the Minangkabau World: West Sumatra in the Early Decades of the Twentieth Century," p. 200.

^{iv} *Ibid.*, p.207. See also Joel Kahn, "'Tradition', Matriliney and Change among the Minangkabau of Indonesia," *Bijdragen to De Taal Land en Volkenkunde*, v. 132, (1976), pp. 64-95.

^v Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2002).

^{vi} Djayakusuma was the director of two other films especially notable for their interest in incorporating cultural traditions in film. In 1958 he made the "Eastern/Western", *Tjambuk Api* ("Whipfire"), a regional film set in East Java celebrating traditions of East Javanese whip fighting. This film was deliberately eclectic in its incorporation of cultural elements from a number of regions of Indonesia, and in its foregrounding of a variety of international styles, for example in its use of songs emulating a Bombay musical, and its conflictual *High Noon* like plot, climaxing with a protracted duel with whips. According to director Ami Priyono, Djayakusuma's film was intended to exemplify the Indonesian national motto of "Unity in Diversity". In 1960 Djayakusuma made *Lahirnya Gatotkaca* ("The Birth of Gatotkaca"), an experiment in filming a *wayang wong* episode from the *Mahabharata*, as a fluid film drama, using modern spoken Indonesian, but using *wayang wong* costuming. A commemorative book on Djayakusuma's life and works was published by colleagues from the Jakarta Institute of the Arts in 1995. See Satyagraha Hoerip, *Dua Dunia Dalam Djadoeg Djayakusuma* (Jakarta: Dinas Kebudayaan Jakarta bekerjasama dengan Institut Kesenian Jakarta, 1995).

^{vii} Dances performed in the wedding scene include the handkerchief dance and the parasol dance.

^{viii} Abdullah, "Modernization in the Minangkabau World: West Sumatra in the Early Decades of the Twentieth Century," p. 197.

^{ix} *Ibid.*, p. 193.

^x *Ibid.*, p. 207.

^{xi} Bart Barendregt, "Written By the Hand of Allah: Pencak Silat of Minangkabau, West Sumatra," *Oideion: the Performing Arts World Wide*, no. 2 (1995). In recounting foundation legends of the Minangkabau, de Jossellin de Jong mentions that the legendary founding king of Minangkabau, Sri Maharadjo Diradjo, "contracted marriages with creatures from different parts of Minangkabau, and that the present inhabitants are the offspring of that couple. When the first king married a tigress (*harimau Tjampu*), the offspring became the inhabitants of

Agam". See P.D. de Josselin de Jong, *Minangkabau and Negeri Sembilan: Socio-Political Structure in Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), p. 99.

^{xii} Krishna Sen, "Indonesian Cinema 1965-1982: Perceptions of Society and History", PhD thesis (Monash University, 1987), p. 314.

^{xiii} For a detailed account of the communist rising in West Sumatra in 1927, see Audrey R. Kahin, "The 1927 Communist Uprising in Sumatra: A Reappraisal," *Indonesia*, no. 62 (1996).

^{xiv} Hamka (H.A.M.K. Amru'llah), *Di Bawah Lindungan Kabaah* (Bukittinggi and Djakarta: N.V. Nusantara, 1961).

^{xv} Hamka, *Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah Dan Perdjjuangan Kaum Agama Di Sumatra*, Second ed. (Jakarta: Umminda, 1982).

^{xvi} Asrul Sani, "Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah," in the collection of "Skenario" of Indonesian films, in the library of Sinematek Indonesia (Jakarta: 1977).

^{xvii} The "Nikah si Kani" section is to be found on pages 121-129 of the 1982 edition of Hamka's *Ayahku*.

^{xviii} *Ibid.*, p. 122.

^{xix} *Ibid.*, p. 125

^{xx} A recent detailed account of the life of Haji Rasul life is to be found in Murni Djamal, "The Origin of the Islamic Reform Movement in Minangkabau: Life and Thought of Abdul Karim Abdullah," *Studia Islamika* 5, no. 3 (1998). An account of the whole context of Indonesian Islamic modernism, including its West Sumatran pioneers, is found in Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1973).

^{xxi} A detailed account of the process of mufakat as practiced in village councils, including its use of *akal*, is found in Abdullah, "Modernization in the Minangkabau World: West Sumatra in the Early Decades of the Twentieth Century," pp. 190-192.

^{xxii} *Ibid.*, pp. 225-226.