

**A CULTURAL ECONOMY OF THE CONTEMPORARY  
INDONESIAN FILM INDUSTRY**

THOMAS ALEXANDER CHARLES BARKER

*(M.Phil., University of Birmingham, UK)*

**A THESIS SUBMITTED  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE**

**2011**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

(in alphabetical order)

Adek	Lilyana Budianto
Agnes Christina	Lim Weida
Alexiel Au Yong	Lisabona Rachman
Ananta Arifin	Lou Janssen Dangzalan
Antariksa	Melissa Esguerra
Arie Setyaningrum	Mira Lesmana
Astrid Candrasari	Monty Tiwa
Bintang Marisi Margaretha	Muhammad Fadli Bin Mohammed
Budi Irawanto	Fawzi
Charlotte Setijadi-Dunn	Nadi Tofighian
Christian Chua	Ng Hui Hsien
Chua Beng Huat, Prof.	Nia Nur'aini (Sinematek)
Dave Stanford	Nicholas Sim Hee Juat
Dharini Ravi	Nuraiani Juliastuti
Ekky Imanjaya	Olivia Pisani
Emlyn Hagen	Pak-Juan Koe
Enrique Nino Panaligan Leviste	Pamela Devan
Gaik Cheng Khoo	Paul Antoni Bonetti
Gauri Bharat	Renata Sadjad
Gek Li San	Riri Riza
Gula Laksmi Sapthari	Rusdi Mathari
Guo-Juin Hong	Sandra Manickam
Harriet Barker	Sealing Cheng
Harry Dagoë Suharyadi	Seno Gumira Ajidarma
Hew Wai Weng	Seuty Sabur
Hoon Chang Yau	Shihan Fang
Ika Arika	Sohyun Park
Indah Haryani	Sophie Williams
Inez Mahony	Tito Imanda
Ingrid Hoofd	Tong Chee Kiong
Intan Paramaditha	Tracy Wright Webster
Jayeel Serrano Cornelio	Ucu Augustin
Jeanine Tan	Vedi R. Hadiz
Jennifer Lindsay	Veronika Kusuma
Joost Coté	Vissia Ita Yulianto
Katinka van Heeren	Widya Narsi
Kean Bon	Yulida Pangastuti
Leong Wai Teng	Zdravko Trivic

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Helen and Robert Barker.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	III
SUMMARY .....	V
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES .....	VI
1. A CULTURAL ECONOMY OF THE CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN FILM INDUSTRY .....	1
1.1 <i>Reformasi</i> and the Presumption of Change .....	1
1.2 Framing the New Order .....	7
1.3 Film as Pop Culture .....	12
1.4 Central Argument: A New Cultural Economy of Indonesian Film .....	22
1.5 Methods .....	26
1.6 Outline of Thesis .....	28
2. NATIONAL CINEMA AND THE NEW ORDER .....	32
2.1 Introduction .....	32
2.2 Indonesian Nationalism .....	34
2.3 <i>Film Nasional</i> as National Cinema .....	36
2.4 History of Film as <i>Film Nasional</i> .....	39
2.5 <i>Film Nasional</i> as Legitimate Culture .....	49
2.6 <i>Film Nasional</i> and the New Order .....	53
2.7 <i>Film Nasional</i> and Creative Freedom .....	62
2.8 An Industry in Decline .....	67
2.9 The Continuing Evocation of Nationalism .....	76
3. A NEW GENERATION OF FILMMAKERS .....	79
3.1 Introduction .....	79
3.2 Transition from Garin Nugroho .....	80
3.3 The <i>Kuldesak</i> Project as Breakthrough .....	84
3.4 The Collapse of Old Production Models .....	93
3.5 Making Films by Being Indie .....	96
3.6 Digital Filmmakers .....	101
3.7 Organized Independence and the Experiment of i-sinema .....	104
3.8 New Generation of Middle Class Filmmakers .....	107
3.9 Conclusion: A New Generation and its Past .....	115
4. <i>REFORMASI</i> AND CHALLENGING THE STATE .....	117
4.1 Film and <i>Reformasi</i> .....	117
4.2: The LSF Post-1998: Redefining Its Role .....	121
4.3 The Banning of <i>Dendam Pocong</i> .....	134
4.4 Challenging the Film Censorship Board .....	139
4.5 A Different Challenge .....	146
4.6 The Irony of <i>Reformasi</i> .....	148
4.7 Disorganization Amongst the Ranks .....	151
4.8 Conclusion: <i>Reformasi</i> .....	154
5. HISTORY, VIOLENCE AND HORROR FILMS .....	157
5.1 Violence, the New Order and Film .....	157
5.2 Horror as Key Genre of New Order Film .....	160
5.3 New Horror post-1998 .....	165

5.4 Teenagers as Agents of Disturbance.....	172
5.5 Contemporary Horror as Allegory of Past Violence.....	177
5.6 Using Horror to Elucidate Ethnic Violence.....	182
5.6.1 <i>Lentera Merah</i> (2006) and the History of 1965.....	185
5.6.2 <i>Kuntilanak</i> and the Indonesian Elite.....	188
5.7 Breaking with History.....	191
6. POP ISLAM.....	194
6.1 Introduction: Film and Islam.....	194
6.2 The Spectacle of <i>Ayat-Ayat Cinta</i> .....	195
6.3 History of Islam and Film.....	206
6.4 Two Post-1998 Islamic Films.....	214
6.5 <i>Ketika Cinta Bertasbih</i> and Tarbiyah.....	217
6.6 Expanding Islam: Hanung Bramantyo and <i>Laskar Pelangi</i> .....	224
6.7 Conclusion: Islam and Beyond.....	230
7. FROM INDIE TO BIG CAPITAL: THE CURRENT CONFIGURATION OF THE FILM INDUSTRY.....	232
7.1 Rebuilding an Industry.....	232
7.2 Seeking Private Capital.....	235
7.3 The Old Production Companies.....	243
7.4 Outsourcing Production.....	249
7.5 Oligopoly of the Old Producers.....	256
7.6 The Old Producers Since 1998.....	261
7.7 The Arrival of Blitz Megaplex.....	269
7.8 Conclusion.....	275
8. CONCLUSION: THE PAST IN THE PRESENT.....	277
8.1 Film and its Cultural Economy.....	277
8.2 Historicizing Pop Culture.....	280
8.3 From State to Market.....	282
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	286
Newspaper and Online Sources.....	313
APPENDIX.....	316
Biographies of Prominent Post-1998 Filmmakers.....	316
Details of Indonesian Films 1998-2010.....	323
List of Interviews Conducted.....	351

## SUMMARY

Following the end of the New Order (1967-1998) and the subsequent period of *reformasi*, Indonesian feature films revitalized as a mode of cultural expression and as a culture industry. By 2008, filmmaking was dominated by a new generation of filmmakers and their films were prevalent in Indonesia's cinemas. Whereas pre-1998 filmmaking was subject to state control and operated through a cultural economy of national cinema, after 1998 film integrated with prevailing modes of pop culture. As the first major study of the Indonesian film industry since 1998, this thesis asks: How did filmmaking and the film industry revitalize? What are the consequences of film becoming pop culture? By deploying a cultural economy approach, this thesis analyses the sociology of film production in combination with a cultural analysis of a selection of films, to answer the above questions. In doing so, it shows that current film production remains structured by the past and is subject to the logic of pop culture.

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1. Audience Data for Indonesian Films 2000-2007 .....	21
Figure 1. Annual Film Production, 1926-2010 .....	3
Figure 2. Location of Film Companies in Jakarta.....	112
Figure 3. Schematic of New Order Horror Films .....	165
Figure 4. The Tripartite in Contemporary Horror Films.....	176
Figure 5. Promotional Poster for ‘Oh Allah! I Have Come’ .....	212
Figure 6. Production Ratio, Independent and Large Production Companies .....	234
Figure 7. Sudwikatmono’s Network in the New Order Film Industry .....	259

# 1.

## A CULTURAL ECONOMY OF THE CONTEMPORARY INDONESIAN FILM INDUSTRY

Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past.

- Karl Marx (1852)

### 1.1 *Reformasi* and the Presumption of Change

From the outside, feature film in Indonesia seems to have been one of the success stories of *reformasi*, the period of reform and democratization that followed the end of the New Order. In the decade between President Soeharto's resignation in May 1998 and today (2010) the film industry has seen exponential growth and expansion. From a position in the late 1990s of near collapse, when less than a dozen films were produced, to a situation today where more films are released than the cinemas can handle (about one hundred titles a year, or two a week), the industry has recovered and grown in a spectacular way. Moreover, local films now regularly attract audiences in excess of 500,000,<sup>1</sup> a figure rarely recorded even in the industry's heyday of the 1970s and 1980s. Box office records have also been progressively broken, with audience figures previously thought impossible: *Petualangan Sherina* (1999, 'Sherina's Adventure'), 1.4 million; *Ada*

---

<sup>1</sup> For audience figures, see the website 'Film Indonesia' <http://filmindonesia.or.id/>, accessed 29 June 2011.

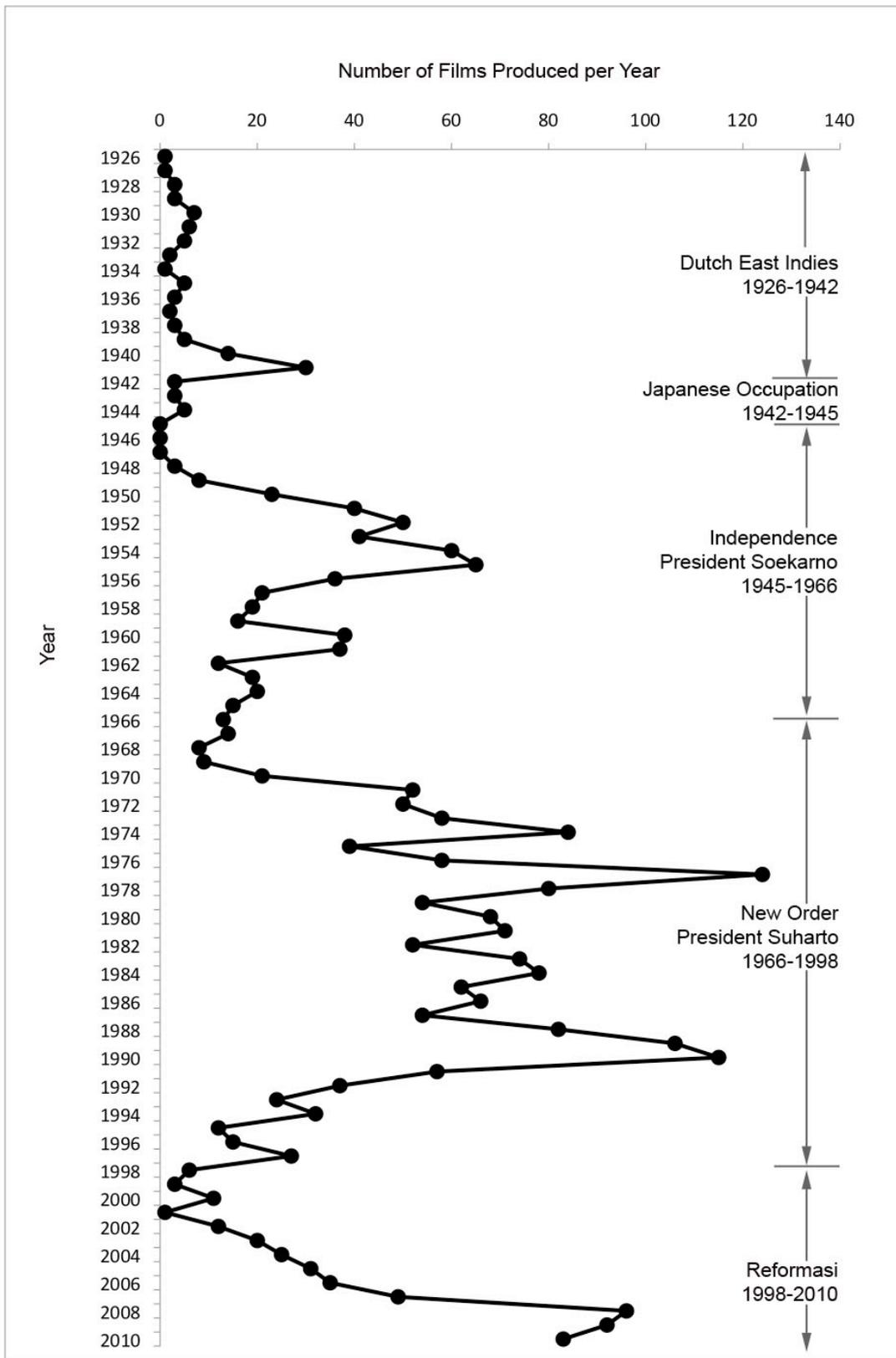
*Apa Dengan Cinta?* (2002, 'What's Up With Love?'), 2.2 million; *Eiffel... I'm in Love* (2003), 3 million; *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* (2008, 'Verses of Love'), 3.8 million; *Laskar Pelangi* (2008, 'Rainbow Troops'), 4.6 million. Ukus Kuswara, the current Director of Film, claimed that the old motto of the local film industry - to be 'master in its own house' (*tuan di rumah sendiri*) - has been fulfilled.<sup>2</sup>

Arguably *reformasi* made this possible. Old regulatory and institutional structures of the New Order were swept away or rendered impotent, along with the last vestiges of its film industry, allowing new production and import companies to mushroom, and new directors and scriptwriters to make films. New creative freedoms were quickly embraced by young filmmakers. *Kuldesak* (1998, 'Cul-de-sac') was released by debutant and relatively unknown film directors, inaugurating the emergence of a 'new generation' of filmmakers whose style and approach were different to anything before them. The Jakarta International Film Festival (Jiffest) began in 1999, alongside a myriad of smaller festivals catering to diverse communities, bringing international art films to cinemas for the first time. New filmmakers entered the industry, beginning an explosion of new films offering new variety and forms of stories to audiences.

---

<sup>2</sup> '10 Tahun Kebangkitan Film Nasional', Presentation given at JIFFEST, Taman Ismail Marzuki, 9 December 2008.

Figure 1. Annual Film Production, 1926-2010<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Data compiled from a variety of sources including Kristanto (2007) and Ardan (2004: 301-302).

The revitalization of the film industry from its nadir in the late 1990s to the situation today was not a linear process, and can be broken into three substantial phases. From 1998 to the 2002 release of *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* there was substantial flux. Production was relatively ad hoc, with the last remnants of the New Order industry and young filmmakers experimenting in the freedom of *reformasi*. This was a period of political euphoria following the end of the New Order, coupled with financial difficulty due to the Asian Financial Crisis. From 2002 to 2006 was the period of re-entry for the old producers especially following the success of *Eiffel... I'm in Love* (2003) and with it a period of adjustment for young creative filmmakers as they looked to establish themselves as dedicated filmmakers. From 2006 onwards, production was increasingly routinized, and a certain amount of stability and consistency had been introduced into film production. Concomitantly there was an increase in audiences and the expansion of the cinema business with the entry of new operator Blitz Megaplex in 2008.

By 2008 however, the optimism and euphoria that had accompanied *reformasi* had largely evaporated, to be replaced by a general malaise.<sup>4</sup> A conservative backlash against the 'excessive' freedoms of post-*reformasi* was in motion, marked by the enactment of an anti-pornography law in 2008 and emboldened conservative critics. The belief that *reformasi* would transform the conditions of film production proved to be premature or, at worst, wrong, as old interests, old producers and modes of production came to dominate once again. Young filmmakers have grown increasingly disillusioned with the return to commercialism, an emphasis on the bottom line and the perceived need to produce

---

<sup>4</sup> See for example 'Nasib Perfilman Nasional Dikhawatirkan Kembali ke Zaman Orba Jumat', *Kompas*, 24 July 2009.

simplified, dumbed down films in order to cater to a generalized audience (Anwar, 2010). The government has been roundly criticized for being a hindrance, not a help. The post New Order film industry is more complicated than they had foreseen from the euphoria of *reformasi*.

This thesis argues that the post-*reformasi* film industry, and in particular the ‘new generation’ of filmmakers, are engaged in a process of negotiation with history or with the past. I do this by refocusing attention to the popular and how it reflects cultural change following the end of the New Order in 1998. The political transition of 1998 was meant to mark the end of the old film industry and its politics through a process of replacement and renewal, and to have allowed a new generation of filmmakers to work in an environment of media freedom. Not only does the past continually reappear in contemporary film practice, historical processes and actors continue to structure the present, creating a situation far more complex than was imagined. These are not just vestiges of the New Order, as this thesis will show; some of these can be traced back over a century to when film first arrived in what was then the Dutch East Indies. Despite the profound political, social and cultural change of the twentieth century, the importance of historical continuity cannot be overlooked. This thesis shows how the past is reconfigured in the present, despite the substantial changes *reformasi* brought to filmmaking in Indonesia.

Of course it is a truism, and somewhat banal, to say that the past structures the present. This observation is particularly important as Indonesia emerged from thirty-two years of authoritarian rule under which history was systematically rewritten and reinterpreted to fit the ideological needs of the regime. A recent collection of essays addresses the question of the past in the present with a focus

on historical memory (Zurbuchen, 2005). More than just remembering the past, social structures continue to persist even after the upheaval of *reformasi*. Similarly, in explanations of how the New Order rose to power in 1965-1966, Levine has observed that:

the approach which asks “what went wrong?” is essentially unhistorical in that it denies the unity of the present with the past in Indonesia. By fixing our attention on the most recent years, it obscures the source of today’s problems in the broader historical development (Levine, 1969: 14).

Amongst academics and outside observers there was a tendency to be swept up in the commonly held narrative of *reformasi*, that democratization, decentralization and reform meant a break with the past. Instead, “the social, political and economic legacy of the New Order [...] will prove more enduring and will continue to influence Indonesia’s trajectory in the foreseeable future” (Hadiz, 2000: 11).

History’s reappearance is no less apparent in the film industry, where many of the debates, concerns and issues in the contemporary film industry in fact have historical precedent. In 1999, when young producer Mira Lesmana (b. 1964) attended a discussion at the national film development council (BP2N) following the box-office success of her film *Petualangan Sherina* (1999), she was greeted by a banner proclaiming ‘*Filem Indonesia Sudah Bangkit! Selamat Datang*’ (Indonesian Film Has Arisen! Welcome!). Her response was not joyous but rather suspicious:

And I’m like what is this? We are then beginning to learn about all the politics, all the people, all the different interests that they have. And I thought ‘my god it is messy, it is very, very messy.’ (Mira Lesmana, personal interview, 30 January 2009)

Political reform did not necessarily mean institutional reform, and the inertia of the New Order film institutions and their particular means of understanding the world remains strong. Young filmmakers Mira Lesmana and Riri Riza (b. 1970) saw themselves outside these politics and the legacy of Indonesian film, but by virtue of their success were now being claimed by it.

## 1.2 Framing the New Order

In 1994, Krishna Sen published *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order*, the most substantial work on Indonesian film to date. In it she argues that the state is the defining institution of Indonesian film, both in terms of institutional structure and on-screen content. Sen's argument is that the New Order state successfully engineered the conditions of film production by bringing all film production under its purview, and in some cases direct control. This enabled it to impose its ideology onto film narratives, in particular what she identifies as a 'return to order' narrative arc. Typically, film narratives began with a situation of normalcy and order, which would then be disrupted by an agent of disorder, with order restored in the end by an agent of the state. This, she argues, mirrored the state's desire to be seen as the harbinger of order and stability, a direct allusion to how the New Order was forged as the antithesis to the chaotic political and economic conditions of the 1960s. The subtitle of her book (*Framing the New Order*) indicates that it is also a critical political tract written to expose the New Order for what it is, namely an authoritarian regime.

Whilst Sen's argument certainly rings true – her thesis was placed off-limits in the national film library (Sinematek) and an Indonesian translation of her book only became available in 2010 – it is unable to explain film after the New

Order. By focusing on the New Order state, Sen inadvertently reduces the study of Indonesian film to a study of the Indonesian state. With the New Order state now gone, not only do the precepts of her thesis become untenable, it is difficult to know what other non-state forces or actors – social, cultural or economic – influence film production in Indonesia. These remain obscured to some extent by her emphasis on the state. Following the logic of Sen’s argument, once the New Order state comes to an end, as it did in May 1998, films must therefore be something other than what they were.

Ariel Heryanto (2008), who is no stranger to the New Order state,<sup>5</sup> sees pop culture, and thus film, as the outcome of competing ideological streams in Indonesian social and political life. He takes the recent example of *dangdut* singer Inul Daratista (b. 1979), who became infamous in 2003 because of her *ngebor* (drill) dance in which she provocatively gyrated like a drill. *Dangdut* is a popular style of music, associated with the lower class, but has since the 1990s been integrated into the media industry, particularly television.<sup>6</sup> In analyzing both Inul and the responses she generated, Heryanto argues that there are four broad ideological streams competing for hegemony: the modernizing forces of Marxism, Islam, and liberalism, and traditional Javanism. “The ongoing tension between these forces,” he writes, “permeates nearly all aspects of Indonesian life all the time” (2008: 11). Yet it means that cultural production, or more importantly cultural agency, is ancillary to the playing out of these trans-historical ideologies. Heryanto’s conceptualization cannot account for the sociological basis of cultural production. Islam, as a cultural force, is far more complicated than Heryanto

---

<sup>5</sup> Heryanto (1999; 2005).

<sup>6</sup> *Dangdut* is a distinctly Indonesian form of popular music, often characterized by the inclusion of the *suling* (a kind of flute). As a genre, it draws on Indian rhythms, as well older forms of local music such as *keroncong* and *orke Melayu*, themselves influenced by various other genres from around the world. See Weintraub (2010).

suggests given that there are a variety of streams, organizations and interpretations that compete for adherents and influence (see for example Winet, 2009). Moreover, his desire to see Marxism return as a viable cultural force in Indonesia, is more a reflection of his own politics than an accurate reflection of Marxism's current position in Indonesia, i.e. virtually non-existent.

Local scholarship on the film industry is still nascent,<sup>7</sup> especially work that tries to understand the vicissitudes of the current film industry. Outside the numerous government-commissioned studies,<sup>8</sup> academic Novi Kurnia (2008) has written the most thorough study of the contemporary film industry. Considering Indonesian film from within a world-systems framework, she argues that the rise and fall of Indonesian film cannot be considered separate to the global film industry, especially given the global supremacy of Hollywood and its cultural hegemony. By taking a comparative approach, her study asks why the Indonesian film industry in economic terms has not been as successful as other Asian industries such as South Korea and Thailand. Whilst the global film industry has certainly shaped the Indonesian film industry throughout its history, her study ultimately fails to say what the Indonesian film industry is, rather than simply what it is not. Moreover her study privileges economic factors and cannot account for how Indonesian films attract Indonesian audiences, especially in the current revival. What is thus needed is a framework that is grounded in the social conditions of cultural production and that is attentive to both its cultural and economic dimensions.

---

<sup>7</sup> One possible author of such a study is academic and director Nan Achnas. She says in a recent interview that she has been planning such a study for the past decade. Webb, Cynthia, 'Nan Achnas: A life immersed in cinema' *The Jakarta Post*, 26 October 2010.

<sup>8</sup> See Kurnia et al. (2004) and Departemen Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Republik Indonesia (2008).

More recent work has largely focused on textual representation, and primarily on how hitherto repressed voices have been re-voiced in post-1998 films. Given that representations of Chineseness were suppressed under the New Order, there has been an emphasis on the ethnic Chinese and their reappearance in recent films made by socially aware, middle class filmmakers (Sen, 2006; Heryanto, 2008). Films such as Nia Dinata's *Ca Bau Kan* (2003, 'The Courtesan') and Riri Riza's *Gie* (2005) are used to explore the reappearance of the Chinese. Both Sen and Heryanto note that the era of *reformasi* has allowed these previously suppressed characters and images to be re-presented on screen, even if ultimately they do not escape the prevailing stereotypes of Chineseness. As Charlotte Setijadi-Dunn rightly points out (2009), the studies of Heryanto and Sen also analytically perpetuate the native-Chinese dichotomy of New Order politics, and can ultimately never escape this reductionist framing. She argues that only art filmmakers working outside the feature film industry and the mainstream exhibition circuit have been able to challenge these assumptions and re-imagine what it means to be Chinese in post-New Order Indonesia.

Further work has been advanced by Marshall Clark (2004; 2008), who looks at representations of masculinity in recent films. His study of *Kuldesak* shows how the dominant masculinist ideology of the New Order was challenged and subverted by the film's anti-hero male characters. As is the case with the reappearance of the ethnic Chinese in film, post New Order film reflects the liberal social change engendered by *reformasi*. Clark develops these themes further in his study of *Mengejar Matahari* (2004, 'Chasing the Sun') and *9 Naga* (2006, '9 Dragons'), two films by young director Rudy Soedjarwo (b. 1971). Although these films are important additions to understanding developments in

film, it is only a narrow selection and it is difficult to extrapolate these observations to the film industry as a complex whole. Individual film texts are important, but ultimately only provide a narrow window as individual cases may not be generalisable. Moreover, any conclusions drawn may reflect the politics of an individual director rather than a broader shift in cultural production generally. Therefore, like Sen (1994), I watched as many post-1998 films as possible in order to be able to speak from a broader perspective.

Studies of film and film industries often fall into the trap of limited scope by selecting films for their ability to speak of things that interest academics, rather than what is meaningful for a popular audience. By and large, academic studies are orientated towards ‘art’ films or the canon, overlooking films that are popular (Zhang, 2009). Barbara Hatley in her 1999 study of theatre in *reformasi* Indonesia considers theatre solely for its ability to criticize the regime and the political establishment. When she mentions ‘mainstream popular culture, as consumed by teenagers and older people alike,’ she derides it for being ‘blandly conformist in style’ (1999: 270). It is as if popular culture, including film, is *a priori* unable to articulate social concerns, and automatically counterpoises oppositional theatre on a simple resistance-compliance political axis. This tells us more about the academic writing, than it does about popular culture itself.

Hatley’s approach remains rooted in the cultural politics of the New Order, a feature common to David Hanan’s recent overview of Indonesian film history (2010). Hanan, a long time observer of the Indonesian film industry, continues to utilize his New Order national cinema paradigm to trace a history that connects filmmaking in the 1950s through the New Order, to the present. He does this by means of differentiating the film canon – directors such as Usmar Ismail, Teguh

Karya and Garin Nugroho – from popular films. In this way he provides a normative reading of film history in line with such New Order scholars as Misbach Yusa Biran whose mission it was to construct a national cinema by means of selective canonization. Scholarship informed by the construction of a national cinema was seen to be appropriate in the post-independence era of nationalism. Hence the conceptual reproduction of national cinema in the work of New Order cinema theorists Krishna Sen, David Hanan and others. In the post-1998 scenario, these precepts become untenable.

This study differentiates itself from this body of previous work by taking popular films as a serious object of sociological study. Popular films and the social relations that go into their production reveal more about broader historical trends than individual texts from an auteur director. In terms of the study of Indonesian film, this is a novel approach, that reorients inquiry away from the director Garin Nugroho who was the sole focus of studies in the 1990s, to the broader range of films that have been released since 1998. Local audiences have responded well to these new films and this newfound popularity must be taken seriously.

### **1.3 Film as Pop Culture**

But whatever it is we see in the development in film over the past two years it is because our people have begun to appreciate locally made products, and filmmakers have also begun to match their hopes, namely with entertainment.<sup>9</sup>

- Raam Punjabi, producer MVP Pictures, personal interview, 17 August 2008.

---

<sup>9</sup> “Tapi apapun yang kita lihat kemajuan dari film dua tahun ini adalah karena orang-orang kita sudah mulai menghargai produk dalam negeri dan pembuat film juga sudah mulai memberikan sesuai harapan mereka, yaitu hiburan.” Translated by the author. All subsequent translations are the author’s unless otherwise indicated.

As Raam Punjabi notes above, one of the most fundamental developments for local film of the past decade is that local films are now part of pop culture. Local films are no longer as stigmatized as they were during the 1990s when local films became synonymous with sex and erotica. Local film production has become a culture industry sustained by its ability to attract a significant mainstream audience. As writer Seno Gumira Ajidarma points out,

According to an ‘arrogant’ viewpoint, films at the moment are often regarded as low quality and an indication of stupidity. But we need to see that if the audience is happy, then that film is beautiful for them. It means there is meaning for them, it fulfils their ideological ideas, it fulfils their need for identity that ‘this is my film.’<sup>10</sup>

Local films now provide audiences with comedies to laugh at, horror films to scare them and romances to fall in love with. The fact that Indonesian films have become popular again and are being watched by local audiences is a significant development.

The ability of films to connect with their audiences means that there is articulation between what du Gay et al. (1997: 52) call the ‘moments of production’ and the ‘moments of consumption.’<sup>11</sup> Pop culture products do not always meet the expectations of an audience and can fail to sell. For example, in 1930s England British working class audiences snubbed locally made films in favour of Hollywood films because the latter spoke to their aspirations more than staid British films could (Miles and Smith, 1987). Similarly in Indonesia during

---

<sup>10</sup> Seno Gumira Ajidarma quoted in ‘Logika Film Hantu’, *Kompas*, 28 March 2010. Original reads: “Kalau menurut pandangan ‘arogan’, film-film saat ini sering dianggap bermutu rendah dan indikasi kebodohan. Tetapi, kita harus melihat, kalau penonton itu senang, ya film itu indah bagi mereka. Artinya ada makna bagi mereka, memenuhi ideological ideas mereka, memenuhi kebutuhan atas identitas bahwa ‘ini film gue’.”

<sup>11</sup> See also Grossberg (1986).

the New Order, locally made films, that were held up by intellectuals and critics as exemplary films, were shunned by local audiences. Local audiences preferred popular films from Hong Kong, Bollywood, and Hollywood and locally made commercial films. These were the films that articulated to a local audience, not the films held up as exemplary by nationalist critics or that won the awards at the annual Indonesian Film Festival.

Throughout the 1990s, television was the primary media for Indonesia's burgeoning pop culture industries, displacing film which had dominated throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Many of the film producers, directors and crews switched to television where they made *sinetron* (local soap opera), taking with them many of the conventions from film (Sen and Hill, 2000). Such a mass exodus of workers from the film industry made any possibility that film would be integrated into the growing television and music industries remote. Even young creative workers who became cultural producers in this period gravitated towards the MTV-style music videos which were at the forefront of youth orientated pop culture, including a growing politically subversive stream (Baulch, 2002; Bodden, 2005). Compared to the booming television industry, film lacked innovation, investment and little opportunity to make money. Even up until 2000, young graduates of Indonesia's main film school Institut Kesenian Jakarta (IKJ, 'Jakarta Arts Institute') and others interested in cultural production often found themselves pulled into television.<sup>12</sup>

The contraction of the local film industry in the 1990s, and the closure of cinemas all across the archipelago, were part of a necessary transition that would allow film to be integrated more closely with pop culture after 1998. After 1998

---

<sup>12</sup> Viva Westi, personal interview, 5 June 2008.

the dichotomy of popular culture / film nasional that had characterized film during the New Order collapsed and with it the edifice that had sustained it. In becoming pop culture, film was to participate in an open market of culture and be defined by its ephemerality, mode of production and broader integration into everyday, mainstream culture. It marked the end of an old mode of production, distribution and exhibition that had accompanied the development of popular film in the 1970s and 1980s based on a national economy model. Globalization as a defining economic and cultural force (Appadurai, 1990) altered the cultural and economic landscape of Indonesia in the 1990s, with significant impact on both audiences and cultural producers.

By the 1990s cinemas were increasingly being integrated into the modern shopping malls that were appearing in the major urban centres catering to the new urban lifestyle and consumption patterns of the growing middle class (Dhakidae, 2001). In 1990 the new Blok M shopping mall in South Jakarta was the first site to incorporate a multi-screen cinema operated by the '21' cinema chain. Throughout the 1990s the 21 cinema chain expanded its operations in this way, opening cinemas in the new shopping malls. A pattern was established whereby the two spaces were integrated in recognition of the needs of youth culture. As such, shopping malls have become the only viable spaces in which new cinemas open. Traditional stand alone cinemas declined and retreated in this period, and now cater mainly to working class male patrons by screening erotic titles (Tanesia, 2003).

As the growing social tensions in 1990s Indonesia escalated, young Indonesians vented their opposition to the New Order regime through various forms of media. Their efforts were further accelerated by the resignation of

President Soeharto in May 1998, ending state hegemony over the media and forms of expression. Oppositional filmmakers who took advantage of declining state hegemony concentrated on making films, rather than on questions of reception and how their efforts might build new pop culture. *Kuldesak* (1998) was the first feature film of this new era made by four young filmmakers (Mira Lesmana, Riri Riza, Rizal Mantovani and Nan Achnas). Their sole aim was to make a film after spending a decade in television and they thought little about how to screen it or how it would be received. *Kuldesak* captured the zeitgeist of *reformasi* Indonesia, but local film had not yet found its audience on the scale of an industry (Nugroho, 2005).

Despite the subsequent successes of *Petualangan Sherina* (1999), *Jelangkung* (2001) and *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (2002), there remained a common perception that Indonesian films were, by and large, not worth watching. This had to do with the reputation that Indonesian films had gained during the 1990s for being cheap, parochial or synonymous with sex. Audience confidence, measured by the willingness of consumers to buy cinema tickets, is integral to the rebuilding of film as a pop culture industry. Here, this process did not happen overnight nor was it immediate, but involved a concerted effort on the part of filmmakers to creatively engage with audiences so that film could be normalized within the prevailing modes of pop culture in Indonesia. Getting to this point where film integrated itself into pop culture took time and it was not until 2004, says Garin Nugroho (2005), that this occurred.

It took a young producer such as Mira Lesmana to understand this problem that filmmakers faced in regards public perception. After *Kuldesak*, she and

director Riri Riza reasoned that the obvious thing to do was to make a children's film. They knew that children, as an audience,

don't have anything against Indonesian film. They have no idea what went on with *Langitku Rumahku*<sup>13</sup> or *filem esek-esek* [erotic titles]. They have no history. So I think we should make a children's film. That was actually the idea of making [*Petualangan*] *Sherina*.<sup>14</sup>

In the film, the schoolgirl Sherina moves to the country when her father gets a job on a community plantation. A developer from the city wants to buy the farmland and convert it into a housing complex, and sends his goons to kidnap the farm owner's son as means of forcing the owner to sell. Sherina and the boy evade capture, and manage to return in time to stop the sale, and thus expose the developer.

Enison Sinaro, a director who has worked in film and television since the 1980s, says in the years after 1998 a new generation of young Indonesians (those born in the late 1980s and 1990s) encountered local films. They

have never watched an Indonesian film. Ten years later [early 2000s] there are Indonesian films again, and they are interested, not because they are good necessarily. They want to know. So they go and watch them with their friends.<sup>15</sup>

This kind of initial curiosity could not, however, sustain a pop culture industry. The process by which audiences came to regularly consume Indonesian films required filmmakers to consistently make films that were relevant to audiences. Under the New Order filmmakers had less creative leeway because of state control

---

<sup>13</sup> *Langitku Rumahku* (1990, 'My Sky, My Home') was a film directed by Slamet Rahardjo that was withdrawn from circulation by 21, the dominant multiplex cinema operator, after screening for only one day. It was a clear indication that local films were no longer welcome in 21 which screened exclusively Hollywood films.

<sup>14</sup> Mira Lesmana, personal interview, 30 January 2009.

<sup>15</sup> "Nggak pernah nonton film Indonesia. Sepuluh tahun kemudian ada film Indonesia, pengen tahu, bukan karena bagus. Mau tahu. Lalu nonton rame-rame dengan temannya." Enison Sinaryo, personal interview, 15 August 2008.

in an industry heavily focused on parochial stories. Contemporary film audiences were voracious consumers of global pop culture, and expected to be entertained in the same way by local productions.

One genre that has been prominent in the rebirth of film is teenage romances with coming of age themes. The teen romance films *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (2002) and *Eiffel... I'm in Love* (2003) both broke box office records with stories about a teenage couple falling in love despite early misgivings and misunderstandings. Even a cursory comparison of film titles from the 1990s and those after 2000 shows that sex<sup>16</sup> has been replaced by love (*cinta*). The rise of romance also suggests that audiences are now younger with a large proportion of film audiences being women.<sup>17</sup> Enison Sinaro says,

Just at that time [1980s] it was different, in the past the majority of the audience were adults. In the past all the films were for mature audiences, in the 1980s. And we started over in 2000. In 2000 started lots of films about teenagers, about 'coming of age'.<sup>18</sup>

*Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (2002), about two high school students learning how to fall in love, marked this shift. Not only did the film speak in the language of teenagers, using slang and Jakartan dialect, it also concluded with the lead couple kissing in the airport, in a scene that captured the spirit of the youth and their refusal to abide by the old standards of morality (Hanan, 2008a). Subsequent romance films further explore these themes of finding one's 'true love', dealing

---

<sup>16</sup> Titles typically had words such as *kenikmatan* (pleasure), *pergaulan* (intercourse), or *nafsu* (lust).

<sup>17</sup> A survey I conducted at the 21 Cinemas in late 2008 revealed that the cinema audience, not just those for Indonesian films, was 56% female and 44% male, with 81% 25 years old or younger. Of 476 respondents, 209 were male, 267 were female. For age groups the following was recorded: 15-18 (114), 19-21 (168), 22-25 (104), 26-30 (63), 31-46 (25) [n=474]. The surveys were conducted at 15 different 21 cinemas in Jakarta in November 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Personal interview, 15 August 2008. "Cuma pada saat itu kan memang beda, dulu kan kebanyakannya penonton dewasa. Cuma memang dulu kan filmnya memang film dewasa semua, tahun 80an gitu. Kan kita mulai lagi di tahun 2000. Tahun 2000 kan udah mulai banyak film-film yang remaja atau yang 'coming of age' gitu."

with complications of love and negotiating between love, sexuality and other social obligations such as friends and family (Maimunah, 2010).

Between 1998 and 2003 production was ad hoc but characterized by a mood of euphoria and experimentation with young filmmakers learning how to make their films speak to their audience. Film audiences had become used to watching American and other imported films, and had come to expect that quality of local films. In an insightful comment, director and scriptwriter Monty Tiwa (b. 1976) said to me that in

The first two years, from 1999, we were scorned by our audience. ‘Watching Indonesians films is totally naff! [tawdry]’ Although, little did our audience know, we are in the process of learning ourselves, trial and error. We are doing stuff, we’re trying new stuff, we are finding out everyday what works and what doesn’t work.<sup>19</sup>

One of his early films, *Biarkan Bintang Menari* (2003, ‘Let the Stars Dance’), written by Monty Tiwa and directed by Indra Yudhistira, Tiwa describes as “the perfect example of the high standard in our head but the minimum capacity and capability of doing it”.<sup>20</sup> The film was a musical about a girl named Bintang who starts university. It is a coming-of-age story with Bintang struggling to find her place in the world and, by the end, a boyfriend. Filmmakers had sufficient creativity but lacked not only technical skills but also the creative ability to make films that could fully articulate to the audience. Filmmakers who only had their films with which to connect to audiences faced a catch-22 because convincing

---

<sup>19</sup> Original reads: “The first two years, dari 99. Kita dicacimaki sama penonton kita. ‘Menonton film Indonesia ah man norak!’ , padahal little did our audience know, we are in the process of learning ourselves, trial and error. We are doing stuff, we’re trying new stuff, we are finding out everyday what works and what doesn’t work.” Monty Tiwa, personal interview, 26 September 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Monty Tiwa, personal interview, 26 September 2008.

sceptical audiences that Indonesian films were worth watching required them to watch Indonesian films.

Local films were further hampered by the screening schedules of the country's dominant cinema chain '21'. 21 had aligned themselves to a Hollywood model whereby big advertising budgets are used to promote films to ensure a huge opening weekend.<sup>21</sup> Films that do not open with strong audiences are quickly pulled. Local filmmakers who struggled to even fund their films could not afford the marketing budgets required to ensure a buzz was created before the film opened. As a result, local films had little chance of developing an audience as they might through word of mouth over a number of weeks. Many films disappeared from the cinemas and went straight to DVD and VCD. Curiously, a secret deal had been struck with the film 'pirates' not to copy Indonesian films, but to instead just copy foreign films. Local audiences who had been reluctant to watch local films at the cinema, came to discover Indonesian films on VCD and DVD, and found that they were actually enjoyable. The films spoke to them as young Indonesians, and although they may not have been as technically proficient as Hollywood blockbusters, they offered something to the audiences that television and Hollywood films could not. By 2008 pirate copies of local films began to appear again, to the consternation of local producers, but it also meant that there was now substantial demand for local films.<sup>22</sup>

Indonesian film was helped by the fact that television was increasingly losing its appeal for young audiences, particularly school students and those in their early 20s. For them, television programming, especially *sinetron* (local soap

---

<sup>21</sup> See Miller et al. (2005).

<sup>22</sup> This is largely paraphrasing what Monty Tiwa told me.

opera), was no longer interesting.<sup>23</sup> *Sinetron* is now seen as viewing for housewives and maids. Coupled with a desire to socialize outside the house, going to the cinema became a viable option for teenagers. The social dimensions of going to the cinema cannot be underestimated. Producer Chand Parwez Servia likens the cinema to a ‘civic centre’ because “Indonesian people like to hang out.”<sup>24</sup> Moreover, with the integration of cinemas into modern shopping complexes, cheap ticket prices and clean, modern amenities, audiences could consume films within comfortable surroundings. Audiences were not just watching Hollywood films, but now more willing to watch locally made films.

**Table 1. Audience Data for Indonesian Films 2000-2007**

Year	Titles	Total Audience	Market share
2000	5	1845520	7.46%
2001	5	687226	2.78%
2002	12	4330540	17.50%
2003	13	4697945	18.98%
2004	21	6065338	24.51%
2005	31	8724223	35.25%
2006	32	10124940	40.98%
2007 (to June)	22	10391842	41.99%
2007 (expected)	50		60.00%

Source: Servia (2007).

With film regaining its place as a part of popular culture the dichotomy of commercialism/idealism that had structured conceptualizations of film during the New Order collapsed introducing a new paradigm into cultural production. *Reformasi* not only marked the end of the New Order as a political regime but also dismantled much of its cultural edifice. Many of the New Order intellectuals and ideologues who maintained this cultural structure passed away in the 1990s and left the few remaining ideologues such as Misbach Yusa Biran, increasingly

<sup>23</sup> Ody Harahap, personal interview, 28 October 2008; Rako Prijanto, personal interview, 11 August 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Chand Parwez Servia, personal interview, 17 July 2008.

alone. This was accompanied by the prevailing mode of production in the film industry becoming unviable in the late 1980s due to the vertical integration of an import-distribution-exhibition monopoly by the Soeharto crony Sudwikatmono, the convulsion of the distribution system outside the major cities, and the introduction of private television broadcasting.

Nevertheless, some scholars have attempted to resurrect the popular/idealist distinction, most notably Ekky Imanjaya (2009a). Imanjaya has argued that the distinction remains and says the two best contemporary filmmakers - Riri Riza<sup>25</sup> and Joko Anwar<sup>26</sup> - have successfully combined idealism and commercialism. His reuse of the dualism is more surprising given that he quotes Riri Riza's producer, Mira Lesmana, as saying "There is no dichotomy between art films and commercial films... There are only good films and bad films".<sup>27</sup> What needs to be recognized is that the whole film industry is now operating under the new cultural paradigm of pop culture.

## **1.4 Central Argument: A New Cultural Economy of Indonesian Film**

Studying film in post-1998 Indonesia requires a new methodological paradigm. To account for the rebirth and repopularization of locally made film in Indonesia means that multiple concerns need to be addressed. First, is to account for the revitalization of film production following the nadir of the late 1990s and in particular to identify the filmmakers who engineered this revival. Second, is to

---

<sup>25</sup> *Eliana, Eliana* (2002); *Laskar Pelangi* (2008, 'Rainbow Troops').

<sup>26</sup> *Janji Joni* (2005, 'Joni's Promise'); *Kala* (2007, 'Dead Time'). Anwar himself subscribes to this distinction. See Anwar (2010).

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Imanjaya (2008).

understand how filmmaking increasingly took on the form of a cultural industry that reintegrated itself into broader modes of pop culture. Third, is to situate contemporary film production within a broader historical trajectory, specifically within the trajectory of cultural production and filmmaking in Indonesia. Finally, is to account for the role of the state and regulation post-1998, and how filmmaking fits into broader conditions and themes of *reformasi*.

Generally studies of cultural production either emphasise the cultural or the economic. This kind of theoretical split is epitomized in the 1995 debate between Nicholas Garnham, an advocate of political economy, and Lawrence Grossberg, an advocate of cultural studies.<sup>28</sup> Garnham's (2001) work on mass media follows a political economy paradigm, not dissimilar to that developed in Adorno's work on the culture industry (1991). This approach looks at the economic or structural conditions of cultural production, especially its industrial mode of production and integration into capitalist economic structures. Grossberg, on the other hand, argues against the reductionist materialism of political economy, and says the cultural must be given equal, if not greater, prominence than the economic. Grossberg in turn is criticized by Garnham for ignoring how the economy shapes culture. Both sides of the debate have not been reconciled (Peck, 2006), and there continues to be calls for such a reconciliation in the popular culture literature (Storey, 1997).

In the context of *reformasi*, not only were the conditions and structures of cultural production altered, so were the cultural dimensions of film in terms of the narratives on screen and the expectations of the audience. As the previous section showed, recent work on Indonesian film has focused almost exclusively on the

---

<sup>28</sup> The argument was featured in edition 12, issue 1 of *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* journal in 1995.

cultural dimensions and simply attributed these changes to the decline of authoritarianism and the coming of democratization. Likewise, a political economy of *reformasi* would note how the structures of the New Order economy have been liberalized, yet in the context of film would assume a priori the position of the audience and have little to say about the shifting cultural referents of new films.

Studying film, which is both a cultural product and an economic commodity, requires an approach that can theorize the complex relationship between film as culture and film as commodity. As delineated in the previous section, Indonesian films became popular again because they were relevant to a mainstream local audience. For an ideological formation such as film, the relationship between production and consumption is tenuous, as Stuart Hall notes, as it

exists historically in a particular formation, anchored very directly in relation to a number of different forces. Nevertheless, it has no necessary, intrinsic, trans-historical belongingness. Its meaning – political and ideological – comes precisely from its position within a formation. It comes with what else it is articulated to. (Grossberg, 1986: 54)

The concept of articulation provides the link between production and consumption and conceptualizes the relationship between them. Consumption is a cultural process in which audiences find meaning; production involves the mobilization of capital and labour power, and is an economic process. Once understood this way, the way to study a formation such as film in Indonesia is by dealing with the complex that is the ‘cultural economy’ of film.

My use of ‘cultural economy’ is in part a heuristic device made necessary by the subject matter at hand. I needed to simultaneously account for the cultural

and economic dimensions of the Indonesian film revival and the way the two dimensions form a complex of mutual interaction. The cultural economy literature seeks to conceptualize the contemporary phase of ‘cultural capitalism’ (Appadurai, 1990) in which economic commodities are imbued with cultural value (Gibson and Kong, 2005). In other words, cultural meaning itself becomes an economic commodity. At the same time, it has become necessary to look at the “the processes of social and cultural relations that go to make up what we conventionally call the economic” (Amin and Thrift, 2004: xviii).

In the cultural economy literature, film has not often featured as a site of application, but the dualistic nature of film lends itself to this approach. Film is not simply an economic commodity without particular meaning for consumers, nor is it simply culture decoupled from the social and economic conditions of its production. Film is both an economic commodity, in that it is produced and sold through various social and economic process and relationships, and a cultural product, which provides meaning to its consumers. Cultural economy provides the means by which the often separated domains of culture and economy can be studied as a complex. Social change is rendered visible in both the cultural content of films and in the structural conditions of film production.

By using cultural economy I seek to move beyond established paradigms in studies of Indonesian film, often reproduced in other studies of Southeast Asian film (Hanan, 1996; Ciecko, 2006b). For much of the twentieth century, film has been regarded within the framework of ‘national cinema’ (Hayward, 2005). This has served as a convenient frame of analysis, especially as film seemed to correspond to both national economics and a ‘national culture’ at the same time. Such national imaginations are no longer tenable in the context of globalization

and are limited by what Ulrich Beck calls ‘methodological nationalism’ (Beck, 2007). From its beginning film has always been more global and more particular than the nation. In this thesis I continue to use the word ‘Indonesia’ and the concept of the nation because they remain crucial to the way in which film is imagined in Indonesia, but this is not to follow the path of Karl Heider (1991) for example, who attempts to construct an Indonesian national cinema. National cinemas are invariably normative in defining culture and prescriptive in regards to how the film industry is to be structured, such as in terms of ownership or ethnic composition.

In this thesis I approach film as pop culture in order to theorise the film industry as a sociological formation. In this way, the relationships between production and consumption, structure and agency are brought to the foreground and analyzed empirically. Each chapter of this thesis analyzes various dimensions of this cultural economy to create a complete picture of how the post-1998 film industry operates at various levels.

## **1.5 Methods**

The empirical content of this thesis is based on in-depth interviews I conducted with film practitioners in Indonesia between June 2008 and January 2009. The sixty interviews I conducted with prominent directors, producers, scriptwriters, government figures, and others in the industry, yielded significant insights into their personal backgrounds, their experiences and their thoughts about the Indonesian film industry.<sup>29</sup> These interviews are an original contribution to the field of cultural studies in Indonesia. These narratives provided the

---

<sup>29</sup> A full list of interviewees can be found in the Appendix.

substantive content informing my understanding of the current composition of the industry and the way in which films are made. I made it a point to interview filmmakers from the commercial end of film production because their opinions are rarely sought despite being the most productive filmmakers in the industry. Since film production is a cultural industry with its own sociological basis, these interviews allowed me to understand “the social relationships within market-orientated institutions” (Negus, 2002: 115).

During 2008, I was fortunate to be a regular attendee at the weekly press preview screenings for journalists, usually held a day or two before the film’s official release. At these events I was able to meet and talk to those behind the screen as well as journalists from various publications. The nature of film journalism is such that most of the journalists were interested only in the actors and actresses. Directors and producers felt particularly sidelined in the mad rush for the latest gossip from the stars. I should not have been surprised then, at how willing filmmakers were to be interviewed for academic research. I suspect that they have had hitherto little opportunity to air their opinions and experiences of the film industry. I hope therefore that this thesis goes some way in substantiating the concerns of Indonesian filmmakers, and is able to situate their experiences within a broader historical framework. Their words and insights are supported by research with publicly available documents such as newspaper and magazine articles, books and various other forms of data, especially those held in the Sinematek film library in Jakarta.

Interview data was complemented by my dedicated viewing of Indonesian films both on video and in the cinema. I made a point to obtain and watch as many of the post-1998 feature films as I could in order to trace the development of

filmmaking over the past decade, as well as to gain a comprehensive insight into the cultural concerns of contemporary films.<sup>30</sup> Not all of these films are featured or mentioned in the chapters that follow and the two chapters I dedicate to the study of the horror and Islamic genres could just as easily have been used to study the abundance of romance films. Furthermore, I made an effort to watch many pre-1998 films, especially those that were prominent in people's memories or that seemed contentious or significant within the literature.

## 1.6 Outline of Thesis

The content and structure of this thesis developed inductively from the accumulated data. Each chapter looks for general conclusions from amassed data, arguing for particular relations within the cultural economy of Indonesian film. Chapter One has introduced the major concerns of the thesis and its central argument, placing the recent recovery of the film industry within a pop culture framework. It has outlined the necessity of using cultural economy as theoretical framework and shown how local films went from a position of contempt in the 1990s to enjoy widespread popularity by 2008.

Chapter Two retraces the history of film in Indonesia and argues that the dominant narrative of that history is that of *film nasional*. *Film nasional* describes film in the normative terms of national cinema by interpreting film through the precepts of a national culture and orientated to the goal of being 'master in their own house' (*tuan di rumah sendiri*). *Film nasional*, as I reveal, has since the

---

<sup>30</sup> Most of these films I was able to obtain on VCD or DVD from the various vendors in Jakarta. Some films I sourced directly from the major VCD/DVD production company Navirindo. *Kuldesak* which is a significant film in this thesis was not publicly available and I did have to request a copy from the filmmakers themselves.

1950s constituted legitimate culture, through the construction of a film canon and an ideological edifice through which film is to be evaluated. The rise of the New Order in 1966 did not only eradicate the leftist opposition and their concepts of art and culture, but also entrenched the conservative nationalist narrative of *film nasional*, by providing the institutional framework for its legitimation and reproduction.

Chapter Three looks at the way in which film production returned following the decline of the 1990s. It traces opposition to the prevailing film industry in the figure of Garin Nugroho, who became the bridge for new filmmakers wanting to make films of their own. I focus on the first *reformasi* film, *Kuldesak* (1998), a project of four young directors who had spent the 1990s working in television, music videos and advertising. Following them, I trace the emergence of the ‘new generation’ of filmmakers, and explore their position as part of the Indonesian middle class and what this means for cultural production. I look at the way in which they defied the precepts of *film nasional* to rebuild feature film as pop culture.

Chapter Four considers how the formal aspects of *reformasi* were mobilized by young filmmakers to oppose state control over film. The chapter looks specifically at the Film Censorship Board (LSF, Lembaga Sensor Film) and the ways in which filmmakers have sought to challenge censorship. It traces the deeper social context of both film production and film regulation, looking at the social forces that have also worked to censor films, evoking in the process spectres of history. The chapter concludes by arguing that the past decade has seen the state re-introduce restrictive measures on film, both in the way in which the LSF interprets films, and in the New Film Law of 2009. I show how complicated

*reformasi* had become with often contradictory outcomes for the film industry whose young members had hoped for greater democratization and liberalization.

To link structural and economic change to film content, Chapter Five explores the popular horror genre which, since 1998, been one of the most common genres made. Horror reveals that post-New Order film articulates a specific set of cultural and historical concerns that reveal how the ability to represent violence and history has been re-appropriated by young filmmakers. This, I argue, is evident in the dominant narrative structure of contemporary horror based on a ‘temporal gap’ between the original violent incident and its reappearance as ghost. Using horror as a genre of allegory, I argue that filmmakers are working through history, especially the residual trauma of the New Order and the genre is indicative of the structural changes wrought by *reformasi*.

Chapter Six engages with the current debate over ‘Islamic films’ and explores the complicated and long history of Pop Islam in Indonesia within the broader history of Islamization. Noting that once again, historical myopia has been prevalent, it traces the social background behind the phenomenal success of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* (2008), an Islamic themed romance set in Cairo, Egypt. I argue that Islamic themed films are constitutive of debates over Islam’s place in contemporary Indonesia, and what it means to be Muslim. In this way, contemporary film production is a part of a broader historical processes and is actively engaging in the imagination of Islam in Indonesia.

Returning to issues pertaining to the structural conditions of filmmaking, Chapter Seven analyses the relationship between the creative personnel (directors and scriptwriters) and producers (capital). Given that independence or ‘indie’ was

integral to film production for young filmmakers after 1998, increasingly film production has come to be dominated by the old producers. These old producers, who dominated film production during the New Order and moved to television in the 1990s, have successfully reasserted themselves in the contemporary industry. I trace the reasons why this was possible, noting that they constitute an informal oligopoly within the film industry.

Finally, the Conclusion returns to the main theme of history and its reappearance in the present. It theorises that the transition of film from national cinema to pop culture over the past decade has had two consequences. The first relates to *reformasi* and how the revitalisation of the film industry was a product of social and political change in 1998. *Reformasi* did not result in a 'free' media but rather a set of complicated outcomes for practitioners in the film industry. Secondly, film production has emerged from the shadow of state control and entered an era characterized by the market. Characteristic of the market is a proliferation of actors and interests as well as the persistence of former economic and regulatory structures. Film in contemporary Indonesia needs to be viewed, not as a continuation of *film nasional* and its cultural hierarchy, but rather as a cultural industry producing pop culture.

## 2.

# NATIONAL CINEMA AND THE NEW ORDER

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is not a history of Indonesian film in the conventional sense; rather it is a history of its dominant ideology known as *film nasional*. Translated *film nasional* means ‘national film’, and would appear to be a localized permutation of a national cinema. As an ideology *film nasional* structures how film has been understood domestically and the narrative of film history. I will argue that this was operationalized through the construction of a legitimate culture which was defined and differentiated from popular culture. *Film nasional* is institutionalized through the canonization of certain filmmakers and their films, and events such as the Indonesian Film Festival (FFI, Festival Film Indonesia). Taken together, the precepts of *film nasional* appeared natural but were in fact ideologically constructed as a legitimate culture.

As this chapter deals with the concept of *film nasional*, it is not always chronological. This is a consequence of how the history of Indonesia and with it film, was rewritten. Following the events of 1965-1966 which brought President Soeharto and the New Order to power, history was systematically rewritten to fit the ideological needs of the regime which then governed until 1998 (McGregor, 2007). Film and its history could not escape the dictates of the regime and it too became an institution governed by the state’s ideological imperatives (Sen, 1994).

As a result, the history of film in Indonesia cannot be separated from political and social events of Indonesia as a nation.

This thesis takes Indonesian film as its analytical concern, but the ‘Indonesia’ here is only a geographical marker that refers to films made in Indonesia, largely in Indonesian language and within the regulations of the Indonesian state. In fact, since most of the film industry is centered in greater Jakarta, including 51% of the nation’s cinemas and most of its significant audience,<sup>1</sup> it might be better to speak of a Jakartan film industry.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, commercial filmmakers imagine their audience as coming from all parts of the archipelago, and cater their films accordingly.

From Sabang [in Sumatra] to Merauke [in Papua]. Our cultures are different, Java with Padang, with Merauke, really different. In terms of pacing we are different. Central Javanese with East Javanese their pacing is different. Central Javanese talk a lot faster, Central Javanese are more polite. [So], there are only three things acceptable to a people this diverse. The first is horror, ghosts, mystery because all Indonesians believe in the supernatural. The second is love, because all Indonesians experience love. The third is comedy.<sup>3</sup> (Rako Prijanto, personal interview, 11 August 2008)

When I spoke to film producers and directors many were concerned about making films suitable to audiences everywhere in Indonesia. There is a commercial

---

<sup>1</sup> Satriago and Wiroto (2008).

<sup>2</sup> Whilst production has been centered in Jakarta, in the 1970s and 1980s the majority of audiences were outside Jakarta. Some of the pre-1942 production was located outside Jakarta, including the first local production *Loetoeng Kasaroeng* (1926), which was made in Bandung.

<sup>3</sup> “Dari Sabang sampai Merauke. Kebudayaan kita beda-beda, Jawa dengan Padang, dengan Merauke, beda banget. Secara tempo secara passing/pesing aja beda. Orang Jawa Tengah dengan Jawa Timur temponya beda orang Jawa Tengah ngomongnya lebih cepet, orang Jawa Tengah lebih sopan. Cuman ada tiga hal yang dapat diterima masyarakat yang begitu majemuk. Yang pertama adalah horor, setan, misteri karena semua masyarakat Indonesia percaya misteri. Yang kedua adalah love, karena semua orang Indonesia merasakan cinta yang ketiga adalah komedi”

imperative to this, but they also believe that it is possible to conceive of a nation as an entity, and that their audience is a national one.

## 2.2 Indonesian Nationalism

For a country as diverse as Indonesia, it has been necessary to continually construct and assert the nation in the face of divergent ethnic, religious and territorial interests. Indonesia is, to quote Robert Cribb, an ‘improbability’ (1999: 3). Although now something of a cliché in the social sciences, the ‘imagined community’ of Benedict Anderson’s theory of the nation (1991), was based to a large extent on his knowledge of Indonesian history and the formation of the Indonesian nation. He noted that in order for a concept of the Indonesian nation to take hold and evoke such passion, required the people to believe that the nation was a single entity. This was propagated through the mass media, a national language – *bahasa Indonesia* effectively a derivative of market Malay – and the production of a national culture. Given that Indonesia adopted its geographical boundaries from the Dutch East Indies, and contained a plethora of internal, often divergent, groups for whom the nation was not the most important goal (O’Malley, 1980), this was no easy task.

Beyond its political rhetoric, the nation required myths that would sustain it as something other than an inheritance of the Dutch colony, which Indonesia geographically and administratively is (Anderson, 1983).<sup>4</sup> Much of the necessary heroic myth of the nation was forged in the four years of struggle against the

---

<sup>4</sup> East Timor was of course a former Portuguese colony, with a political history distinct from the majority Dutch controlled archipelago. This however did not stop Soeharto from trying to incorporate East Timor into Indonesia through invasion in 1975 resulting in years of bloody conflict.

Dutch in 1945-1949. When the Japanese surrendered following their brief three and a half year occupation (1942-1945), the Dutch returned to reclaim their colony. An awakened nationalist movement that had been incubated by the Japanese, led by Soekarno and Hatta, opposed the Dutch return, establishing a Republican Government in Yogyakarta. This period of the Indonesian Revolution thus came to be the most important event in modern Indonesian history because it gave birth to the nation, even if it was not solely the result of organized armed resistance or the Nationalists (Anderson, 1983: 481). Subsequently, other forms of uprising and resistance, such as the Communist Rebellion in Madiun 1948, and Darul Islam uprisings and secessionist movements, were construed as antithetical to, or betrayals against, the nation.<sup>5</sup> Even in the face of political and economic collapse in November 1998, the first statement of the Ciganjur Declaration by reformist leaders was one of national unity (Young, 1999: 96-97).

Yet the nation as imagined suffered from the fact that nationalism was primarily an urban phenomenon (Benda, 1965: 1069). The nation was principally imagined from the perspective of those in the major urban centres, who looked outwards at the extent of the potential nation and saw in them a common community. This was a particularly administrative viewpoint, and the product of a centralized colonial bureaucracy. For those in the regions and on the periphery, they saw something different or no nation at all, concerned more with their local or ethnic community. For the urban elite it became necessary to construct a 'national culture' expressed most evidently in literature and film, in order to articulate the glory, spirit and idea of the new nation. Artists who would do this migrated to the cities and from there constructed eulogies to the nation and

---

<sup>5</sup> See van Dijk (1981) for more on Darul Islam.

national culture. The *Angkatan '45*, the 'Generation of 1945', became the first generation of 'Indonesian' artists whose work embodied this necessary nationalism. As a result, much of the intellectual effort surrounding Indonesian film after 1950 has been concerned with trying to construct and demarcate a 'national cinema' that reflects and articulates the nation.

National cinema is a well-worn frame of analysis in film studies (Hayward, 1993; Zhang, 2009), that gives rise to seemingly coherent but problematic entities such as 'French Cinema' or 'Chinese Cinema'. National cinemas require the construction and promotion of a canon, works that represent the pinnacle of artistic endeavour and represent national culture. Zhang argues in fact these national cinemas are historical constructions in which:

canonized auteurs and movements may have appeared originally as disjunctures or ruptures, but [...] they were subsequently rewritten as representative of national cinema at the expense of popular (and therefore mainstream) film practices, most of them commercial in nature (2009: 23).

In Indonesia, where nationalism is a cornerstone of cultural and political life, the construction and promotion of a national cinema was imperative. In Indonesia it is referred to as *film nasional*.

### **2.3 *Film Nasional* as National Cinema**

In 1979, prominent film personage Soemardjono (1927-1998) described *film nasional* in the following terms:

1. Film Nasional must be a product of the culture of the Indonesian Nation.
2. Film Nasional must replace the domination of foreign films, just as the Indonesian People were victorious in destroying colonial domination.

3. Film Nasional must serve the Indonesian People and Nation in developing the [sic] CHARACTER and NATION BUILDING.<sup>6</sup>

*Film nasional* as a national cinema defined the parameters of nation and national culture and whose proponents established a group of auteur directors as exemplary artists whose works are canonized into film history. It thus establishes the principle dichotomy that underpins conceptions of film, separating *film nasional* from mainstream, popular, commercial films. Salim Said, one of the central film intellectuals of the New Order, says that “there are two types of films: entertainment type films, and quality films that contain values that are not just entertainment” (1991a: 217).<sup>7</sup> Not only are films categorized by this dichotomy, it also ascribes their cultural value.

*Film nasional* constitutes a part of the cultural hierarchy which Pierre Bourdieu refers to as ‘legitimate culture’ (1984: 28). For Bourdieu social class manifests itself through a differentiation of cultural taste in which the tastes of the dominant class are codified into ‘legitimate culture’. Legitimate culture often corresponds to ‘high art’ which requires aesthetic distance and cultivated contemplation in order to be appreciated. It is then legitimized through the consumption habits of the dominant class and official institutions. In film, this corresponds to ‘art cinema’ as a type, and film festivals as a forum of such consumption. Legitimate culture is distinguished from popular culture, the undifferentiated, vulgar forms of culture that do not require an acquired taste to

---

<sup>6</sup> Soemardjono (1979) ‘Perfilman Indonesia Masa Kini dan Nanti’ Paper Presented at Lokakarya Perfilman Nasional, 3-4 March 1979, Jakarta, DHD Angkatan ’45 DKI Jakarta. Original text reads:

“1. Film Nasional harus merupakan produk kebudayaan Bangsa Indonesia.

2. Film Nasional harus dapat menggantikan dominasi film asing, seperti halnya Bangsa Indonesia berhasil merobohkan dominasi kolonialisme.

3. Film Nasional harus mampu mengabdikan kepada Bangsa dan Negara Indonesia dalam pembangunan WATAK dan KEBANGSAAN INDONESIA (Character and Nation building).”

<sup>7</sup> “harus dibedakan dan diakui adanya dua jenis film: film jenis entertainment (hiburan), dan film bermutu yang mengandung nilai-nilai yang tidak sekedar hiburan.” Said (1991a[1990]: 217).

discern and appreciate. Bourdieu has termed this differentiation the ‘aristocracy of culture’, and noted that cultural consumption is not only linked to class positions and class reproduction in society, but that culture is not neutral. Culture is operationalized in a social context, and is there validated and inserted into a social hierarchy.

Film in Indonesia presents a variant of the schema proposed by Bourdieu. It was noted that during the New Order, higher class audiences tended to avoid locally made films and watched imported titles, especially those from Hollywood (Sumardjo, 1990). In response, efforts were made to encourage more of the middle and upper income audiences to watch local films, through programmes such as a state-run Kine Klub aimed at university students.<sup>8</sup> Their lack of appreciation caused much anxiety amongst proponents of *film nasional*. Defining legitimate culture in film was the work of the cultural elite within the film industry itself - ideologues such as Salim Said, Misbach Yusa Biran, Asrul Sani, Soemardjono and others - who articulated and defined what was to be valued in a film. This included how films should be made and by whom, what constituted appropriate themes and subject matter, and so on. These preferences were operationalized through a canonization of films and directors, especially through the annual Indonesian Film Festival (FFI) which was restarted in 1976.<sup>9</sup> Significantly in Indonesia, this conception of legitimate culture was modulated through a necessary nationalism.

As this chapter will show, a tripartite criteria underpinned *film nasional*. When Soemardjono outlined what *film nasional* was in 1979 (see the quote

---

<sup>8</sup> Dewan Film Nasional (1980: 82-83) and Suharto (1999).

<sup>9</sup> The FFI had been established by Djamaluddin Malik in the early 1950s and was held sporadically during that decade. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the festival was not held due to social, economic and political instability. Its return in 1976 was significant as it coincided with the renewed need to institutionalize *film nasional*.

above), he articulated the outward features or the ‘recipe’ for what film in Indonesia should be.<sup>10</sup> I argue that *film nasional*, in keeping with dominant ethno-nationalism, stipulates a *pribumi* (indigenous) rather than a ‘foreigner’ (Chinese, Indian) progenitor. Although ‘foreigners’ have been prominent in the film industry since it began, they are defined as traders who treat film as a commodity, and are seen to be unable to escape this ethno-nationalist paradigm by virtue of their race.<sup>11</sup> Moreover the progenitor must be an artist (*seniman*) who approaches film with idealism and the intention of creating art because only the artist can distill national culture in his films. *Film nasional* thus stands above and outside popular film, but also seeks audiences amongst the masses in order to educate and enlighten them. In short, *film nasional* means *pribumi*, idealist and nationalist.

## 2.4 History of Film as *Film Nasional*

*Film nasional* provides a narrative about the history of film in Indonesia. The history of film is intimately tied to the history of the Indonesian nation, in that *film nasional* came into being in 1950 once Indonesia became an independent nation. Everything before this point is a precursor to *film nasional*, and is deemed irrelevant or illegitimate as a result. By differentiating itself from the two and a half decades of local film production before 1950, *film nasional* creates its first necessary ‘other’. As Misbach Yusa Biran says in a recent history of film in Java, films before 1950 are ‘not national films’ because they were “not based on

---

<sup>10</sup> Recipe, or ‘*resep*’, is used by Harmoko (1977) in a piece he wrote as head of the Indonesian Journalists Association (PWI) before he became Minister of Information in 1984.

<sup>11</sup> Biran (2001: 220) for example says the Chinese producers “from the beginning had been primarily interested in making money.”

national awareness” and did not “reflect the national personality” (2009: 45).<sup>12</sup> This is not just because ‘Indonesia’ as a nation did not exist, but because what counted as legitimately Indonesian could only come into being after 1945. Indonesian literature is likewise reinterpreted to explicitly coincide with the national struggle (Jassin, 1996: 28). As a result, the narrative of *film nasional* denies competing interpretations of film history based on popular culture or cosmopolitan connections.

Artists and writers came to occupy a coveted position in this version of nationalist history for their ability to enunciate the new nation, and the national culture integral to its imagination (Anderson, 1983).<sup>13</sup> Of all the art forms, film was the last to be appropriated by nationalist artists who came to recognize film as the most effective medium for representing and propagating national culture to the people of independent Indonesia. Many of the post-1950 filmmakers came from other fields of art, such as theatre and literature, and believed that film could be an artistic enterprise (Ismail, 1983[1966]). At the time, *seniman* (artist) was an important identity within the independence struggle, and their work was seen as a manifestation of both the desire for independence and the creation of a new national culture. *Seniman* were regarded highly as “the embodiment of the spiritual energy of a people. They are composed of and shaped by the wealth (or poverty) of the people’s spirit, in the speakers, writers, painters, sculptors, composers and other creators” (Jassin, 1983[1950]: 131).<sup>14</sup> They differentiated

---

<sup>12</sup> “Bukan film Indonesia. [...] tidak didasari kesadaran nasional. [...] mencerminkan *national personality*.”

<sup>13</sup> Most significant in this regard was the *Angkatan '45* (‘The Generation of 1945’) of whom poet Chairil Anwar (1922-1949) is the most venerated, but which included Asrul Sani (1926-2004), subsequently an important figure in the film industry. Members of the *Angkatan '45* were notable for their directness, individuality and humanism in expressing what Holmes calls a ‘new Asian’ personality (1955: 33).

<sup>14</sup> “Seniman-seniman sebenarnya adalah kumpulan tenaga batin suatu bangsa. Pada mereka terkumpul dan terbentuk kekayaan (atau kemiskinan) batin bangsa, pada penyair-penyair,

themselves from the pre-war artists through their commitment to film as art, and film as a project of national culture.<sup>15</sup> These ideas were crystallized through experience working for the Japanese during their brief occupation (1942-1945), when film was turned into a medium of propaganda (Kurasawa, 1987; Pané, 1953: 49).

The Japanese occupation proved to be formative period for the construction of *film nasional*. Historian and *film nasional* advocate Misbach Yusa Biran places significant emphasis on the Japanese occupation, noting that “the arrival of the Japanese in this country together with their propaganda films caused a huge shock to the thoughts of Indonesians about the function of film and introduced them to a new way of thinking” (Biran, 2009: 346).<sup>16</sup> The Sendenbu, the Japanese propaganda division, and the Nippon Eiga Sha film department, employed indigenous cultural workers to produce Indonesian language propaganda.<sup>17</sup> This not only introduced a more professional and centralized filmmaking industry (Kurasawa, 1987; Biran, 2009: 339), but the instrumentalization of film “was clearly useful for efforts to establish national film in the independence era” (Ismail, 1983[1954]: 55).<sup>18</sup> Usmar Ismail, one of those employed by the Sendenbu, argues that “people became aware of the function of film as a tool of social communication. [...] In this way, it became obvious that

---

pengarang-pengarang, pelukis-pelukis, pemahat-pemahat, komponis-komponis dan lain-lain pencipta.”

<sup>15</sup> Angkatan '45 differentiated themselves from the *Pujangga Baru* artists who included Armijn Pane. *Pujangga Baru* were criticized for their romanticism. At their conference held in 1979, members of the Angkatan '45 reiterated their commitment to these principles to an audience that included the Vice-President Adam Malik and the Minister of Information.

<sup>16</sup> “Kedatangan Jepang ke negeri ini berikut film-film propagandanya, telah membuat suatu goncangan besar sekali pada pikiran bangsa Indonesia mengenai fungsi film dan membawanya kepada pemikiran baru.”

<sup>17</sup> Indonesian cultural workers employed by the Sendenbu included playwrights Usmar Ismail, Armijn Pané, Gayus Siagian, D. Djajakusuma, poet Chairil Anwar and RM Soetarto, later head of Berita Film Indonesia, the Indonesia News Bureau). See Biran (2009: 328).

<sup>18</sup> “Akan ternyata berguna sekali bagi usaha-usaha membangunkan film nasional di masa kemerdekaan.”

film was starting to emerge and grow closer to an awareness of nationalism” (Ismail, 1983[1954]: 55-56).<sup>19</sup> Film was seen as an effective way of communicating ideas to a wide audience, especially to the illiterate and those located outside urban areas. Artists and intellectuals like Usmar Ismail believed that the function of film was to spread nationalist propaganda and to foster national unity. Film made as mere entertainment was clearly anathema to this function.

By praising Japanese propaganda for having fostered a sense of national awareness, Biran (2009: 45) further differentiated the modus operandi of film production before 1942. Films made during the Dutch colonial period were characterized “as a trade commodity made by non-Indonesians at a time when the populace were excited by fantastical stories, [such that] it was already typical that our films also do not describe the world around us” (Said, 1991a[1975]: 18).<sup>20</sup> Moreover, as most of the production companies and cinemas were owned by ethnic Chinese, film was seen to be in the hands of profit-orientated commercial producers whose only interest was pandering to popular taste. Feature film production which had begun in 1926, was closely associated with imported genres and styles, and local production grew out of local theatre. Although the first film screenings in the Dutch East Indies were largely for European audiences, very quickly film was consumed by Chinese and *pribumi* (indigenous) audiences (Saputro, 2005: 165; Arief, 2010). When recounting the history of film, nationalist

---

<sup>19</sup> “Barulah pada Masa Jepang orang sadar akan fungsi film sebagai alat komunikasi sosial. [...] dalam hal ini tampak bahwa film mulai tumbuh dan mendekatkan diri kepada kesadaran kebangsaan.”

<sup>20</sup> “Sebagai barang dagangan yang dibuat oleh bukan orang Indonesia pada zaman masyarakat asyik dengan cerita-cerita khayal, sudah selayaknya jika film-film kita tidak pula berkisah tentang dunia sekitar.”

historians would regard these films as mere entertainment and incompatible with the necessity for film to contribute to nation-making.

In one of the first studies of the local film industry, writer and intellectual Armijn Pané (1908-1970)<sup>21</sup> argued that film and theatre were a product of ‘*acculturatie*’ (acculturation), the mixture of a diverse range of Asian and European forms of entertainment contributing to a cosmopolitan cultural *mélange* (Pané, 1953). His conception of Indonesian film focused on its cosmopolitan cultural dimensions, rather than whether or not it was sufficiently nationalist (Frederick, 1997; Setijadi-Dunn and Barker, 2010). Contrary to the belief that the pre-1942 film industry excluded *pribumi*, as early as 1930,<sup>22</sup> films were using Malay as the language of the screen, with increasing numbers of *pribumi* actors, scriptwriters, and by the end of the decade, directors.<sup>23</sup> The first time the word Indonesia appeared in a title was in the 1931 ethnic Chinese produced film *Indonesia Malaise* (1931), as a response to the economic discontent in the colony during the Great Depression. Cohen (2006), who has extensively studied the peripatetic theatre of the period, which was a precursor to film, talks of an emerging ‘Indies nationalism’ created in the interaction of diverse peoples. Hildred Geertz (1963: 17) describes a ‘superculture’ of the cities that was locally generated but also international in its outlook. Films played an important role as the imagery of this early cosmopolitanism (Antariksa, 2005), which was to be lost

---

<sup>21</sup> Armijn Pané was a key writer and intellectual in the *Poedjangga Baroe* (‘The New Writer’) group in the 1930s who pioneered modernism in Indonesian writing, especially through his novel *Belenggu* (1940, ‘Shackles’).

<sup>22</sup> Sound was introduced in local films in 1930 and 1931. Previously, films had employed local orchestras to accompany the silent pictures.

<sup>23</sup> This included: Parada Harahap (*Melati van Agam* 1930, scriptwriter); Bachtiar Effendy (*Njai Dasmira* 1932, director and scriptwriter); Saeroen (*Fatima* 1938, story); Rd Arifin (*Harta Berdarah* 1940, co-director); Andjar Asmara (*Kartinah* 1940, director and scriptwriter).

once the Japanese came and brought instructive propaganda and fostered ethno-nationalism, leading to the birth of *film nasional*.

The film that marked the birth of *film nasional* and stands as its archetype is *Darah dan Doa* (1950, 'Blood and Prayers'),<sup>24</sup> directed by Usmar Ismail.<sup>25</sup> Films made prior to this, are simply 'not Indonesian films' (Said, 1991a: 293). *Darah dan Doa* has been memorialized in National Film Day (30th of March), which each year evokes the following typical panegyric:

The 30th of March marks the birth of Indonesian cinema. It was on this date, in the year 1950, that the first Indonesian film, *Darah dan Doa* (Blood and Prayers) was directed by an Indonesian native [Usmar Ismail], produced by an Indonesian production house [Perfini] and shot in Indonesia. (Chairil, 2010)<sup>26</sup>

In an oft-quoted passage, Usmar Ismail famously says of *Darah dan Doa* that it "was made entirely without any commercial considerations whatsoever, and motivated entirely by idealism" (1983[1954]: 58).<sup>27</sup> So central is Usmar Ismail to the *film nasional* narrative, that he is often synonymous with the history of film in Indonesia.<sup>28</sup>

*Darah dan Doa* follows the military's Siliwangi Division as they march back home to West Java after their successful defeat of a Muslim rebellion in Yogyakarta. The drama is told through the perspective of the Division commander

---

<sup>24</sup> Its English title is *The Long March*. Usmar Ismail had intended to submit the film to Cannes. Although he does not explicitly mention this in his writing, it can be assumed from his essay about *Darah dan Doa* (1983[1963]: 164-171) that his reason for submitting it to Cannes were based on his sense of nationalism.

<sup>25</sup> It was remade in 1972 as *Mereka Kembali* ('They Have Returned') but by then was an army sponsored project, fitting well with the ideological self-portrayal of the military in Indonesian history. In this version it is the Darul Islam who are vilified as traitors to the nation. See McGregor (2007: 147, 187).

<sup>26</sup> Nova Chairil (2010) 'Looking at both sides of the national cinema' *The Jakarta Post*, 28/04/2010. This is only one example among many. See also Biran (2009:45), as well as how Hanan (1996) writes about the history of the 1950s and 1960s.

<sup>27</sup> "dibikin tanpa perhitungan komersial apa pun, dan semata-mata hanya didirong oleh idealisme." Translation from Sen (1983: 120).

<sup>28</sup> See for example Biran (2001) for one such account.

(Captain Sudarto), who is troubled by the experience of war and by his affections for two women. The film ends with him being shot by members of the 1948 PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia, 'Indonesian Communist Party') rebellion in Madiun.<sup>29</sup> *Darah dan Doa* eulogizes the military and the armed struggle in the establishment of a unitary and independent Indonesia (Irawanto, 1999). Although contentious at the time, especially for some in the military who banned the film in their areas, the film has since been canonized. In 1972 the film was remade as *Mereka Kembali* (1972, 'They Have Returned') and served as a blueprint for subsequent military sponsored feature films. Other films by Ismail that are still highly regarded, namely *Enam Djam di Jogja* (1951, 'Six Hours in Jogjakarta') and *Lewat Djam Malam* (1954, 'Past Curfew'), similarly focus on the military and their role in the establishment of a unitary Indonesia.

Usmar Ismail (1921-1971) is rather typical of the generation of artists and intellectuals that emerged with Indonesian independence. Born in Bukittinggi in Sumatra to an aristocratic family, he was educated in elite Dutch Schools and moved to Yogyakarta with his friend Rosihan Anwar,<sup>30</sup> where they established the Maya theatre group. A promising playwright, Ismail was employed by the Japanese to produce propaganda, the experience of which had a great impact on his thinking. After the war, he joined the Republican government in Yogyakarta working as a journalist, army major and playwright. He was captured by the Dutch, and on his release in 1949, directed two films for the Dutch SPFC (South Pacific Film Corporation) with director Andjar Asmara. When independence was officially achieved in 1950, he established the film company Perfini, which

---

<sup>29</sup> This is the Madiun Affair of 1948. See Swift (1989).

<sup>30</sup> Rosihan Anwar was to become an important figure in the film industry, occupying positions in the FFI jury and committee, and various government bureaus relating to film. He also worked as a journalist and historian.

produced a number of films in the 1950s and 1960s. He was a key figure in the PPF (Persatuan Produser Film Indonesia, ‘Association of Indonesian Film Producers’), in the Federation of Motion Picture Producers in Asia-Pacific (FPA), a Cold War anti-communist organization of Asian film producers, and in LESBUMI (Lembaga Seniman Budayawan Muslimin Indonesia, ‘Institute of Indonesian Muslim Artists and Cultural Producers’), a cultural organization established to oppose the PKI-linked LEKRA (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, The People’s Cultural Institute) (Sen, 1983; Foulcher, 1986).

In the personalities of Usmar Ismail and others like him, *film nasional* could be differentiated from the Chinese film producers. At the same time the fact that some of the Chinese had been making films since the 1930s was simply ignored by proponents of *film nasional*. In 1951, Asrul Sani could say that

The film producers in Indonesia are nothing other than those who think about their wallets and do not consider or intend to establish anything that is worthy of being valued highly, it should not be doubted anymore. It can be said: all of them are Chinese.<sup>31</sup>

Such stereotypes are in line with the prevailing ethno-nationalist thinking at the time, in which ‘foreign Orientals’ (ethnic Chinese and Indians) are circumscribed to roles of financier and commercial producer.<sup>32</sup> Filmmakers from both the left (Siagian, 1964: 4-5) and the right (Ismail, 1983[1954]) expressed similar views on the Chinese. In his later rendering, *film nasional* ideologue Salim Said (1991a: 22) would blame the Chinese for having committed the film industry’s ‘original sin’ (*dosa asal*) by introducing commercialism into film production.

---

<sup>31</sup> “Bahwa produser-produser film di Indonesia adalah semata-mata mereka yang hanya memikirkan kantong dan tidak menimbang atau bermaksud untuk mendirikan sesuatu yang patut diberi harga tinggi, tidak usah disangsikan lagi. Boleh dikatakan: semua mereka adalah orang Tionghoa.” (Sani, 1997[1951]: 302).

<sup>32</sup> For a general account of anti-Chinese sentiment in post-independence Indonesia, see Toer (2007).

Not only had Chinese Indonesians pioneered filmmaking between 1926 and 1942, they continued to play an important role in the film industry. Chinese filmmakers had been willing to invest in a new form of entertainment, often at substantial financial risk and helped to create a vibrant industry in the years leading to the Japanese invasion (Setijadi-Dunn and Barker, 2010). There is also a Chinese back story to *Darah dan Doa*. The completion of *Darah dan Doa* was only possible after Chinese cinema owner Tong Kim Mew provided 350,000 rupiah of pre-production capital (Said, 1991: 51).<sup>33</sup> At the time most films cost nearer to 100,000 rupiah,<sup>34</sup> and Tong took a big gamble on Ismail's idealism. Two of Ismail's other films – *Enam Djam di Jogja* (1951) and *Dosa Tak Berampun* (1951, 'Unforgiven Sin') – were similarly funded in this way. Yet this kind of monetary support from ethnic Chinese investors and producers, repeated right up until today,<sup>35</sup> was overlooked because it did not fit the ethno-nationalism that sustained *film nasional*.

If nationalists, both left and right, readily agreed on the natural link between the Chinese and commercialism, prominent commercial producer Djameluddin Malik faced no such criticism. Djameluddin Malik (1917-1970), a *pribumi*, owned the Persari company, a production studio modeled on the big Hollywood studios. In the 1950s and 1960s Malik produced over twenty films, many with Usmar Ismail. Film historian and former Persari employee Misbach

---

<sup>33</sup> Funding was also supplied by senior officials of the Siliwangi military division (Imanjaya, 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Ismail (1983[1963]: 170).

<sup>35</sup> Chinese and Indian producers consistently provided the funding for various films that went on to win awards at the FFI or came to be regarded as exemplars of Film Nasional. Teguh Karya was one such beneficiary, especially his epic *November 1828*. In the current industry, Hatoek Subroto and Leo Sutanto are the two most prominent Chinese producers who fund idealist or otherwise unprofitable films.

Yusa Biran refers to him as the ‘big boss’ (2008: 138), and praises him for being the only producer to ‘think big’ (Biran, 1988). Usmar Ismail described him thus:

Djamaluddin Malik in his ambitions wants to support cultural sentiments but in his execution is more inclined to the commercial stream of the Chinese group. This fact is not that disturbing, because Djamaluddin Malik is originally a trader who of course judges everything from that perspective. (1983[1954]: 58)<sup>36</sup>

Different standards were thus used to assess the contributions of Djamaluddin Malik and the ethnic Chinese, even though their approach to film was largely the same. Malik earned his nationalist credentials for patronizing nationalist directors such as Usmar Ismail, and for establishing the Indonesian Film Festival (FFI) in 1954 to reward and celebrate efforts in the local film industry.

Malik was a prominent, at times controversial, capitalist in the film industry of independent Indonesia. Before the war, Malik had worked for Dutch companies in Sumatra and later migrated to Java to manage theatre groups. He became associated with the *Seniman Senen* artists who used to congregate in Senen, East Jakarta,<sup>37</sup> where he was known to patronize the artists (Ardan, 2004: 34). The first FFI was mired in controversy when his own Persari-produced film *Tarmina* (1954) tied for the best film prize with Usmar Ismail’s *Lewat Djam Malam*,<sup>38</sup> also produced by Persari. Then, when Malik produced Indonesia’s first colour film – *Rodrigo de Villa* (1952) – Goenawan Mohamad argues Malik plagiarized a story from the Philippines, “lock, stock and barrel” (2005[1983]:

---

<sup>36</sup> “Djamaluddin Malik yang dalam tujuannya juga ingin mendukung cita-cita kebudayaan, tetapi yang dalam prakteknya lebih banyak terbawa arus komersial golongan Tionghoa. Hal ini tidaklah mengherankan benar, karena Djamaluddin Malik pada asalnya adalah seorang pedagang yang tentunya memperhitungkan segala sesuatu juga dari sudut itu.”

<sup>37</sup> Notable amongst them were actor Sukarno M. Noor, director Wahyu Sihombing (1932-1989), S.M. Ardan, director Sjaman Djaya (1933-1985), Misbach Yusa Biran (b. 1933, known as ‘Pak Haji’), journalist and future Minister of Information Harmoko (b. 1939). Actor Wahid Chan (1921-1971) was the de facto ‘leader’ of the Seniman Senen. The Seniman Senen group were around from 1950 to the establishment of the Jakarta Arts Centre in 1968 in nearby Cikini.

<sup>38</sup> Ironically, *Lewat Djam Malam* was a joint production between Persari and Perfini.

35). Later, Malik went as far as to bring in Indian directors and technicians to make films in order to capitalize on the popularity of Indian films with local audiences.<sup>39</sup> Despite his dubious record, Malik is still regarded as an exemplary figure of *film nasional* simply because he is *pribumi* and a nationalist.

## **2.5 Film Nasional as Legitimate Culture**

Djamaluddin Malik and Usmar Ismail were not the only nationalist filmmakers active in the 1950s and 1960s, although subsequent renderings of film history often make this seem so (Biran, 2005). This is because history came to be rewritten by New Order ideologues following the inception of the New Order regime in 1966, which dismissed or erased the contribution of leftist filmmakers such as Bachtiar Siagian and Basuki Effendi (Sen, 1985).

In the version of film history that came to dominate under the New Order, filmmakers associated with LEKRA (Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat, ‘People’s Cultural Institute’) were responsible for politicizing film, creating havoc and thus deviating from the ideals of ‘apolitical’ *film nasional*. They were said to put factional demands ahead of national concerns, and preferred to create divisions rather than unity in the film industry. As a reprehensible period in the history of *film nasional*, the 1960s are referred to as ‘the dark period’ of national cinema. Such historical constructions were possible because the leftists were virtually extinguished and their writings, films and other works were destroyed or removed from public circulation. Left-wing directors Bachtiar Siagian (b. 1923), Basuki Effendi (1930-2006), and writer Sitor Situmorang (b. 1924) were all imprisoned.

---

<sup>39</sup> Malik is famously quoted as saying “If the audience want Indian type [films], we will give them Indian, until they get bored” Said (1978: 66). Original reads: “Kalau penonton mau yang India, kita kasih India, biar sampai mereka bosan.”

Sen (1985: 1) reports that when they were released and returned to work in the film industry, they only worked as ghost writers. Much of the complexity of the period is elided in subsequent renderings, such that *film nasional* moved from being one competing ideology amongst many, to being the official, legitimate history of film in Indonesia (Barker, 2010).

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s art had been a site of ideological contestation between the different political streams that constituted Indonesian nationalism. The formation of LEKRA in 1950 marked the beginning of a politically informed social commitment amongst a section of the country's artists and cultural producers (Foulcher, 1986). LEKRA were affiliated to the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia, 'Indonesian Communist Party') which grew in stature and importance throughout the 1950s and 1960s, reaching an estimated membership of six million by 1965. When President Soekarno ended parliamentary democracy in 1957, and began the era known as Guided Democracy (1957-1965), the PKI were important allies in his political vision of NASAKOM (Nationalism, Islam and Communism). In response, right wing conservative and Islamic artists formed LESBUMI, the Indonesian Muslim Cultural Workers Institute, of which Usmar Ismail and Djamaluddin Malik were both key members.

Nationalists from both left and right advocated realism as the appropriate means to represent national culture, and enlighten audiences (Gunawan, 1973). It is generally accepted that leftist filmmakers, as with LEKRA artists in general, advocated social realism, in line with their belief that art should seek to explain the structural dimensions of the social. The position of conservative artists meanwhile has been described as 'universal humanism' or 'naturalism' for

presenting social conditions,<sup>40</sup> and the emphasis on the moral or individualist dimensions of social action (Sen, 1985). Both of these positions were at ease throughout the 1950s, but by the 1960s, ideological contest was more in the open, especially with the increased power and mobilization of the PKI politically. As a result, the conservative faction, including filmmakers Djameluddin Malik, Usmar Ismail, Misbach Yusa Biran and journalist Rosihan Anwar, found that the activities of the PKI and LEKRA not only threatened their interests but were damaging to the national film industry.<sup>41</sup> Usmar Ismail would write later that artists who advocated class theory are “hypocrites who have to be excluded from the Indonesian art world”.<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, since nationalism was a common cause, both sides advocated greater protection and support for the local film industry. Imported films from the Philippines, India, China and America dominated in the local cinemas because it was cheaper to import, rather than to make, a film.<sup>43</sup> Finding little support from the government, producers closed their studios temporarily in 1957 in protest. Events took a more ‘ideological’ turn when the PAPFIAS (Panitia Aksi Penganyangan Film Imperialis Amerika Serikat, ‘The Action Committee for the Destruction of Imperialist American Films’), a LEKRA/PKI linked organization, successfully petitioned to have ‘imperialist’ American films banned. The subsequent dearth of films available for screening further exacerbated an already conflicted and struggling film sector. This left a huge impression on many

---

<sup>40</sup> C.W. Watson provides an overview of realism and naturalism as it applied to Indonesian literature in his introduction to Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s *It’s Not An All Night Fair*.

<sup>41</sup> For Rosihan Anwar’s interpretation of events, see Anwar (1981).

<sup>42</sup> “Penilaian yang berdasarkan ‘teori perjuangan kelas’ adalah palsu dan harus ditolak dan dibuang jauh-jauh dan apa yang menyebutkan dirinya pekerja seni yang ingin menerapkan teori itu di dalam karya-karya mereka adalah orang-orang munafik yang harus disisihkan dari dunia kekarya-an kesenian Indonesia” Ismail (1983[1966]: 26)

<sup>43</sup> In 1957 for example, members of the PPFi shut down their studios in protest at government inaction over the domination of the lower class cinemas by Indian films (Biran, 2008: 115-116).

in the film industry that Soekarno and the leftists put political ideology before the interests and viability of the local film industry. The ban on imports and the declining state of the economy under Soekarno's increasingly erratic presidency resulted in the closure of over half of the country's cinemas by 1965.

The erasure of the left in 1965-1966 made the transition from Soekarno's presidency to the New Order possible. An abortive "coup" on 30 September 1965, engineered by members of the military, was exploited by then General Soeharto to annihilate the PKI and its followers.<sup>44</sup> Soeharto then installed himself as President and presided over thirty-two years of the New Order. There is widespread consensus amongst scholars of modern Indonesian history that the New Order redefined Indonesian history by elevating the military to a preeminent position and discrediting communism in all its incarnations (Heryanto, 1999; McGregor, 2007). In order to institutionalize nationalism the New Order state devoted itself to the task of making 'national culture' a state, rather than a popular, project (Hooker, 1999: 263). Anderson (1983) argues that the New Order represented the victory of the state over the nation, premised on the idea that it brought order and stability to a country in chaos. The effect of these events concerned Krishna Sen in her early work on the Indonesian film industry (1983; 1985).

In response to the events of 1965, Usmar Ismail reiterated the artistic and nationalist purpose of film. The artist, he said, must remain pure and not succumb to any illegitimate political ideology (i.e. communism or the theory of class conflict), but must affirm Pancasila,<sup>45</sup> Islam and traditional values (Ismail,

---

<sup>44</sup> The exact events of the so-called "coup" and the subsequent events leading to General Soeharto's rise to the presidency remain unclear and are subject to dispute amongst academics and historians.

<sup>45</sup> Pancasila, adopted by Soekarno, are the nation's founding principles. They are belief in one god; social justice; unity of Indonesia; democracy; and, just and civilized society.

1983[1966]: 24). The artist is “the purest manifestation of an individualist”,<sup>46</sup> is uncompromising and “works in relation to and with a responsibility to the world around him and to the Creator.”<sup>47</sup> Through this, the artist is meant to be the “voice of the people”<sup>48</sup> and “with awareness elucidate the problems of life in their entirety.”<sup>49</sup> Ismail’s position post-1965 contradicts how he had praised Bachtiar Siagian less than a decade earlier, calling him and others in LEKRA, “traitors” (*pengkhianat*) (1983: 25). Nevertheless, Ismail’s position was adopted as the official position of *film nasional*, although the individualist principles he advocated for the artist were to be increasingly compromised by a state intent on ideological hegemony.

## **2.6 Film Nasional and the New Order**

Revealing the authoritarian nature of the New Order informs much of Krishna Sen’s work on Indonesian film as evident in the subtitle of her monograph *Framing the New Order* (1994). Her central argument is that the New Order imposed its ideological and institutional controls over film such that cinema was increasingly ‘ordered’ both on-screen in terms of narratives and censorship and in the institutional organization of film production. Her model suggests a homogenous regime in which proponents of *film nasional* found a natural ally. Far from being a politically homogenous regime over its thirty-two years from 1966 to 1998, the New Order took time to consolidate its rule and introduce its

---

<sup>46</sup> “Seniman [...] pada fitrinya adalah individualis dalam manifestasinya yang paling murni.” Ismail (1983: 18).

<sup>47</sup> “dia menetapkan hubungannya dan tanggung jawabnya terhadap dunia sekilangnya dan terhadap Khaliknya.” Ismail (1983: 18).

<sup>48</sup> “penyuara hati nurani rakyat” (Ismail, 1983: 25).

<sup>49</sup> “dengan sadar mengungkapkan persoalan-persoalan kehidupan secara bersungguh-sungguh.” (Ismail 1983: 22).

ideological programme. Only during the 1980s could the New Order be said to be at its ideological peak, after which the regime went into decline in the 1990s. Each of the three phases influenced the New Order film industry and the relationship between state ideology and *film nasional*.

Once the nation stabilized after the upheaval of 1965-1966, the period up to 1974 was relatively liberal, despite the violent extermination of the left from both political and cultural life. In describing this liberal atmosphere one minister from Suharto's first cabinet likened Jakarta to the 'Prague Spring of 1968' (Schwarz, 1991: 33). Jakarta Governor Ali Sadikin inaugurated the Jakarta Arts Centre in 1968 and allowed gambling and massage parlors in the city as a means of generating tax revenue.<sup>50</sup> Reportedly, the iconic Djakarta Theater in Sarinah, Central Jakarta, was built using the proceeds of a casino next door (Jauhari, 1992: 104). The Department of Information adopted an open import policy known as the 'quantity approach' in an attempt to revitalize the cinemas and in turn, local production.<sup>51</sup> These policies were to be a disappointment to the 'victors' of 1965 (Hatley, 1994: 220), who hoped that the New Order would promote *film nasional*. Instead of edifying quality films that *film nasional* proponents wanted, the cinemas were filled with 'sex and violence' (Budiman, 2006; Said, 1991: 81).

In response, the DPFN (Dewan Pertimbangan Film Nasional, 'National Film Development Council') under Asrul Sani, funded four 'quality' films in 1968 in order to show local producers the types of films they should be making.<sup>52</sup> Funds came from a levy imposed on film imports. Publicly, the DPFN films were

---

<sup>50</sup> He was governor from 1966 to 1977, President Soekarno's last appointment.

<sup>51</sup> The Department of Information had been established in 1964 by Soekarno.

<sup>52</sup> *Matt Dower* (1968) directed by Nya Abbas Akup. The film was not released because of its satire; *Apa jang Kau Tjari, Palupi?* (1969, 'What are You Looking For, Palupi?') directed by Asrul Sani. It won an award at the Asia Pacific Film Festival in Jakarta; *Nyi Ronggeng* (1969, 'The Ronggeng Dancer') directed by Alam Surawidjaja; and *Djampang Mentjari Naga Hitam* (1968, 'Djampang's Search for the Black Snake') directed by Lilik Sudijo. The only film to sell well.

regarded as failures for not attracting audiences and the programme was discredited for an ‘excess use of funds’ (Said, 1991: 83), a euphemism for corruption. Director General for Film, H. Djohardin, attacked the supporters of the DPFN saying:

Let us not ignore the taste of the millions of people just to please those pseudo-intellectuals who give high honors to such (commercial) failures like *What Are You Looking For, Palupi?* In my opinion, the national film industry has made great strides forward: our actors are living better; so too the technical personnel, something never before seen in the last twenty years.<sup>53</sup>

The populism of the Department of Information prevailed and the Minister Budiardjo (1968-1973) formally adopted what was to be known as the ‘quantity approach’ to film, by cultivating “the cinema as industry handled by private enterprises under government control” (Mohamad, 1975: 78).

Debates over what constituted suitable viewing increased in this period with the revival of popular film led by the horror, sex and *silat* (martial arts) genres. Producer Turino Junaedi, who publicly criticized the DPFN films saying they cost twice as much as what he could make films for, went on to produce the wildly popular *Bernafas Dalam Lumpur* (1971, ‘Breathing in Mud’) starring actress Suzzanna. Often cited as one of the first ‘daring’ (Said, 1991b: 81) or ‘sex’ films, it is also a fascinating representation of modernizing Jakarta, as a young housewife journeys to the city to find her errant husband. After a series of predatory men have sex with her, she becomes a prostitute, wherein a kindly client falls in love and attempts to rescue her. She dies from excessive alcohol and marijuana use. Observers who concentrated on its “numerous bedroom scenes” (Tombs, 1998: 67) failed to see its social relevance. They decried the commercial

---

<sup>53</sup> As quoted in Said (1991b: 120). Original is from 1971 and quoted in Mohamad (1980: 79).

orientation of the industry that films like *Bernafas Dalam Lumpur* heralded. Others, such as intellectual Goenawan Mohamad (1975; 1980) who argued that popular films needed to be taken seriously, had little effect on the nationalist critics.

The ‘liberal period’ ended when the ‘Malari Riots’ broke out in Jakarta in 1974, precipitated by the visit of the Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka, but directed at the ‘foreign’ control of businesses in Indonesia.<sup>54</sup> The New Order showed its repressive hand by sending in the military, arresting instigators and shutting down twelve publications (Hill, 1995). These actions signaled the regime entering a period of consolidation and hegemony that would last until the early 1990s. Film import quotas were progressively introduced from 1972, and in 1973 film importers were required to join one of four import consortiums in order to better control them.<sup>55</sup> This was first done with Chinese films, due to the fear of Communist propaganda (Endah, 2005: 136), but the policy was soon expanded to cover all films imported into Indonesia. State control intensified with the appointment of Soeharto-loyalist Ali Moertopo as Minister of Information (1978-1983), a military intelligence officer responsible for engineering much of the New Order’s political architecture (Bourchier and Hadiz, 2003: 29).

Nevertheless, audiences flooded the cinemas to see these comedy, horror and sex films, signaling the rise of a popular culture in film. A similar cultural movement was underway with the emergence of pop literature, a challenge to the serious works of literature (Kleden, 1987). Many of these pop novels and comics were then turned into popular films. Nationalists like Asrul Sani became even

---

<sup>54</sup> Foreign here means by domestic Chinese as well as by foreigners, especially the Japanese.

<sup>55</sup> The four consortiums corresponded to the regions from which the films came from: Europe America I, Europe America II, China (including Hong Kong); Asia Other (India and ASEAN).

more concerned about the impact this was having on the people's morals and on the direction of the film industry generally.<sup>56</sup>

I use the word 'commercialism' in the sense that everything is evaluated according to purely financial concerns without consideration for social, cultural or other concerns. We here in Indonesia are not free from this either. Moreover at the moment it can be said that compared with conditions in the past, film in Indonesia was never fully in the grip of commercialism like it is now. This does not mean that in the past people did not make films to make money, but in their efforts, they still spoke with their conscience, there were still patriotic concerns, sometimes there was even concerns that were idealistic.<sup>57</sup>

Echoing Sani's sentiments, Sjumandjaya posed the dilemma: "The question is now whether the image of Indonesian films will be the personification of these adventurers or that of our artists" (1977: 29).

The concerns over the excessive commercialism of the film industry fed into a broader debate about 'national culture' which had its antecedents in the cultural debates of the 1950s. At the centre of this debate was the image or 'face' (*wajah*) of Indonesia shown in locally made films (Mohamad, 1975). Critic Jakob Sumardjo famously asked of film in 1974: "When will we see our real face up there?"<sup>58</sup> He was alluding to the concern that Indonesian films were not showing a so-called real Indonesian face, but rather one copied from imported films from

---

<sup>56</sup> See also Said (1991b: 81) for reactions to these popular films.

<sup>57</sup> "Saya mempergunakan kata 'komersialisme', dalam pengertian bahwa semuanya diukur dari sudut kepentingan komersial semata tanpa menghiraukan kepentingan sosial, kebudayaan dan sebagainya. Kita di Indonesia juga tidak bebas dari ini. Malahan saat sekarang ini dapat dikatakan, bahwa dibandingkan dengan sejarahnya di masa lampau, belum pernah perfilman Indonesia begitu mutlak berada dalam cengkeraman komersialisme seperti kini. Ini tidak berarti, dulu orang tidak membuat film untuk beroleh keuntungan, tapi dalam usaha ini masih ada bicara hati sanubari, masih ada pertimbangan patriotik, kadang-kadang masih ada pertimbangan yang bersifat idealistik." Asrul Sani (1997 [1976]: 366).

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Said (1991b: 4). The original question reads "Kapan wajah kita yang sebenarnya bisa kita lihat di sana?" From 'Image Indonesia Dalam Film Nasional Kita' *Kompas* 16/04/1974, p. 4. Jakob Sumardjo (b. 1939) is an academic and writer, currently a lecturer in the Indonesian Dance Institute (Akademi Tari Seni Indonesia).

Hong Kong and Hollywood.<sup>59</sup> These concerns became formalized when the jury of the 1977 Indonesian Film Festival failed to select a best film,<sup>60</sup> and issued a statement that in part read:

Our filmmakers in general do not have an awareness of environment, geography or society, such that they have never made a film about their Indonesian environment, and because of that their films are not Indonesian films. Their films are only superficial fictions based on their dreams and obsessions supported by their excessive enthusiasm for business.<sup>61</sup>

Populated by members of the cultural elite, the FFI jury clearly showed the criteria they used to assess and judge a film was that of *film nasional*. According to *film nasional* Indonesian culture was not to be found in popular films, but rather in films made by idealist directors. Defining ‘Indonesian culture’ in this way was a project in speculation, but sustained the ongoing distinction between popular films and *film nasional*.

For filmmakers though, this demand to make authentic Indonesian films was difficult given the vagueness of the concept. Director Ami Priyono explained his difficulty as a practitioner, saying, “I would like in fact to produce a film with a real Indonesian image, but we can’t determine exactly what the Indonesian image is” (1977: 33). In a piece written for the daily *Kompas*, FFI jury member D.A. Peransi dissented from the majority opinion of the 1977 FFI jury:

---

<sup>59</sup> By the 1970s the principle sources of imported film were India, Hong Kong and Hollywood. In the literature I did not find reference made to the influence of Indian films on the ‘Indonesian face’.

<sup>60</sup> Members of the jury included D. Djajakusuma, H. Rosihan Anwar, Irawati M. Sudiarso, Zulharmans, Setyadi Tryman MS., Dr. Soedjoko, D.A. Peransi, Taufik Ismail and Salim Said. The statement was read by head D. Djajakusuma and Rosihan Anwar.

<sup>61</sup> “Pembuatan film kita pada umumnya tidak mempunyai kesadaran lingkungan, geografis, maupun sosial, sehingga mereka tidak pernah membuat film tentang lingkungannya yang Indonesia, karena itu film mereka bukan film Indonesia. Film-film mereka cuma rekaan dangkal dari impian dan obsesi mereka yang ditopang oleh semangat dagang yang berlebihan.” Quoted in Said (1991a: 193)

The theme of searching for the Indonesian face in Indonesian films this year is the manifestation of a desire which is as vague as the film industry in this country trying to find and formulate its own identity. And the formulation of that face is as difficult as the formulation of a personality and identity of Indonesia (1997[1977]: 47).<sup>62</sup>

Instead, Peransi argued that recent films did in fact provide a picture of Indonesia, 'of a people wanting to be modern' (1997[1977]: 54) but that it was an image that nationalist critics did not want to see.<sup>63</sup> In essence, this revealed the largely hollow rhetoric of *film nasional* and the search for 'Indonesian culture', but did not stop its continual reiteration.<sup>64</sup>

It was possible to take a different approach to the question of 'Indonesian culture' as American anthropologist Karl Heider (1991) did. He argues that Indonesian films in fact do exhibit an identifiable national culture, which he says is clearly visible in the expressions, stories and characters visible on the screen. These features, he says, are common to all people in the nation because films are made for a national audience, and thus constitute national culture. Despite being an axiomatic argument, Heider's work is important because it used popular film to substantiate ideas about the Indonesian character and culture. These he linked to folklore, the emphasis on groups rather than the individual, and the 'return to order' narrative arc. He however fails to identify the interests embedded in the

---

<sup>62</sup> "Tema mencari wajah Indonesia dalam film Indonesia tahun ini agaknya merupakan proyeksi dari keinginan yang samar-samar dari dunia perfilman di negeri ini untuk mencari dan merumuskan identitasnya. Dan perumusan tentang wajah itu kiranya sama sulitnya dengan perumusan tentang kepribadian dan identitas Indonesia." Peransi, D.A. "Sebuah "Snapshot" Profil Film Indonesia (1976-1977)". Original published in *Kompas* 10 March 1977.

<sup>63</sup> This theme had been earlier articulated by journalist Goenawan Mohamad (1975) in a piece he wrote for the first edition of academic journal *Prisma*.

<sup>64</sup> In fact from 1977 onwards the film world increasingly became obsessed with this question of the 'real Indonesia' or 'Indonesian culture' such that it rapidly became an empty slogan, much like the *pembangunan* (development) rhetoric of the New Order.

local debates about national culture and especially how the ideology of *film nasional* operated to define national culture a priori.

To produce films befitting of *film nasional*, ideologues argued that realism was the proper means to produce national culture. This was traced back to Usmar Ismail, as his films “are Indonesian films, because the stories are about Indonesian people on Indonesian soil” (Said, 1991a[1975]: 192).<sup>65</sup> Usmar Ismail was posthumously associated with Italian neo-realism, even though during his life he spoke more of his attachment to Hollywood aesthetics,<sup>66</sup> and studied in California in 1953. In a 1978 interview, Said elaborated further on the realism, urging filmmakers to “commit to the reality that is around us. Stories have to be about: our ups and downs as Indonesian people” (1991[1978]: 200).<sup>67</sup> Asrul Sani elaborated thus:

But the issue is how to make our films a means to talk to their audiences about their real situation that they encountered around them. So that film can be developed to become a tool that can push audiences to engage in dialogue with themselves: so that film can help them understand their reality in a better way. It is only in this way that we can give a contribution to national development. (1988: 84)<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> “Film-film almarhum Usmar Ismail itu adalah film-film Indonesia, karena ceritanya tentang manusia Indonesia di bumi Indonesia” (Said, 1991a: 192).

<sup>66</sup> Film scholar Ekky Imanjaya has told me that Usmar Ismail did write about Italian neo-realism in the 1950s, although I have not seen any evidence of this. Rosihan Anwar writes that Usmar Ismail was criticized by the left in 1964 for supporting the ‘American way of life’ (1981[1964]: 474).

<sup>67</sup> “Harus kommit dengan realitas yang ada di sekitar kita. Ceritanya harus bercerita tentang: sukaduka kita manusia Indonesia” (1991[1978]: 200).

<sup>68</sup> “Tapi soalnya adalah untuk menjadikan film kita menjadi alat yang bicara pada penontonnya tentang kenyataan sebenarnya yang terdapat dilingkungannya. Supaya film kita dapat dibina menjadi alat yang bisa mendorong penonton mengadakan dialog dengan dirinya sendiri: supaya film dapat membantunya untuk memahami kenyataan dengan cara yang lebih baik. Karena hanya dengan cara begitu kita dapat memberikan sumbangan pada pembangunan bangsa.” Sani (1988: 84).

These appear to be very noble aims linking audiences to a project of national development through film. Yet they hide an elitist cultural politics and obfuscate the cultural politics of the 1950s and 1960s on which these ideas claim legitimacy.

This call for ‘realism’ evoked the cultural debates of the 1960s between the left and the right discussed in the previous section. Both sides had claimed that their version of social realism best captured the realities of social life. In the 1970s however, these ideas went largely unchallenged because its original critics, from LEKRA and the social realist directors such as Basuki Effendi and Bachtiar Siagian, were discredited and disappeared from public life by means of imprisonment and murder (Sen, 1983). One of these critics, Sitor Situmorang, had written in 1965 that

Statements from the realists say that the social situation can provide an understanding about the existence of suffering, but it does not provide understanding of its causes, moreover it often hides it, with the reason that: it is just humanity! (Situmorang, 2004[1965]: 213)<sup>69</sup>

Situmorang, the writer behind *Darah dan Doa*, was imprisoned in 1966 for writing this essay, because of its pro-LEKRA stance. He identified the politics of the cultural elite whose interpretation of art and its social purpose was in ascendance and that found official form within the New Order. This was a realism very much catered to the ideological demands of the New Order and built on the triumph of conservative nationalism in the 1960s.

By the 1980s film had been thoroughly incorporated into the developmentalist agenda of the New Order. Not only had the state-owned National Film Company (PFN, ‘Perusahaan Film Nasional’) become the largest

---

<sup>69</sup> “Pengungkapan realis tentang keadaan sosial dapat memberi pengertian tentang adanya penderitaan, tapi tidak memberi pengertian tentang sebab-sebabnya, malahan sering menutup-nutupinya, dengan dalih: namanyalah manusia!”

producer of films in the country, but the beginning of the 1980s saw film being deployed as a media of ‘education and enlightenment’ (Kurnia, 2006: 275).

## **2.7 Film Nasional and Creative Freedom**

With its ideological opponents gone, *film nasional* was increasingly dissociated from the popular film industry. The FFI continued to be a key institution from which the standards of legitimate culture in film were defined. Due to the divided nature of the industry, the winners at the FFI tended to be the same people year after year (Biran, 2001: 232).<sup>70</sup> This was further enforced in 1984 when the criteria for the H. Antemas prize were changed.<sup>71</sup> Antemas was an anti-LEKRA producer in the 1960s who opposed the PAPFIAS ban on American imports, and thus became a hero of the anti-communist right. In 1975 the Antemas Prize was introduced to recognize the most successful film at the Jakarta box-office, invariably a popular commercial film. As this contradicted the principles of *film nasional*, the criteria were changed so that only films nominated for awards at the FFI qualified.<sup>72</sup> This “only gave rise to problems,” says Tjasmadi (2008: 189),<sup>73</sup> as in 1988, when Eros Djarot, director of *Tjoet Njak Dhien*, refused the Antemas prize because *Saur Sepuh* (1988) had garnered more than double his audience.<sup>74</sup> Unsurprisingly, commercial producers felt betrayed (Punjabi, 2005: 172).

---

<sup>70</sup> Biran is referring to Syuman Djaya, Teguh Karya, Wim Umboh and Ami Priyono.

<sup>71</sup> An earlier incident occurred in 1974 when a journalist-run film festival, the PWI Jaya, was forced to dissolve itself in favour of the Indonesian Film Festival, organized by the government and populated by *film nasional* figures. See Siagian (2006: 43-47).

<sup>72</sup> Like the Academy Awards, the FFI awarded Citra for cinematography, directing, sound, special effects, best actor and actress, best supporting actors, etc.

<sup>73</sup> “Justru menimbulkan masalah saja”.

<sup>74</sup> According to Tjasmadi (2008: 188), *Saur Sepuh* was seen by 575,480 people whilst *Tjoet Njak Dhien* was seen by 204,785 people.

The New Order continued to produce its ‘great’ directors, such as Teguh Karya (1937-2001), Wim Umboh (1933-1996) and Eros Djarot (b. 1950). Many came across from theatre, a more ‘artistic’ realm of cultural production, whereas apprenticeships produced the majority of commercial directors. Much was made of the aforementioned directors, who dedicated their skills as artists to creating great works of the nation. Telling is the story of director Teguh Karya (Steve Liem Tjoan Hok) who came into film through theatre from his Teater Popular group. As an ethnic Chinese, Karya downplayed his Chineseness to the point of denial, and conformed to the precepts of *film nasional*. His greatest film is *November 1828* (1979), a nationalist epic set in the context of the war fought by Prince Diponegoro against the Dutch. He too follows the *film nasional* dichotomy, and believes in the “two patterns [that] have become something of traditions” (1988: 6), namely commercialism and idealism. His students at Teater Popular, actor and director Slamet Rahardjo and his younger brother Eros Djarot, would continue the tradition of ‘idealism’.

What was also apparent was that the concerns of the New Order state were increasingly being merged with *film nasional*, such that key intellectuals became apologists for New Order film policy. Consequently, in 1978 the case of the film *Wasdri* (unproduced) marked a turning point between the first relatively liberal decade of the New Order and its increasing control over the industry into the 1980s. *Wasdri* was based on the factual story of a porter working in Senen Market (inner East Jakarta) who was beaten up after he protested at how little a judge’s

wife had paid him for his labour.<sup>75</sup> Scriptwriter Jasso Winarto explained in a recent interview that

The Wasdri case is an example of where a marginalized market labourer refused to be underpaid by the wife of a judge who then used his position as judge to appeal to the press and public. In the film, I wanted to show how hypocrisy had become part of the culture, especially amongst civil servants and officials.<sup>76</sup>

The film script was 'held up' in the Department of Information, and the film was never made. It did, however, trigger a significant protest from over one hundred filmmakers.

The protest that followed was the last concerted effort by filmmakers to collectively resist state encroachment on filmmaking. Until that point, filmmakers had largely acquiesced to encroaching state interference in their work, such as requirements for checking scripts and censorship. Sjuman Djaya had introduced pre-production script approval as head of the DPFN in 1968 to assess whether scripts should receive state funding, but by the 1970s it was being used to check all film scripts for inappropriate content. Even a commercial producer like Raam Punjabi was irritated at this process when in one film he was ordered to change the name of a female character, after a Minister complained that the name Sisca was also his wife's name (Punjabi, 2005: 170).<sup>77</sup> When the script for the film *Wasdri* was rejected by the Department of Information in 1977, filmmakers

---

<sup>75</sup> The attack is listed by Said (2009) as one of the many human rights violations committed during the New Order regime. Said is a former journalist associated with left wing newspapers who stayed overseas following the events of 1965.

<sup>76</sup> "Kasus Wasdri adalah kasus orang kecil-kuli pasar yang menolak dibayar murah oleh ibu jaksa yang memakai jasanya yang mendapat perhatian pers dan masyarakat. Lewat film ini, saya hanya ingin memotret bagaimana hipokrisi begitu membudaya dalam masyarakat, terutama di kalangan pejabat dan aparat." 'Dua yang Terpasung' *Tempo*, 10 April 2006.

<sup>77</sup> This was the wife of Soedomo, then Minister of Manpower (1983-1988).

protested against state interference.<sup>78</sup> “This protest,” said director Arifin C. Noer “is not just about *Wasdri*, but about the question of creativity more generally.”<sup>79</sup> Concerns about creative freedom were generally ignored by New Order ideologues who continued to argue that the real problem was commercialism and a lack of national sentiment.

If *film nasional* ideologues thought they were upholding the vision of the industry’s nationalist founding fathers, they were plainly wrong. The irony was that the so-called founding fathers of film in Indonesia were not just nationalists, but also advocated artistic and creative freedom. Two of the earliest post-independence filmmakers – Usmar Ismail and Dr Huyung – encountered protest and interdiction from civil society groups on the release of their debut films. Both felt that the state had a responsibility to protect them and their work from such arbitrary protest and public outcries. They hoped that censorship and government regulation would provide filmmakers with institutional protection and not be used as a mechanism for curtailing expression. Subsequently they worked to strengthen censorship and state regulation as a means to protect filmmakers and their right to free expression (Ismail, 1983; Huyung, 1952). By the 1970s however, censorship and regulation were deployed to ensure New Order cultural and ideological hegemony.

By the late 1970s censorship was clearly one of many mechanisms of control over filmmakers and their films to ensure films conformed to New Order ideology (Sen, 1994). For example, Asrul Sani had in 1957 insisted that:

---

<sup>78</sup> The film, written by Yasso Winarto with director Nico Pelamonia was never made. A number of other artists at the time joined the protests because of increasing cases of bannings including songs by Rhoma Irama, poetry and theatre performances and films.

<sup>79</sup> “Protes ini tidak cuma menyangkut soal Wasdri, tapi menyangkut masalah kreativitas secara umum.” Arifin C. Noer quoted in ‘Betulkah soalnya hanya “wasdri”?’ *Tempo*, 17 December 1977.

the artist is the ‘conscience of a people and an era.’ And he cannot carry out his obligations as that ‘conscience’ or ‘geweten’ if he is only allowed to follow the official truth, that has been taught in the schools, or from the department of education or even religion.<sup>80</sup>

However, by the late 1970s, Asrul Sani, like many other proponents of *film nasional*, had submitted *film nasional* to the prerogatives of the New Order state in order to conform to New Order ideology. In doing so they gave up the cultural struggle for independence that they had valued in the 1950s. If the goal was to produce films that reflected national culture then “Not every film containing criticism should be censored” suggested director Ami Priyono. “I am convinced that many films with Indonesian characteristics will be produced if this [criticism] is made possible” (1977: 34).

State control over film reached its peak during the 1980s as the New Order consolidated its hegemony across all aspects of Indonesian life. In a 1979 conference to discuss film policy, Ali Moertopo floated the concept of ‘educational and cultural films’ (Said, 1991b: 123) which was then formalized into a comprehensive set of ethical guidelines for filmmakers a year later. As Sen (1994) notes, these guidelines were not so much concerned about sex and violence, but with order and stability.<sup>81</sup> Little changed when former journalist Harmoko became Minister of Information in 1984. He had been close to the *Seniman Senen* and a former film critic for the news weekly *Tempo*, but proved himself more loyal to the regime when he ordered numerous press bannings.

---

<sup>80</sup> “seniman adalah ‘hati sanubari suatu masyarakat dan zaman.’ Dan ia tidak akan dapat melakukan kewajibannya sebagai ‘hati sanubari’ atau ‘geweten’ itu jika ia hanya diperbolehkan makai kebenaran-benaran yang resmi, yang telah diakui di bangku-bangku sekolah, atau kementerian pendidikan ataupun agama.” (Sani, 1997[1957]: 321).

<sup>81</sup> From here she developed her theory of the ‘return to order’ narrative arc where she argues film narratives typically presented situations of order that are disrupted by an agent of disorder, and are only restored to order through the intervention of the state (police, army or modernist Islam).

These included the newspaper *Sinar Harapan* in 1986 and famously in 1994 the news magazines, *Tempo*, edited by Goenawan Mohamad, and *Detik*, edited by filmmakers Eros Djarot and Gatot Prakosa. Despite all the rhetoric to the contrary, excessive regulations only dampened the film industry and when the new film law (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 8 Tahun 1992 Tentang Perfilman) was introduced in 1992, it initiated the 1990s decline of film production.

## **2.8 An Industry in Decline**

During the last decade of the New Order, the film industry stagnated for reasons that have not been grasped in their entirety by those seeking to understand the history of the film industry. Generally one of three reasons is offered: state interference (regulations and censorship), technological competition (TV and video), or market conditions (import, distribution and exhibition monopoly). By the 1980s state interference in filmmaking hampered the ability of filmmakers to create films with the certainty that they would not be banned or severely cut. Mainstream local observers, compromised as they were for their complicity in the regime, sought to blame outside factors, specifically home video technology (GPBSI, 1992: 71; Lubis, 1992: 157-159) and the poor quality of local productions (Said, 1992b), often emphasizing the latent moral threats both posed to the nation. Progressive critics were more inclined to blame the rise of the Soeharto crony, Sudwikatmono and his monopoly over film imports, distribution and first run cinemas (Hakim, 2005). The combination of factors in the 1980s and 1990s coalesced to create a condition of impossibility for the local film industry.

President Soeharto's cousin and foster brother, Sudwikatmono, entered the film industry in the early 1970s as an ad-hoc producer. He came to take a more

powerful position following an invitation from the Tan Brothers (Benny Suherman and Bambang Sutrisno) who were importing Chinese films (Keng and Lin, 2008). Together as 'Suptan', they came to gain control of all film imports into Indonesia, first by taking the lucrative Shaw Brothers license and then progressively the other import consortiums. This form of business arrangement – between crony and ethnic Chinese business - would become a notable feature of New Order corporatism. Soeharto cronies, such as Sudwikatmono, provided political protection and business opportunities for politically powerless ethnic Chinese businessmen in exchange for a portion of the business (Chua, 2006). As importer Raam Punjabi noted, “We, the small importers, had to align ourselves with the prevailing regulations, but PT Suptan quickly gained the autonomy to import Mandarin films freely” (Endah, 2005: 136).<sup>82</sup> With this control over imports, Suptan developed a close relationship with a set of compliant film producers, mostly ethnic Indians, who came to rely on Suptan for production capital.

The 1970s also saw the growth of powerful distributors/brokers across the eleven film distribution areas in the archipelago. Due to the geography of Indonesia, and the popularity of locally made films in the regions, brokers came to be powerful intermediaries between producers in Jakarta and the exhibitors in their region. Producers would be paid a fixed price for their films, generally half paid upfront and the other half on a post-dated cheque. If a film flopped in the market, the producers would find the second cheque bounced, whereas if the film was successful, only then would they receive the initially agreed amount. As a result, there was little incentive for producers to invest in risky films, and

---

<sup>82</sup> “Kami, importir-importir kecil harus menyesuaikan diri dengan peraturan yang berlaku, tapi P.T. Suptan melaju dengan kelueluasannya mengimpor film Mandarin dengan bebas.”

distributors came to be so rich that they started funding films themselves to order. Some Jakarta-based producers, such as Ali Hasan of Inem Films, made films to order on his conveyor belt system based on rational calculations of the total income he could expect from all eleven distribution areas in Indonesia and exports to Singapore and Malaysia (Lent, 1990: 208). Commercially inclined producers remained powerful in this system due to the strength of the popular market.

Despite the salience of *film nasional* as the dominant ideology, the popular film industry remained substantially larger. Proponents of *film nasional* lacked the financial resources to fully realize their vision of a film industry dedicated to national development. As a concession to *film nasional*, commercial producers funded directors inclined to artistic or statement films, usually in order to win accolades and awards at the annual FFI and to do their part for *film nasional*.<sup>83</sup> Commercial producers were routinely criticized for producing culturally worthless films, yet they were often the ones funding the idealist directors to make the films that would later be heralded as exemplary ‘quality’ films. Budi Irawanto has described this kind of hypocrisy in the rhetoric of the period as chauvinistic (2007: 120).

By the end of the 1980s, the combination of the growing concentration, or monopoly, in the hands of Sudwikatmono and a distribution system that film journalist Rosihan Anwar described as a ‘jungle’ (1988: 4), caused stagnation in the film industry. In the distribution jungle imported films could take up to two years to reach audiences in the outer regions, and even then on well-worn copies, promoting many to seek entertainment elsewhere.<sup>84</sup> In 1986, Subentra, a

---

<sup>83</sup> There are other instances where the film import consortiums were instructed by Ali Moertopo to fund nationalist monuments, supposedly to prevent egocentrism amongst importers. See Tjasmadi (2008: 159).

<sup>84</sup> Notably television and home video. Chand Parwez Servia, personal interview, 17 July 2008.

Sudwikatmono-Benny Suherman company, established the 21 Cinema chain, vertically integrated into their import monopoly. 21 played almost exclusively imported Hollywood films, in its new air-conditioned cinemas, many built in the new shopping malls in Jakarta. Local films played in the peripheral cinemas where ticket prices were substantially lower than in 21, thus limiting the ability of local films to earn money. Local producers found their returns diminishing and so invested less in their films, further distancing local productions from popular tastes.

Discontent amongst local filmmakers became public when 21 pulled *Langitku Rumahku* (1990, 'My Sky, My Home') after only one day of screening. The film by Slamet Rahardjo had screened at a number of international film festivals, including in France and Berlin, allowing the filmmakers to claim it was a quality production. *Langitku Rumahku* is about an unlikely friendship between Andri, a son of a rich family, and Gempol, a slum dweller who collects paper for a living. After it was pulled, the filmmakers sued Perfin, the state distribution company, for not adhering to the stipulation that local cinemas had to play Indonesian films for at least two days.<sup>85</sup> 21 sidestepped responsibility by pointing to a 1986 decision reached between PPFI, GPBSI (Gabungan Pengusaha Bioskop Seluruh Indonesia, 'Organisation of Indonesian Cinema Owners'), Perfin and importers that a film had to have a minimum audience of 125 over three screenings.<sup>86</sup> According to Perfin, seven films had previously encountered this problem, but had simply accepted the situation rather than protesting like Eros Djarot and Slamet Rahardjo from Ekapraya.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> As stipulated in the SK 3 Menteri of 1975.

<sup>86</sup> PPFI, GPBSI and the importer's association were all controlled by, or affiliated with, Subentra. Coincidentally, this decision coincides with the opening of the first 21 Cineplex in 1986.

<sup>87</sup> S. Happy, and Leila S. Chudori. "Langitku Di Rumah Pengadilan." *Tempo*, 20 July 1991.

As the issue of *Langitku Rumahku* renewed allegations of monopoly, including a protest of 200 film people outside parliament in 1991,<sup>88</sup> 21 continued to enjoy protection via its patronage. Not only were such allegations dismissed by owners Sudwikatmono and Benny Suherman,<sup>89</sup> Minister of Information Harmoko, who was in business with the 21 owners, defended them. In response to critics in 1989, Harmoko claimed that “everything is operating according to the prevailing regulations. [...] The talk of a monopoly is not true.”<sup>90</sup> This blatant use of political power for economic gain had become a key feature of the New Order regime in its final decade, with more and more people upset at the excesses of Soeharto cronies. So whilst 21 Cinemas did modernize the cinema-going experience with their air-conditioned, comfortable modern *sineplex*, they only screened Hollywood films.

Popular audiences are not automatically inclined to locally made or imported films and have shown varying preferences over time. The market dominance of Hollywood in the late 1980s and into the 1990s was not simply an outcome of consumer preferences, but was shaped by the prevailing political economy both domestically and internationally. The consolidation of Subentra as dominant importer/distributor/exhibitor coincided with the global expansion of the Hollywood film industry as it sought markets overseas. Hollywood’s presence in Indonesia was made visible by the presence of its advocate body the MPEAA (Motion Pictures Export Association of America).

---

<sup>88</sup> ‘Indonesian actors, actresses slam film monopoly’ *The Straits Times*, 29 June 1991, 18. See also Christine Hakim in ‘Film semakin memprihatinkan’ *Tempo*, 29 December 1990.

<sup>89</sup> See for example the interview with Sudwikatmono, ‘Saya selalu dikambinghitamkan’ *Tempo*, 13 July 1991.

<sup>90</sup> “semua berfungsi sesuai dengan mekanisme yang berlaku... Kabar monopoli itu tidak benar.” ‘Kerajaan film impor’, *Tempo*, 22 July 1989.

By 1990, when 21 had around 70 of its own cinemas and hundreds more in its network, the MPEAA sought to alter the market conditions of Indonesia's film industry. The MPEAA had Indonesia placed on the US Trade Department's 301 watch list, used to signal US dissatisfaction with a country's economic rules, usually in contravention of 'free trade'. Ostensibly this action was directed at the existence of film import consortiums who were seen to restrict the importation of Hollywood films. In retaliation, the US Trade Department threatened to impose tariffs on Indonesian textiles. Dissident filmmakers supported the MPEAA's actions, believing that it would help expose Subentra's import monopoly.<sup>91</sup> MPEAA representative Stephen Clug revealed the real aim of the trade dispute with Indonesia: "The problem is the government regulation that only allows American films to be distributed through an importer. *And also the issue of quotas*" (my italics).<sup>92</sup> When the issue was resolved in 1992, along with the legislation of a new Film Law (No. 8. 1992), the film import quotas were increased. Although the import consortiums were also abolished, Subentra remained the sole importer and distributor of Hollywood films.

Limited private television broadcasting began in 1989, but by 1995 had expanded to six national stations (Kitley, 2000). A massive exodus occurred as filmmakers shifted to television, where work and money were far more abundant.<sup>93</sup> Rosihan Anwar reported in 1988 that more than half of the registered film workers (actors and technical) could not get work, and only 41 of the 95

---

<sup>91</sup> Probably Eros Djarot and some other dissident film makers.

<sup>92</sup> "Problemnya adalah peraturan pemerintah yang hanya mengizinkan mengalirnya film AS melalui importir. Dan juga soal kuota." 'Sinepleks tanpa singa mengaum' *Tempo*, 27 January 1990.

<sup>93</sup> Directors not wanting to move into television or the film industry often went into documentary. Such discontent led one young director, Johan Terangga, to establish Cinevisi, a documentary production company that produced documentaries for foreign television and documentary companies.

registered directors were directing films. In 1995, private television attracted 3335 trillion rupiah in advertising revenue, whereas cinemas only attracted 11 billion (Sen and Hill, 2000: 115).<sup>94</sup> Directors could earn 15 million rupiah per episode of *sinetron* which could be shot in a day, compared to 30 million for a complete film which might take up to a month to complete.<sup>95</sup> Sen and Hill (2000) report that by 1995 some private stations were showing up to 45% locally made content and 20% advertising, all of which had to be locally made. Only a few producers and filmmakers remained in feature film, making films destined for the peripheral cinemas.

The response of those who remained in film production was to turn to film *esek-esek*, erotic titles. Although eroticism has been a part of films made since 1970, sex and erotica, or at least the promise of it, came to dominate titles and stories in the 1990s (Tanesia, 2003). These films increasingly caught the ire of the public, and producers were called to the Censor Board to explain the increase in sex and erotica.<sup>96</sup> Offering ‘spice’ (*bumbu*) producers said, was the only way to attract dwindling audiences. Most mainstream audiences had shifted to television, and in particular the popular *sinetron*, for entertainment. Producer Ram Soraya of Soraya Intercine says he “asked that there be an inducement for the audience, so that they would go to the cinemas that screened Indonesian films. The LSF agreed. The cinemas overflowed again, but only the low class cinemas.”<sup>97</sup> Despite these concessions, the film industry had basically stagnated with many referring to the industry in this period as being in ‘suspended animation’ (*mati suri*).

---

<sup>94</sup> At an exchange rate of 2290 rupiah to the US dollar, this equals \$4.8 million of cinema advertising compared to \$1.5 billion in television. Exchange rate from Kitley (2000: 352).

<sup>95</sup> Emil G. Hampp, personal interview, 11 July 2008.

<sup>96</sup> Hendrix Gozali, personal interview, 19 June 2008.

<sup>97</sup> ‘Suara dari balik seluloid yang panas itu’ *Tempo*, 25 June 1994. “Saya minta supaya ada pancangan buat penonton, supaya mereka mau masuk bioskop yang memutar film Indonesia. BSF setuju. Dan bioskop luber lagi, bioskop kelas bawah tapi.”

Some organs of the state attempted to respond to this situation by funding feature films in the 1990s, rather than simply the propaganda films produced in the State Film Company (PFN). This was to maintain Indonesia's prestige at international film festivals.<sup>98</sup> Garin Nugroho and Nano Riantiarno were chosen to make films in 1994. Nano Riantiarno, despite being a respected playwright and leader of the Teater Koma, had only years before had his play *Sukses* (1990, 'Succession') banned. *Sukses* was a satire on Soeharto's children fighting to inherit the presidency from their father. The play was staged just after President Soeharto had announced his new policy of '*keterbukaan*' ('openness') to allow, within limits, feedback and criticism of the regime. After playing for ten days, *Sukses* was banned and Riantiarno had his activities curtailed.<sup>99</sup> Despite this, the DFN gave Riantiarno money to make *Cemeng 2005 (The Last Primadonna)* (1995) about the decline of a fictional theatre group called Cemeng in his hometown of Cirebon. However, the film only enjoyed a limited release.

Another project showed just how removed state functionaries were from the economic and cultural realities of the film industry. Head of the GPBSI (Gabungan Pengusaha Bioskop Seluruh Indonesia, 'Organisation of Indonesian Cinema Owners') Johan Tjasmadi, with money from the Pemda DKI (Jakarta Local Government), decided to make *Fatahillah* (1997) based on the life of the devout Muslim warrior who defeated the Portuguese in 1527, naming the city Jayakarta ('City of Victory'). Jakarta mayor Surjadi Soedirdja expected the film "to support the current film industry whose condition is worrying. Hopefully after

---

<sup>98</sup> Sumarno and Achnas (2002)

<sup>99</sup> More significantly however, after Soeharto announced '*keterbukaan*' officially in 1994, was the shutting down of news magazines *Tempo*, *Editor*, and *Detik*. One of the editors of *Editor* was Eros Djarot, a known oppositional filmmaker.

*Fatahillah*, many producers will make good films.”<sup>100</sup> It became a *dakwah* (proselytizing) film with devout Muslims Misbach Yusa Biran as scriptwriter and Imam Tantowi as director. Even with its huge three billion rupiah budget (about US\$1.2 million; Kwok, 1988), making it one of the most expensive films ever made in Indonesia, and the mobilization of civil servants to watch the film, it revealed the excess and delusion of state functionaries. Biran interestingly, makes no mention of the film in his 2008 autobiography. One observer in Yogyakarta did however notice that the film attracted an audience of families and *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) students, presaging some later developments in cinema audience trends.

Although the New Order state had adopted *film nasional* in its approach to film as an expedient means to link state ideology to the prevailing legitimate culture in film, by the 1990s blatant profiteering had become the overriding concern of state elites. As it was, local films no longer articulated to popular audiences whose preferences were now with television and Hollywood films. The nature of pop culture was itself changing, as Indonesia become increasingly connected to the growing global mediascape (Appadurai, 1990), and audiences turned to pop music, television, and music videos. This gave the space for a new generation of filmmakers to emerge post-1998. In the film industry the 1990s are often referred to as a period of *mati suri* or ‘suspended animation’ belying the assumption that nothing of note happened or was produced in this decade. This overlooks the fact that Indonesian films were to transition from an old model of

---

<sup>100</sup> “Kita bersama-sama menghimpun kekuatan untuk mendukung perfilman nasional yang saat ini memprihatinkan. Semoga setelah film *Fatahillah* akan banyak produser yang akan membuat film-film yang baik” ‘Film Fatahillah Dibuat Dengan Dana Rp 2,5 Miliar’ *Suara Pembaruan*, 17 November 1996.

production, premised on local popular culture, to a closer association with global pop culture.

## 2.9 The Continuing Evocation of Nationalism

Despite the obvious failures and unsustainability of the New Order film model, and even with the end of the New Order in 1998, *film nasional* continues to inform contemporary thinking about film. Nationalism and the desire to construct a national cinema outlives any particular political regime, even if the New Order regime gave form and structure to this project. Despite its rhetoric, the New Order succeeded in strangling the film industry through excessive regulation and by giving the economic interests of Sudwikatmono free reign. Despite this, the dearth of academic scholarship and revisionist history of film in the decade since 1998 has meant that the narrative of film history outlined in this chapter remains largely intact. In fact, given the social upheaval of the past decade, many have looked back, often in nostalgia, to the work of Usmar Ismail in order to find a stable concept of national cinema. Partially this is due to the failure of film intellectuals to properly analyze and question the history of film in Indonesia, preferring instead to reiterate the historiography of *film nasional* as historical fact.

Typical in this regard is scholar Ekky Imanjaya (2009a) who has sought to reconceptualise the commercial-idealist dichotomy of *film nasional* to account for recent developments in filmmaking. Laying out the standard dualism, noting how it has structured thinking about film in Indonesia since the 1950s, Imanjaya proposes that Miles Films (director Riri Riza and producer Mira Lesmana) are the contemporary idealists, who in their recent film *Laskar Pelangi* (2008, 'Rainbow Troops') successfully combine both idealism and commercial interests. He

regards them as idealists because they manage their own film projects without being dictated to by producers, and make films with social relevance. *Laskar Pelangi* narrates the struggle of the students at a poor school in Bangka Belitung, bringing to the screen issues to do with poverty and marginalization in Indonesia. At the same time, Miles is a commercial company, and *Laskar Pelangi* went on to be seen by a record 4.6 million people. Imanjaya also inserts director-scriptwriter Joko Anwar into the same category. Anwar is known not to compromise with producers and makes, he says, films with “something to say”.<sup>101</sup>

Imanjaya’s attempt to bridge the historical divide of *film nasional*, by finding filmmakers who marry commercialism with idealism, does not escape the dichotomy of *film nasional*. Rather, he reproduces the categories of distinction that sustain *film nasional*. Evident in this regard is the opening quote he uses from Mira Lesmana who says: “There is no dichotomy between art films and commercial films... There are only good films and bad films.” This does not necessarily help in deciding what a ‘good’ film might be, but shows rather that Imanjaya has neither problematised nor moved beyond these dualistic categories. Even Usmar Ismail, who is held up by Imanjaya and others as the idealist par excellence, made commercial films, especially later in his career as money became a concern. Likewise, many of the so-called ‘idealist’ films were funded by commercial producers. These two categorizations in themselves are hyperbole, but remain necessary for the perpetuation of a national cinema.

At its core, *film nasional* relies on a distinction between itself as legitimate culture, and popular culture. This division was necessary to construct and sustain a historical narrative about national cinema as a nationalist project. It required the

---

<sup>101</sup> ‘Percakapan Joko Anwar, Edwin dan Eric Sasono’, *Rumah Film*, 16 June 2008, [http://old.rumahfilm.org/wawancara/wawancara\\_jokoedwin\\_1.htm](http://old.rumahfilm.org/wawancara/wawancara_jokoedwin_1.htm), accessed 16/01/2011.

formation of a canon and a set of ideals, forged through the political debates of the 1960s, thus leaving an ideological imprint on post-1998 considerations of film. Its continuation thus limits the means by which recent developments in the film industry can be evaluated or studied, especially the recent growth of the film industry and its popularity amongst contemporary audiences. By analyzing the cultural economy of film during the New Order I have revealed the parameters of *film nasional* and the trajectory of the film industry into the 1990s, showing how on-screen politics and the structure of the film industry interlock. As the next chapter will show, *film nasional* simply cannot account for the rebirth of the film industry after 1998. Instead it is necessary to return to the cultural economy of film to trace the conditions that made the revival possible.

### 3.

## A NEW GENERATION OF FILMMAKERS

There is an old style film industry and a new style. I call the new way is starting with *Petualangan Sherina*. *Petualangan Sherina* is releasing on 14 of June 2000, they open up everybody mind. If the movie's well made it can give you a big pocket.

- Starvision Producer Chand Parwez Servia, personal interview, 17 July 2008.

### 3.1 Introduction

To talk of Indonesian film post-1998 is invariably to talk of a 'new generation' of filmmakers (Sumarno and Achnas, 2002). As Servia recognizes above, a fundamental shift happened in the film industry with the release of *Petualangan Sherina* (1999), a children's film directed by Riri Riza and produced by Mira Lesmana. What he calls the 'new style' is attributable to a new generation of filmmakers who began making films in the period after 1998. They caused a fundamental shift in the way in which film was imagined and operationalised in post-*reformasi* Indonesia, and in doing so revitalized a cultural form that had stagnated under the New Order. In order to do this, young filmmakers needed to move outside the confines of *film nasional* and established modes of production.

In tracing their effect on film production in Indonesia, this chapter argues that whilst members of this generation are agents of cultural change, they have a complicated relationship to the past. In overcoming the paradigm of national cinema that had characterized the New Order film industry, young filmmakers sought to reconnect film production with global pop culture. In essence, they

eschewed the narrow parochial nationalism that had characterized *film nasional* and sought to imagine Indonesia in a broader plural or cosmopolitan sense. This chapter looks at who these new filmmakers are, and how they came to repopulate the industry. It traces how they re-imagined film in post New Order Indonesia, both culturally and technically, and the ways in which they managed to revitalize a medium that had stagnated under the New Order.

### **3.2 Transition from Garin Nugroho**

The search for the origins of the post-1998 generation of filmmakers, leads invariably to Garin Nugroho (b. 1961), a filmmaker who bridged the divide between the old industry of the 1980s and 1990s and the contemporary era. As a transitional figure, Nugroho challenged the politics of *film nasional* that had solidified under the New Order, and escaped the orbit of the declining industry. To do this, Nugroho positioned himself as a critic of the regime which won him favour and thus stature at international film festivals and with foreign academics. For many, his name became synonymous with Indonesian Cinema in the 1990s (Cheah, 2004: 12). For example, London-based film writer Tony Rayns associates Nugroho with a ‘New Wave’ of Indonesian filmmaking in the 1990s, although ironically he is its only member (2004: 17). In becoming Indonesia’s first globalized filmmaker, Nugroho compromised the status quo at home, by forcing the film establishment to accept his politics along with his international success.

Garin Nugroho was schooled at IKJ, the Jakarta Arts Institute, established in 1976 by the local Jakarta Government with the aim of educating and training new filmmakers, especially to follow the tradition of artistic and idealist

filmmaking.<sup>1</sup> Graduating in 1985, Nugroho, like other anti-establishment graduates of IKJ, was discouraged by the state of feature filmmaking in Indonesia and its prevailing politics.<sup>2</sup> To avoid the commercial film industry, Nugroho turned first to documentaries, producing a number of critical works in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>3</sup> His 1991 documentary *Air dan Romi* ('Water and Romi') for example, deals with conditions of slum life around the polluted river systems in Jakarta, bringing into question the realities of 'development' in the nation's capital. Compared to feature films, documentaries often allowed filmmakers the most freedom to tell the story they wanted and to make social and political critique (Hanan, 2008b: 3). His films are notable for trying to capture Indonesia's cultural diversity, at odds with the developmentalist vision and homogenizing nationalism of state-sponsored documentaries of the time (Isla, 2010). His critical ethnography won him praise overseas and would inform the subject matter of his later feature films.

Nugroho's first, and most important, feature film is *Cinta Dalam Sepotong Roti* (1991, 'Love in a Slice of Bread') for the way in which it encapsulated the changing cultural and social conditions of Indonesia. David Hanan describes the film as a 'new wave style road movie' (2008c: 2) as it follows a young couple as they journey across Java accompanied by an old friend whose presence develops into a love triangle between the three of them. It was the first film to take seriously the lifestyle and problems of the '*profesional muda*' (Kristanto, 2004: 146), the class of young middle-class professionals created by New Order economic development. Their material wealth, white collar jobs, and detachment from traditional modes of morality and village life were not otherwise addressed

---

<sup>1</sup> See for example Iskandar (2006: 45-50) on film education in Indonesia including IKJ.

<sup>2</sup> See also the discussion of *Sinema Gerilya* in Ajidarma (1999).

<sup>3</sup> A full list of his films up to 2004 can be found in Cheah (2004: 238-242).

in Indonesian films at the time. As film audiences, the new middle class were more inclined to watch Hollywood films in the new air-conditioned 21 Cinemas, rather than Indonesian films that mainly catered to the lower classes. In this case, the film garnered a significant local audience composed of these urban middle class. Although Nugroho would not return to this material, preferring instead to become more ethnographic in his subsequent features, *Cinta Dalam Sepotong Roti* presaged what were to become the relevant themes for audiences post-1998.

After *Cinta Dalam Sepotong Roti*, Nugroho increasingly looked to international film festivals for screening opportunities and for funds.<sup>4</sup> *Surat Untuk Bidadari* (1993, 'Letter to an Angel'), about a precocious boy in a Sumbanese village, was funded by TPI (Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia, 'Indonesian Educational Television'), a television station owned by Soeharto's daughter Tutut. Even TPI were trying to piggyback on the growing reputation of Nugroho and funded *Surat Untuk Bidadari* whose narrative challenged much of the New Order's desire to homogenize national culture (Sen, 2003; Hanan, 2008b). For Nugroho, this was part of his strategy to escape the restrictive conditions in Indonesia: "This was all the starting point of my career, showing at film festivals. The money I won in the Young Cinema competition at TIFF [Tokyo International Film Festival for *Surat Untuk Bidadari* in 1994] changed my career because with that money, I realized I could do something new in the future."<sup>5</sup> Liberated from the quagmire of the local film industry, Nugroho was able to build a career in filmmaking as an autonomous director.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Cinta Dalam Sepotong Roti* had been produced, and financed, by producer Budiayati Abiyoga.

<sup>5</sup> 'Garin Nugroho on Tokyo International Film Festival and diversity', <http://www.garinnugroho.com/2007/10/garin-nugroho-on-tokyo-international-film-festival-and-diversity/>, accessed 11/04/2010.

Central to Nugroho's success was his ability to avoid the restrictive filmmaking regulations in Indonesia. Often he evaded the strict rules governing filmmaking by saying he was making material for seminars which, unlike films destined for the cinema, did not require a multitude of permissions (Ishizaka, 2004: 109). By using locations and settings outside of Jakarta, he worked outside the purview of the Jakarta-based bureaucracy. At the same time, Nugroho positioned himself as a critic of the regime and its Jakarta-centric model of the nation, both of which won him respect and audiences overseas. Tony Ryans celebrates Nugroho's work as having "consistently pushed the limits of what was 'permissible' under Soeharto's crony-ridden dictatorship" (2004: 7). For Australian scholar David Hanan, Nugroho was a critical voice "able to tackle what was behind the ideologies and the lies of the New Order" (2004: 179). For many outside Indonesia, Nugroho became the face of Indonesian film, with his anti-New Order politics and exotic subject matter resonating with foreign audiences, particularly amongst academic and film festival circles.

The conditions of filmmaking in the 1990s meant that the revival of film production, if any, would not come from within the existing circuits of film production. Old producers, known for their opportunism, lacked the initiative or inclination to think outside the established modes of production. They found it easier to switch to television where money was plentiful, rather than attempt to revive a bankrupt film industry. Moreover, local films no longer spoke to local audiences who increasingly found entertainment in television, pirated films or in Hollywood films.<sup>6</sup> The revival of the film industry required a paradigm shift in pop culture, indicated in *Cinta Dalam Sepotong Roti* in 1991, but which did not

---

<sup>6</sup> See for example 'Killed by Hollywood' *The Straits Times*, 4 November 1992: 12.

translate into a wider reorientation of the film industry. Garin Nugroho may have been the most productive and innovative director of the 1990s, but he was only a single director who alone could not revive an industry in such decline.

### **3.3 The *Kuldesak* Project as Breakthrough**

It is ironic therefore that the film that initiated the post-1998 revival of the film industry was named *Kuldesak* (1998, ‘Cul-de-sac’). *Kuldesak* is properly the first *reformasi* film, even though it was initiated in 1996 and screened in November 1998, six months after Soeharto’s resignation. Of the project, director Riri Riza says simply “We had this dream of becoming filmmakers” (quoted in Ciecko, 2006a: 92). It was part of a growing movement of young people in the 1990s, who were tired of the New Order and its cultural politics. The title refers to the young characters in the film whose dead-end lives are symptomatic of the cultural impasse of the late New Order. Eschewing a grand narrative, the film concentrates on “the frustrated ideals and tragically meaningless lives experienced by Jakartan youth” (Bodden, 2005: 9).

Filmmakers from this ‘new generation’, as they would come to be known, employed a distinctive visual style, referenced global rather than local films, and purposively sought to break with the past. The four young, debutant feature filmmakers (Mira Lesmana, Riri Riza, Nan Achnas and Rizal Mantovani, calling themselves ‘Day for Night’), came from the world of television, as directors of music videos and advertisements; three of the four are graduates of IKJ (Nugroho, 2005: 89). Their move into feature films marked an important reconfiguration of film production, and its reference points away from theatre and folk culture towards other audio-visual media such as music and global pop culture.

Stylistically, *Kuldesak* owes its themes to the gritty urban stories of American director Quentin Tarantino and structure to the *Four Rooms* (1995) omnibus,<sup>7</sup> rather than to any conventional mode of filmmaking in Indonesia. Like *Four Rooms*, it is composed of four interwoven stories, with almost all of them using the night as the backdrop.

Although none of the four stories really intersect, they are woven together to appear as if they occur simultaneously. One is about Dina who works in a cinema ticket booth. She fantasizes about Max Mollo, an infantile TV presenter who also comes to her cinema to sleep. She befriends a gay couple, Budi and Yanto, who move into the room opposite hers.<sup>8</sup> Second, is Andre, a depressed Kurt Cobain fan whose life takes on meaning when he finds a gun.<sup>9</sup> The following day, Cobain's suicide is reported on the news and he chooses to follow his hero. The third is about Lina, a young female officer worker who finds herself the victim of her boss' sexual perversions.<sup>10</sup> Bored with money, the boss kidnaps his young female employees as playthings. Lina however escapes from captivity and shoots him dead. Finally, is that of Aksan and his friend Aladin who want to make a film.<sup>11</sup> They decide to rob the safe at Aksan's father's laserdisc shop to fund their film. At the same time, a group of thrill-seeking teenagers happen to break in, and a Tarantino-esque sequence transpires as each group grapples with the unexpected presence of the other.

---

<sup>7</sup> Directed by Allison Anders, Alexandre Rockwell, Robert Rodriguez and Quentin Tarantino.

<sup>8</sup> Directed by Nan Achnas.

<sup>9</sup> Directed by Riri Riza.

<sup>10</sup> Directed by Rizal Mantovani.

<sup>11</sup> Directed by Mira Lesmana.

As aspiring filmmakers, the four were “nauseated by the politics of filmmaking in Indonesia”.<sup>12</sup> When for example, famed director Sjuman Djaja (1934-1985) visited IKJ, Mira Lesmana says she felt only reverence rather than inspiration. When they made *Kuldesak*, Lesmana says

We were very aware in wanting to do something completely different to what we had seen. This has to be different to Teguh Karya’s work, this has to be different to Garin Nugroho’s work, this has gotta to be different, it has to be. It has to show what we like. And naturally being young people, close to television, starting to open to the internet, and reading books of independent filmmakers, what comes out was quite similar in *Kuldesak*: the story, so it’s about young people trying to find something or wanting to do something. (Mira Lesmana, personal interview, 30 January 2009)

Riza says he was inspired by directors such as Eric Khoo from Singapore, Fruit Chan and Wong Kar Wai from Hong Kong and Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez from the USA.<sup>13</sup> Their influence is evident in the style of the film, and in the props littered throughout the scenes.<sup>14</sup> Rodriguez’s book *Rebel Without a Crew* (1996), in which he describes making his first feature film *El Mariachi* (1992) by subverting conventional filmmaking wisdom and with a budget of only US\$7000, was inspirational for the Days for Night team.

The rejection of tradition is also self-reflexively woven in the plot itself. Marshall Clark notes this in his analysis of *Kuldesak*, noting in particular how all four stories attack the hegemonic masculinity of the New Order (2004). When

---

<sup>12</sup> “muak dengan filmmaking politik di Indonesia.” Riri Riza, personal interview, 30 September 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Personal interview, 30 September 2008.

<sup>14</sup> These includes film posters for *Reservoir Dogs* (1992, dir. Quentin Tarantino), *Pulp Fiction* (1994, dir. Quentin Tarantino), *Cinema Paradiso* (1988, dir. Giuseppe Tornatore), and Peter Greenaway’s *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* (1989). Shots also linger on a copy of *The Gen X Reader* (1994, edited by Douglas Rushkoff), and a copy of Rodriguez’s *Rebel Without A Crew* innocuously appears amongst the tools in a car repair shop.

Lina shoots the conglomerate boss, Gamarhada, she is also symbolically killing the predatory big business of the New Order economy. Andre, who loves Kurt Cobain, embraces a nihilistic figure of global pop culture, not the figures of Indonesian cultural history. And then there is Aladin encouraging Aksan to make his film:

It's all right if it's a bit westernized. The generation today is like that. It's a developed country. It's okay, a film should reflect its period. Don't be another Teguh Karya, Eros Djarot, Sjumandjaya and who's the other director who always wins in festivals, what's his name? Garin Nugroho! [...] Give choices for the audience, choices.<sup>15</sup>

To include commentary about the condition of filmmaking in Indonesia within the film narrative itself as a kind of metalanguage was clearly unconventional.<sup>16</sup> *Kuldesak* boldly rejected Indonesia's filmmaking tradition within its own narrative itself, mirroring the motivations of the filmmakers themselves. On the release of *Kuldesak* Mira Lesmana defiantly claimed that "We don't want the burden of being culturally-educative to promote nationalism."<sup>17</sup>

All four of the directors had been working in television, documentaries and music videos since the early 1990s. Lesmana, Riza and Achnas went to IKJ with the dream of making feature films, but graduated at a time when the local industry was contracting. After the first private television station was established in 1989, the television industry expanded exponentially, so much so that Lesmana was pulled out of IKJ before graduation by an advertising company due to the

---

<sup>15</sup> English subtitles from *Kuldesak*.

<sup>16</sup> The other prominent film about filmmaking in Indonesia and its possibilities for young people is *Catatan Akhir Sekolah* (2005, 'Final School Notes') written by Salman Aristo and directed by Hanung Bramantyo. It is about a group of high school students who expose corruption in the school administration when they try and make a documentary film about their final year in school.

<sup>17</sup> "Kami tidak ingin punya beban cultural edukatif dan membangkitkan nasionalisme." Mira Lesmana quoted in 'Sebuah Film Bermodal Darah Muda' *Tempo*, 7 December 1998: 85.

high demand for English speaking workers. Achnas and Riza had both graduated from IKJ with films that had been screened at overseas festivals and won awards.<sup>18</sup> In television, Riri Riza established himself as a savvy director of music videos and advertisements. Mantovani meanwhile, a former architecture student, had gained a reputation as one of the industry's best music video directors together with partner Richard Buntario. Mantovani directed videos for some of the biggest pop musicians of the 1990s including Iwa-K's *Bebas* ('Free') in 1993, whose album *Topeng* ('Mask') sold in excess of 250,000 copies. All four of them were active in the rapidly globalizing mediascape of 1990s Indonesia and its burgeoning pop culture.

Despite knowing each other and being active producers in the cultural industries, the conditions for making a feature film were not ripe. In 1995, Mira Lesmana was asked by Alex Kumara, head of TV station RCTI, to produce a documentary series to commemorate thirty years of national development under the New Order. The project had originated from Minister Harmoko himself, and was intended to propagandize the regime. Shocked at this revelation of propaganda and not wanting to support the regime so blatantly, she proposed to make a series about children across the archipelago, in collaboration with Garin Nugroho. The executives of the private television stations opposed the idea, but quickly changed their minds when the Minister approved of the idea. With their approbation, Lesmana went ahead and produced a thirteen part series called *Anak Seribu Pulau* ('Children of a Thousand Islands'), employing nine young directors, including Riri Riza and Nan Achnas.

---

<sup>18</sup> Riri Riza's film *Merry Go Round* (1994) which won a bronze award in the children's category of The International Short Film Festival of Oberhausen in Germany. Sonata Kampung Bata (Sonata of the Brick Village), won third place in the 1994 Oberhausen short film festival. Nan Achnas made *Hanya Satu Hari* (1988, 'Only One Day') which won the Grand Prix prize at The Young Cinema Film Festival, Tokyo in 1988.

*Anak Seribu Pulau* was a success in terms of audience reception and in its vision as a work that documented Indonesia. Far from being a propaganda-laden film, the team managed to rethink the parameters of possible expression under the New Order, having defied the initial brief. In particular, the series broke with the established conventions of voiceover documentary so common under the New Order, and instead used children as narrators of their own lives (Strassler, 1999). For Lesmana, it was a chance to produce her own large-scale project, to work with celluloid, and to see the potential of the young filmmakers around her.

Inspired by the success of the series, Achnas, Lesmana and Riza discussed the now-conceivable idea of making a feature film. It would have to be made outside the purview of the state, and with the modest resources available, much the same as Robert Rodriguez had with *El Mariachi*. At this point they approached Rizal Mantovani, asking him “Of your ambitions what is the most important?”, to which he replied “to make a film.”<sup>19</sup> Shanty Harmayn (b. 1967) came on-board as producer,<sup>20</sup> with a crew composed of friends in the industry, and friends such as rapper Iwa-K, actor Tio Pakusadewo and IKJ student Harry Suharyadi contributing their time as actors. Leftover film stock from advertising projects was used for filming, with equipment borrowed from local hardware companies. In total, the film took two years to complete. They worked undercover, explicitly avoiding the state apparatus, knowing what they were doing was illegal, but at the same time driven by a strong purpose to make their own feature film. For ten years, they had had to suppress their desire to make their own feature film.

---

<sup>19</sup> Mantovani says that Lesmana asked him “Sebenarnya cita-cita kamu yang paling ultimate apa sih?” His reply was “Bikin film.” See Setiyono (2002).

<sup>20</sup> After *Kuldesak*, Harmayn established her own production and import company Salto Films in 1998 and then the Jakarta International Film Festival in 1999.

*Kuldesak* was not just driven by a desire to make a film in protest of the prevailing regulations, but was also a concerted effort to have the film screened in mainstream cinemas. The problem was that 21 no longer screened local films. *Langitku Rumahku* (1990, 'My Sky, My Home'), directed by Slamet Rahardjo, was the last local film to be screened and it was withdrawn after only one day in the 21 Cinemas. This was despite the fact that the film had won awards overseas and that the filmmakers protested loudly and tried to sue the state distribution company Perfin. With this knowledge, the *Kuldesak* directors went straight to 21 boss Sudwikatmono, by securing an appointment through a mutual acquaintance. They took a trailer they had prepared and showed it to him, convincing him that they were serious and that their film was properly made. Surprisingly, he gave his approval for the film to be screened in 21 provided that it passed censorship. Not only did they succeed in bypassing the state bureaucracy but their actions reveal how Sudwikatmono was in many senses above the law. Knowing that their efforts would not be in vain, the 'Days for Night' team was able to finish the film, and screened it in November 1998. In total it was seen by an audience of 130,000 in its three month run.

It is worth noting that *Kuldesak* is not a 'political' film in that it did not criticize the regime or set out to make any grand statement of protest.<sup>21</sup> The film directs its anger at the lack of hope and opportunity for young people in Jakarta of the 1990s and their struggles as they seek to find their place in the world. If anything, *Kuldesak* is driven by an imperative of creative freedom and cultural expression, eschewing the control and constraints of the state. Mira Lesmana said to me that they were amazed how positive the response was from the press who

---

<sup>21</sup> The closest it comes is when Budi, Yanto and Dina are dancing in front of a propaganda billboard of Soeharto and his generals.

championed their film, celebrating it as the beginning of a new era, concomitant with the freedom of *reformasi*. Questions were also raised about the legality of the film, given that it had been made without any of the necessary permissions. These were allayed when Slamet Rahardjo, as head of the BP2N (Badan Pertimbangan Perfilman Nasional, ‘National Film Advisory Board’), defended the filmmakers in the media. For young Indonesians who had grown up during the New Order, *Kuldesak* encapsulated their frustrations and interests. A friend of mine, now a film student at IKJ, remarked that when she saw *Kuldesak* in the cinema as an eighteen year old, she felt it ‘represented me’.<sup>22</sup>

Older observers failed to understand the significance of *Kuldesak*, preferring to compare it narrowly to the work of Garin Nugroho. New Order ideologue and establishment figure Misbach Yusa Biran was particularly dismissive of the film:

It is said that many young people were attracted to view the film. But it is not clear what reaction they had to the film, and it was not a film that pleased the general audiences. The makers of this film indeed did not set out to stimulate the national industry, on the contrary they were offering a new alternative. And overall, despite being highly experimental, it was not made with the rare skill of a film by Garin Nugroho. (2001: 248)

Senior journalist JB Kristanto was a little more circumspect in his analysis, noting that we “face a new generation of Indonesian filmmaking which is separated from its past. [...] If Garin [Nugroho] comes from a greater concept, then the directors of *Kuldesak* can be said to come without concept, or if there is, then a small and insignificant one” (2004: 179).<sup>23</sup> Obviously they struggled to fit *Kuldesak* into

---

<sup>22</sup> “Mewakili aku”. This is Veronika Kusuma, b. 1980.

<sup>23</sup> Original reads: “Di sini kita mulai berhadapan dengan suatu generasi baru perfilman Indonesia yang seolah putus dari sejarahnya. [...] Kalau Gain berangkat dari gagasan besar, maka para

their analytical paradigm, which could not accommodate a work that was at once experimental, global and embedded in pop culture.

*Kuldesak* upset the prevailing paradigm of film in two important ways. First, was the filmmakers civil disobedience by refusing to submit to regulations governing filmmaking. To become a director required a long process of working as an assistant director and then approval from a board of senior directors. Riri Riza witnessed Garin Nugroho undergo this process and thought it was absurd that a director of Nugroho's calibre should have to be judged by a panel of directors who had not made anything worthwhile in years.<sup>24</sup> Second, by producing a film composed of montage they challenged the linear narrative, director-centric model of Indonesian film. *Kuldesak*, is the product of four directors, whose sections are intercut into a non-linear narrative. "Its structure," says writer Seno Gumira Ajidarma, "made fun of all existing aesthetic presumptions about Indonesian cinema" (2004: 23). Ajidarma identifies editor Sentot Sahid as the film's 'chief author' (2004: 22),<sup>25</sup> thereby effacing the authorial mark of the individual director central to New Order imaginings of art film. Even today, it is difficult to work out which director is responsible for which section.

To describe this new creative and cultural phenomenon that *Kuldesak* represented, a new point of cultural reference was needed. Garin Nugroho, who was implicitly criticized by the *Kuldesak* filmmakers, was nonetheless able to characterize them as the 'Multimedia Generation'.<sup>26</sup> Obviously responding to criticisms that the film was too 'Westernized', Leila S. Chudori, senior film

---

sutradara *Kuldesak* ini boleh dibilang berangkat hampir tanpa gagasan, atau kalau pun ada, gagasan kecil dan remeh."

<sup>24</sup> Riri Riza, personal interview, 30 September 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Sentot Sahid was a prominent editor in the 1990s, having worked on a number of Garin Nugroho's films in the early 1990s. In 2003 he joined Leo Sutanto in the new Sinemart production house, and later left to establish his own company, FrameRitz. He also teaches at IKJ.

<sup>26</sup> 'They Are the New Kids on the Block' *Tempo*, 7 December 1998: 86.

reviewer for weekly news magazine *Tempo*, defended the *Kuldesak* filmmakers at the end of her review:

Hollywood? America? Come on, they - the actors and filmmakers - are part of an MTV generation who emerged from and live via the multimedia industry. So, allow them to be 'young people'.<sup>27</sup>

Television and pop culture define the new direction of filmmaking in Indonesia in terms of its practitioners and their cultural referents. They were "not satisfied," says Nugroho, with "the euphoria of the television industry, which over these past ten years did not give them personal and independent space" (2005: 90).<sup>28</sup> These four directors, and many who would follow them, have been referred to as the 'new generation' of Indonesian filmmakers.

### 3.4 The Collapse of Old Production Models

*Kuldesak* was not the only film to be made in the years 1997 to 1999, but their relative failure vis-à-vis *Kuldesak* showed that the mode of production needed to be changed to accommodate the changing social and economic conditions of post New Order Indonesia. Nugroho continued to make films in his trademark way, somewhat insulated from the tumultuous economic upheaval of the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis. His 1997 film *Daun di Atas Bantal* ('Leaf on a Pillow') about street children in Yogyakarta, was a surprise success in local cinemas. Audiences who usually avoided his films, or had no opportunity to watch them because they were not released locally, came out of curiosity and in

---

<sup>27</sup> "Hollywood? Amerika? Come on, mereka – para pemain maupun sineas film ini – adalah generasi MTV yang tumbuh dan hidup melalui industri multimedia. Jadi, izinkanlah mereka untuk menjadi 'anak muda'." Chudori, Leila S. 'Hasil Perdana Kuartet Sutradara Muda', *Tempo*, 7 December 1998: 87.

<sup>28</sup> Original reads: "ketidakpuasan terhadap eforia industri televisi yang selama 10 tahun tidak memberi ruang personal dan independensi."

the euphoria of *reformasi* to watch it (Hakim, 2005). IKJ lecturer Marselli Sumarno (b. 1956) made *Sri* (1997) with money from both the Hubert Bals Fund (part of the Rotterdam Film Festival) and the BP2N, and submitted the film for consideration at the 2000 Academy Awards. In the film *Sri* struggles to support her family and delay the arrival of Death who threatens her mentor, the aristocrat Hendro. The film discusses death in the context of traditional Javanese belief and the cosmology of Javanese life. The film likewise enjoyed greater local audiences than it might otherwise have.

Erotic titles declined and disappeared altogether after 1999. The three companies that were still producing them – Diwangkara Citra Swara Film (Handi Muljono), Andalas Kencana Film (Madhu Mahtani) and Cancer Mas Film (Tien Ali, Sally Marcelina) – stopped producing films altogether. When producers Madhu Mahtani and Handi Muljono returned to making films (non-erotic) almost a decade later neither of their films managed to engage with contemporary audiences.<sup>29</sup>

The cinemas that screened these peripheral films were fast disappearing. Cinema listings in the Jakarta tabloid *Pos Kota* showed that in 1991 there were eighty-one lower class cinemas, which by 1998 had fallen to nineteen, and halved to eight in 2000.<sup>30</sup> The audiences who had continued to sustain these films in the 1990s disappeared as the economic crisis deepened and many found alternative viewing on television or the cheap VCDs that were now readily available in street-side stalls.

---

<sup>29</sup> *Roh* (*The Evil Spirit*) (2007) produced by Madhu Mahtanu. *Rien Pembunuh Berantai* (2008, 'Rien the Serial Killer') produced by Handi Muljono. Both were funded by Hatoek Subroto who was reportedly paying off old debts.

<sup>30</sup> Cinema listings in *Pos Kota*, 16 May 1991; 14 January 1998; 25 January 2000.

Likewise, even senior actor and director Slamet Rahardjo, a critic of the New Order regime who had managed to find funding for his earlier films, struggled with his old production model. Rahardjo had begun production on *Telegram* in 1997, with money from Artcam International (France) and the 21 Cinemas (Camila Internusa). Due to financial problems caused by the exchange rate, the film was not released until 2002 and even then only attracted a paltry 10,500 viewers.<sup>31</sup> Production company Starvision, had similar problems with *Reinkarnasi* (2000, 'Reincarnation') which began production in 1997 in conjunction with SCTV. Filming was originally planned in Tibet and Hong Kong, but was scaled down and delayed because of the Asian Financial Crisis.<sup>32</sup> Their production models, rooted in the economic stability of the 1990s, "could not compete with the difficulties of the economy, [and] the crisis" (Riri Riza quoted in Ciecko, 2006a: 91) or respond to the uncertain conditions of *reformasi* Indonesia.

For filmmakers, the SK71 funds remained a possible source of funding. Introduced in 1967, the 'SK71' levy was collected on film imports to be used to fund local productions (Sen, 1996: 175). According to a 1998 exposé in *Tempo*,<sup>33</sup> 70.6 billion rupiah remained unaccounted for, which was enough money to fund about twenty feature films. Filmmaker Eros Djarot claimed that the actual figure could be as high as 200 billion and accused the 'Subentra Group' (Sudwikatmono, Djohan Tjasmadi,<sup>34</sup> Benny Suherman<sup>35</sup> and unnamed others) of embezzlement. Unsurprisingly, the issue of the SK71 money was never resolved, and was

---

<sup>31</sup> 'Slamet Rahardjo: Perfilman Nasional Mati adalah Tragedi', SCTV, 1 October 2001, <http://berita.liputan6.com/sosbud/200110/20921/class=%27vidico%27>, accessed 25/01/2010.

<sup>32</sup> See Starvision's release notes for the film at 'Keseriusan: Pilar Kebangkitan' [http://www.klikstarvision.com/id/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=58:reinkarnasi&catid=52:rel-movies](http://www.klikstarvision.com/id/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=58:reinkarnasi&catid=52:rel-movies), accessed 25/01/2010.

<sup>33</sup> 'Ke Mana Duit Film, Palupi?' *Tempo*, 17 November 1998.

<sup>34</sup> Head of the Association of Indonesia Cinema Owners (GPBSI, Gabungan Pengusaha Bioskop Seluruh Indonesia).

<sup>35</sup> Business partner of Sudwikatmono in Subentra.

overtaken by filmmaker concerns about the amount of taxes that the industry was subject to (Sasono, 2007). Mira Lesmana and Shanty Harmayn (2004) saw tax reform as essential to the viability of the nascent industry. In a move typical of the newfound openness in the industry, they published details of their film budgets that showed how much money was actually taken by the state in taxes and questioned where that money went. Their desire was to see the money used to develop the film industry. As it was, filmmakers were on their own and needed to develop their own models of funding.

### **3.5 Making Films by Being Indie**

For the young filmmakers who were set to revive local film production, the old production models represented everything that was wrong with the industry and provided no opportunity for innovation. The descent into erotic titles in the 1990s showed how the established industry lacked creativity and dynamism, and did not reflect the interests of a young generation of film consumers. State produced films and documentaries were stale, propaganda-laden and a world away from the Hollywood films most people watched. In order to distance themselves from this tainted legacy, young filmmakers adopted the ideas of 'indie' or 'independent' filmmaking from a global lexicon (Sihar, 2001).

Reformasi provided a conducive context in which young filmmakers could experiment and develop the parameters of indie production and exhibition. The decline in state hegemony meant that the strict rules and regulations that had governed production and exhibition were no longer in force, allowing an explosion in alternative voices and forums. Abduh Azis, a filmmaker who straddles both eras, says:

The atmosphere of *reformasi* had a direct inducement on the creative sector. At that time essentially we could make whatever we wanted, the old regulations had disappeared, technology was also conducive and cheap. Our film references were increased, whereas previously it had been limited, we used to watch non-Hollywood films only in the foreign cultural centres and even then, only rarely. With Jifest, with unlimited piracy, there was everything. More so, with the internet.<sup>36</sup>

Being indie connected local filmmakers with film movements from around the world whilst at the same time embracing the spirit of *reformasi* sweeping Indonesia.

As Kurnia (2006: 290) notes, the indie tradition can be traced back to the 1960s to '*film pinggiran*' (peripheral films), productions made outside the commercial and state dominated mainstream feature film industry. Garin Nugroho was in many respects part of this tradition. Indie films, mostly documentaries and short films, blossomed after 1998 with more than 1600 titles made between 2002 and 2004 alone (Prakosa, 2005). Young Indonesian filmmakers developed alternative screening circuits and film festivals to support their production. Young director/writer/producer Harry Suharyadi explained that:

Whilst here there is definitely no big industry. So their independence is more a form of resistance against the rules that shackle creativity, rules that have different interests than the interests of filmmakers. Rebellion against these rules

---

<sup>36</sup> "Atmosfir reformasi itu secara langsung sebenarnya mengimbas juga ke bidang kreatif. Saat itu pokoknya kita bisa bikin apa saja, peraturan lama sudah sangat longgar, teknologi juga sudah sangat ramah dan murah. Referensi film juga makin luas kan, dulu terbatas, kita menonton film non-Hollywood hanya di pusat-pusat kebudayaan asing itupun jarang sekali. Dengan adanya J-fest, dengan adanya bajakan terbuka itu semua tambah lagi teknologi internet." Abduh Azis, personal interview, 6 August 2008.

that inhibit the creative process, that is the basic characteristic of the independent cinema movement.<sup>37</sup>

They insisted that films be made and distributed separate to or outside the established mainstream channels of production and distribution, and be free from state interference.<sup>38</sup>

For the *Kuldesak* filmmakers, being independent was more a statement of their attitude to control over their film than about funding or assistance. The directors used existing relationships in the media and in the film industry itself to launch a film project that was, in its content and direction, independently conceived and completed without outside influence. *Kuldesak* was different to the other filmmaking projects underway in the euphoria of *reformasi* because of the express desire to have the film screened in 21 Cinemas, which had throughout the 1990s been a bastion of Hollywood films. *Kuldesak* also relied on the goodwill of films crews, actors and by borrowing equipment from rental companies. Hatoek Subroto, the boss of the Elang Perkasa group of companies and a film producer active since the 1970s, assisted them by lending equipment. Mira Lesmana recalled Subroto saying to her “if you are successful, I’m going to be in business”,<sup>39</sup> as justification for his support. When I spoke to Subroto in December 2008, he was quite humble about his role but knew he had nothing to lose by supporting a film project in a period he described as a ‘vacuum’.

Capital became a serious issue for the *Kuldesak* team when the Asian Financial Crisis struck in 1997, sending the economy into turmoil and the value of

---

<sup>37</sup> “Sedang di sini kan jelas-jelas nggak ada industri besar. Jadi independennya lebih ke perlawanan terhadap aturan-aturan yang selama ini membelenggu kreativitas, aturan yang punya kepentingan berbeda dari kepentingan pembuat film. Pemberontakan terhadap aturan yang menghambat proses kreatif inilah karakteristik dasar gerakan sinema independen.” Quoted in Taufik (2007).

<sup>38</sup> See also Barendregt and van Zanten (2002: 82) for a similar discussion of ‘indie’ in the music scene.

<sup>39</sup> Personal interview Mira Lesmana, 30 January 2009.

the rupiah plummeting. Indonesian film production is particularly sensitive to the rate of foreign exchange because of the reliance on film processing facilities in India, Bangkok and Hong Kong. Using their international connections, as Garin Nugroho had done in the 1990s, the filmmakers applied for money from overseas. The Hubert Bals Fund (Rotterdam Film Festival) gave them money that covered the negative transfer and the printing of four prints. Advertising and promotion for the film was covered by local cigarette brand A-Mild which Lesmana secured through her advertising connections. Although an independent project, *Kuldesak* drew on the support of a variety of actors and sources, both from within established industries and old figures in the film industry.

Subsequent film projects from the four directors involved in *Kuldesak* showed how complicated the funding arrangements in the post-1998 film industry would be. Rizal Mantovani with partner Jose Poernomo secured funding from TransTV, a new private television station,<sup>40</sup> to make a horror film they called *Jelangkung* (2001).<sup>41</sup> With a budget of US\$30,000 and using digital cameras, it was only ever intended as a straight-to-television film. However when promoter cum producer Erwin Arnada (b. 1965) became involved, he convinced them to screen the film in cinemas where it became an instant success. Nan Achnas' film *Pasir Berbisik* (2001, 'Whispering Sands'), a formalist art film, was funded by Japan's NHK and by the 21 Group (Harris Lesmana). Mira Lesmana and Riri Riza took another route with *Petualangan Sherina* (1999) which secured its funding through private channels.

*Petualangan Sherina* (1999), and Miles Productions' subsequent film *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (2002), mark an important transition in the funding models of

---

<sup>40</sup> Owned by businessman Chairul Tanjung. TransTV began broadcasting in December 2001.

<sup>41</sup> A *Jelangkung* is a kind of voodoo doll or ouja board.

films. Lesmana and Riza, who had worked in advertising and television during the 1990s, were invited to speak at a BP2N meeting. They took with them a proposal that calculated the potential audience for a local film based on the sales of pop music albums.<sup>42</sup> Given that these albums regularly sold in the hundreds of thousands, they were able to calculate a rational budget for a film to ensure profitability. As they conceived a children's film, they logically considered that for each child two tickets would be sold (child and guardian). Their proposal was met with skepticism by members of the BP2N who believed it could not work; only producer Budiyati Abiyoga liked the idea.<sup>43</sup> No one believed that the film market was yet strong enough to sustain such a film. Yet by engineering a marketing campaign that generated significant buzz before the launch, and releasing the film during Lebaran,<sup>44</sup> the traditional high season, *Petualangan Sherina* performed better than even their modest expectations, selling 1.4 million tickets.

What made this possible was the income arrangement of the 21 Cinemas. Unlike the old system during the New Order where films were bought at a fixed price by distributors, 21 acted as both distributor and exhibitor with over one hundred cinemas throughout the archipelago.<sup>45</sup> Although this was less than a tenth of the two thousand cinemas in existence in 1990, 21 splits the income from ticket sales fifty-fifty after the subtraction of tax. For each ticket sold, a producer receives around 5000 rupiah (US\$0.50) with no ceiling on total revenue. It

---

<sup>42</sup> Mira Lesmana, personal interview, 30 January 2009.

<sup>43</sup> She was Garin Nugroho's producer for a number of his films, including *Cinta Dalam Sepotong Roti*.

<sup>44</sup> Lebaran is the holiday period following Idul Fitri, the end of the fasting month of Ramadan when Muslims return to their families and celebrate. During Lebaran, people often go to the cinema with their families.

<sup>45</sup> Tony Ryanto (2003) notes that in 2003, 21 had 100 cinemas with 300 screens. 100 of which were located in Jakarta. This does not take into account the cinemas they also work in partnership with.

depends entirely on the number of tickets sold. As a result, producers are now directly rewarded in proportion to the success of their film in the market. This would enable independent producers like Miles Productions to generate sufficient income from films to enable them to fund future projects. According to Abduh Azis this arrangement fitted well with the business acumen necessary in post-1998 filmmaking:

Now what is interesting about the generation after Garin [Nugroho] actually is their awareness that film is not only an outlet of expression but has connections with aspects of investment, market, promotion. It was actually initiated by Mira [Lesmana] who I think was very aware of this because she used to work in an advertising agency apart from IKJ. She was aware that film needs a package: content, distribution, promotion.<sup>46</sup>

These new independent arrangements were brought into the mainstream by Miles Productions and others, allowing other independent filmmakers to screen in the mainstream 21 cinemas. This commercial arrangement freed many filmmakers from the tyranny of the distributors and revolutionized the way in which producers now approached their films.

### **3.6 Digital Filmmakers**

The spirit of independence manifested itself most readily via digital filmmaking which quickly became a viable option for young filmmakers looking to make a feature film for minimum cost and without special equipment or training. Whilst IKJ continued to train young filmmakers with the necessary skills

---

<sup>46</sup> “Nah yang menarik generasi setelah Garin sebenarnya ada kesadaran bahwa film bukan hanya saluran ekspresi tetapi ada/punya keterkaitan dengan aspek modal, aspek pasar, aspek promosi. Itu sebenarnya dimulai oleh Mira yang saya kira dia sangat sadar karena pernah bekerja di Advertising Agency selain dari IKJ pula, dia dengan sadar bahwa film perlu package: konten, distribusi, promosi.” Abduh Azis, personal interview, 6 August 2008.

to make a film, the curriculum is weighted towards French theories of cinema (formalism and auteur theory) and to using celluloid as the recording medium. Digital technology offered opportunities to filmmakers not versed in the use of celluloid and who came from outside these formal channels. In a period when the costs of raw materials and processing were expensive for celluloid, digital filmmaking was not just a passing fad, but has since become a standard for the post-1998 industry. It enabled a number of new filmmakers to enter the industry and even allowed young filmmakers to set up their own film schools.<sup>47</sup> Digital was also seen as a democratizing factor in the new industry, decentering expertise away from the schools and big capital and allowing younger filmmakers with only passion as their capital (Prasad, 2001).

The most significant filmmaker to emerge as a digital pioneer in his own right is Rudy Soedjarwo (b. 1971). Soedjarwo had gone to the USA in the 1990s to study business but switched to study filmmaking at the Academy of Art in San Francisco. Soedjarwo was not without his connections in Indonesia, as his late father Anton Soedjarwo was National Chief of Police from 1982 to 1986. On return to Jakarta, he worked briefly in Raam Punjabi's Multivision, but left, unsatisfied with the established mode of production. As 'Digital Underground', Soedjarwo and a group of friends that included future-director Rako Prijanto (b. 1973) made a number of quickfire films that showed the potential of digital. In a 2004 interview Soedjarwo summed up his attitude to filmmaking:

If you want to make a film, just make it. Don't make excuses like you don't have any money. What is important is to find friends with the same dream, to work

---

<sup>47</sup> For example the Reload Film School setup by Rudi Soedjarwo and Monty Tiwa. Monty Tiwa, personal interview, 26 September 2008. Hanung Bramanaty's protégé, Iqbal Rais, was trained in a similar way.

together, plan it well, compile a rational budget, maybe then, there will be an investor who believes in us.<sup>48</sup>

*Bintang Jatuh* (2000, 'Falling Star') is a love story set on a Jakarta university campus and *Tragedi* (2000, 'Tragedy') about a group of young troublemakers who fall foul of a gambling syndicate. *Bintang Jatuh*, which cost nine million rupiah to make (approx US\$1200) and was expected to be seen by only 1000 people, was finally seen by about 8000.

In fact, almost all of the feature films made in the year 2000 were shot on digital. Eko Kusumo Nugroho, who returned from film school in the USA, made a children's film called *Petualangan Trio Penjelajah Dunia* (2000, 'The Adventure of the Three World Travelers') before setting up his own production company for television. IKJ graduate and actor in *Kuldesak* Harry Suharyadi (b. 1969) returned from a six month scholarship in Japan where he had made *Pachinko and Everybody's Happy* (2000). Suharyadi remains an important independent director and producer. Fellow IKJ graduate Aria Kusumadewa made *Beth* (2000) with actress and producer Lola Amaria (b. 1977).<sup>49</sup> Director Indra Yudhistira (b. 1974), who returned from film school in Canada, made *Jakarta Project* (2000), an ambitious film about a diamond heist. The consortium of producers behind the film was inspired by Soedjarwo's *Bintang Jatuh*.<sup>50</sup> Yudhistira later took this

---

<sup>48</sup> "Kalau mau bikin film, ya bikin saja. Jangan ada alasan, tidak punya modal. Yang penting, cari teman yang satu cita-cita, kompak, mau banting-tulang, bikin perencanaan bagus, susun anggaran yang rasional, mungkin ada investor yang percaya sama kita," 'Rudi Soedjarwo Dan Tradisi Berbagi', *Raya Kultura*, 20 December 2004.

<sup>49</sup> For a further discussion of Aria Kusumadewa, see Bayu Dwi, 'Independent filmmakers express themselves', *The Jakarta Post*, 11 March 2001.

<sup>50</sup> The producers were Christiantiwati (Journalist and Author), Indra Yudhistira, Ronny P Tjandra (now head of Jive Entertainment, the DVD production arm of Blitz Megaplex), Nurliswandi Piliang (Journalist and Writer), Yusuf AS Muhammad. "Keberhasilan Bintang Jatuh membuat terpacu untuk melakukan hal yang sama." 'Sinema Indonesia Baru: Menggeliat Setelah Mati Suri', *Tempo*, 21 May 2001.

experience into working as a staff director for TransTV, and is now General Manager of Production at RCTI.

Digital filmmaking was aided by the availability of digital projection, not only in campuses and other informal sites, but in 21 Cinemas itself. For a brief period 21 allowed digital projectors to be used in their cinemas thus allowing filmmakers to skip the expensive transfer to celluloid. One reason, commentator Herman Wijaya suggests, is that 21 is now easily accused of being ‘anti-nationalistic’ if they do not screen locally made films.<sup>51</sup> However after allowing a number of films to be screened digitally, 21 stopped the practice for reasons that were not made clear. When Aria Kusumadewa was not allowed to screen his films digitally in 21 Cinemas, he publically criticized 21 for restricting local films access to the cinemas (van Heeren, 2009). Director Rudi Soedjarwo suggested to me that allowing digital projection was troublesome because no cinemas were properly outfitted for digital projection.<sup>52</sup> Insisting on celluloid also allowed 21 to maintain control over their cinemas. By 2003, the rupiah had started to stabilize and filmmakers began to access other sources of funding and to afford the costly transfer to celluloid. Nevertheless, shooting is primarily done with digital cameras such that it is now standard practice in the Indonesian film industry.

### **3.7 Organized Independence and the Experiment of i-sinema**

One of the most organized efforts at collective independence, emblematic of the idealism of new filmmakers, was the short-lived grouping of thirteen filmmakers called i-sinema. Formed in 2000, i-sinema’s members were Dimas

---

<sup>51</sup> Herman Wijaya ‘Film Indonesia Menggali Kubur Sendiri’ *Pikiran Rakyat*, 6 August 2008.

<sup>52</sup> Rudy Soedjarwo, personal interview, 19 July 2008.

Djayadiningrat, Enison Sinaro, Ipang Wahid, Jay Subyakto, Mira Lesmana, Nan Achnas, Nayato Fionuala, Richard Buntario, Riri Riza, Rizal Mantovani, Sentot Sahid, Srikaton M, and Teddy Soeriaatmadja.<sup>53</sup> Their aim was to help each other realize a self-defined film project and have it screened in mainstream cinemas, the idea being that if they each made a film, there could at least be one Indonesian film a month in the local cinemas. Their manifesto in part stated:

We believe in each other and give each other support. A synergy of creativity, an enthusiasm to explore, an aesthetic achievement, a variety of themes and stories, all to provide new colour to the cinema. More importantly, to give choices, insight as well as a different experience to viewers.<sup>54</sup>

In many ways i-sinema was an extension of *Kuldesak*, expanded in its scope to allow more aspiring film directors to realize their films. Although *Jelangkung* and *Petualangan Sherina* had been successful with audiences, these were only one-off films that had not yet provided for sustained film production in the form of an industry.

Not much remains of i-sinema except fragments of a manifesto and the five films that members were able to make. The former members I spoke to (Mira Lesmana, Nan Achnas, Riri Riza and Enison Sinaro) about i-sinema downplayed its significance, suggesting that its importance was in its formation and not in its execution.<sup>55</sup> I-sinema was partly inspired by the Dogme 95 movement initiated by Danish directors Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg in 1995. Dogme 95 pledged to produce modest films with small budgets, use natural settings and lighting, and avoid cinematic excesses (such as guns) wherever possible (Roberts,

---

<sup>53</sup> See the Appendix for biographical details.

<sup>54</sup> “Kami saling percaya dan memberi dukungan. Sinergi kreativitas, semangat eksplorasi, pencapaian estetis, keragaman tema dan cerita, semuanya untuk memberi warna baru pada perfilman. Lebih penting lagi, memberi pilihan, wawasan, serta pengalaman berbeda untuk penonton.” Quoted in Imanjaya (2008).

<sup>55</sup> See also the interview with Riri Riza in Ciecko (2006a: 94).

1999). In many ways it was a return to cinematic realism and a turn away from the manipulated imagery of Hollywood films. i-sinema's manifesto opens with the following lines:

Stagnation in the Indonesian film industry means that we must find new ways of making feature films, and much of the short document [i.e. the manifesto] relates to what these new ways might be. The use of digital technology is mentioned specifically as giving us the opportunity to work more freely and independently.<sup>56</sup>

In total five films were made under the i-sinema rubric. Enison Sinaro, a television director from the 1990s, made *Sebuah Pertanyaan Untuk Cinta* (2000, 'A Question for Love') based on a story by author and critic Seno Gumira Ajidarma. *Bendera* (2002, 'Flag') by Nan Achnas is about two school children who have to look after a flag for a day. Simple in its execution, the film expresses a nationalist response to the violence of May 1998. Production was managed out of the back of her car in the spirit of independence and self-reliance. Music video director Richard Buntario made the comedy *5 Sehat 4 Sempurna (9 Sahabat 1 Taruhan)* (2002, '5 Health, 4 Perfection (9 Friends, 1 Bet)').<sup>57</sup> As a sign of the times, the gay character ends up winning the bet and claiming the handsome American singer John Doe, played by the Eurasian actor Mike Lewis. Sentot Sahid, known as an editor, directed his first film *Titik Hitam* (2002, 'Black Dot'), a kind of ghost story. Riri Riza directed what many critics regard as his best film, *Eliana, Eliana* (2002), about a mother who comes to Jakarta to convince her daughter Eliana to return home to Sumatra.

---

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Sharpe (2002).

<sup>57</sup> The title is a play on the New Order public health slogan '4 Sehat, 5 Sempurna' used to refer to the five food groups.

### 3.8 New Generation of Middle Class Filmmakers

From *Kuldesak* through to i-sinema, these filmmakers were people who transitioned into feature film making from television, music videos and advertising. Some would not stay in film, but most have, and continue to shape film production. After them new names also entered the industry, filmmakers with overseas film education (Nia Dinata, Mouly Surya, Monty Tiwa), those from IKJ (Hanung Bramantyo, Ody Harahap, Viva Westi, Edwin) and some without formal film training at all (Salman Aristo, Joko Anwar, Awi Suryadi, Ve Handojo). What should be clear is that this ‘new generation’ are the children of the middle-class that formed during the New Order. As that middle class they not only had access to education and English, but their cultural diet consisted of global youth culture, local music and music videos. They were born into and grew up under one of the longest post-colonial authoritarian regimes in Asia. As was evident in *Kuldesak*, they felt no connection with the dominant culture of the New Order, desiring instead to escape the narrow confines of ‘national culture’ to become cultural producers themselves.

The Indonesian middle and upper classes were characterized by their disdain for prevailing modes of normative culture in New Order Indonesia. State-determined forms of national culture, such as TVRI (the national broadcaster) and documentaries, embodied a propagandistic model of information. Similarly, the popular culture of local film was aimed at lower class audiences. Culturally the middle class saw themselves as unbound from tradition and orientated themselves towards foreign, particularly Western, culture (Dhakidae, 2001). American films have always been the viewing preference of the middle to upper classes and the rise of the 21 Group cineplexes in the late 1980s and 1990s and their exclusive

screening of Hollywood films mirrored this relationship between class and cultural orientation. An important reformist section of the middle class defined themselves as global, forward looking and consumerist (Robison and Goodman, 1996; Robison, 1996).

During the 1990s, the middle class increasingly agitated against the New Order regime, discontented that their growing social and economic importance were not matched in the political sphere. As a class they did not align themselves politically or culturally to the New Order nor did they feel indebted to it (Dick, 1985). Politics in Indonesia were still orientated towards a developmentalism that was nationalist, agricultural and traditional in outlook, and controlled by a military regime (Crouch, 2010: 16). Predatory cronyism which had become a hallmark of the New Order economy in the 1990s excluded the middle class from economic opportunities. This was no less evident in television where the licenses had all been given to cronies and their business partners (Kitley, 2000). Middle class discontent fed the student movements which coalesced in the protests and demonstrations in Jakarta and other major cities in 1997 and 1998 that finally toppled the regime. They saw the New Order as increasingly out of touch with the social realities of Indonesia and with global politics.

Cultural production similarly became a site of agitation and encapsulated the divergent interests of young audiences and new cultural producers with the regime. In order to preempt these demands and to mediate the effect of globalization and new media technologies, the New Order introduced the policy of *keterbukaan* (openness) between 1989 and 1994. The press embraced the opportunity, publishing increasingly investigative and opinion-driven pieces that questioned the regime and pushed for democratization. Then in 1994, three

leading magazines, *Tempo*, *Detik* and *Monitor*, were banned by Minister of Information Harmoko, indicative that the criticism challenged New Order hegemony. For young Indonesians, who were the products of New Order economic development but not witnesses to its forging in the tumultuous years of the 1960s, the regime appeared anachronistic and out of step with global developments. As voracious consumers of global pop culture, an obvious divergence was opening up between the regime and its young citizens. This was no less evident on campuses where the alternative student presses flourished as the mouthpieces for oppositional politics (Juliastuti, 2006).

Subsequently, the 1990s saw new developments in creative and cultural production, most notably in literature. In 1998 author Ayu Utami (b. 1968) published her novel *Saman* (1998) which shocked the stagnant domain of literature because of its depiction of sex and violence and its matter-of-factness in regards to female desire (Hatley, 1999). She and many other authors pioneered a new wave of literature that was much bolder in its representations of life and expressions of self. Young female authors dominated in this field, and alongside Ayu Utami came authors such as Dewi Lestari (b. 1976) and Djenar Maesa Ayu (b. 1973). They overturned the male dominance of previous literary movements, and challenged established modes of discourse and representation. *Saman* for example is notable for its portrayal of sex and female sexuality in a way that defied conservative morality, and gave space to female desire and pleasure (Hatley, 1999: 454). Young women writers showed how the moral and cultural structures were being rewritten by a generation of new cultural creatives.

Similarly, access to the film industry was no longer restricted to graduates of IKJ, or subject to the procedures of accreditation. Almost anyone could become a filmmaker. Salman Aristo commented on his own entry to filmmaking:

I am from the generation who experienced the process of democratization initiated by Mira Lesmana, Riri Riza, and their friends in *Kuldesak*. It was they who broke the trend that if you want to be a director you have to do this, this, this. [...] after that everyone can make a film. [...] I'm not coming from a film school, but I can reach the position I have at the moment. Monty [Tiwa] is the same, Rudy [Soedjarwo] is the same. It means that the Indonesian film industry is very democratic at the moment. It can be said [we are] the generation who enjoyed democratization whose path was already opened.<sup>58</sup>

*Reformasi* was to have a profound effect on the mediascape in Indonesia, opening multiple avenues of expression for hitherto repressed or marginalized voices. The sheer explosion in film reflected this explosion of stories people wanted to tell.

The rise of women in literature was mirrored in film, a domain previously dominated by men. Krishna Sen notes that during the New Order, besides on-screen roles, women were sparsely represented in the film industry with only four women directors in its entire history, “all of them related to prominent male members of the film community” (1994: 51). By 2008, the number of women working in film as directors and producers multiplied exponentially. Early pioneers included Mira Lesmana, Nan Achnas, Cassandra Massardi and Shanty Harmayn. They were later joined by Upi (Avianto), Viva Westi, Lasja F. Susatyo, Nia Dinata, Mouly Surya, Sekar Ayu Asmara, Lola Amaria, and Djenar Maesa

---

<sup>58</sup> “Saya adalah generasi yang sudah merasakan proses demokratisasi yang dilakukan oleh Mira Lesmana, Riri Riza, dan kawan-kawan lewat *Kuldesak*. Mereka kan menabrak tren kalau mau jadi sutradara harus ini, ini, ini... proses itu ditabrak sama mereka dan sesudah itu semua orang bisa bikin film. Latar belakang... I'm not coming from a film school, but saya bisa posisi seperti sekarang. Monty juga begitu, Rudy juga begitu. Berarti demokrasi sekali kan, industri film Indonesia pada saat itu. Bisa dibilang generasi yang menikmati demokrasisai yang sudah dibuka jalurnya.” Salman Aristo, personal interview, 8 December 2008.

Ayu. Other notable directors in short films and documentaries are Ucu Augustin and Ariani Darmawan. Kalyana Shira, a company set up by Nia Dinata, has devoted itself almost exclusively to making films about women's issues, notably *Berbagi Suami* (2006, English title 'Love to Share') a critique of polygamy, and *Perempuan Punya Cerita* (2007, English title *Chants of Lotus*) a four-part compendium of women's stories. Their involvement suggests changing gender roles in Indonesian society, and an openness in the film industry that means it is no longer exclusively a male domain.

Likewise, ethnic minorities have moved from their historical role as financier-producers to positions as directors and actors. Teguh Karya, who was one of the great directors during the New Order, was also Chinese, but in all his work and interviews denied and erased his Chineseness. Hatoek Subroto, an ethnic Chinese producer and father of director Allan Lunardi, described to me how he sees the issue of race:

Interviewer: Have you been criticized that 'you are not a *pribumi*'?

Subroto: At the moment, no. Maybe five, ten years ago there was. There were differences Chinese, Indian or *pribumi*. Now not anymore.

Interviewer: So not anymore. How was it in the 1970s and 1980s?

Subroto: Oh more! Even more!<sup>59</sup>

Prominent Chinese directors now include Nayato Fio Nuala, the anointed master of horror films, Awi Suryadi, Thomas Nawilis, Edwin, Charles Gozali (son of producer Hendrick Gozali), Allan Lunardi as well as actors Verdi Solaiman and Donny Alamsyah. Lunardi's *Karma* (2008) broke with the convention of the horror genre by being set entirely in a Chinese family, which producer Elvin

---

<sup>59</sup> "Pernah dikritik dasarnya 'Anda bukan pribumi' nggak?" "Nggak. Saat ini nggak. Mungkin 5 tahun, 10 tahun yang lalu, ya. Ada beda itu, Chinese, India atau pribumi. Sekarang nggak." "Nggak lagi ya. Kalau tahun 70an 80an gimana?" "Oh lebih! Lebih lagi."

Kustaman thought would not have been allowed under the New Order.<sup>60</sup> Ravi Bharwani is also a respected ethnic Indian director, behind the award-winning film *Jermal* (2008, 'Fishing Platform').

Figure 2. Location of Film Companies in Jakarta



<sup>60</sup> Personal interview, 19 July 2008.

A clear indication of the class position of these new filmmakers is the location of their film companies in the suburbs of South Jakarta (See Figure 2.). Throughout its history the film industry has been centered in Jakarta, with older companies spread out across the city. New production company Maxima Pictures is located in Mangga Dua, an old Chinese part of town, but operates in a similar way to the old commercial companies. Raam Punjabi's Multivision is currently in Roxy Mas to the West. By contrast, new middle-class filmmakers are located in and around Kemang, Citos, Fatmawati, Pondok Indah and other areas in the South of Jakarta, a typically suburban middle class part of the city. It is in these areas that they live, meet and work, forming networks and connections. Throughout 2008, Café Tornado in Kemang was known as the filmmakers' café, and in the afternoon and evenings would be populated by filmmakers. When they collectively shifted to the Coffee War café in 2009, they only moved a few streets away. Recently, the Miles Films office moved to within one hundred meters of Monty Tiwa's Moviesta Pictures.

Most young filmmakers were born after the pivotal years of 1965-66, or were at least too young to remember these foundational years of the New Order, and grew up in its shadow. Thus, contrary to their parents' generation who were implicated in the events of 1965-66, the young generation was not invested in the events and in maintaining its official narrative. To them the continual demonization of the PKI and communism makes little sense and they have had no direct experience of the events that inaugurated the New Order. Rather than avoiding the topic, prolific scriptwriter Salman Aristo, says:

I am, like others in my generation, obsessed with 1965. Because for us it happened during a mysterious period in which there is no way of knowing what version is

true and what is false. It is a topic that is extremely interesting and important. Only because the topic is that sensitive, as a creative person, I see that to cover or talk about that issue, we as creative people also have to be sensitive.<sup>61</sup>

Whilst they were inundated with the propaganda of the regime, they themselves have no investment in maintaining the narrative of 1965 and the demonization of the communists.

Free from the ideological limitations of New Order nationalism, young filmmakers could instead engage with film as a pop culture enterprise, in which the parameters of cultural reference were not weighed down by the state or the legacy of insular nationalism. Instead of imagining Indonesia in a narrow ethno-nationalist sense, they imagined Indonesia in a global frame or in terms of popular culture. Yet the nation remains as an important ethical imperative for a number of filmmakers, given the lack of viable alternatives. The nation seems to be the only inclusive institution that that can overcome sectarian interests as in the films *Ruma Maida* (2009, 'Maida's House') and *Kita Punya Bendera* (2008, 'We Have a Flag'). It is not the dogmatic nationalism of previous generations but seeks to reimagine Indonesia after the New Order.<sup>62</sup> Some of the most nationalistic works of late – the popular action film *Darah Garuda* (2009, 'Blood of Eagles'), that dramatizes the 1945-49 war against the Dutch, and the award-winning *Denias Senandung Di Atas Awani* (2006, 'Denias, Humming above the Clouds'),<sup>63</sup> about

---

<sup>61</sup> "Saya juga seperti generasi saya yang lainnya, itu lumayan obsessi dengan 65. Karena buat kita itu dalam masa-masa talhul yang tidak pernah adalah menceritakan mana yang benar, mana yang salah gitu. Itu topik yang sangat luar biasa menarik dan penting. Nah cuma karena topiknya begitu sensitif, sebagai seorang kreator, saya melihat bahwa untuk bisa melakukan atau menceritakan hal seperti itu, kreator juga harus sensitif." Salman Aristo, personal interview, 8 December 2008.

<sup>62</sup> See for example the interview with Ayu Utami, the scriptwriter behind *Rumah Maida*. 'Ayu Utami: Ruma Maida Gambaran Persoalan Indonesia' *21 Cineplex*, <http://www.21cineplex.com/exclusive/ayu-utami-ruma-maida-gambaran-persoalan-indonesia,87.htm>, accessed 21 June 2011.

<sup>63</sup> Best Indonesian Film (Jakarta International Film Festival 2006) and Asia Pacific Screen Award for Best Children's Feature Film (Asia Pacific Screen Awards 2007).

a Papuan boy who discovers 'Indonesia' as his means to be modern – were produced in collaboration with the Indonesian military.

Whereas Garin Nugroho pioneered the expansion of Indonesian film into the international film festival circuit in the 1990s, the young filmmakers that followed have not relied on the exotic oriental or anti-New Order politics that pervades Nugroho's work. The work of Joko Anwar (*Kala*, 2007; *Pintu Terlarang* 2009), Edwin (*Babi Buta yang Ingin Terbang*, 2008) and Djenar Maesa Ayu (*Mereka Bilang Saya Monyet*, 2007) engage in new ways with being Indonesian. Anwar's work is postmodern in its aesthetics and setting in unidentifiable cityscape; Edwin's work deals with the experience of being Chinese in Indonesia; Djenar's with the struggle of being a woman writer in Indonesia, and the relationships with her mother, mentor and her past. To some extent, each struggled to garner a wide audience because of their middle class concerns, but expanded the scope of film in Indonesia, whilst taking new concerns to these foreign audiences. Where they have taken political or social edge, they have been like their generation more generally, and concerned with issues of identity, self-expression and local communities (Juliastuti, 2006).

### **3.9 Conclusion: A New Generation and its Past**

The new generation of filmmakers that has been discussed in this chapter are products of historical development in Indonesia, whose aspirations and concerns mirrored the opposition to Soeharto and the development of the new media industries in the era of *reformasi* that followed it. The collapse of the existing film industry during the late 1990s meant that when young filmmakers entered the film industry it was open to reinvention. They were able to work free

from the restraints and conditions that had dogged filmmakers in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Garin Nugroho, who had found it easier to make films for overseas festivals rather than audiences at home. With training and experience in television, music videos and other forms of pop culture, new generation filmmakers have, since 1998, altered the conditions of filmmaking in Indonesia. Although as Chapter 7 will show, the structures of the old film industry have not evaporated completely. Significantly, young filmmakers brought the creative capital necessary to engineer the reintegration of film with broader modes of pop culture.

As agents of history, being middle class has specific consequences for the way in which the new generation filmmakers have asserted themselves. Primarily, as this chapter has shown, their greatest influence has been on revitalizing the stagnant film industry by bringing it closer to prevailing modes of pop culture. Politically however their efforts have been less successful, prompting Garin Nugroho (2005: 92) to describe their revitalization of film as ‘half-baked’ (*setengah matang*). Whilst freedom of expression and independence have been the dominant slogans of this new generation, they have not been able to effect structural change to the film industry itself. Of course this reflects broader complications, or indeed the failure, of *reformasi*. Structures of power and patronage networks remain in place (Crouch, 2010), despite the cosmetic changes of *reformasi*. As the next chapter shows, political action on the part of young filmmakers has primarily been against censorship, which further speaks to middle class politics.

## 4.

### **REFORMASI AND CHALLENGING THE STATE**

#### **4.1 Film and *Reformasi***

The dominant narrative of *reformasi* says that the period following the resignation of President Soeharto in 1998 and thus the end of the New Order introduced a period of democratization, decline of state hegemony and freeing of the media (Sen and Hill, 2006: 221; Nyman, 2006). For film, the array of institutions that had governed filmmaking were rendered impotent, and post-1998 film production largely operated free of state involvement and bureaucratic control, which had characterized filmmaking under the New Order (Sumarno and Achnas, 2002). Only the Film Censorship Board (LSF, Lembaga Sensor Film) remained in operation, and any film to be screened in the cinema or released on VCD/DVD still needed to pass censorship. The initial euphoria of *reformasi*, saw a production boom, especially for films distributed outside these LSF controlled streams. Over time however, filmmakers became entangled in the prevailing politics of film including of censorship, which had not been shaken loose through *reformasi*.

Political agitation against the New Order state intensified in the early 1990s and culminated in the student protests of 1997 and 1998. This coincided with the onset of the Asian Financial Crisis in mid 1997, when Indonesia's economy went into turmoil and over twenty percent of the population fell below the poverty line (Tambunan, 2005: 23-34). Although President Soeharto had been

unanimously confirmed as President for another five years by his compliant parliament in January 1997, his legitimacy was seriously undermined and in May 1998 he resigned, to be replaced by his vice-president BJ Habibie. Soeharto's resignation marked the end of the New Order, and the transformation of its repressive state apparatus. The Ministry of Information continued until 1999, when it was abolished and replaced by the new Ministry of Communication and Information Technology. Responsibility for film shifted to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, signaling a change in how film was to be regulated. Despite these changes, the government and its agencies no longer had effective control over filmmaking in Indonesia due to institutional impuissance, and filmmakers were largely free to do what they liked.

Whilst journalists and students were the major advocates of regime change leading up to the resignation of President Soeharto in 1998, filmmakers however were rather peripheral to the politics of opposition and *reformasi* and rarely used their medium for making political statements. Sen (2003) identifies Garin Nugroho, Indonesia's internationally renowned art cinema director of the 1990s, as the embodiment of political opposition to the New Order although Nugroho was largely unknown to local audiences. The position of filmmakers in the New Order is best captured in the experience of Eros Djarot (b. 1950),<sup>1</sup> who made *Tjut Nyak Dhien* (1988) about the Acehnese resistance leader Tjut Nyak Dhien (1848-1908) and her fight against the Dutch. In the final scenes, as Tjut Nyak Dhien faces capture, she allows the child Agam to escape into the jungle. Agam, or Gam as she calls him, is an obvious reference to GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka, Free Aceh Movement) who waged a decades-long war of independence against the

---

<sup>1</sup> Djarot also supported Megawati Soekarnoputri in forming PDIP, the breakaway faction of the PDI. In 2001 Megawati would become Indonesia's fifth president.

New Order state. Yet this minor wordplay of opposition paled in comparison to Djarot's other work as founder and chief editor of oppositional news tabloid *Detik*, that in 1994 was shut down along with *Tempo* and *Editor* by Minister of Information Harmoko. Djarot also helped establish the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) and NGOs including Indonesian Corruption Watch (ICW). Filmmaking only allowed a minimum opportunity for political opposition, and most filmmakers were decidedly apolitical.

The spirit that animated the first post New Order film, *Kuldesak* (1998, 'Cul-de-sac'), was substantially different. Their struggle was not to topple the New Order, but rather to work in a cultural industry in a way they wanted. Mira Lesmana for example says of the *Kuldesak* project that:

Our enthusiasm is more because we were angry because we cannot make films. We've studied, and this is what we want, and why are there so many bureaucracies, of course there was rebellion towards the government as well. With the Department of Information, we're so upset with them. What is this Department of Information, 'you cannot do this, you cannot do that' but not per se about bringing down the regime. But dissatisfaction towards the regime of course. It's all in us.<sup>2</sup>

President Abdurrahman Wahid abolished the Department of Information in 1999 and shifted film to the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, in a move that filmmaker Tino Saroengallo says was "more a reaction to the euphoria of reformasi"

---

<sup>2</sup> Mira Lesmana, personal interview, 30 January 2009. "Our semangat itu lebih karena we were angry because we cannot make films. We've studied, and this is what we want, and why are there so many bureaucracies, of course ada pemberontakan terhadap pemerintah juga. Dengan Departemen Penerangan, we're so upset with them. What is this Departemen Penerangan, 'you cannot do this, you cannot do that' but not per se about bringing down the regime. Tapi ketidakpuasan terhadap regime of course. It's all in us."

(Saroengallo, 2006).<sup>3</sup> Filmmakers themselves had very little to do with the decision and remained peripheral in the push for institutional reform.

Filmmaking in Indonesia was governed by the 1992 Film Law No.8 legislated at the height of the New Order and in the aftermath of a trade dispute with the USA over film import quotas. When introduced in 1992 to replace the 1964 film law, the 1992 film law coincided with the downturn in local production which prompted the few remaining local filmmakers to ask for more lenient restrictions on sexual content in order to attract more audiences.<sup>4</sup> Film Law No. 8 1992 reinforced many of the restrictive film policies already in place, seeing film as a substantial threat to the state's hegemony over information. Krishna Sen (1996: 183) describes the law as being written by "a state that sees itself as threatened by the cultural work of its own citizens." Substantively the law seeks to regulate all aspects of filmmaking, distribution and exhibition and subjugate it to social order and national development, giving the state the power to revoke a film if it threatens either. It makes particular reference to film's role as a tool of education and as a means to enhance social cohesion and national unity (Sen and Hill, 2000). These references are all classic elements of New Order framing and the law is full of recondite New Order speak.

Effectively the 1992 film law was only efficacious in the context of the New Order and its institutional control. Even with the transfer of regulatory authority to the Department of Culture and Tourism in 1999, there was no effort to renew film regulations or to enforce the 1992 law. Whilst this shift of authority meant that film was no longer to be treated as a mode of propaganda but as a

---

<sup>3</sup> Original reads: "lebih merupakan reaksi terhadap euphoria reformasi."

<sup>4</sup> See for example Sri Pudyastuti R., Wahyu Muryadi, dan Indrawan, 'Suara dari balik seluloid yang panas itu', *Tempo*, 25 June 1994.

cultural resource, it did not signal a change in the film law. Journalists on the other hand successfully campaigned for a new Press Law. When it was legislated in 1999 it removed the arbitrary powers of the minister and gave greater protection and freedom to news outlets. A similar process was advocated for the film law but failed to gain traction with lawmakers.<sup>5</sup> The nascent film industry was disorganized and largely unaffected by the law anyway as young filmmakers were more concerned with making films than fighting for legal change. Of greater importance to filmmakers was the LSF, which not only remained potent in its role as censor, but directly limited their ability to make the types of films they wanted to make. This chapter therefore focuses on state censorship and how young filmmakers have dealt with it.

#### **4.2: The LSF Post-1998: Redefining Its Role**

State control over film continues to manifest most obviously and powerfully through the Film Censorship Board (LSF). Formerly a part of the vast Department of Information, in 1999 with the abolition of the Department of Information, the LSF became an autonomous institution, reporting directly to the Minister of Culture and Tourism.<sup>6</sup> Under the Department of Information, censorship was the last gate in a long line of regulations that governed the production of film. Its forty-six members, composing commissions A and B, are drawn from government departments, the five sanctioned religions, the security

---

<sup>5</sup> See for example the detailed legal study and argument put forward by the Indonesia Media Law & Policy Centre. Hinca IP Pandjaitan and Dyah Aryani P (2001) *Melepas Pasung Kebijakan Perfilman di Indonesia: Catatan untuk Undang-Undang Perfilman Baru*, Jakarta: Warta Global Indonesia.

<sup>6</sup> Since 2004 the Minister for Tourism and Culture has been Jero Wacik.

apparatus (police, military) and ‘experts’ in journalism, psychology and culture.<sup>7</sup> Long serving member Titie Said (b. 1935) was elected as head in 2003 and served until 2009.<sup>8</sup> The choice of members means that the LSF is a normalizing institution whose mission is to ensure order and stability by cutting content deemed harmful, immoral or divisive. Despite *reformasi*, the LSF continues to perpetuate a similar social and political conservatism as it did under the New Order.

Of all the institutions that have governed filmmaking in Indonesia, censorship has been the most consistent and continuous.<sup>9</sup> When the Dutch introduced their Ordonnantie Bioscoop (Cinema Ordinance) in 1916 it was designed to prevent the native audience from witnessing the immoral activities of Caucasians on screen for fear that it would lower their moral standing in the eyes of their colonial subjects (Kusuma and Haryanto, 2007: 107; Tjasmadi, 2008).<sup>10</sup> Under the Japanese (1942-1945), film was deployed as a central media of propaganda designed to inculcate sympathy and compliance to their rule and the idea of the East-Asian Co-prosperity Sphere. Within this propaganda function was the idea that film should be informative, educative and promote social order. These functions carried over into the newly established Department of Information of the Republican government, whose officials had all worked for the Japanese and saw it essential that the media support and promote the nation. These functions were incorporated into the Department of Information of independent Indonesia in the 1950s, and then intensified during the New Order

---

<sup>7</sup> For a full list of the members for the period 2005-2008, see Tjasmadi (2008: 238).

<sup>8</sup> Titie Said Sadikun is an accomplished author of twenty-five novels and a former journalist. She became involved in film after a number of her stories were turned into films in the 1970s, and in the 1980s she acted on juries for various film festivals. She is also regarded as a member of the Angkatan '66 (Generation of 1966) artists i.e. those who survived the purge of 1965-1966.

<sup>9</sup> Even if it has not always been consistent or systematic in its operation.

<sup>10</sup> This was particularly true of Hollywood films at the time.

(Sen, 1994). Behind these censorship regimes is a belief in the inherent potency of film (more than any other medium), both in terms of its ability to educate and inculcate and conversely its potential to cause disorder and promote sedition (Saputro, 2005).

Following the abolition of the Department of Information in 1999, the LSF began its own internal review, in part proposing to shift from simple censorship to a graduated classification system on a par with countries such as Singapore or Australia.<sup>11</sup> Only a year before the end of the New Order, the BP2N (National Film Planning Agency, ‘Badan Pertimbangan Perfilman Nasional’) commissioned a study that recommended strengthening the censorship regime because of a perceived rise in the immoral content of films (Arief, Kahariady and Hadiyat, 1997). In post-*reformasi* Indonesia, LSF head Titie Said told me that the ‘cutting’ kind of censorship was no longer appropriate given the social changes of the past decade.<sup>12</sup> Her comments suggested a loosening of the restrictions that applied a singular standard to all material and thus to allow audiences to make their own viewing decisions. Despite this acknowledgement, the internal discussions of the LSF were not made public and up to 2009 the LSF continued its ‘cutting’ as before.

*Reformasi* threw up fewer challenges to the LSF than might have been expected. Between 1998 and 2004 a vibrant culture of informal and private film screenings gave independent filmmakers place to screen their films away from the cinemas and thus outside the scope of the LSF.<sup>13</sup> One of the few films to encounter the LSF in this period was *The Army Forced them to be Violent* (1999)

---

<sup>11</sup> Titie Said, personal interview, 28 May 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Personal interview, 28 May 2008.

<sup>13</sup> These films were mostly documentaries and short films, although some feature were screened in this way including films by Aria Kusumadewa (*Beth* and *Novel Tanpa Huruf ‘R’*) and Rudy Soedjarwo (*Tragedi* and *Bintang Jatuh*). See Prakosa (2005).

a documentary about the student protests that forced the resignation of President Soeharto.<sup>14</sup> Although many films were made about the protests at the end of the New Order (Kusuma, 2008; Prakosa, 2008), director Tino Saroengallo (b. 1958) wanted to release his film in the cinemas and on VCD. After submitting the film to the LSF as required, fourteen seconds of footage were cut and the title was changed to the more neutral *The Student Movement in Indonesia*. The LSF argues that the original title and the cut footage of army members hitting demonstrators, portrayed the army negatively:

If it is his intention to make a documentary film, then the central principle that has to be observed is to cover both sides equally. By using the aforementioned title, does that not mean that a priori ‘the Army’ is isolated as the only cause of students turning violent?<sup>15</sup>

Saroengallo argued that this infringed his creative rights and served to erase history to which the LSF replied: “Will history be erased with the removal of scenes only 14 seconds long?”<sup>16</sup> Although the footage had been widely aired on television, the LSF clearly showed that the spirit of *reformasi* had not affected the opinions of the LSF and that creative freedom film was not on a par with freedom of the press. Mostly however, *reformasi* minded young filmmakers especially those making short films simply eschewed the LSF altogether by working outside the formal film industry, thereby avoiding any complications with the state.

It was only in 2004 that the position of the LSF in post-New Order Indonesia was contested with the case of *Buruan Cium Gue* (2004, ‘Kiss Me

---

<sup>14</sup> Directed by Tino Saroengallo (b. 1958).

<sup>15</sup> “Kalau niatnya untuk membuat film dokumenter maka prinsip yang pertama-tama harus dipegang adalah to cover both sides equally. Dengan mengambil judul tersebut, apakah bukan berarti sudah secara a priori menyudutkan ‘the Army’ sebagai satu-satunya penyebab mahasiswa bertindak keras/brutal?” ‘Jawaban Terinci Lembaga Sensor Film Bag.4’ <http://webs.lsf.go.id/>, accessed 26/11/2008.

<sup>16</sup> “Apakah sejarah akan dapat ditutupi dengan penghapusan adegan yang hanya 14 detik?” ‘Jawaban Terinci Lembaga Sensor Film Bag.4’ <http://webs.lsf.go.id/>, accessed 26/11/2008.

Quick'). *Buruan Cium Gue* was the 'comeback' film for commercial producer Raam Punjabi who had spent the 1990s in television. The film concluded his popular *Anak Baru Gede* ('Growing Up') television serial. Scriptwriter Ve Handojo told me he wrote the script around what could not be shown on television, namely, the lead couple's first kiss.<sup>17</sup> After passing censorship (kiss intact), the film was released in the cinemas, but soon faced protest from Islamic tele-preacher Aa Gym who claimed that the film's title alone encouraged promiscuity.<sup>18</sup> After much back and forth between the LSF, the producer and Aa Gym, Minister Jero Wacik ordered the film withdrawn from circulation. The film had already screened for sixteen days and although already drawing large audiences because of the popularity of the TV series, attracted even more audience because of the controversy. Within a week of the ban 'pirate' copies were available and selling fast (Ardiansyah, 2004). The film was re-edited and released six months later under the unappealing title of *Satu Kecupan* ('One Kiss').<sup>19</sup>

The protest by Aa Gym about the immorality of pop culture was not an isolated incident but rather part of a much broader realignment of social power and moral authority in post-Soeharto Indonesia. *Reformasi* had allowed for a plethora of hitherto suppressed voices to be heard, as well as increased sexual content. The latter in particular caused a backlash amongst conservative factions in society who started to equate *reformasi* and free speech with immorality. The Islamic Defenders Front (FPI, 'Front Pembela Islam') became notorious for attacking and shutting down 'immoral establishments' including nightclubs and

---

<sup>17</sup> Personal interview, 20 November 2008.

<sup>18</sup> For a more detailed account see van Heeren (2009: 113-119).

<sup>19</sup> The original title makes use of more informal language, whereas the new title uses a more literary word (*kecupan*) for kiss.

shops selling alcohol. In parliament, a concerned Minister for Women's Affairs had begun a push for anti-pornography legislation to control what she saw as an increased amount of immoral and sexual content in the media. Popular *dangdut* sensation Inul Daratista, famous for her 'drill' (*ngebor*) dance, was publicly censured by senior *dangdut* singer and moral conservative Rhoma Irama. These incidents captured the public mood as public opinion turned against the excesses of post-*reformasi* free media, bringing to an end a relatively liberal period for the media. Film was also subject to greater public scrutiny.

As Van Heeren argues, the controversy of *Buruan Cium Gue* is the product of celebrity culture which has very little to do with the film itself (2009: 118). A year earlier *Arisan!* (2003, 'The Gathering') had featured a passionate gay kiss without protest or controversy. In this context of resurgent moral conservatism, Aa Gym used *Buruan Cium Gue* to bolster his celebrity credentials by loudly protesting encroaching immorality in pop culture.<sup>20</sup> Raam Punjabi was an easy target because of his wealth and his minority Indian ethnicity (van Heeren, 2009). The LSF tried to justify their decision to Aa Gym but capitulated to his demands, agreeing that their judgment was wrong. A short-lived group of progressives calling themselves the Exponents Supporting Freedom of Expression (Eksponen Pendukung Kebebasan Berekspresi) (Harsono, 2004) expressed disappointment at the LSF, at the Minister and at Raam Punjabi for having given in so easily. What became readily apparent was that the LSF had lost its authority and was itself looking for legitimacy in post New Order Indonesia. Beginning with *Buruan Cium Gue*, the LSF would increasingly side with more reactionary groups such as

---

<sup>20</sup> Scriptwriter Ve Handojo believes Aa Gym "needs the controversy for his image." Personal interview, 20 November 2008.

Aa Gym as a means of allaying criticism and substantiating their *raison d'être*. Naturally, this was at the expense of protecting filmmakers and their work.

For filmmakers, the *Buruan Cium Gue* case revealed how easily the LSF could be influenced by an outspoken individual such that a film could be withdrawn from circulation even though it had passed the LSF and been approved for screening. It was widely known that Aa Gym had not seen the film and was only reacting to the title. This led to consternation amongst filmmakers, like director Ody Harahap, who criticizes the LSF for their flippancy: “After they make a decision, they are not even sure about their own decisions.”<sup>21</sup> Even a low profile commercial producer such as Sunil Samtani of Rapi Films feels frustrated:

The problem is, the censors view it, ‘Ok this is fine. We have cut some and it’s fine to proceed with the movie. Show it.’ But then there are some extreme religious fanatics that are like ‘this is not allowed.’ Who do you put the fault at? Do you put the fault at that or do you put fault at the censors?<sup>22</sup>

In this climate of uncertainty created by the seemingly arbitrary and inconsistent behaviour of the LSF, many such as Sunil Samtani, who produces over half a dozen films a year, err on the side of caution. The LSF increasingly aligned itself with the conservative morality of people like Aa Gym. Meanwhile public discontent with *reformasi* was growing as many came to see free speech as equivalent to immorality and pornography. Censorship was no longer the monopoly of the LSF but had mutated to be far more multifarious and hence unpredictable.

Filmmaker concerns about the censorious power of civil society groups increased when the production of *Lastri* was abandoned in late 2008 because of

---

<sup>21</sup> “Tapi sesudah mereka ngasih keputusan kok mereka tidak yakin dengan keputusan mereka sendiri.” Personal interview, Ody Harahap, 20 October 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Personal interview, Sunil Samtani, 19 October 2009.

protests by a group of residents, provoked by the FPI. Eros Djarot returned to film production, after a decade long hiatus, with a love story set in the context of 1965 based on the 2007 novel *Suara Perempuan Korban Tragedi 65* ('The Voice of a Woman Victim of the 1965 Tragedy') by Ita F Nadia. In it, the two lovers come from opposite sides of the political divide. At the ceremony marking the beginning of production, Djarot was optimistic about the project,<sup>23</sup> but within weeks he had abandoned production due to protests from residents in Solo, where filming was to take place. The local police ordered filming to stop, agreeing with residents who claimed that the film promoted communism. Despite Djarot's insistent arguments to the contrary and permission from both the Central Intelligence and Security Agency and the National Police Headquarters, Djarot had to abandon the project. The spectre of communism, an old New Order scapegoat, remains just as potent. Eros Djarot likened the situation to being under the New Order again.<sup>24</sup>

One filmmaker, who though making a controversial film has so far avoided any recriminations from either the public or the LSF, is Edwin (b. 1978). *Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly* (2008) is his statement film about being Chinese in Indonesia, and includes, amongst other things a scene of sodomy forced on a Chinese dentist by two characters, metaphors of the military and big business respectively. Edwin sees this scene as integral to the film, and when the 2009 Singapore International Film Festival was to screen the film with the scene censored, Edwin withdrew the film, preferring instead to maintain the work's integrity. Numerous screenings have been held in Indonesia and in Singapore by utilizing informal networks and private venues, thereby avoiding the state and

---

<sup>23</sup> Personal interview, Eros Djarot, 22 October 2008.

<sup>24</sup> 'Eros Djarot Gagal Buat Film Lastri' *Kompas*, 14/11/2008.

ensorship. Coincidentally, *Blind Pig* and many of Edwin's short films have been screened at film festivals around the world, including Cannes (Khoo, 2010). With the strengthening of the local film industry, most young filmmakers wanting to make feature films have not followed this independent *modus operandi*, preferring instead to pursue greater audiences and money in cinema screenings with all the complication it also brings.

*Lastri* was an important lesson for writers and filmmakers about how tenuous their position as filmmakers really is. Reactionary protests are able to override official permissions and force shooting to be stopped. Respected scriptwriter Jujur Prananto sees the case of *Lastri* as pointing to the limits of what can be shown in a film:

For this reason I have a feeling that freedom of expression is only for the elite, the thinkers, intellectuals. [They] can appreciate [or] can accept the fact that those who were detained as PKI were not necessarily guilty. History was engineered, and those who know that are only from that strata of people. It may be true, but only a few know, but for others, the rest [of the people] know that it was the communists. [For them] Communists, atheists and enemies of religion have to be attacked. Period.<sup>25</sup>

When young director Hanung Bramantyo wanted to make a film about the 1965-66 era with Prananto as scriptwriter, Prananto declined finding the topic too serious, preferring to write something lighter. Hanung Bramantyo and scriptwriter Salman Aristo have also fostered ideas of making a film set during the events of

---

<sup>25</sup> "Karena itu tadi saya punya feeling tentang kebebasan berekspresi itu hanya elit, kalangan pemikir, intelektual itu sudah bisa mengapresiasi bisa menerima ternyata yang dulu ditahan waktu PKI itu belum tentu salah. Ini ada rekayasa sejarah, itu yang mengetahui hanya kalangan selapis ini. Mungkin benar, tapi cuman segini yang tahu, tapi yang lain yang sebanyak itu tahunya itu komunis, kommuniste ateis dan musuh agama harus kita gempur. Udah titik." Jujur Prananto, personal interview, 5 December 2008.

1965 but so far, it remains unrealized.<sup>26</sup> The inability of organized conservative forces, especially religious ones, to accept such controversial topics, coupled with the “fundamental anti-communism of the Indonesian political establishment” (Cribb, 2002: 562), may be the cause of their delay.

This form of nebulous censorship, where groups in society have been able to influence state actors and prevent films from being made or screened, van Heeren calls ‘censorship from the street’ (2009: 119). Whilst observers have equated this with the political conditions of the post-New Order period (Heryanto, 2008; van Heeren, 2009), this form of censorship has a long history in Indonesia. Most famously in the 1950s, both Usmar Ismail and Dr Huyung, two pioneering filmmakers in the post-independence era, faced opposition from civil society. Huyung’s first film *Antara Bumi dan Langit* (1950, ‘Between the Earth and the Sky’) was protested by the Indonesian Islamic Students Organization (PII, Pelajar Islam Indonesia) in Medan who claimed that the film did not reflect Indonesian values. A promotional still for the film showed the two lead characters kissing. Similarly, Usmar Ismail’s *Darah dan Doa* (1950, ‘The Long March’), now regarded as the first great *film nasional*, was loudly protested and even banned by military units in some areas. Subsequently, both filmmakers engaged themselves in reforming censorship in order to protect filmmakers from such reactionary protests (Huyung, 1951; 1952). Usmar Ismail bitterly complained that the ability of reactionary protests to force films off the screen had a lasting impact on the film industry by limiting what could be shown and therefore filmmaker’s willingness to tackle controversial topics (1983: 73-79).

---

<sup>26</sup> Bramantyo’s previous effort to talk about 1965 was through oblique references in his horror film *Lentera Merah* (2006). See the next chapter for a detailed discussion of this film.

Following the end of the New Order, the LSF sought to overcome its stigma as a repressive institution of the New Order and align itself with the mood of free speech. Yet over the past decade as it has sought to redefine its role, the LSF has found itself caught between the demands of filmmakers and the demands of reactionary civil society groups. As a result, the LSF has found it easier to revert to its conservative role as censor, and be seen to side with the concerns of the ‘people’, rather than protecting the rights of filmmakers who are seen as a privileged minority. In this way, the LSF has sought to align itself as the protector of the public, and so gain legitimacy once again as an institution that plays a role in the public discourse surrounding culture, nation, and responsible speech. Filmmakers, hoping that *reformasi* would bring greater freedom to create and have their ideas seen by the public, were sorely disappointed.

Filmmakers wanting to use films as a means to comment on contemporary society found themselves at odds with the LSF’s mission to protect the image of the nation and the state. For example producer Erwin Arnada, of new film production company Rexinema, described his experience with *Jakarta Undercover* (2006),<sup>27</sup> a film about a striptease dancer who witnesses a murder:

The cut was of a scene with the police, not a dancing scene. A scene in which the police were being paid off. Mostly it is those realistic scenes that are cut. In actual fact the scene of the police accepting money is a representation of reality in... A lot of us if we are booked [by the police], you give them money and it’s over. We all know that if we are driving, we get stopped, we pay, clear, finished. But we cannot show it in film, it gets cut.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> The film takes the title from a popular book that exposed the sexual nightlife of Jakarta, mostly different forms of prostitution. Erwin Arnada also edited Indonesia’s version of the American men’s magazine *Playboy*.

<sup>28</sup> “Itu juga potongan adegan polisi bukan potongan adegan tari-tarian. Adegan polisi yang sedang disuap. Kebanyakan adegan-adegan itu yang realistis yang dipotong. Sebenarnya adegan polisi

As with the case of *The Army Forced them to be Violent*, the LSF takes film as a repository of powerful and influential imagery. Its role then is to protect the state and its agencies from negative representation in film, and in doing so, alter both the recording of historical events and the portrayal of what is everyday life in Indonesia. It suggests that *reformasi*, a process that was supposed to allow greater transparency and criticism, remains alien to film.

Further uncertainty is created for filmmakers as many do not know the standards that are actually applied to films. Although the guidelines on content are available in the 1992 Film Law, they are vague and are open to interpretation. Problems then come in how the LSF selectively interprets these rules. Speaking as a producer, Erwin Arnada thinks the LSF

are sometimes quite contradictory. They do not have a reliable schema at all. Sometimes in one film the kissing scene is cut, but in another film it's not. On one poster a man's bellybutton is not allowed but on another poster it is. So they are quite inconsistent.<sup>29</sup>

The LSF actually does not cut solely on the basis of images, but also according to the context in which it appears. Proper morality is an overriding concern of the LSF, and depictions of sex can either be morally justified or not. In *Virgin* (2005), a film about three high school girls who sleep with older men for money, the sex scenes are left intact. Whilst *Virgin* is a moral condemnation of pre-marital sex, *Buruan Cium Gue* was subsequently cut because it is a light-hearted celebration of teenage love and sexuality.

---

yang terima suap, itu adalah gambaran yang realita di... Banyak kita kalau ditilang, kita bayar selesai. Kita semua taulah kalo dijalan, ditilang, kita bayar, damai, selesai. Tapi nggak bisa di film, itu aja yang dipotong.” Erwin Arnada, personal interview, 16 June 2008.

<sup>29</sup> “Mereka kadang-kadang mendua sih. Tidak punya sistematika yang baku sebenarnya kayak apa. Kadang ada di sebuah film adegan ciuman dipotong, tapi di film ini nggak. Ada poster yang pusar laki-laki harus nggak boleh tapi di poster yang lain boleh. Jadi emang mendua aja.” Erwin Arnada, personal interview, 16 June 2008.

A moral distinction was evident in the prominent case of *ML (Mau Lagi)* (unreleased, 'ML [Want it Again]') an Indonesian version of popular US frat-comedy *American Pie* (1999).<sup>30</sup> As in *American Pie*, two boys make a deal that within a month Wisnu, a virgin, must finally have sex, and Mario, a womanizer, must be celibate. The film garnered controversy, not just because of the suggestive title – 'ML' is a euphemism for sex – but because an uncensored trailer was released on the internet that suggested the film was full of sex scenes. Like many films however, the sex is tempered by a moral message, in this case Mario discovers that he has herpes, indicting his promiscuity. When it was censored, the LSF reportedly cut fifteen meters of the print, rendering the film incoherent. Titie Said told me that this was necessary because the film purported to talk about the risk of HIV/AIDS in its publicity material, not herpes. *ML*'s harsh treatment at the hands of the censors suggests that the LSF reacted out of spite to their authority being challenged by the trailer. Producer Shanker spent the next six months reshooting and reediting the film, adding a long lecture from famous sexologist Dr Boyke at the end telling viewers not to engage in premarital sex. It was released under the safer title *Cintaku Selamanya* (2008, 'My Love Forever'). Fellow producer Chand Parwez Servia suggested to me that Shanker brought it on himself,<sup>31</sup> but the whole episode only added to the perception that the LSF is vagrant in its decisions.

The LSF continued to frustrate filmmakers of all stripes. *Reformasi* was supposed to herald an era of free expression and a media free from repressive influence from the state but instead the LSF maintained a *modus operandi*

---

<sup>30</sup> Scriptwriter Awi Suryadi told me that the film was based on *American Pie*, and the tagline 'Indonesian Pae bukan American Pie' is an obvious reference to the American film. Personal interview, 6 June 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Personal interview, Chand Parwez Servia, 17 July 2008.

reminiscent of the New Order. Kusuma (2007) identifies sixteen films that were cut and one that was banned outright (*Dendam Pocong*, 2006).<sup>32</sup> Filmmakers across the spectrum - not just those inclined to using film to explore sensitive issues or to document their concerns - are frustrated with the LSF and its interpretation of appropriate content. They find their ideas being constrained by a conservative narrative arc in which 'immorality' (free sex, recreational drug use and so on), must end in tragedy.

### 4.3 The Banning of *Dendam Pocong*

Before making *Dendam Pocong* (English title *Shrouded*), filmmakers Rudy Soedjarwo and Monty Tiwa had earned a reputation as two of the most daring of the young filmmakers with their film *9 Naga* (2005, '9 Dragons').<sup>33</sup> In the promotional poster for *9 Naga*, a bare-chested man stands against a black background with the tagline '*Manusia terbaik di Indonesia adalah seorang penjahat*' (The best person in Indonesia is a criminal). The LSF took issue with the visible bellybutton, pubic hair and especially the provocative tagline. Titie Said expressed the LSF's concerns:

Really it's not nice a sentence like that. There will be a lot of people who see the poster. Don't homogenize like that. Lots of people try to do good things for this country without becoming criminals. We want this country to become a good

---

<sup>32</sup> *Kuldesak* (1997), *The Army Forced Them to Be Violent* (1998), *Buruan Cium Gue!* (2004), *Gie* (2004), *9 Naga* (2005, '9 Dragons'), *Tales of Crocodile* (2005), *Timor Loro Sae* (2005), *Passabe* (2005), *Black Road* (2006), *Promised Paradise* (2006), *Berbagi Suami* (2006, 'Love to Share'), *Lentera Merah* (2006, 'Red Lantern'), *Pocong 2* (2006), *Long Road to Heaven* (2007), *3 Hari Untuk Selamanya* (2007, '3 Days Forever'), *Maaf Saya Menghamili Istri Anda!* (2007, 'Sorry, I Impregnated Your Wife'), *Dara* (2007).

<sup>33</sup> '9 Naga' refers to a mafia organization in Indonesia.

country. We just don't want that sentence to be taken negatively.<sup>34</sup>

*9 Naga* is about three two-bit hit-men who try to escape their profession but tragically fail in their efforts. The film passed the LSF, because the film still ends tragically,<sup>35</sup> what was not allowed was the inverted sense of right and wrong in the tagline that sympathized with criminals. The LSF maintains a very strong idea of the normative.

*9 Naga* was an indicative precursor to what was to come with *Dendam Pocong* released a year later. Whereas most horror films that employ the revenge narrative limit themselves to isolated incidents of sexual abuse and murder or unspecified events in history (see Chapter Five), *Dendam Pocong* was explicitly based on the 1998 riots in which houses and shops owned by ethnic Chinese were looted and destroyed, people were killed and scores of Chinese women were sexually assaulted and raped.<sup>36</sup> Scriptwriter Monty Tiwa made the film in response to the riots. The film tells a story about the Sugeng family who are petty traders.<sup>37</sup> After discovering that someone has been stealing rice, they accuse and fire Rustam, one of their employees. Coincidentally the May 1998 riots break out, and as revenge, Rustam directs the rioters to target the Sugeng family. In the ensuing violence, the parents are burnt alive, and the daughter is raped and killed. Only Wisnu, the son, survives. Wisnu goes mad when he begins to see a *pocong*, a corpse wrapped in traditional burial shroud. Its appearance prompts him to seek revenge on Rustam and his family, and he does to them what the mob did to his

---

<sup>34</sup> “Aduh kok ndak enak ya kalimat seperti itu.” Tentunya akan banyak orang yang melihat poster itu. Ya jangan ditebyah-uyah (disamaratakan--Red) seperti itu. Banyak orang akan berbuat yang terbaik untuk bangsa ini, tapi kan bukan dengan jadi penjahat. Kita ingin bangsa ini menjadi bangsa yang baik. Kami cuma tidak ingin kalimat itu ditafsirkan negatif.” Quoted in ‘Film “9 Naga” Kesandung Poster dan Puser’, *Kompas*, 13 December 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Even with the controversy, the film attracted an audience of less than 200,000. Rudi Soedjarwo still regards it as his best film. Personal interview, Rudy Soedjarwo, 19 July 2008.

<sup>36</sup> For a more complete account see Purdey (2006).

<sup>37</sup> The Sugeng family are not explicitly identified as Chinese.

family. Yet the film has a twist: at the end of the film, one of the Sugeng's other domestic helpers admits to her husband that she was the rice thief. All the killing, and by extension the May 1998 riots itself, are the result of misunderstanding.

The LSF was unequivocal in its decision to ban the film, citing nine points where they thought the film was inappropriate.<sup>38</sup> Kusuma (2009) says that the opening sequence of the riots and killing is particularly violent. The crux of the LSF decision rested on their belief that the film “has the potential to provoke revenge or open old wounds from the bloody events of May 1998.”<sup>39</sup> Titie Said elaborated the LSF's reasoning to me:

So we thought about it, this can reignite the community, [their] trauma. This is revenge with revenge; cruelty with cruelty; murder answered by murder; rape answered by rape. Later there will be retribution.<sup>40</sup>

The logic of this reasoning is murky since the film questions the motivations of violence and it is unclear who would be exacting revenge. Moreover most of the audience would have been middle to lower class teenagers who were peripheral to the violence of May 1998. This is in keeping with the prevalent response to the 1998 violence, that it should be buried and forgotten, not reenacted or remembered, out of fear of potential ‘revenge’ (Cribb, 2002: 562).

What the LSF is more fearful of is the counter narrative that *Dendam Pocong* opens on the events of May 1998, especially as any reconsideration of the events might challenge powerful interests. When for example Komnas HAM

---

<sup>38</sup> Although the film was never released, it was screened online as part of the Insomnifest Horror Film Festival in early 2009. Unfortunately, I only found out about this after the screening took place. The synopsis is based on the official synopsis due and information from Veronica Kusuma who was able to view the film as part of her research into Indonesian horror films.

<sup>39</sup> “Dan dapat berpotensi membangkitkan dendam atau luka lama akibat peristiwa berdarah Mei 1998” said Titie Said, quoted in ‘Pocong Terkubur Sensor’ *Tempo*, 17 October 2006.

<sup>40</sup> “Terus kita pikir, ini nanti bisa menimbulkan gejolak masyarakat, trauma. Ini balas dendam dengan balas dendam; kekejaman dengan kekejaman; pembunuhan dibalas pembunuhan; perkosaan dibalas perkosaan. Ini nanti ada pembalasan.” Titie Said, personal interview, 28 May 2008.

(National Commission for Human Rights) issued their report of the May 1998 riots in 2008, members of the FPI protested outside the Commission's gates. Many believe that the FPI are in the pay of Soeharto's son-in-law Prabowo Subianto, a disgraced former General who is thought to be implicated in orchestrating the riots in May 1998 through Kopassus (The Indonesian Special Forces). As with *Buruan Cium Gue*, the case of *Dendam Pocong* showed how the LSF defers to conservative and reactionary politics. Their reasons still rely on the perceived 'potential' inherent in the film which can easily be used to justify the banning or cutting of any film. Film is still a repository of powerful images, and as with *The Army Forced them to be Violent*, history is to be presented or remembered in only limited ways.

Naturally, the filmmakers were disappointed, especially producer Leo Sutanto who lost his three billion rupiah investment. The filmmakers had few other avenues of recourse, and Monty Tiwa remains disappointed at the LSF and the reasons given by Titie Said:

I was devastated. I feel the opposite of her. One of the most important duty of a film is to be a reflection of its society. To always be a reminder of our past, an update of our present and an imagination of what the future might hold. If all the bad things (in this case the massacre) should be forgotten like what the censor board suggested, I fear the future generation will repeat the same mistake.<sup>41</sup>

Director Rudi Soedjarwo thinks that they banned the film because it demonstrated that:

Humans are more frightening than ghosts. Those who actually rape and murder

---

<sup>41</sup> Monty Tiwa, personal correspondence, 12 December 2009.

are humans. The real evil is mankind. Yet it's not allowed to be shown like that.<sup>42</sup> That is, humans are actually more malevolent than ghosts because "ghosts cannot kill, rob and rape,"<sup>43</sup> a particularly pertinent point in a country with such a bloody past. As a result the film has never been released in Indonesia and has only once been publically screened at a US-based online film festival in 2008.<sup>44</sup>

Only two other films have since dealt with May 1998 in any significant way. One of the young Chinese characters in Edwin's *Babi Buta Ingin Terbang* (*Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly*) is shown editing a film about the May 1998 riots, as an event amongst many where the Chinese are discriminated against in Indonesia. The other, *May* (2008) by Viva Westi, tries to deal with the trauma of a Chinese girl (May) caught during the riots after her boyfriend is unable to leave work to pick her up. The film operates through a series of flashbacks to May 1998, showing the violence obliquely through insinuation, such as angered groups running past the camera. In its focus on the character of May and her trauma after the event, the film fails to delve into the motivations or reasons behind the riots, presenting them merely as something awful that happened.<sup>45</sup>

The LSF proved that they were not willing to allow young filmmakers to explore issues such as the violence of May 1998 in graphic detail. After *Dendam Pocong*, Soedjarwo and Tiwa made the sequel *Pocong 2* (2006) which was a huge success at the box-office with an audience of 1.3 million people. *Pocong 2* is a continuation of the story from *Dendam Pocong*, but its references to the May

---

<sup>42</sup> "Kita tunjukkan human is more menakutkan daripada setan gitu lah. Karena yang memperkosa dan membunuh itu kan manusia jadi setannya manusia. Oh ya nggak boleh gitu." Personal interview, 19 July 2008.

<sup>43</sup> "Karena setan tidak bias membunuh, merampok, dan memperkosa". Rudy Soedjarwo quoted in "Pocong Terkubur Sensor" *Tempo*, 17 October 2006.

<sup>44</sup> *Insomnifest 2008*, <http://www.insomnifest.com/films/shrouded.htm>, accessed 24/11/2008.

<sup>45</sup> Viva Westi described *May* to me as "Maka ceritanya yang universal. Cerita sepasang remaja, kekasih yang terpisah itu kan seperti film Titanic yang ada love story didalam kapal yang tenggelam. Sederhana cuma latar belakangnya isunya besar sekali tentang kerusuhan gitu." Personal interview, 5 June 2008.

1998 violence, are more oblique. Instead it takes up the story of two sisters who move into a strange apartment block where they begin to be haunted by a *pocong*. In one scene, the older sister Maya searches on the internet for information about *pocong*, and hovers over an article about the banning of *Dendam Pocong*.<sup>46</sup> The two *Pocong* films precipitated the end of the collaboration between Soedjarwo and Tiwa, and neither would return to such controversial material, preferring instead to concentrate on safer, commercial film projects. The potential of a new paradigm in film had been shown the limits of representation. The case of *Dendam Pocong* and other encounters with the LSF prompted a group of reform-minded filmmakers to challenge the prevailing institutions of film and in particular the LSF.

#### **4.4 Challenging the Film Censorship Board**

As film production increased after 2003 more young filmmakers realized that the LSF was becoming more, not less, conservative in its approach to film. This frustration, although palpable, lacked organization, partly because each director or producer had to deal with the LSF individually. In 2006 reform-minded filmmakers found their call to action when *Ekskul* (2006, 'Extracurricular'), directed by Nayato Fio Nuala and produced by Shanker RS of Indika Entertainment, won the Citra (award) for best film at that year's FFI (Festival Film Indonesia, Indonesian Film Festival). Concerned filmmakers and others in the industry came together as Masyarakat Film Indonesia (MFI, 'Indonesian Film Community') and staged a public protest in which many returned the Awards

---

<sup>46</sup> The article is 'Pocong Terkubur Sensor' *Tempo*, 17 October 2006.

(Citra) they had won at previous FFI.<sup>47</sup> They argued that the FFI was clearly unprofessional in selecting a film that had plagiarized music from other films. In their collective statement they not only demanded that the Citra for *Ekskul* be revoked but wanted wholesale institutional reform. The MFI felt that the problems within the FFI were common to all government institutions regulating film, including the LSF. Amongst their list of demands was for film institutions to be more transparent, democratic and professional; government support for the industry; revision of the 1992 Film Law No. 8; and conversion of the LSF into a film classification board.<sup>48</sup>

In the subsequent war of words, Indika producer Shanker accused the MFI of opportunism by protesting after the award was given, and not during the nomination stages. He caused further controversy when he claimed that the FFI awards could be bought and that he had been offered one for thirty million rupiah (approx. US\$3030 or S\$5060),<sup>49</sup> an accusation the FFI committee denied. Shanker later apologized, and a year and a half later in June 2007, the head of the BP2N, Deddy Mizwar, issued a letter revoking the awards for *Ekskul*. Shanker was understandably upset, and when I met him two years later, he still had bitter memories and continues to defiantly keep his Citra. In a subsequent release *Film Horor* (2007, 'Horror Film'), Shanker spoofs the MFI by including a comical character that looks like Riri Riza wanting to know where he can return his Citra.

---

<sup>47</sup> Prominent members include Abduh Azis (Jakarta Arts Council), Mira Lesmana (producer), Nia Dinata (producer), Ody C. Harahap (director), Riri Riza (director), Shanty Harmayn (producer), Tino Saroengallo (line producer), Hanung Bramantyo (director), Prima Rusdi (scriptwriter), Joko Anwar (director and scriptwriter). For a full list, please see 'About Us', <http://masyarakatfilmindonesia.wordpress.com/about/> accessed 08/12/2009.

<sup>48</sup> A full list of the demands and an overview of MFI activities for the period December 2006 to August 2007 can be found at their website. See [http://masyarakatfilmindonesia.files.wordpress.com/2007/09/overview\\_akhir\\_komdok.pdf](http://masyarakatfilmindonesia.files.wordpress.com/2007/09/overview_akhir_komdok.pdf), accessed 08/12/2009.

<sup>49</sup> It was suggested to be me by one informant that Shanker needed the FFI award to prop up his struggling Indika company. It is unclear however when Shanker stated that the awards could be bought whether he himself had done so. 'Kisruh Jual-Beli Piala FFI' *detikHot*, 21 December 2005.

Although the MFI's efforts had not been in vain, they had only managed to have the Citra revoked, showing that a public protest was not sufficient to precipitate substantial institutional reform.

Using the *Ekskul* case as momentum the MFI moved to the much larger target of the LSF. The MFI struggled to stay together and to expand their operations to become a more broad based organization, rather than one composed of mainly progressive filmmakers. Despite these difficulties, the MFI lodged a petition at the Constitutional Court (MK, Mahkamah Konstitusi) in September 2007 arguing that the existence of the LSF violated their constitutionally guaranteed rights to free expression.<sup>50</sup> This was not a new idea: filmmakers in the early 1970s had questioned film regulations on the same grounds (Siagian, 2006: 57-58) but they had not directly challenged the LSF in the courts. *Reformasi* provided the MFI with opportunity to legally challenge the LSF, given the breakup of state hegemony. Members Mira Lesmana, Riri Riza, Shanty Harmayn and Abduh Azis represented the MFI. Their individual grievances and experiences are detailed below.

In *3 Hari Untuk Selamanya* (2007, '3 Days Forever') directed by Riri Riza, three scenes involving drug taking and one sex scene were cut, totaling 100 seconds. In what is a celebration of modern youth culture, the story follows the journey of a boy and a girl as they drive from Jakarta to Yogyakarta to deliver a family heirloom tea set and, along the way, develop a close bond despite their initial abrasions. She is a free-spirited, directionless ecstasy user and he is an austere marijuana smoker. During the journey, they seem to have sex, although we never actually know because of the cuts. *3 Hari Untuk Selamanya* is the pinnacle

---

<sup>50</sup> Paragraph 28C Section 1 and Paragraph 28F specifically of the 1945 Constitution.

cultural expression film from the young generation of cosmopolitan filmmakers, as it celebrates the coming of age of the two characters who are free from traditional forms of morality.

Even though this might be an accurate representation of contemporary youth culture in Indonesia, the LSF regards it as glorification rather than condemnation and therefore needs to be censored. The cutting of the sex scene leaves a feeling of ambiguity towards the film as we are left wondering about their sexual relationship. It is made more incomprehensible because the final scene shows them meeting '9 months later' i.e. the normal term of a pregnancy. On the drug-taking scenes, the LSF asked at the MK hearing:

Are the censored parts, that show negative elements, being protested because the director considers the LSF has 'already disturbed the portrait of Indonesian youth which is being portrayed in this film?' Is it the intention of the director to show Young Generation Indonesians taking DRUGS MERRILY???' (emphasis in original)<sup>51</sup>

The more usual portrayal of drug use in Indonesian films is that it leads to despair, criminality, devastation and/or death such as in *Detik Terakhir* (2005, 'Final Moments') for example. In this film, supported by the National Narcotics Bureau, Regi, whose parents are constantly fighting, starts to take drugs, becomes a lesbian and watches her girlfriend die from an overdose. Cultural statements like *3 Hari Untuk Selamanya* that portray a different view of youth lifestyle are censored because they do not conform to the moral order that the LSF envisions.

---

<sup>51</sup> "Apakah hal-hal negatif seperti ini yang diprotes pemotongannya karena sutradara menganggap LSF "telah mengganggu keutuhan karakter anak muda Indonesia yang hendak digambarkan/dipotret dalam film dimaksud?" Maksud sutradara apakah ingin menunjukkan Generasi Muda Indonesia yang ber-NARKOBA RIA???" 'Jawaban Terinci Lembaga Sensor Film Bag.4' <http://webs.lsf.go.id/>, accessed 26/11/2008.

A similar censoring happened to an earlier film from director Riri Riza, *Gie* (2004), a biography of the student nationalist Soe Hok Gie in the 1960s. The scene showing Gie and his girlfriend kissing was cut. The LSF gave a number of debatable reasons as to why the scene was cut. First they argued that “it is not possible [they would have] been kissing” in that period, then added that “the kissing scene is arousing, as it is conducted full of passion.”<sup>52</sup> The cuts were then necessary in order to “respect the character of Soe Hok Gie” because the scene would “give rise to aspersion which would lower his prestige.”<sup>53</sup> Ironically, the cuts have an inadvertent effect on how the character of Gie is represented. In watching *Gie*, Lisabona Rahman and Paul Agusta<sup>54</sup> draw attention to the homoerotic overtones of Gie’s friendships with his male friends Han and Herman Lantang, calling it “the first homoerotic Indonesian movie in 20 years” (Rahman, 2005). By cutting the kissing scene, the sexuality of Gie is consequently even more enigmatic. If it was indeed the LSF’s intention to avoid aspersion, they have in fact done the opposite by cutting the kissing scene.

Other examples brought to the MK included Annisa Nurul Shanty K, an actress in *Berbagai Suami* (2006, ‘Love for Share’). In *Berbagai Suami*, the LSF cut much of the scene showing the first-night of sex between a polygamous husband and his latest wife. The film was trying to dramatize the trauma of the event for the new wife, but the LSF found this representation of the ‘first night’ to be contrary to the sanctity of marriage. Lalu Rois Amriradhiani from the Jakarta

---

<sup>52</sup> “tidak mungkin melakukan ciuman” and “adegan ciuman yang merangsang, yang dilakukan dengan penuh birahi.” ‘Jawaban Terinci Lembaga Sensor Film Bag.4’ <http://webs.lsf.go.id/>, accessed 26/11/2008.

<sup>53</sup> “adegan ciuman yang merangsang, yang dilakukan dengan penuh birahi” “menimbulkan fitnah yang justru akan merendahkan martabatnya” “untuk menghormati sosok Soe Hok Gie” ‘Jawaban Terinci Lembaga Sensor Film Bag.4’ <http://webs.lsf.go.id/>, accessed 26/11/2008.

<sup>54</sup> Lisabona Rachman was formerly a journalist and film critic with *The Jakarta Post*. She now works as film programmer at the Kineforum Indonesia, the art cinema in Jakarta. Paul Agusta is a film director and Film Curator at Komunitas Utan Kayu.

International Film Festival (Jiffest) brought further cases of films that had been rejected outright since the festival began in 1999. Arguably, all these cases were brought by culturally progressive filmmakers who use film as a means of cultural and political expression. The LSF emphasized the role of film in maintaining social harmony and in avoiding improper representations of Indonesia and its people.<sup>55</sup> It is not surprising that this conflict of values has occurred given the conservative cultural criteria used by the LSF and way in which the LSF believes that film has a direct influence on the audience.

The court case is important because it pitted young, progressive filmmakers in direct opposition to a long-established state institution that embodied New Order regulations. It brought the LSF and many of their arguments and justifications into a public forum. The MFI briefly bridged the gap between senior producers and the younger generation of filmmakers when producers Leo Sutanto and Chand Parwez Servia supported the MFI in the early stages. They however withdrew when the case went to court, which MFI member Abduh Azis attributed to their ethnic minority status.<sup>56</sup> The only expert witness from the New Order film industry to support their case was producer Budiyati Abiyoga, famous for having produced many of Garin Nugroho's films in the 1990s.<sup>57</sup> On April 30 2008, the Constitutional Court upheld the legality of the LSF but required that the government revise the 1992 Film Law in their current term as it was no longer suitable. The ruling was not unanimous, with one judge expressing a dissenting

---

<sup>55</sup> Lembaga Sensor Film, 'Jawaban Terinci Lembaga Sensor Film. Bag.1' <http://webs.lsf.go.id/>, accessed 26/11/2008.

<sup>56</sup> Abduh Azis, personal interview, 6 August 2008.

<sup>57</sup> Budiyati Abiyoga is a well known producer of less commercial films, and had been one of the more vocal opponents of the encroaching Subentra monopoly in the early 1990s. The other witnesses were Amir E. Siregar, Fadjroel Rahman, Gunawan Moehammad (editor of *Tempo*), Seno Gumira Ajidarma (writer, film scholar and IKJ lecturer), Tito Amanda (film scholar), Mira Lesmana (producer).

opinion,<sup>58</sup> agreeing with the petitioners that the LSF did infringe upon their rights as filmmakers.

Overall, the MFI found that the arguments put forward by the LSF, the Ministry and their expert witnesses were incoherent, unsubstantiated and speculative.<sup>59</sup> “Without a film censorship body,” Titie Said argued, “our identity as a nation would soon perish.”<sup>60</sup> She was supported by Minister of Culture and Tourism Jero Wacik who stated in his submission that the MFI case was “unfocussed, hazy and unclear”, and that the LSF was in place to ensure films “do not clash with cultural values, morals, public order and religious values.”<sup>61</sup> Not only did these arguments fail to placate members of the MFI, the debate marked the ideological distinction between the establishment, many of whom were New Order figures, and young filmmakers versed in the ideas of media freedom and individual rights. Many of the arguments put forward by the LSF are reminiscent of the logic of order and stability promulgated under the New Order.<sup>62</sup> Following the decision, Titie Said expressed her relief at the outcome: “We are thankful. If the Film Censorship Board had been dissolved, we would have returned to a primitive state again.”<sup>63</sup>

MFI member Abduh Azis said they were not surprised at the defeat, but that the major victory they had achieved was forcing the government to revise the

---

<sup>58</sup> Laica Marzuki.

<sup>59</sup> See the report written by MFI member Prima Rusdi ‘Soal Pulau di Tengah Samudra, Pagar, dan Iblis: Catatan Ringkas Persidangan 24 Januari 2008’

<http://masyarakatfilmindonesia.wordpress.com/2008/01/26/soal-pulau-di-tengah-samudra-pagar-dan-iblis-catatan-ringkas-persidangan-24-januari-2008/>, accessed 08/12/2009.

<sup>60</sup> quoted in ‘Minister Backs Film Censorship Board’ *The Jakarta Post*, 11 January 2008: 9.

<sup>61</sup> See section 3.16 ‘Keterangan Pemerintah’ of *Risalah Sidang Perkara Nomor 29/PUU-V/2007*, available at

[http://www.mahkamahkonstitusi.go.id/putusan/risalah\\_sidang\\_Perkara%2029%20%20puu%20V%20-2007%2030%20April%202008%20\\_PUTUSAN\\_.pdf](http://www.mahkamahkonstitusi.go.id/putusan/risalah_sidang_Perkara%2029%20%20puu%20V%20-2007%2030%20April%202008%20_PUTUSAN_.pdf), accessed 08/12/2009.

<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of similar arguments in relation to the need to censor literature, see McGlynn (2000).

<sup>63</sup> “Kami bersyukur. Seandainya saja Lembaga Sensor Film itu dibubarkan, berarti kita kembali ke masa hutan belantara lagi.” Quoted in ‘Gunting Sensor Tetap Bergerak’, *Tempo*, 11 May 2008: 86.

1992 Film Law.<sup>64</sup> The case also revealed how the government, and in particular Culture and Tourism Minister Jero Wacik, understood the issues at stake and how he sided during the process. MFI member Nirwan Ahmad Arsuka (2008) wrote in an opinion piece that this patronizing attitude of the LSF and the Minister was reminiscent of Dutch colonial policy towards the natives (*inlander*). The case, which had been based on their right to creative freedom, revealed how the LSF and the Minister responsible for film understand the creative process, film and its role in popular culture. These were not encouraging signs for filmmakers hoping that *reformasi* would have altered these perceptions.

#### 4.5 A Different Challenge

Soon after the MFI defeat in the Constitutional Court, controversy erupted over the screening of the Australian film *Balibo Five* (2009). *Balibo Five* (2009), about the five Western journalists killed in East Timor in 1975,<sup>65</sup> was to play at a special screening for journalists at the Jakarta Foreign Correspondents Club and then at the Jakarta International Film Festival (Jiffest) in December 2009. The Indonesian state continues to challenge the widely held belief that the journalists were shot by the Indonesian military to prevent them from filming the Indonesian invasion of the former Portuguese colony. Two hours before *Balibo Five* was to be screened, the film was banned by the LSF without any official reason. Bringing in *Balibo Five* was consistent with Jiffest's history of programming challenging or controversial films including those that covered 'sensitive' topics such as conflict

---

<sup>64</sup> Personal interview, 6 August 2008.

<sup>65</sup> On October 16, 1975 five Western journalists in Balibo on assignment were killed during the incursion prior to the invasion by the Indonesian military. The Indonesian military maintained that they were killed in the cross-fire.

in Aceh, East Timor and Papua.<sup>66</sup> For reasons of ‘social order’ these films are banned by the LSF, even though Jiffest caters to a culturally elite, Jakartan audience.<sup>67</sup>

Given the previous failed attempts by Jiffest with similar contentious films, it was not surprising that *Balibo Five* was banned. The LSF provided no official explanation, but the Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa commented, saying that

What we have to be cautious of, is to not let this film affect the global perception of Indonesia. If it [the ban] is explained well, then I think there will be no problem.

The ban showed how politicized a single film could become. The ban was imposed not to protect Indonesia from outside opinion insomuch as to maintain a particular narrative of history domestically - in this case, how East Timor was annexed and the fate of five foreign journalists.<sup>68</sup> Not surprisingly therefore, military spokesman Air Vice Marshall Sagom Tamboen was jubilant.<sup>69</sup> Members of the military sit on the LSF boards and were more than likely had a strong influence on the ban. In defiance, members of the Association of Indonesian Journalists (AJI) vowed to screen the film which they did at informal screenings, risking fines and imprisonment. Within days, pirated copies quickly became available as interest in the now ‘controversial’ film soared.

Yet, the banning brought attention to the events in East Timor and the freedom of the media, particularly film. The involvement of the press no doubt

---

<sup>66</sup> Jiffest began in 1999. *Tales of Crocodile* (2005), *Timor Loro Sae* (2005), *Passabe* (2005), *Black Road* (2006). These were films brought in by Jiffest and that were subsequently rejected by the LSF.

<sup>67</sup> During the New Order, when import quotas were in place, importers simply could not risk having a film banned and would only import ‘safe’ films.

<sup>68</sup> In Australia itself, *Balibo Five* was criticized because it seemed to downplay the Australian government’s knowledge of and complicity in the 1974 annexation of East Timor. Only one scene, in which the Australian Prime Minister and President Suharto are shown shaking hands on the front cover of a newspaper, suggests this was the case.

<sup>69</sup> Markus Junianto Sihaloho and Putri Prameshwari ‘‘Balibo’ Ban Wins Rave Reviews From Indonesian Military’, *The Jakarta Globe*, 2 December 2009.

played a large part as previous bannings of Jiffest films had gone largely unreported. Within days, retired Air Marshall Prawanto, in an interview with *Tempo*,<sup>70</sup> revealed that the Australian journalists had in fact been killed by the military and implicated (former Minister of Information from 1998 to 1999) Yunus Yosfiah as having given the orders to shoot.<sup>71</sup> Jero Wacik, the Minister responsible for film, claimed that he could not interfere in the decisions of the LSF and allow the film to screen.<sup>72</sup> “For the sake of the country, the movie is not fit for playing in theaters. The movie is political” was his justification.<sup>73</sup> What the case of *Balibo Five* showed was that Indonesian journalists were more successful in challenging the institutions of the New Order and their version of history than filmmakers were. Journalists had a greater tradition of opposition and were able to organize and articulate their position far better than filmmakers could. Filmmakers, it seemed, were ineffectual in their challenge to the institutions of censorship that most directly affected their work.

#### **4.6 The Irony of *Reformasi***

Replacing the 1992 Film Law would therefore be the culmination of filmmaker efforts to reform film institutions and of *reformasi* more broadly. When the new film law was finally legislated on September 8 2009, by the parliament (DPR, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat) after a relatively brief deliberation in order to

---

<sup>70</sup> See ‘Killings of Balibo Five were deliberate, says former army colonel’ *The Australian*, 7 December 2009. Also Kinanti Pinta Karana & Markus Junianto Sihaloho, ‘‘We Killed Balibo 5,’ Former Indonesian Soldier Says’, *The Jakarta Globe*, 8 December 2009.

<sup>71</sup> In 1975 Yunus Yosfiah was a Captain of the Indonesian Special Forces (Kopassus).

<sup>72</sup> Wacik’s claim that he could not get involved in the *Balibo Five* case contradicted his involvement in the case of *Buruan Cium Gue!* five years earlier. In both cases however, he acted to preserve the authority of the government.

<sup>73</sup> ‘People Want East Timor Massacre Banned, Indonesian Military Says’ *The Jakarta Globe*, 4 December 2009.

have it legislated before the end of the sitting term, the result was a huge disappointment to the film community. Nine factions within the DPR supported the new law, with only the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDIP, 'Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle') abstaining. The process involved little consultation with or involvement from members of the industry and failed to involve the BP2N in any significant way. The absence of the BP2N was even more surprising because it is the peak consultative body responsible for recommending policy to the government. Senior actor and then head of the BP2N, Deddy Mizwar responded in mumbles: "This country is doomed, this country is doomed!"<sup>74</sup> As the law was being deliberated, a loose Coalition of Film People (Koalisi Masyarakat Film) formed to represent the interests of filmmakers and included members of the MFI and other normally reluctant producers such as Raam Punjabi and Chand Parwez Servia. The law however, was drafted, deliberated and legislated as an internal affair of the government.

The law was desperately needed by a film industry which was looking for positive support from the state to help sustain local production and strengthen the institutions of film, especially educational institutions. Instead, the law was written by parliamentarians with little understanding or interest in film, and whose concept of film was still embedded in an old paradigm that saw film as a media of mass communication that needed to be controlled. The law reintroduced restrictive measures over filmmaking, including pre-production approval from the Department of Culture and Tourism. A 60% screening quota was introduced, similar to South Korea, but many feared it would have the effect of encouraging poor quality productions just to fill the quota and would hinder cinemas dedicated

---

<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Dalih Sembiring, 'Mourning the Passage of Indonesia's Film Bill' *The Jakarta Globe*, 8 September 2009.

to foreign films (Barker and Kusuma, 2009). Perhaps, the only concession to the MFI was the introduction of a classification system, except that censorship remains in place with the onus on cutting content now on filmmakers themselves.

Filmmakers found the unsubstantiated claims from Minister Jero Wacik - that the new film law would help the film industry - to be mere talk. Director Hanung Bramantyo, whose film *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* (2008) was praised by Wacik for reviving the local film industry, has been particularly scathing of the government:

They do not know our struggle in making a film. We organize the permits, face local gangsters, complete all technical requirements, all of it by ourselves. There is no subsidy from the government. Yet when the film is finished, the LSF cuts it arbitrarily. When it goes to the cinemas, the audience are taxed and that money does not come to us.<sup>75</sup>

Despite these hindrances, in the decade from 1999 to 2009 local filmmakers had managed to revive film production in Indonesia and to make it a profitable venture once again. The 2009 film law was thus a slap in the face. Ironically in the years 1998 to 2009 the old 1992 film law, although out-dated and written during the New Order, was a paper tiger. The new 2009 film law, by virtue of it being new and updated, demanded far greater adherence on the part of filmmakers.

Missing from the law was provision for a film commission that would vet and fund more artistic or idealistic film projects from directors who might not otherwise be able to find funding. Sweden is often cited as an example of a successful state film funding body because it gave Ingmar Bergman greater

---

<sup>75</sup> “Mereka enggak tahu bagaimana perjuangan kami membuat sebuah film. Kami mengurus izin, menghadapi preman, menyelesaikan urusan teknis, semua dilakukan sendiri. Tidak ada subsidi dari pemerintah. Tapi ketika film itu jadi, LSF memotong film itu sembarangan. Ketika masuk bioskop, penonton dipungut pajak dan pajak itu enggak lari ke kami.” Hanung Bramantyo, interviewed in Haryadi (2008: 104).

opportunity to make films and thus put Sweden on the map of world cinema.

Indonesian filmmakers hoped for the same opportunity, including Raam Punjabi:

Our government is also not very serious to promote such kinds of movies. So there is no foundation, there is no such kind of... I'm trying to push the government to make a film foundation, film finance corporation.<sup>76</sup>

This would be different to how the state funded films via the PFN (Perusahaan Film Nasional, 'State Film Company') during the New Order. The PFN studios, located in East Jakarta, now lie in a state of disrepair, having not been used since the abolition of the Department of Information in 1999. Of course, it would be naïve to expect the Indonesian government to actually follow through on this idea of funding films and make it work.

#### **4.7 Disorganization Amongst the Ranks**

*Reformasi* ushered in the ability for civil society to freely organize, associate and form interest groups, all in the spirit of democracy and free speech. Yet the groups who were so effective in organizing to topple Soeharto, and had hoped to restructure the government and the bureaucracy, found themselves at a loss once the euphoria of *reformasi* dissipated. Within a few years old power structures reasserted themselves, particularly those that coalesced around big business, the military and the political establishment (Crouch, 2010; Robison and Hadiz, 2004). This left the middle class reformers unable to penetrate the power structures as they had hoped, and many people have become disillusioned by what was promised by democracy and *reformasi*. It is not uncommon to hear people

---

<sup>76</sup> Raam Punjabi, personal interview, 17 August 2008.

nostalgically looking back to the New Order or reacting negatively to ‘*democracy*’ by demanding greater state control again.

In the domain of cultural production and in particular film production, the problems encountered by filmmakers stem from these conditions. Filmmakers had hoped to be able to reform the film industry so as to make the films they wanted to make, without the constant struggle of finding funding, fighting off reactionary elements of the public, and constantly battling with the LSF. Filmmakers’ inability to collectivize their interests can be traced to the creative conditions of *reformasi*, which Adi Wicaksono likens to a ‘bazaar culture’:

There emerged a number of different communities in the field of culture and politics but they did not converge towards integration. [...] Activities in the bazaar are noisy, but are only a cacophony of events, not an integrated activity that can push the creative energies of the participants to a higher level.<sup>77</sup>

(Wicaksono, 2007)

As a result, argues Garin Nugroho (2005: 92), the opposition with which the new creative forces confronted longstanding structures and paradigms was only ‘half baked’ (*setengah matang*). Filmmakers are generally “unaware of the value of organization, and the legal and political protection for the film economy and film works”.<sup>78</sup>

The film industry has found itself caught between centrifugal and individualizing forces. Efforts towards integration, such as MFI and discussions of

---

<sup>77</sup> “Munculnya berbagai komunitas dalam bidang kerja budaya maupun politik tidak mengerucut pada integrasi. Masing-masing bergerak sendiri, sporadis, mirip budaya bazar dalam masyarakat tradisional. Kegiatan bazar memang riuh, tapi hanya berupa timbunan peristiwa, bukan suatu kegiatan yang terintegrasi yang dapat mendorong daya cipta para peserta ke tingkat yang lebih tinggi.” ‘Dosa Asal Film Indonesia’, *Kompas*, 20 March 2007

<sup>78</sup> “kurangnya kesadaran sineas pada nilai penting kelembagaan, perlindungan yuridis dan politis terhadap ekonomi dan penciptaan film.” Nugroho (2004[1999]: 92).

establishing something like a screen writers guild,<sup>79</sup> have not been able to sustain any long-term form. Rather what seems to dominate is acrimony and division.

Senior producer Raam Punjabi notes:

I'm telling you we have a fundamental problem in this industry. [...] You see this one fighting with this one, this one fighting with this one. What is happening?<sup>80</sup>

Enison Sinaro is more critical of young filmmakers, saying that "Individual egos are too strong. And the funny thing is it's only 'I'm better than you.' I know both sides, it's silly".<sup>81</sup> Overcoming these individualizing tendencies hinders the ability of filmmakers to form and sustain a collective organization to advance their interests vis-à-vis the state. Despite succeeding on the cultural front, young filmmakers have struggled to organize themselves as something more than a generation with a common subject position.

For young filmmakers who grew up under the New Order, organization meant the state, and in their pursuit of independence after 1998 they have eschewed organization. The film industry of the 1950s and 1960s was renowned for its plethora of organizations and political fractures, with various interest groups and unions formed to advance particular interests. These were then monopolized by the New Order state in line with the state ideology of organicism that promoted stability and order. The KFT (Karyawan Film dan Televisi, 'Television and Film Workers'), the union responsible for film workers, still exists as the highest body representing film workers but "they are not trusted"<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Salman Aristo, personal interview, 8 December 2008.

<sup>80</sup> "But I'm telling you we have a fundamental problem in this industry. [...] You see this ini berantam sama ini, ini berantam sama ini. What is happening?" Raam Punjabi, personal interview, 17 August 2008.

<sup>81</sup> "Orang film sendiri tidak kompak, termasuk generasi muda, tidak kompak. Ego masing-masing terlau keras dan lucunya adalah itu hanya demi gue lebih hebat dari ini. Saya tahu persis kedua sisi, konyol," Enison Sinaro, personal interview, 15 August 2008.

<sup>82</sup> "Kita nggak punya organisasi yang kuat. Kalau di kita ada sih pekerja film (KFT), cuman masih gitu, tidak dipercaya lah." Ody Harahap, personal interview, 28 October 2008.

because they are still dominated by old interests and are seen as extension of the bureaucratic state. The influential PPF (Persatuan Perusahaan Film Indonesia, 'Indonesian Film Producers Union'), is populated by older producers.<sup>83</sup> Young producers have avoided the PPF because of its associations with the past, domination by old producers and proximity to state bureaucracy. Enison Sinaro, currently a lecturer at IKJ, is trying to revive the KFT, but struggles against people predisposed to distrusting organizations. Discussions amongst young filmmakers to form a screen writers guild or an organization of producers have not come to fruition.<sup>84</sup> As a result, it has been difficult for filmmakers to construct a common front to advance their interests.

#### **4.8 Conclusion: *Reformasi***

This chapter has shown that the agenda of policy and institutional reform made possible by *reformasi* and the end of the New Order have not extended to film. Filmmakers of all stripes continue to be affected by the decisions of the LSF which have become more unpredictable and conservative over time.<sup>85</sup> Attempts by filmmakers to challenge government regulation and film institutions have been largely ineffectual. In the case of *Balibo Five* however, journalists and 'piracy' showed that they were far more able to resist the censorship imposed on the media, and to effectively circumvent the LSF. Filmmakers by contrast have found that their ability to resist the state is limited. On the whole, filmmakers failed to institute substantial changes to the way in which the film industry is governed in

---

<sup>83</sup> See Tjasmadi (2008: 165).

<sup>84</sup> Salman Aristo, personal interview, 8 December 2008.

<sup>85</sup> See Barker and Kusuma (2009) for a further discussion of this in the context of the new film law.

Indonesia, and when finally review came in the form of the new 2009 Film Law, actually found themselves back at square one.

What underlies this state resistance to change is the continuing dominance of a mass communications paradigm, a sender-receiver interpretation of the media in which film is seen as having a direct influence on the audience. This view remains prevalent amongst legislators and members of the LSF for whom film is still inherently dangerous and needs to be either controlled or actively imbued with the ‘right’ content. The LSF continues to cut films based on the criteria that anyone and everyone can watch the film; and legislators, in drafting the new film law, continue to see film as a powerful form of mass media that needs to be controlled. This paradigm diverges sharply from how contemporary audiences interact with pop culture,<sup>86</sup> and how young filmmakers themselves consider their work.

At the level of censorship, very little has changed in terms of what can and cannot be shown on the cinema screen. The LSF appears to have two very simple aims to its censorship. The first is to maintain a conservative and moralistic narrative about sex, drugs and criminality - that for example, free sex or sex outside of marriage always has negative consequences. The second is to maintain a particular image of the state and its agents and to maintain the state’s interpretation of history. It is now common that the ‘state’ does not appear at all in contemporary films. Filmmakers with a critical or even social realist bent who might want to critique the government are limited in how they can do that. These limits disallow young filmmakers from exploring issues to do with sex and

---

<sup>86</sup> It should be noted that those who protest the loudest about pop culture, for example Aa Gym and the FPI as seen in this chapter, rarely if ever consume the pop culture they are protesting. AA Gym admitted as much during his widely publicized comments on *Buruan Cium Gue!*.

sexuality that overtly challenge normative conceptions, or even allow for greater sex on screen as means of titillation.

If assessing the outcome of *reformasi* focused solely on the reform of the state and its institutions then it could be said that *reformasi* failed. What is obvious is that significant change has occurred in the film industry as a result of *reformasi* but that it has not produced the breakthrough at the level of regulations and the state that many hoped. The search for the political and cultural changes produced by *reformasi* should not concentrate on the formal aspects of the state because of its institutional inertia. Instead, it is in films themselves that the effects of *reformasi* are the most visible; not in the fringe films made by art directors, but rather in the most popular genre of films. The next chapter analyses the popular genre of horror films to uncover the significant political and cultural changes brought about by the end of the New Order.

## 5.

### HISTORY, VIOLENCE AND HORROR FILMS

All our horror films are stupid. They are only for scaring audiences [laughs].

- Prolific horror director, Nayato Fio Nuala<sup>1</sup>

The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a  
nightmare on the brains of the living.

- Karl Marx (1852)

#### 5.1 Violence, the New Order and Film

In order to trace the shift in narratives between New Order and post New Order films, I turn first to the politics of violence. As a military-backed authoritarian regime, the New Order (1966-1998) was known for its deployment of violence to maintain social and political control (Heryanto, 2005). Its reign was ushered in by the violent events of 1965-1966 when then General Soeharto and the Kostrad division under his command staged a countercoup against the ‘30th of September Movement’ to restore order in the capital. On September 30, 1965 members of the military, calling themselves the ‘30th of September Movement’, kidnapped and killed a number of generals they believed were planning to overthrow President Soekarno. Although interpretations vary, the later ‘official’ story of the events construed the killing of the generals as a communist (PKI) plot to seize control of the government. Using this as justification, over the following

---

<sup>1</sup> “Film horor kita bego semua. Cuma bikin takut penonton, ha-ha-ha...” ‘Film di Indonesia Itu Ajaib Banget’ *Koran Tempo*, 4 June 2006.

months PKI and its associated organizations were purged, including its affiliated cultural organization LEKRA. Farid (2007) argues that the killing orchestrated by the ascendant military faction constituted ‘bureaucratic violence’ and was systemically carried out against PKI members within the military and in society at large, often through military-backed militias. In addition, citizens killed citizens in widespread cases of horizontal violence, leaving deep scars on Indonesian society. Estimations of the numbers killed are in the 500,000 to one million range (Cribb, 2002), with hundreds of thousands imprisoned. These events served as the founding myth of the New Order regime: that Soeharto and the military had rescued the nation from communism and restored order and stability. Throughout the New Order, “the events of 1965-66 could be conjured up as a terrible warning” (Cribb, 2002: 550).

‘1965-1966’ has concerned many scholars of Indonesia both as an event of social upheaval, and as a defining event of modern Indonesia history (Dittmer, 2002; Cribb, 2002). As Stoler (2002) notes, 1965 was the culmination of events in the 1960s within the context of a coercive political system established since colonialism.<sup>2</sup> The New Order would then go on to perpetrate numerous violent incidents over its citizens: the ongoing suppression of separatist movements in Papua, Aceh and East Timor; the Petrus killings<sup>3</sup> of *preman* (gangsters) in Jakarta in the early 1980s (Siegel, 1998; Barker, 2001); the killing of Muslims in Tanjung Priok in 1984 (Burns, 1989); the occupation of the PDI (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, ‘Indonesian Democratic Party’)<sup>4</sup> party office to prevent pro-democracy activities in 1996; shooting and abduction of student demonstrators in 1998, and

---

<sup>2</sup> See also van der Kroef (1970).

<sup>3</sup> *Petrus* is the portmanteau of *Penembak Misterius*, or Mysterious Shootings. Gangsters in Jakarta were kidnapped, shot and then left in public areas as a warning to others.

<sup>4</sup> Led by Megawati Soekarnoputri, the daughter of President Soekarno. She would become President herself from 2001 to 2004.

so on. Often these violent incidents included significant involvement from civilians, as mobs, hired thugs, vigilantes or similar, seen in the 1966 killings as well (Anderson, 2001; Cribb, 2002). Such violence occurred within the framework of an authoritarian regime, where the ultimate power remained with the military and its *dwifungsi* (dual function) policy of defending the nation from outside attack, and maintaining order and stability within.

Given that film was assumed to be a potent means of propaganda, the cinema was used extensively to articulate a state ideology of violence. Principally, violence in film was deployed to construct narratives about the role of the military in the 1945-1949 struggle for independence and their role in national formation. Examples include *Mereka Kembali* (1972, 'They Have Returned'), *Pasukan Berani Mati* (1982, English title *Daredevil Commandos*), *Bandung Lautan Api* (1974, 'Bandung Sea of Fire'), many of which were funded by various military commands. Even great nationalist epics by idealist directors, such as Teguh Karya's *November 1828* (1979) and Eros Djarot's *Tjut Nyak Dhien* (1988), legitimize the violence of proto-nationalism because it was directed against the Dutch colonizers. In general, violence against the colonizers (Dutch and Japanese) and against other threats to the integrity of the nation (Darul Islam, criminality) were deployed to affirm the state and the nation.<sup>5</sup>

Such representations found their apogee in *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (1982, 'The Betrayal of the G30S/PKI'), the exemplary portrayal of violence on screen in the New Order. The film dramatizes the abduction and murder of the six

---

<sup>5</sup> In fact, there has been a recent return to the nationalist narrative in war films set in the independence period of 1945 to 1949, where violence is legitimately used against the colonizers. Specifically *Darah Garuda* (2010, 'Blood of Eagles') and *Merah Putih* (2009, 'Red and White'), part of a trilogy by American director Rob Allyn. The films are being funded by Hashim Djojohadikusumo, the brother of former Kopassus General and presidential hopeful Prabowo Subianto.

generals on the night of September 30, 1965 in graphic and bloody detail. Whilst it was not the only film made about 1965,<sup>6</sup> it dramatized most clearly the New Order's version of events. It implicates the PKI in the coup by dramatizing their brutal techniques. Not only is the film extremely violent, school children as young as seven were made to watch the film as part of their national 'education'. Even if they had not witnessed the events of 1965, they would still be witnesses to its violence and understand that the New Order was the bringer of order (Irawanto, 1999).

A standard reading linking film and violence during the New Order would stop at these genres that focus on the military and the use of violence in the name of the unitary nation and the promotion of order. Whilst these violent films provide insight into the ideology of the New Order (McGregor, 2007; Sen, 1994), they do not represent all the violent films of the New Order. In fact, popular horror film narratives are premised on acts of violence and revenge. This chapter argues for a reconsideration of horror films as a genre of violence that provides an insight into New Order ideology, and more importantly, the transition in emphasis in post-New Order film to a politics of trauma.

## 5.2 Horror as Key Genre of New Order Film

One of the key ideological missions of the New Order was not just to promote *film nasional* but to also submit popular genres to its ideological narrative of the nation (Sen, 1994). One integral genre in this regard is the

---

<sup>6</sup> Two films were sponsored in the aftermath of 1965-1966. *Piso Komando* ('Commando Knife') (1967) directed by SA Karim and produced by the RPKAD (Army Commandos), was about enlisting in the army. *Operasi X* (1968, 'Operation X') by Misbach Yusa Biran produced by Pusroh AD, the Army Religious Centres, dealt with a mysterious organization that threatened the nation.

immensely popular horror/mystical genre. To be sure, horror films have been regarded with some disdain by *film nasional* critics, who have viewed it as a cheap and contemptible genre. Nevertheless, even mysticism and the supernatural were brought into the ideological imperatives of the New Order (Sen, 1994; van Heeren, 2007; Kusuma, 2009).

Sen (1994) argues that film narratives made in the New Order are typified by the ‘return to order’ arc which served as its principle ideological function. Typically, a harmonious social situation (village, family) is disturbed by an agent of disorder. Horror films typically presented the intrusion of the supernatural, black magic or mysticism into a harmonious family or *Pancasilist* village i.e. one that conformed to the state-ideology of Pancasila (Kusuma, 2009). The narrative arc is concluded when order is restored, usually through the intervention of a state agent (religious leader, police, etc). Usually in horror this was personified in the figure of a *deus ex machina* Islamic priest (*kyai* or *ustadz*) who would arrive in the village and use monotheistic Islam to restore order. “That was the regulation from the national censor board,” says producer Tien Ali, “They said that horror films have to have a religious message.”<sup>7</sup> As Van Heeren (2007) notes, horror was thus the perfect stage to contrast developmentalism, modernity and order with the rural backwardness of traditional mysticism.

Although mysticism had been a theme since local filmmaking began in the 1930s, it was in the 1970s that horror’s iconic form came into being. In 1971, the two horror films *Lisa* and *Beranak Dalam Kubur* (‘Birth in the Grave’) started the trend of horror films that used the female ‘avenging spirit’ motif, locally known as

---

<sup>7</sup> “Itu aturan dari lembaga sensor nasional. Mereka bilang film horor harus ada misi agamanya” Tien Ali, PT Cancer Mas, ‘Dari Babi Ngepet hingga Jelangkung’ *Tempo*, 17 February 2003.

the *kuntilanak*.<sup>8</sup> In the case of both *Lisa* and *Beranak Dalam Kubur*, an evil woman is haunted by the apparition of a good woman she had tried to kill for personal gain. When she finally confronts the apparition, she is killed, and the good woman is reunited with her strong male partner. In later films it was typically men who instigated the violence, to then face the wrath of the avenging female spirit. These films were direct renditions of folk myths, with a strong resonance amongst popular audiences. Many of the horror films of the 1970s and 1980s starred actress Suzanna (1942-2008) who became synonymous with many of the mystical characters she played.<sup>9</sup>

Horror and mysticism resonated with audiences because of its embeddedness in traditional beliefs in the supernatural. The *kuntilanak* myth on which many horror films are modeled provides both the ghost and a narrative model. She is a monstrous figure with long hair, often appearing as a seductive maiden before turning into her frightening, grotesque form (Kusuma, 2009). Her power derives from being the avenging spirit of a woman wronged in her life: “it is the one whom one kills, who, it is said, wants revenge” (Siegel, 1998: 5). She is usually the victim of a crime of passion, often raped, murdered and/or buried improperly. Becoming *kuntilanak* is her way of seeking revenge over those who wronged her. Kueh (2003: 6) has noted that as the *kuntilanak* “women are temporarily allowed to be the ‘aggressors’,” being one of the few culturally sanctioned places for this to occur. Barbara Creed (1986) has previously argued that this type of ‘grotesque feminine’ is a means by which patriarchal cultures mitigate women’s sexuality in the abject body of the feminine monster. Horror

---

<sup>8</sup> The *kuntilanak* is known as *pontianak* in other parts of Southeast Asia.

<sup>9</sup> She also made a reprise in a couple of post 1998 horror films, including *Hantu Ambulance* (2008, ‘The Ambulance Ghost’). Her full name is Suzanna Martha van Osch Boyoh.

was also used to codify and assert New Order ideas of sexuality, and the place of women in that order.

Horror has always been a violent genre, with much of that violence enacted on the body of women. The space for revenge that horror allowed was limited to seeking personal revenge. What was impermissible was contagion, lest the violence spread beyond the personal to subsume a village, or the 'nation'. Terrified at the ghost in their midst, a mob of villagers would often appear, demanding violent retribution, only to be stopped and tempered by the voice of reason and authority (the Islamic priest). As Dittmer argues (2002: 542), violence in the Indonesian context might be better thought of as "an instrumental value, to be used against a perceived greater evil." State agencies like the military liked to believe that Indonesian culture is inherently violent, therefore justifying the military's presence as an internal agent of order (Collins, 2002). Violence was a means to purge evil from the community and to submit various minorities (Chinese, women) to a regime of power.

Following psychoanalytical theories, horror films play an important representational and functional role in the ideology of violence in New Order Indonesia. Monsters are 'metaphors' for the unconscious fears of a society, argues Franco Moretti in his analysis of horror fiction (2005: 105). In the case of Indonesian horror, female sexuality and the supernatural as agents of disorder threaten order and stability. The fear that horror generates "is not an end in itself: it is a means to obtain consent to [...] ideological values" (Moretti, 2005: 107). In this vein, Robin Wood has famously argued that

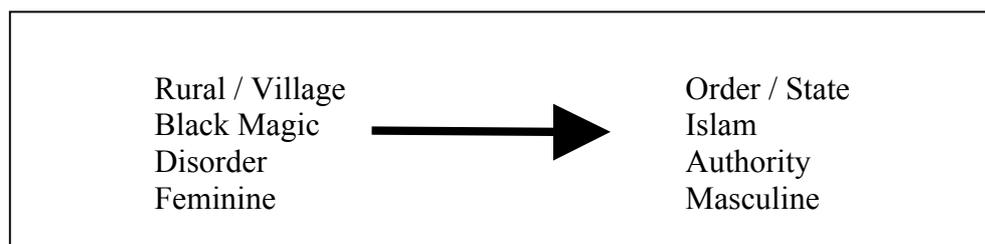
the true subject of the horror genre is the struggle for recognition of all that our civilization represses or oppresses, its reemergence dramatized, as in our

nightmares, as an object of horror, a matter for terror, and the happy ending (when it exists) typically signifying the restoration of repression. (Wood, 2002: 25)

Thus, a legitimate regime of violence was established with ultimate authority and justified violence embodied in the state. It enforces submission to the state, not to the 'disorder' of traditional belief.

In the case of Indonesian horror, the events of 1965-1966 when violence was legitimized in order to eradicate the 'threat' of communism from Indonesia are continually recalled. The ways in which the threat of communism was evoked during the New Order, as an '*organisasi tak terbentuk*' (formless organization), or as a latent threat, shared many similarities with how the supernatural operated and was portrayed in horror films. Village settings recalled the rural areas where the PKI had had the most appeal and drawn its support from among the syncretic *abangan* population (Bourchier and Hadiz, 2003), the group most likely to believe in mysticism. Women were subject to the state ideology of state *ibuisim*, where women were to serve their husbands and raise children, or be considered as prostitutes (Suryakusuma, 2004). Portrayals of the Gerwani (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, 'Indonesian Women's Movement') women participating in the torture of the six generals was often evoked to remind people about the violent potential of both communism and women (Wieringa, 2009). Horror served as an ideological battleground where state ideology could continually be used to control threatening elements in broader society.

**Figure 3. Schematic of New Order Horror Films<sup>10</sup>**



New Order horror neatly encapsulated many of the necessary relationships of New Order ideology (See Figure 2 above). Even with the intrusion of the state's imperative into the narrative conventions of the horror genre, horror is one of the most iconic genres of Indonesian film production. For *film nasional* critics, the genre encapsulated everything that was wrong with the film industry: irrational and simplistic stories, catering to low taste, a reliance on special effects, and embedded in rural mysticism and superstition. Moreover, the genre has long been regarded as a genre for commercially minded producers to make quick and easy profits.<sup>11</sup> As a result it is often ignored by more serious critics, and regarded as little more than kitsch. Yet in tracing the history of the genre from New Order to post New Order Indonesia, perceptible shifts and changes are visible in the narrative that warrant description and analysis.

### **5.3 New Horror post-1998**

Horror narratives significantly changed after 1998. With the end of the New Order and the abolition of the Department of Information in 1999, the requirement that films conform to the 'return to order' narrative arc disappeared. The few old style horror films that were made after 1998 suddenly looked

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from van Heeren (2007).

<sup>11</sup> Seno Joko Suyono and Dwi Arjanto (2003) 'Dari Babi Ngepet hingga Jelangkung' *Tempo*, 17 Feb.

anachronistic. For example, *Kafir* (2002, ‘Nonbeliever’), produced by old company Starvision and directed by Mardali Syarief (b. 1941?), was described by *The Jakarta Post* film reviewer Joko Anwar as a “corny, unintentionally hilarious movie [that] will remind viewers of a local horror flick from the 80’s.”<sup>12</sup> One reason was that director Syarief had been making films since the 1970s and still employed New Order iconography. Audience expectations as well as the motivations of new filmmakers in the post-1998 industry had changed and this would be visible in a realignment of the genre and its narrative features. Between 1998 and 2010 almost a third of all films made were horror films, with many attracting upwards of a million viewers (Kusuma, 2009).<sup>13</sup>

Horror and mysticism had not disappeared from pop culture in the 1990s. Although horror films declined as the film industry as a whole did, much of the horror and mystical programming shifted to television (van Heeren, 2009), including actress Suzanna.<sup>14</sup> The return to horror film production however attracted many of the new filmmakers who entered the industry post-1998, including prominent directors Helfi Kardit, Nayato Fio Nuala, Rizal Mantovani, Rudi Soedjarwo and Toto Hoedi. This new wave of horror was initiated by *Jelangkung* (2001),<sup>15</sup> the work of music video directors Rizal Mantovani and Jose Poernomo. *Jelangkung* was initially intended as a low-budget film for television, but when the filmmakers tried small-scale cinema screenings in Pondok Indah Mall in South Jakarta, they were amazed when it became an overnight sensation. In total, the film played for over three months in cinemas, attracting an audience

---

<sup>12</sup> Joko E.H. Anwar, ‘New local films create stimulating phenomenon’ *The Jakarta Post*, 28 December 2002.

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix for details of audience figures.

<sup>14</sup> ‘Suzanna: “Syukur Bisa Menakut-nakuti Anda”’ *Tempo*, 17 February 2003.

<sup>15</sup> It is hard to translate *Jelangkung* in one or two words. Literally a *jelangkung* is a kind of ouja board or talisman used to summon spirits. In the film, it looks like a voodoo doll, implanted in the grave and used to summon the boy’s spirit.

of over 1.5 million. The film was so ‘real’ that viewers came to believe that the fictitious haunted village in the film - Angkerbatu (‘Haunted Rock’) - actually existed.<sup>16</sup>

*Jelangkung* opens on a Javanese village called Angkerbatu in 1938 where a young boy of 12 is ritually killed and then buried by his village. They fear that he is the harbinger of disaster. Sixty-two years later, in 2000, a group of young Jakarta teenagers, bored with fruitless excursions to supposedly haunted sites in Jakarta, hear of the Angkerbatu story and decide to go there. Upon arrival, they discover the boy’s grave, but not seeing anything, return to Jakarta. Unbeknownst to the friends, one of the boys had planted a *jelangkung* (voodoo doll) in the grave to try and summon the ghost, but he too had seemingly failed. Back in Jakarta, all of them begin to be haunted by a mysterious presence, and after consulting a *dukun* (local magician), come to understand that the boy’s ghost is haunting them. The *dukun* advises them to return to Angkerbatu and remove the *jelangkung*, thereby returning the ghost to its grave. With an air of foreboding, they return to Angkerbatu, but meet resistance from the ghost, who causes one boy to hallucinate and kill his girlfriend. The last shot we see is of the ghost leaping at us, the audience.

More than just a popular sensation, *Jelangkung* contains within it many of the tropes and patterns that have come to characterize contemporary Indonesian horror films. Replacing the deus ex machina Islamic priest, who restores order at the end, is an open ending. Partly, this is to do with the abolition of the Department of Information and their narrative requirements, but it is also the

---

<sup>16</sup> Rizal Mantovani, personal interview, 5 November 2008.

religious position of new filmmakers. One of the generation's most iconic horror directors, Rizal Mantovani, is quite explicit about his reasons:

I will never mix religion into a horror film, because they are different things. Horror films are horror films, religion is religion. [...] Indeed, I concentrate on entertainment, pure entertainment. And as a belief, part of my beliefs, it is extremely wrong if I put religious elements into horror because if we put them together, it is heresy.<sup>17</sup>

Mantovani is a filmmaker whose films are, as Kusuma (2009) says, a “historical break with the horror films before them.” The break is evident in cinematography, much of it influenced by music video, and in narratives as we will see. However, in terms of iconography, contemporary horror continues to employ many of the motifs familiar to viewers of horror films made before 1998.

In a novel development, contemporary horror is populated by teenage protagonists who encounter ghosts. Coming almost exclusively from Jakarta, these teenagers are presented as normal, middle to upper class youth who lead modern consumer lifestyles. Not only are these characters a reflection of the audience themselves, they also perpetuate the clash between modernity and tradition through the motif of horror. Whereas New Order horror films were set in rural villages where black magic and superstition are part of the social fabric, post-1998 horror films present contemporary youth as having little time for either religion or supernatural beliefs. This is beautifully illustrated in *Pocong 2* (2006), when young university teacher Maya visits a *dukun* and is given the ability to see ghosts. Maya only goes to see the *dukun* because her younger sister, Andin, says

---

<sup>17</sup> “Saya tidak akan pernah mencampurkan film horror dengan agama, karena beda. Film horror ya film horror, agama ya agama. [...] Memang saya konsentrasi dengan entertainment, pure entertainment. Dan memang secara belief, unsure kepercayaan saya, sangat salah kalau saya memasukkan unsure agama kedalam horror karena kalau kita menggabungkan itu akhirnya menjadi musyrik.” Rizal Mantovani, personal interview, 5 November 2008.

she is being haunted by a *pocong*. Initially skeptical, the *dukun* shows Maya the parallel world of ghosts. She is shocked by its presence, and her modern-secular worldview is overturned completely. The ghosts she had associated with pre-modern or rural thinking she now sees co-existing with herself. The supernatural, long associated with the rural, returns to the city via the interface of teenage protagonists.

In line with this new urban perspective, urban legends have become the material for horror stories set in Jakarta and involving Jakartan youth. Titles such as *Hantu Kereta Manggarai* (2008, ‘Ghost of the Manggarai Train’), *Terowongan Casablanca* (2007, ‘Casablanca Tunnel’), *Hantu Jeruk Perut* (2006, ‘The Ghost of Jeruk Perut’) all refer to ‘haunted’ sites in Jakarta. Where films are not about specific sites in Jakarta, they are still located within an urban imagination, occurring either within the city or in its hinterland. In some films this involves the teenagers traveling outside the confines of the city to haunted places such as forests,<sup>18</sup> lakes<sup>19</sup>, old country houses<sup>20</sup> and even a ghost island.<sup>21</sup> Others are set in modern institutions, familiar to any urbanite, most often schools and hospitals.<sup>22</sup> There is a noticeable shift in the perspective of the film, that they no longer view the world from a rural subject position, but rather a modern urban one.

What all these films show is the persistence of the revenge narrative and the *kuntilanak* as the embodiment of revenge. Rizal Mantovani says that this is to

---

<sup>18</sup> *Hantu* (2007, ‘Ghost’), *Keramat* (2009, English Title ‘Sacred’), *Pencarian Terakhir* (2008, ‘Final Search’).

<sup>19</sup> *Di Sini Ada Setan* (2008, ‘There is a Ghost Here’)

<sup>20</sup> *Enam* (2007, ‘Six’), *Hantu Ambulance* (2008, ‘Ambulance Ghost’), *Suster N* (2007, ‘Nurse N’).

<sup>21</sup> *Pulau Hantu* (2007, ‘Ghost Island’) and its sequel *Pulau Hantu 2* (2008).

<sup>22</sup> Films set in schools include *Ada Hantu di Sekolah* (There’s a Ghost in the School), *Hantu Bangku Kosong* (‘The Ghost of the Empty Schoolbench’), *The Mirror* (2005); in hospitals: *Suster Ngesot* (‘The Crawling Nurse’), *Malam Jumat Kliwon* (‘Ominous Friday Night’), and *Bangsai 13* (‘Ward 13’).

ensure horror films maintain a cultural relevance to their audience.<sup>23</sup> Filmmakers who have tried to make slasher films which are popular in the USA, realized that they have had little traction with an Indonesian audience (Kusuma, 2009).<sup>24</sup> Horror stories still concentrate on death caused by crimes of passion, improper burial and revenge. For example, the ghost of Astari in *Terowongan Casablanca* says to Refa before killing him, “Your biggest mistake was betraying me. And my biggest act of stupidity was trusting you to have sex with me.”<sup>25</sup> Refa had forced her to have an abortion during which she wakes up and flees. Refa then kills Astari, burying her near his apartment. She returns to have her revenge. Victims are still primarily women and horror continues to grapple with the problematic sexuality of women in Indonesian society.

In some films, this goes even further to substantiate codes of conservative sexual morality. *Aborsi* (2008, ‘Abortion’), for example, is about the ghost of an aborted fetus that returns to confront and kill its parents.<sup>26</sup> It ends with an authoritative voiceover telling the viewers not to have abortions. More subtle is a story like *Suster Ngesot* (2007, ‘Crawling Nurse’).<sup>27</sup> Vila and Silla are two young nurses who move to a hospital in Jakarta to work, and are given a room that has been unused for twenty years, hence awakening the Crawling Nurse ghost. Mike, Vila’s boyfriend, is introduced to Silla and they have an affair soon after. In an old diary that Vila discovers in the room, a letter appears, which is the initial of the Crawling Nurse’s next victim. The victim is always someone who is promiscuous.

---

<sup>23</sup> Personal interview, 5 November 2008.

<sup>24</sup> *Psikopat* (2005, ‘Psychopath’). Recently in 2009, *Rumah Dara* (2009, ‘The House of Dara’), a gore film took after others in the genre, especially from Japan. It found a significant audience and prompted some other filmmakers to attempt similar films, for example *Air Terjun Pengantin* (2010, ‘Waterfall Bride’).

<sup>25</sup> “Kesalahan paling besar mu adalah mengkhianati aku. Dan kebodohan paling besar ku adalah mempercayai kamu untuk meniduri ku.”

<sup>26</sup> The parents, high school lovers, had the abortion before they were married.

<sup>27</sup> Kusuma (2009) argues that the Crawling Nurse ghost is a new character in Indonesian horror, but she is still primarily an avenging spirit in the vein of the *kuntilanak*.

As it turns out, the diary belonged to a nurse called Lastri who was murdered by her boyfriend Doctor Herman when she discovered him in bed with another woman. Herman buried her in the wall of the room, and she seeks her revenge by killing others who are promiscuous. When an ‘M’ appears and Mike is killed, Silla confesses to Vila but is still killed for her promiscuity. Just before her death, she screams at the Crawling Nurse: “I regret it. I promise I will never do such a stupid thing again.”<sup>28</sup> The twist at the end is that as Vila packs to return home, a ‘V’ appears in the diary, signaling her own death as she herself had been in a relationship with Mike.<sup>29</sup>

Alongside the *kuntilanak*, the ‘*pocong*’ has been used extensively, and although differing in its provenance, is still motivated by revenge. In an Indonesian-Muslim burial, the corpse is wrapped in a white shroud (*pocong*) and buried. It is believed that if the strings at the feet are untied before burial, then the corpse will rise from the dead. In *Tiren: Mati Kemarin* (2008, ‘Tiren: Died Yesterday’), Tiren dies from falling down the stairs after seeing her boyfriend in bed with another woman. In distress, her father releases the strings at her burial so that she can have her revenge. This she does, killing both the boyfriend and the woman. In this case, the *pocong* is used as the instrument of another’s revenge. Whilst the *pocong* is more gender-neutral than the *kuntilanak*, the majority of victims are still women who experience an unnatural death.

Even older directors and old companies have adopted these narrative conventions, as in *Rumah Pondok Indah* (2006, ‘The House in Pondok Indah’). *Rumah Pondok Indah* is directed by old director Irwan Siregar (b. 1966) who

---

<sup>28</sup> “Aku menyesal. Aku janji kejadian bodoh itu nggak pernah aku ulangi lagi.”

<sup>29</sup> Films from MD Productions, from what I have seen, are the most moralistic in this regard. Generally however, horror films feature young couples or mixed groups as their protagonists, combining sexual adventurousness with haunting.

directed films in the 1980s, and produced by Shanker RS from Indika Entertainment, formerly owned by Sudwikatmono, President Soeharto's foster brother. In the story, a mother and her two children (Elsie and Ian) rent a cheap house in Pondok Indah, and discover that the house is haunted. The landlord Tio, a sculptor, had killed his girlfriend Maya in the house and encased her body in a statue. After several encounters with Maya's ghost, Elsie and Ian discover the truth about the statue. Seeking her revenge, Maya's ghost possesses the body of Elsie and confronts Tio when he arrives at the house. When Maya attempts to kill Tio, she is stopped by the female *dukun* who succeeds in forcing Maya's ghost out of Elise's body. Maya's ghost possesses Tio, forcing him to reveal Maya's corpse in the statue. The film ends with the arrival of the police and the spirit shooting off into the night. It contains all the features of contemporary Indonesian horror: use of urban legends to anchor the story in 'reality', teenage protagonists, a revenge narrative and a distinction between those who kills a woman who become ghosts and those who discover her. The Islamic priest is however absent.

#### **5.4 Teenagers as Agents of Disturbance**

With revenge remaining as the *modus operandi* of the ghosts, the combination of teenage protagonists with an avenging spirit produces a horror narrative that is propelled by disturbance. Rarely are the teenagers the perpetrators of the original crime, instead, their presence or intrusion in a particular place disturbs the dormant ghost causing it to manifest itself. This differs substantially from the role of protagonists in New Order horror. In the narrative of New Order horror, such as the classic 1981 film *Sundel Bolong* ('Whore with a Hole'), becoming a ghost for Alicia is her means of exacting immediate revenge on her

attackers. Alicia, a former prostitute now married to the ‘perfect’ husband Hendarto, is raped by a gang after she refuses the advances of their boss. Although they are taken to court, the judge declares it cannot be rape because she is a former prostitute, and releases the suspects. Pregnant and afraid of confronting her husband who is away overseas,<sup>30</sup> Alicia kills herself and returns from the grave as an avenging ‘ghost with a hole’, the hole symbolizing the unborn child in her womb. She kills the perpetrators one by one. When Hendarto returns from overseas and sees what has happened, he enlists the help of the Islamic priest, telling Alicia that she can now rest in peace. Not only is her revenge immediate, it structures the narrative of the film.

Post-1998 horror films are characterized by a temporal gap between the original violent incident and the apparition of the ghost. In *Suster Ngesot*, the original murder happens ‘20 years ago’; in *Jelangkung*, the original killing happens in 1938.<sup>31</sup> *Malam Jumat Kliwon* (2007, ‘Ominous Friday Night’) explains that in 1990 a female *dukun* was attacked by a mob,<sup>32</sup> and when she was taken to hospital, she killed all the hospital staff forcing the closure of the hospital. Almost two decades later, teenagers rediscover the abandoned hospital, disturb the ghost, and fall victim to her wrath. The arrival and incursion of the teenagers causes the dormant ghost to manifest itself. Violence is thus primarily something that is committed in the past, the ghost of which is only resurrected in the present. Her revenge narrative is embedded within the more immediate story about a group of teenagers encountering a ghost.

---

<sup>30</sup> After seeing the doctor to try and get an abortion, he lectures her about how abortion is murder. Later at home, she is haunted by the apparitions of dozens of babies crying in her house. She says to her maid that she is ‘afraid and embarrassed’ and ‘confused’ (*takut dan malu* and *bingung*).

<sup>31</sup> Almost all contemporary horror films have this temporal gap. I have only included a couple of examples here. Moreover, almost all of them refer to events before 1998.

<sup>32</sup> It is referred to as *Pembantain Dukun Santet* (‘Eradication of Black Magic *Dukun*’) and is a reference to the real killings of witches by local mobs in Java in the early 1990s.

The original violent incident in these cases is usually one of two types. The first is that caused by a mob of some sort, seeking to destroy the evil that lurks in their community or institution. For the villagers of Angkerbatu in *Jelangkung*, this is a little boy; or for the villagers in *Malam Jumat Kliwon*, she is a practitioner of black magic. These figures represent disorder and, as a threat, need to be purged from the community. The second type of violence is that against a woman, involving crimes of passion or sexuality. Much the same as New Order horror, her murder or suicide is linked to virginity, pregnancy, abortion or unrequited love. In both cases, the burial is usually ‘incorrect’, meaning that the corpse is not given the proper funeral rites and remains in limbo. Subsequently, the violent vengeful ghost remains dormant until disturbed by the contemporary teenagers.

What plays out, therefore, is a disjuncture between the youth of the present and the violence of the past. Just as the youth know little about mysticism, the teenagers are invariably ignorant of what comes before them. The appearance of the ghost prompts them to investigate its existence, and in doing so, the past itself. As Alice says to her friend in *Lewat Tengah Malam* (2007, ‘Past Midnight’) in a moment of realization, “The ghost is trying to tell us something”.<sup>33</sup> In *Ada Hantu Di Sekolah* (2004, ‘There’s a Ghost in the School’) a group of school students inadvertently break a floor tile in the school library, releasing the ghost it conceals. Haunted by the ghost, they dig into the school’s past and discover that their teacher, a former pupil, had buried his girlfriend in the school library. She had committed suicide after he had got her pregnant. In the final scene the ghost confronts the teacher, admonishes him, and kills him, avenging herself at the same

---

<sup>33</sup> *Lewat Tengah Malam* (2007, ‘Past Midnight’) “Hantu, kayaknya menyampaian sesuatu.”

time. The problem of the ghost is thus solved, and the ghost and spirit of the teacher evaporate into the beyond. Despite being the protagonists of the story, the teenagers act as intermediaries for the ghost to seek her revenge.

In the process of investigation the teenagers encounter hindrances, from signs that read 'Dilarang Masuk' (Entry Forbidden) outside Angkerbatu in *Jelangkung*, to characters who block their progress. It is usually those in power or authority who resist inquiry into the ghost either because they are implicated or know the true story. In *Bangsai 13* (2004, 'Ward 13'), a young doctor unlocks the unused Ward 13 and lets the girls stay there to recover from their car accident. The head doctor finds out and reprimands him; she knows why Ward 13 was locked and the secret it contains.<sup>34</sup> In *Beranak Dalam Kubur* (2007, 'Birth in the Grave')<sup>35</sup> the following exchange takes place between medical student Jess (J) and a hospital guard (G):

J: Sir, what is it that you are trying to conceal from me? I only want to know, what is in that room? Why is the corpse in that room?

G: You are not allowed to enter the morgue room again. Do you understand?

J: Just so you know, ever since my friends and I entered that room, we have not been at ease. We are being terrorized by a female ghost. And I only want to look and go in.

G: The identity of the woman's corpse is unknown and I was forced to lock her in the morgue room because she is the harbinger of disaster.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> A former nurse at the hospital was killed by an angry mob after they found out she was euthanizing patients at the hospital. They locked her in the cellar where she died. The ward was then locked after her ghost appeared and started killing patients.

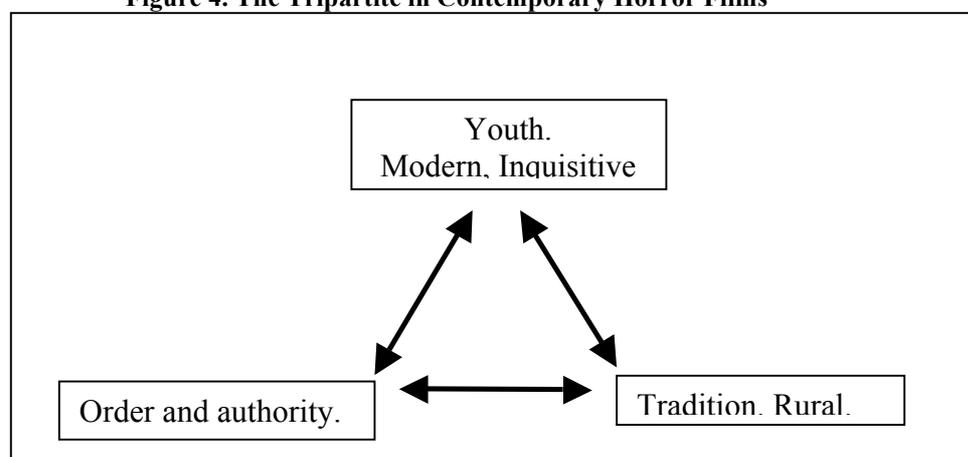
<sup>35</sup> Note, although it shares the same title as the 1972 film, it is not a remake. The film is about a group of medical students who discover a strange corpse in the hospital. The corpse is of a pregnant girl Jasmine who died after her boyfriend murdered her. She comes back from the grave to seek her revenge on him.

<sup>36</sup> "Pak, apa sih bapak coba tutup-tutupin dari saya? Saya hanya ingin tahu Pak, ada apa dengan kamar itu? Kenapa mayat ada di dalam ruang itu pak?"  
"Kamu tidak boleh masuk-masuk kamar mayat-mayat itu lagi. Ngerti?"

The curiosity of the young Jess and her friends places them in direct conflict with those in power who work to maintain the artifice of normality. Generational power structures are inverted as the youth challenge their elders in their pursuit of the truth.

Within this constellation of actors, there are another set of characters who represent tradition and are, by that virtue, cognizant of the supernatural. An old lady at the cemetery in *Hantu Jeruk Perut* warns the teens saying, “Don’t come to this cemetery at night, it’s not good. If you don’t have a reason to be here, better you all leave.”<sup>37</sup> The old Javanese caretaker at the hospital of *Bangsai 13* and the school of *Hantu Bangku Kosong* even talks to the ghosts. These characters are carried over from previous horror films as the rural characters whose worldview includes the supernatural. The structure of relationships in contemporary horror is thus expanded to include the youth:

**Figure 4. The Tripartite in Contemporary Horror Films**



The addition of the youth and their inquisitive nature adds both a temporal and a critical dimension to the dichotomous relationship of New Order horror. It

---

“Asal bapak tahu aja ya, setelah saya dan teman-teman saya masuk ruang itu, itu kami jadi nggak tenang pak. Kami itu diteror sama hantu perempuan. Dan saya hanya ingin lihat dan masuk pak.” they talk, the guard then says:

“Mayat wanita tidak jelas identitasnya itu terpaksa saya terkunci dalam kamar mayat ini, karena dia membawa petaka.”

<sup>37</sup> “Jangan main ke kuburan ini malam ndak baik. Kalau kalian nggak ada urusan, lebih baik kalian pergi dari sini.”

indicates a generation coming of age in Indonesian pop culture, both behind the screen and on it. As in American horror it is possible to describe the monster they discover as “both murdered and victim, the exiled source of rebellion against society and simultaneously the product of that society’s repression” (Trencansky, 2001: 70). Thus contemporary horror films in Indonesia speak about history, and violence committed in the past.

### **5.5 Contemporary Horror as Allegory of Past Violence**

Having delineated the features of contemporary horror films, we need to return to situate horror within a broader social context. Despite what are obviously important changes in the genre that should provoke investigation, the consensus amongst most critics and observers of film is that horror is still a cheap and contemptible genre. Hikmat Darmawan (2007b) complains that contemporary horror films, like those of the past, have bad and illogical stories. Only the cinematography of contemporary horror has improved, he says. Pattisina (2007) finds little redeeming at all in the genre, except that it provides a place for audiences to be frightened together. One reviewer of the film *Terowongan Casablanca* notes:

Like the majority of Indonesian horror films, *Terowongan Casablanca* does not offer anything special. The plot is superficial, the acting is standard that is to say average, and the appearance of the *kuntilanak* is far from scary. (Hadriani, 2007)<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> “Seperti kebanyakan film horor Indonesia, *Terowongan Casablanca* tidak banyak menyajikan hal yang istimewa. Jalan ceritanya datar, akting para pemain standar alias biasa saja, dan penampakan *kuntilanak* jauh dari kesan menyheramkan.” Hadriani P., review of *Terowongan Casablanca*, *Koran Tempo*, 23 February 2007.

In their dismissal of the horror genre, none of these critics are able to explain why horror is so popular, and effectively regard audiences as ‘cultural dopes’ (Hall, 1981: 232). Given the history of *film nasional* in Indonesia (see Chapter Two) and the general association of horror with low-brow tastes, the dismissal of the genre is not unexpected. Given the changes in narrative and protagonists in contemporary horror films, it seems reasonable to ask whether horror films can in some way delineate the social changes of the post-New Order era.

In response to the end of the New Order, a number of recent films have attempted to describe the violence that accompanied the events of 1998. One early effort, originally titled *The Army Forced them to be Violent* (2002), is a forty-three minute documentary about the 1998 student protests.<sup>39</sup> When submitted to the censors,<sup>40</sup> a number of scenes showing police attacking protestors were cut and the title was changed to the more neutral *Student Movement in Indonesia*. Most of the footage had been shown on television at the time, but was not allowed in a feature film. *May* (2008) about a Chinese girl called May, caught in the May 1998 riots that targeted the ethnic Chinese, skirts around the May 1998 violence.<sup>41</sup> The very issues the film seems to tackle – May 1998 and being Chinese in particular – are not problematized. Neither film manages to portray the violence of the historical event the narrative is built around.

In the spirit of reform, other films attempted to describe the nature of the New Order regime and the violence it perpetuated. *Pasir Berbisik* (2000, ‘Whispering Sands’), directed by Nan Achnas, is the story of a mother and daughter struggling to live in a strange sandy landscape. An important feminist

---

<sup>39</sup> Directed by Tino Saroengallo.

<sup>40</sup> So as to be released in the cinemas.

<sup>41</sup> Although well made, and a timely reminder of the events a decade earlier, *May* only managed to draw 50,000 people to the box-office. Compare this to the average audience for a horror film.

work (Paramaditha, 2007), it also alludes to the violence of the New Order with mysterious corpses that wash up on the beach and soldiers trampling through the landscape. In its representations, it relies almost entirely on allusion and allegory to describe the New Order, including the sandy barren landscape. Tackling a more specific event, *Marsinah (Cry Justice!)* (2002)<sup>42</sup> dramatizes the ‘mysterious’ death of labour activist Marsinah in 1993. Despite being made a decade after the event, the film concentrates on Marsinah’s colleagues who were interrogated and mildly tortured by security personnel. It avoids identifying the officials involved and the circumstances of Marsinah’s death. Ironically, the film clearly shows local television station SCTV reporting on Marsinah’s death at the time. Both films, despite being important attempts to deal with violence committed under the New Order, are too cautious and ultimately fail to document or condemn the violence of the New Order.

Significantly, the end of the New Order in 1998, and the era of *reformasi* and democracy that has followed, has not been any more peaceful. In fact, there seems to have been a diversification of violence, prompting many to call for the return of a Soeharto-style regime where at least order and stability were more guaranteed. The end of the New Order, like its beginning, was marked by violence, this time in the form of street protests involving students and the people (*massa*, the masses). The two days of rioting, looting and violence in North Jakarta and other cities in May 1998 stands out from this period for their brutality and systematic targeting of the ethnic Chinese (Siegel, 2001; Purdey, 2002). Whilst Indonesian history is replete with incidents where the Chinese have been singled out for attack (Purdey, 2006), the events of May 1998 were particularly

---

<sup>42</sup> Directed by Slamet Rahardjo.

shocking for the use of rape and the involvement of military instigators.<sup>43</sup> These forms of social violence tore at the social fabric as the structures of control were thrown into disarray. The riots of May 1998 ended as suddenly as they had begun, and life returned to a semblance of normality (Siegel, 2002).

To deal with the violent events of Indonesian history, most notably 1965-66 and the May 1998 riots, fact finding and/or truth and reconciliation commissions have been the usual means proposed (Stoler, 2002). Especially in the context of *reformasi*, when anything seemed possible, these were serious, although eventually unrealized, proposals. Robert Cribb argues there are “serious misgivings about the likely effects of reexamining 1965-66” (2002: 562), given the trauma it might evoke and the more pressing problems plaguing the country. It must be remembered that this silence may work to serve a particular elite, and by extension the security forces, who are often implicated in the violence and whose legitimacy would be undermined by such investigations (Collins, 2002). What is unrecognized in these debates is that the cinema, and specifically horror films, may be an important means whereby audiences seek catharsis for the ghosts of past violence that haunts Indonesian society (Kusuma, 2009).

Studies of horror films however note a coherence and social relevance of horror and the fear they generate. Using horror as a genre of allegory, scholars have argued that horror films are a metaphorical representation of the fears of a society (Lowenstein, 2005). For example, slasher films made in the United States in the 1980s are notable because of their lone maniacal killer terrorizing suburban residents. As more middle-class Americans moved to suburbia to escape the problems of inner city living (gangs, violence, etc), new fears emerged about the

---

<sup>43</sup> Although never confirmed, it is widely believed that Prabowo Subianto was the mastermind behind the riots. He was married to Soeharto's daughter Titiek, but had by 1998 fallen out of favour, and was passed over for promotion by General Wiranto.

social isolation of the suburbs and the destruction of the family. Slasher films allegorized these fears.<sup>44</sup> “The appeal of horror,” says Tudor, “is understood to be a product of the interaction between specific textual features and distinct social circumstances” (Tudor, 1997: 460).

Using the established conventions of the genre, with the female body and female sexuality as its stage, contemporary Indonesian horror films allegorize historical violence and its residual trauma. Indonesian history is littered with episodes of violence in a multitude of forms many of them committed by state agencies, which to this day, remain unresolved. Overshadowing post 1998 Indonesia is still the legacy of the New Order’s violent military regime (Heryanto, 2005). Filmmaker Garin Nugroho says that:

Indonesian history goes from trauma to trauma, the most obvious cases being the Japanese era, to G30S/PKI [i.e. 1965-1966] which victimized more than 500,000 people, the New Order regime to the current transitional period which has produced various forms of political and social violence which we have not yet had a chance to describe.<sup>45</sup> (Nugroho, 2005: 35)

Horror films, Lowenstein (2005: 2) argues, provide the ‘allegorical moment’ where film, spectator and history intersect to explore issues of national trauma. If Indonesia has not been able to deal with its violent past through open description,<sup>46</sup> then it is through horror that we see it re-enacted.

---

<sup>44</sup> Examples are numerous. The most famous being the *Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984, dir. Wes Craven) and *Halloween* (1978, dir. John Carpenter) franchises.

<sup>45</sup> “Sejarah Indonesia adalah sebuah kisah dari trauma ke trauma, sebutlah yang gampang, dari masa Jepang hingga G30S/PKI yang menelan korban tak kurang 500.000 manusia, masa pemerintahan Orde Baru hingga periode transisi sekarang ini yang melahirkan berbagai bentuk kekerasan sosial dan politik yang belum sempat kita deskripsikan.”

<sup>46</sup> For example, reports into incidents of violence have often been banned by the government or faced heavy censure from groups in society.

## 5.6 Using Horror to Elucidate Ethnic Violence

So far, we have seen how the temporal gap in horror films serves as an allegory for the violence of history and its rediscovery by contemporary teenagers. The potency of the horror genre in evoking episodes of violence is evident in the case of *Dendam Pocong* (2006, English title *Shrouded*), the only locally-made film to be banned since 1998. From what Kusuma (2009) describes in her study (being one of the few people to have actually seen the film), *Dendam Pocong* is set during the riots of May 1998 when the ethnic Chinese were the target of mob violence, lootings and rape.<sup>47</sup> *Dendam Pocong* portrays these events in graphic detail, perhaps too graphically, says Veronika Kusuma (2009). Scriptwriter Monty Tiwa told me that the censorship board believed the film would “bring back bad memories and [...] remind us of our ‘nation’s past wounds’.”<sup>48</sup> In its depictions of the 1998 violence in Jakarta, the film strayed too close to reality by linking a specific violent event with the apparition of the *pocong*. It is also one of the few films to describe and identify the violence of a recent event, rather than decontextualized violence of the past.

In *Dendam Pocong* the *pocong* torments Wisnu Sugeng, prompting him to seek revenge for the death of his parents and sister. They were brutally killed when the family’s former employee, Rustam, led May 1998 rioters to their house as means to avenge himself. Rustam was angry because the Sugeng family fired him for stealing rice from the family business. Although the Sugeng family is not identified as being Chinese, the public secret of the riots is that they targeted the ethnic Chinese, and were probably orchestrated by factions within the military.

---

<sup>47</sup> As Kusuma (2009) notes however, the Sugeng family and thus the *pocong* are however not Chinese.

<sup>48</sup> Personal communication, 12 December 2009.

The son, Wisnu Sugeng, survives the riot having witnessed his parents being killed and his sister raped. Tormented by a *pocong*, Wisnu exacts his revenge on Rustam and his family, subjecting them to the same violence that his own family encountered. The twist at the end comes when another of the Sugeng's family servants admits to her husband that she, not Rustam, had stolen the rice. Thus the violence and revenge is not only over a petty amount of rice, it was all based on an initial misunderstanding.

Monty Tiwa and Rudi Soedjarwo were attempting to use horror as a means of exploring recent violent events. Scriptwriter Monty Tiwa says that he had

a chest full of remorse out of the May 98 riot, which to me was and still is, really scary... That event was the real 'horror' ... And in the script, the message I was trying to convey is, we should not be afraid of ghost. But human can be more frightening. (personal communication, 12 December 2009)

To my knowledge, no other fictional film has been as explicit in reproducing an actual event of historical violence. In the sequel, *Pocong 2* (2006), only oblique references are made to the events of the first film as well as to the events of 1998. As the only Indonesian film that has been banned in post-1998 Indonesia, we see how history and trauma can reach a potent combination in the horror genre.

Despite the banning of *Dendam Pocong*, horror films still provide filmmakers with the space to explore some of the more taboo topics in Indonesia. History in Indonesia has not yet been subject to significant revision and remains framed within a New Order paradigm, which promotes national independence and the formation of the nation as the legitimate process of history. Alternative narratives of history, especially those that challenge the dominant narrative of independence or that of 1965, remain peripheral and discouraged. Film scholar Ekky Imanjaya criticizes contemporary filmmakers:

There is an absence of films that make critical or political comment. Most filmmakers have not used this opportunity, this atmosphere of democracy, to do what they longed for when the situation was repressive. As a matter of fact, a majority has not handled cinema as a medium to express their thoughts and feelings or to convey a message. Rather, they have shown preference for love or horror stories and suchlike themes, which entice more and more people to the cinemas and allow them, the filmmakers, to earn good money. (Imanjaya, 2007)

Imanjaya suggests that the horror genre is incapable of being used for political or critical comment as it is merely a site for commercial profit making. In fact, these two goals need not be mutually exclusive. Horror films are one of the genres where filmmakers have explored critical ideas, as in *Dendam Pocong* above, and in the examples below.

To unpack the assumption that horror is nothing more than commercialism, we need look no further than commercial producer Leo Sutanto and two of his early films.<sup>49</sup> During the New Order, ethnic Chinese citizens were required to change their Chinese names into ‘Indonesian’ names and Chinese writing was banned from public use. In tandem, the ethnic Chinese were erased from the cinema screen (Sen, 2006). Sutanto, who is ethnically Chinese, became a producer in 1999 after having worked in Subentra/Suptan since the 1970s. In his horror film *The Mirror* (2005), one of his first as producer, a young woman Kikan starts seeing dead people in mirrors. Rather than consulting a traditional *dukun*, Kikan goes to see a Chinese paranormal, played by Leo Sutanto himself. In the scene, we see the paranormal’s house littered with Chinese paraphernalia in the customary red colour with Chinese characters. It is a small scene but given the

---

<sup>49</sup> Leo Sutanto also produced *Dendam Pocong* and *Pocong 2*.

history of Chinese representation in Indonesian films, a significant reappearance of Chineseness.<sup>50</sup>

However, it is Sutanto's first horror film *Di Sini Ada Setan* (2004, 'There is a Ghost Here'),<sup>51</sup> co-written by Sutanto, that engages with the question of being Chinese in Indonesia more directly. Separately, Sen (2006) and Heryanto (2008) have found that whilst there has been a reappearance of the Chinese in some recent films, they evoke prevailing ethnic stereotypes of the Chinese and, despite their best intentions, reaffirm rather than overcome these historical constructs. *Di Sini Ada Setan* follows the standard post-1998 horror narrative as a group of Jakartan teenagers leave the city and travel to a lake for a holiday. The ghost that haunts and kills them however, is of a Chinese girl who was murdered in the past by her *pribumi* (indigenous) boyfriend. His parents had forbidden their relationship, and out of spite for her, the boyfriend made her confess her love for him before pushing her in the lake. Her revenge as a Chinese woman thus takes an added dimension in the context of ethnic relations in Indonesia and the historical persecution of the ethnic Chinese. In this case, the horror genre provides a space to explore some of the historical trauma associated with being Chinese in Indonesia without the burden of having to represent Chineseness.

### **5.6.1 *Lentera Merah* (2006) and the History of 1965**

Director Hanung Bramantyo (with scriptwriter Ginatri S Noer) made the first feature film post-1998 that deals with the legacy of 1965. Instead of using a

---

<sup>50</sup> Although other films have reinserted the ethnic Chinese into films, they have generally not escaped the stereotypes of the Chinese. See Sen (2006) and Heryanto (2008). Both however discuss the most obvious cases of *Ca Bau Kan* (2002) and *Gie* (2005). See also Setijadi-Dunn (2009) for a more detailed discussion of Chineseness in recent films.

<sup>51</sup> The film attracted an audience of 600,000.

non-specific event of violence for his horror narrative, the film purposively used the persecution and killing of communists in 1965 as its reference point with the tagline '*Kebenaran Harus Terungkap*' ('The Truth Must Be Told'). The ghost is of a journalist from the campus newspaper *Lentera Merah* ('Red Lantern') killed by her colleagues in 1965 for her leftist views. She returns as a ghost to haunt the editorial committee in 2005. It so happens that the 1965 editorial committee's children are now the 2005 editors. Revenge for a killing in 1965 takes forty years to be enacted. It is the children of the original perpetrators who experience the ghost's retribution and who must investigate and placate the ghost that haunts the newspaper. The parallels to history in Indonesia are obvious, and as an indication of the ongoing sensitivity of 1965, the LSF made a number of cuts to the film.<sup>52</sup>

The film *Lentera Merah* opens with the 2005 editorial team selecting a new editorial team for the following year and subjecting them to a selection and initiation process. Amongst the hopefuls for 2006 is the mysterious girl Risa. During the trial period, Risa exposes the plagiarism of Wulan, one of the current editors. Later that night Wulan is found dead and beside her body, written in blood, is the numeral '65'. Later, during the initiation night, members of the 2005 committee are discovered dead in strange circumstances, all with '65' written in blood near their bodies. Iqbal, one of the new editorial hopefuls, investigates the mysterious deaths and discovers that Risa is actually a ghost from the 1965 committee. It turns out that Risa's fellow members from 1965 are the parents of the 2005 committee, including Iqbal's father. She was murdered by the 1965 committee for writing a pro-communist article and was buried in the wall of the *Lentera Merah* office.

---

<sup>52</sup> Scenes censored included one with the song "Genjer-Genjer" playing. This used to be the 'PKI song' in the 1950s and 1960s. Any mention of 'communism' had to be edited out, and was replaced by 'kaum kiri' (leftists).

In the closing scenes of the film, Iqbal's father, one of the original members from 1965, turns to his son and says "Now you know right, that behind the LM motto of 'always side with the truth,' a great lie was hidden."<sup>53</sup> Likewise, the film is asking the viewers to reconsider the 'truth' of 1965 that they have been told. Garin Nugroho similarly explored the events of 1965 in his film *Puisi Tak Terkuburkan* (2000, English title 'The Poet') about suspected PKI members imprisoned in Aceh in 1965. Nugroho's motivation is strikingly similar to Bramantyo's:

Although I had no experience or knowledge about what happened in 1965 I grew up in the shadow of this event and under the authoritarian system that followed. Even though I'd done nothing wrong I kept coming up against things that forced me to think about what had happened. [...] This means that many people are still suffering from the consequences of 1965, whether they were connected with the communists or not. There is no exact figure about how many were killed but whatever the numbers everyone in Indonesia lives under this shadow.<sup>54</sup>

Whereas Garin Nugroho took these concerns and questions to a film festival audience, Bramantyo sought to bring them to a local mainstream audience by using the horror genre.

In the opinion of critic Eric Sasono (2006),<sup>55</sup> *Lentera Merah* is historically inaccurate in a number of areas, and does not present a wholly convincing portrayal of the events of 1965. The film is set in June 1965, and the mass killings did not begin until after the abortive coup of 30 September 1965, most of which

---

<sup>53</sup> "Sekarang kamu tahu kan, bahwa di balik moto LM yang selalu berpihak pada kebenaran ternyata ada kebohongan besar disembunyikan."

<sup>54</sup> Phillips, Richard, 'To explore one of the dark episodes in Indonesian history' *World Socialist Web Site*, 19 September 2001, <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/sep2001/ganu-s19.shtml>, accessed 29/06/2010.

<sup>55</sup> Eric Sasono (2006) 'Lentera Merah: Gagal Jadi Penerang', <http://ericsasono.multiply.com/reviews/item/8>, accessed 28/04/2010.

occurred in 1966 (Ricklefs, 2008). He says that although there was agitation on the campuses, reflective of the politics of the 1960s, such an incident was not likely to have occurred. Whether or not a fictitious feature film can be expected to be historically accurate is not really the point of *Lentera Merah*. For filmmakers like Bramantyo, horror is about exposing what is repressed in society:

For me, the most horrific situation in Indonesia are the years of 1965. Until today, this situation is still terrifying. It happened when the film was to be released, the censors were already on hold. The producer got paranoid which almost resulted in him cutting the film even more. The producer was worried after the experience of *Lentera Merah* when a group proclaiming themselves as 'Muslim' arrived at Indosiar [TV station] and asked them not to screen *Lentera Merah* because of the scenes with the PKI. That is horror for me. Like the living dead that scare everyone, the story of 1965 still haunts us. (Bramantyo, 2007)<sup>56</sup>

At its core, *Lentera Merah* is offering a counter-narrative to a period of history already clouded by obscurity and lies.

### **5.6.2 *Kuntilanak* and the Indonesian Elite**

One of the most successful horror franchises of the last decade in Indonesia has been the three films in the *Kuntilanak* (2006; 2007; 2008) series, written by Ve Handojo and directed by Rizal Mantovani for MVP Pictures. *Kuntilanak* departs from the usual narrative conventions of horror by eschewing

---

<sup>56</sup> “Bagi saya, situasi paling Horor di Indonesia adalah tahun-tahun 1965. Sampai dengan hari ini, situasi itu masih menjadi teror. Terbukti ketika film ini hendak dirilis, pihak sensor sudah menunggu. Producer menjadi paranoid yang nyaris membuat film ini banyak di potong. Producer merasa khawatir oleh pengalaman Lentera Merah yang tiba-tiba di minta oleh sekelompok komunitas yang menamai dirinya 'Muslim' mendatangi stasiun TV Indosiar, meminta pihak TV tidak menayangkan kembali Lentera Merah karena memuat adegan PKI di dalamnya. Itulah Horor buat saya. Seperti mayat hidup yang menakutkan setiap orang, cerita 65 masih menghantui kita.” Hanung Bramantyo (2007) ‘Sundel Bolong’, [http://hanungbramantyo.multiply.com/journal/item/5/SUNDEL\\_BOLONG](http://hanungbramantyo.multiply.com/journal/item/5/SUNDEL_BOLONG), accessed 19/01/2010.

the revenge narrative in favour of a modern rendition of the *kuntilanak* myth. The films revolve around Sam, a young Jakartan who moves into an old boarding house following a strange dream she has. The house is owned by the wealthy Mangkujiwo family, an old aristocratic lineage from Java. She learns that the large tree outside the house houses a *kuntilanak*. One day, in an altercation with one of the other girls, Sam suddenly begins to sing an eerie song (a kind of descant) and thus summons the resident *kuntilanak*. The *kuntilanak* once summoned, proceeds to kill the girl for Sam. Her ability not only throws her into turmoil and leads her boyfriend to investigate further the *kuntilanak* myth, but also attracts the attention of the Mangkujiwo family matriarch. The Mangkujiwo had cultivated the ability to summon the *kuntilanak* and had used its power to further their business ventures. Sam's possession of the ability threatens them, and the matriarch tries to convince Sam to join the family.

As is now typical in post-1998 horror films, modern youth characters are the link between the supernatural and its manifestation in the modern world. The skill of summoning the *kuntilanak*, which had been the monopoly of the aristocratic Mangkujiwo family, is suddenly made possible for Sam without any explicit reason. Her newfound ability upsets the stable structures of power that had been exploited by the Mangkujiwo family. By implication, we know that the Mangkujiwo family had gained their wealth through 'evil' means by using the *kuntilanak* to eliminate business competitors, as in part three where they kill a businessman who cannot pay back his debt to the family. Sam, as a youth, gains what was formally the power of the elite, a metaphor for the ways in which the youth in *reformasi* gained the tools to challenge entrenched forms of New Order power. The film thus critiques wealth and aristocracy in Indonesia gained and

maintained through evil means. Subsequently, the *kuntilanak* becomes Sam's means to destroy the Mangkujiwo family.

Sam as powerful protagonist also points to another salient feature of how society is re-imagined in post-New Order Indonesia. Female protagonists are already a staple feature of these horror films, as the leaders of investigation and inquiry. Sam differs in that she is the archetype of a 'final girl' (Trencansky, 2001), a character type found in American horror films such as *Halloween* (1978) and *Alien* (1979). Final girls characteristically are the only character who remains alive at the end of the film having fought and overcome the evil she encountered. She remains sexually unavailable whereas other female characters by contrast tend to be helpless victims and sexually promiscuous. Final Girls represented a new mode of imagining women as protagonists in horror, suggesting horror films were not simply misogynistic portrayals of violence against women and instead offered new gender roles.

In line with her final girl typology, Sam's first victim as summoner of the *kuntilanak* is a sexually active woman in her boarding house who is killed along with her lover in a hotel room. Sam's boyfriend, in contrast to Sam, is weak and useless, and spends most of the first film in a coma, waiting to be rescued. Like the final girls of American horror films, Sam "must recognize the source of the monster to defeat it" (Trencansky, 2001: 71). In *Kuntilanak*, the monster is not the *kuntilanak* per se, but the Mangkujiwo family who had harnessed it for their financial gain.

At the end of the first film, Sam has destroyed three of the four mirrors from where the *kuntilanak* emerges, but has kept the fourth and in the film's final scene looks, with a glint in her eye, at the camera. Sam, like the heroines in 1980s

American slasher films, “cannot drive the narrative forward, or be the authors of their own fates, without recognizing the lack of boundary between themselves and their monsters and their own complicity, as part of society, in its creation” (Trencansky, 2001: 71). The remaining two films explore the complexity of the Mangkujiwo family, and Sam’s struggle is as much against the family as it is with herself. Sam as ‘final girl’ embodies the rise of the youth, their appropriation of the tools of power, and their conflict with the establishment.<sup>57</sup> Very few films made post-1998 have such a strong critique of power, a fact even more surprising since it comes from within the conventions of the horror genre, and from such a ‘commercially’ oriented company.

## 5.7 Breaking with History

This chapter has looked at the horror genre in detail as a popular genre that traces the shift from New Order ideology to post New Order social formations. It argues that the horror genre is primarily a genre of violence that operates through allegorical representation of monsters or ghosts that haunt Indonesian society. Whilst the two New Order monsters reappear in post-1998 horror, namely women’s sexuality and threats to social order, post-New Order horror narrative is structured around a temporal gap between the original violent incident and the apparition of the ghost. In its use of allegory and metaphor, the horror genre provides insight into the collective fears and trauma of contemporary Indonesia, and how the violence of the past reappears in the present.

---

<sup>57</sup> This theme of the youth challenging established power appears more crudely in Mantovani’s section of *Kuldesak* (1998), his first film as director.

This reorientation of the horror genre indicates a fundamental shift in who has the power and means of representation in post-New Order film. Horror's return, and its evocation of historical trauma, indicates that a reappraisal of history is taking place, using a genre and its icons that were only a decade earlier being used by the state for the purposes of ideological control. The avenging spirit is now a means to conjure up 'the ghosts of the past' and so allow an exploration, however metaphorical, of the violence of history. At the same time, it reflects the residual trauma of this violent past, and horror film provides a site of both expression and catharsis. Although the LSF showed the state's boundaries of permissible representation, there is visible a fundamental shift in the power of representation. What has occurred is therefore a shift in the power of representation from the state to 'the people' themselves.

In discussions of representing violence on screen, horror films occupy a peripheral position. The emphasis on realism in Indonesian film history precludes serious consideration of horror which is thought of as dramatization of the supernatural. On the surface it appears to be a genre of sex and cheap thrills, but it also operates to explore a variety of forms of violence. Where directors have tried to use realism to represent violence, they are either thwarted by censorship for being too real, become cautious about what they show, or present it in less accessible genres such as art cinema.

Horror is different in that it is a popular genre that operates through allegory, and provides a more visceral relationship with the violence it presents. What is socially revealing is not that the violence is explicitly depicted as a faithful reproduction of any particular event, but rather that watching horror films is a form of catharsis. Horror is a "space [for audiences] to scream together"

(Nugroho, 2007). Screening violence in horror does not necessarily resolve trauma, but rather serves to provide catharsis and mystical explanation for the audience, so they can grapple with the nature of violence more easily, rationalize it, and to re-repress it. This is symptomatic of post-New Order politics.

By 2009 however, another shift was noticeable in horror films. The temporal gap, such a common motif of post-1998 horror, was no longer as salient as it once was. Horror narratives closed the temporal gap, and instead returned to cases of violence in which the revenge was immediate. This coincided with the maturation of the contemporary film industry and the greater rationalization of the film production process. To read this through history would be to say that the trauma of the past, that is residual trauma from the New Order, had been sufficiently documented through horror and thus repressed again for audiences and filmmakers alike. It is also a recognition that violence cannot be dealt with. This coincided with the return of new outbreaks of violence in the Indonesian society and the inability to deal with violence in the present as it occurred. Simultaneously, Islamic-themed films were coming into vogue, signaling the rearticulation of another historical force with pop culture. Islamic films and horror films would screen side-by-side indicating the complicated cultural terrain of post New Order Indonesia. These Islamic films are the subject of the next chapter.

## 6.

### POP ISLAM

We are so accustomed to thinking... only of politicians using religion for political ends, that it is extremely hard for us to understand what politics might look like if we could see it through religious eyes, or in a religious perspective, and thus imagine the possibility of religious people using politics for religious ends.

- Benedict Anderson (1977: 21)

#### 6.1 Introduction: Film and Islam

In early 2008, one film released seemed to realign the trajectory of the growing film industry and with it pop culture in Indonesia. The film was called *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* (2008, 'Verses of Love'), and it marked the rise of so-called 'Islamic Pop Culture', something many saw as a new phenomena only possible in post-*reformasi* Indonesia (van Heeren, 2006; Nef-Saluz, 2007; Hariyadi, 2010). *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* captured the imagination of the nation, attracting a record audience of 3.8 million and stirring up considerable debate. What makes a film 'Islamic' is not easily defined, and especially since the release of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, and then *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* ('When Love Exalts God') a year after it, the parameters of what makes a film Islamic has been lost amongst the hype that accompanied the release of these two films. Islamic films for the purposes of this chapter refers to films that deploy Islamic elements in their content and seek to

define what it means to be Muslim either at a personal level or in terms of Islam itself.

Seen from a different perspective, that of the *longue durée*, *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* can be read as an incarnation of a historical process of Islamization that has been ongoing since Islam first arrived in the region at the end of the thirteenth century (Machmudi, 2008: 51; Tagliacozzo, 2009). The manifestation of Islam in everyday life is nothing new, and this recent portrayal in film is neither the first time that Islam has been ascendant, nor is it the first time that Islam and pop culture have been combined together. Given these observations, this chapter first analyzes *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* as a spectacle that captures the complexity of Islam in contemporary Indonesia. Returning to the history of Islam and film, I show that Islam and pop culture have been combined before, with a variety of intentions and forms. By returning to *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* and *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih*, I argue that their success is suggestive of developments within Indonesian Islam itself, namely towards neo-*Salafism*, a revivalist movement that emerged in the 1970s. Finally I complicate notions that Indonesian Islam as interpreted in film is in any way homogeneous by exploring the oeuvre of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* director Hanung Bramantyo and the Miles film *Laskar Pelangi*.

## **6.2 The Spectacle of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta***

Love, as it appears in Indonesian films, is usually imagined as something secular with little overt religiosity involved in terms of partner selection, dating practices or moral choices. Although there are both liberal as well as conservative presentations of love and romance, neither kind of romance would typically invoke Islam. Film moreover is commonly perceived as a commercial medium,

antithetical to religiosity, and cinemas are still regarded as places of sin (Qardhawi, 1997). Films of love therefore focus on issues to do with coming of age, realizing one's love, and grappling with the complicated terrain of sexuality, parent's expectations and self-realization. Typically, a narrative revolves around a boy and a girl meeting, and having to undergo numerous obstacles, before finally realizing that their love for one another is enduring and complete. Two recent films have explored the problems associated with inter-ethnic love between people from different backgrounds. Garin Nugroho's film *Aku Ingin Menciummu Sekali Saja* (2002, 'I Want to Kiss You Just Once') courted controversy by telling the story of an Islamic pupil in a *pesantren* who desires a Chinese girl he sees walking past his school. Another, *Cin(t)a* (2008, 'Love') explores the impossible love between a Chinese Christian boy (Cina) and a Muslim girl. In its saccharine presentation of inter-religious love, it extols the audience to think of both as equals, as both who 'call the same God by different names'. Given these prevailing norms, *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* places the discourse of love in a wholly new context of an Islamic habitus.

Let us first consider *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* as the spectacle it was, to explore the ways in which the film brought debates around Islam into public discourse. The film is semiotically rich in Islamic content from the use of Arabic, the main character's references to scripture, Islamic dating practices (*taaruf*), a conversion narrative (*muallaf*), a polygamous marriage, fully veiled female characters, and an Egyptian setting, suggestive of an 'authentic' Middle Eastern Islam. With these as obvious markers that the film was projecting an Islamic lifestyle, it provoked debate over the meaning of Islam, Islam's role in contemporary Indonesia and the relevance of Islamic practices. Primarily the film brought to the surface three

contentious issues that mark the faultlines in Indonesian Islam today: polygamy, conversion (*muallaf*) and commodification. Not only did this reveal film's growing importance as a cultural form into which various people and interests would invest themselves and could engage in discourse about Islam, but it shifted the discussion away from religious experts and authorities and into the hands of the broader public. The film was thus both polarizing and emboldening.

At the centre of the story is Fahri, a young Indonesian student studying at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt. He is handsome, pious, courteous and dedicated to his studies, and as a result has caught the attention of four women, including his next door neighbour Maria, a Coptic Christian. On a public bus one day, he defends an American journalist and her mother from an abusive Egyptian, who thinks they should not be sitting because they are American *kafir* (nonbelievers). Fahri's defense of the women, in which he quotes scripture, attracts the attention of Aisha, a fully veiled German Muslim woman. Later, Aisha proposes to Fahri via the Islamic *taaruf*,<sup>1</sup> a request to which he initially vacillates. After consulting his friends and Islamic teacher, he agrees and they are married in a lavish wedding ceremony. Fahri's life changes as Aisha comes from a very rich family. Heartbroken that Fahri is now married, Maria falls into a coma, and Fahri finds himself under arrest when Noura, one of his other secret admirers, accuses him of raping her. As the trial proceeds, only the evidence of the unconscious Maria can exonerate him, and so with permission from the court and his wife Aisha, Fahri visits and marries the unconscious Maria. At his kiss Maria wakes, and journeys to the court as his witness, where her evidence exonerates Fahri.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Taaruf* is a particular Muslim form of engagement meaning 'to get to know each other'. Permata and Kailani (2010: 83) explain that it is "the introductory meeting before marriage during which mates get to know each other based on *syari'ah* ways, i.e. by avoiding all physical contact with non-*mahram* (male or female who could be married)." It is offered as a distinctively Islamic form of engagement as opposed to the more secular or Western '*pacaran*'.

Together Maria, Aisha and Fahri embark on a difficult polygamous married life. Maria progressively becomes sicker and as death nears, she pleads to her husband to teach her how to pray in the Islamic way. While praying, Maria dies, leaving Aisha and Fahri to continue as '*jodoh*' (soulmates).

*Ayat-Ayat Cinta* is an intense two hour long melodrama that fellow director, Rako Prijanto, described to me as being like a 'daydream'.<sup>2</sup> Director Hanung Bramantyo with scriptwriters Salman Aristo and Ginatri S Noer were praised for having so skillfully brought the popular novel to life on the screen.<sup>3</sup> Supposedly the producers had shown Bramantyo the successful Bollywood romance *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998, 'Something Happens') and been told him to make *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* similar to it.<sup>4</sup> This strategy was so successful that even the Indonesian President admitted to crying whilst watching the film. Commentators in the media noted that the film brought a new audience to the cinemas: old people, veiled women, as well as students of *pesantren*. The film went on to be seen by a record 3.5 million people, the most in history for a local film, a success that surprised even its own producers. Many in the film industry had believed that a film that featured Islam prominently could not and would not be accepted by audiences, especially given the mediocre success of other Islam-themed films made since 1998 and the perception that the Indonesian public had become more secularized.<sup>5</sup>

Supporters of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* picked up on the positive and confident image of Islam that the movie portrayed. Fahri embodied everything that was to

---

<sup>2</sup> Personal interview, 11 August 2008.

<sup>3</sup> The novel had sold 750,000 copies and was in its 37th print run by the time the film was released. See Lilian Budiarto, 'Islamic romance novels make splash', *The Jakarta Post*, 2 March 2008.

<sup>4</sup> The film was produced by MD Pictures, a commercial company headed by Manoj Punjabi and his father Dhamoo Punjabi. They are ethnic Indians, and related to Raam Punjabi of Multivision Plus.

<sup>5</sup> Salman Aristo, personal interview, 8 December 2008.

be idealized in the modern Indonesian Muslim: he is dedicated to his studies; he dutifully phones his mother back in Indonesia; he is learned in and applies Islamic scripture; and represents a modern, pious and benign Islam. These features differentiate him from the usual images of Islam as fundamentalism and terrorism. In an early scene in the bus, when Fahri stands up against the bigoted Egyptian by quoting scripture, his moral and intellectual superiority is established. This prompts the American woman, who is also a journalist, to seek Fahri's views on women in Islam. Fahri writes her a lengthy essay in English called 'The Status of Women in Islam' where he diligently defends women's rights and responsibilities according to Islam. Not only does she find his answer illuminating, she too is visibly attracted to Fahri. Fahri not only defends Islam in the face of Western questioning, he also makes Islam seem desirable.

For politicians and religious leaders in Indonesia, this kind of positive representation was exactly what they needed. Din Syamsudin, the leader of Muhammadiyah, endorsed the film, thus substantiating its Islamic credibility. He said it promoted peace and love and could therefore counteract Geert Wilders' film *Fitna* (2008) which had gained notoriety for its portrayal of Islam as a religion of hate and violence.<sup>6</sup> When the President organized a special screening for himself, his ministers, bureaucrats and foreign ambassadors, the film was further legitimized as a film that "taught good values" and showed the humane side of Islam.<sup>7</sup> Arts and Tourism Minister Jero Wacik praised the image of Islam that the film gave and went on to claim that the film proved that the Indonesian film industry was not only flourishing but that films were now 'healthy'; proof, he

---

<sup>6</sup> Gagah Wijoseno, 'Din Syamsuddin: Lawan Fitna dengan Ayat-ayat Cinta', *Detik News*, 7 April 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Desy Nurhayati 'SBY tearful, Kalla laughs', *The Jakarta Post*, 31 March 2008.

said, of his own policies as Minister.<sup>8</sup> Islamic groups likewise claimed that the film vindicated Islam and was essential material for modern Muslims to consume and learn from (Widodo, 2008)

Within this assertion of Islamic values, the issue of polygamy was brought to the fore, enlivening a debate that had been rumbling for some time.<sup>9</sup> Permissible Muslim marriage norms have long been an issue in Indonesia as its legal system has tried to remain secular whilst trying to also accommodate Islamic law (Dickson, 2007; Nurmila, 2005). In 2006 polygamy had been elevated to the level of national scandal when celebrity preacher Aa Gym, who had built himself a successful self-help and marketing empire based on Islamic teachings and values, fell from grace after taking a second wife (Hoesterey, 2008). For his disappointed followers, the issue was not about the rights and wrongs of polygamy per se, but rather that Aa Gym was seen to contradict his own teachings, thus damaging his 'brand credibility' (Hoesterey, 2008: 104). Polygamy encapsulated the ongoing faultlines present in Indonesian Islam including Islamic marriage and Sharia law, feminism and women's rights, modernity and love.<sup>10</sup>

*Ayat-Ayat Cinta* contributed to the debate because it dramatized a polygamous marriage brought about by necessity and so kept within the boundaries of scripture.<sup>11</sup> Its representation was divisive in that proponents of polygamy read it as a celebration of the practice, whereas progressive commentators saw it as a worrying endorsement. Ariel Heryanto notes however

---

<sup>8</sup> See DVD Extras.

<sup>9</sup> In fact, the debate over polygamy could be traced back to President Soekarno who had more than one wife.

<sup>10</sup> See for example Abshar-Abdalla (2008) who puts forward an argument against polygamy, framing it within the context of modernity and monogamy.

<sup>11</sup> This is the position of the author El Shirazy himself. 'Melihat Poligami dalam Film Ketika Cinta Bertasbih', *Republika*, 3 June 2009.

that these interpretations missed how polygamy was actually presented in the film.<sup>12</sup> In the book he says, there is little space given to describing how the polygamous marriage proceeds because Maria dies soon after marriage. In the film, this section between her marriage and her death is extended to show how problematic polygamous life actually is. Fahri struggles to mediate between his two wives, without wanting to favour either one over the other. Finally, Aisha leaves the household frustrated, but returns when Maria is on her deathbed. Heryanto suggests that the presentation of polygamy is actually more ambiguous than many assumed, and indeed the film privileges monogamous marriage as Maria's death allows Fahri and Aisha to continue as husband and wife.

Director Hanung Bramantyo stayed away from the debate over polygamy, preferring to remain mum on the issue.<sup>13</sup> Author El Shirazy was however less than pleased with the way in which Bramantyo had presented their polygamous marriage as polemic. Nevertheless, El Shirazy argued that polygamy in *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* is a humanistic way of solving problems and is sanctioned by the Koran. This is a common argument that uses scripture as the justification for polygamy, rather than the social experience of it. Women's rights advocate and film director Nia Dinata took an activist approach in her film *Berbagi Suami* (2008, 'Love for Share'), where polygamy is 'softly' critiqued for being a manifestation of patriarchy by showing "how the main women characters negotiate their polygamous relationships" (Kurnia, 2009: 6). The male characters are loathsome, and only the second story offers an escape, when two wives runaway together as

---

<sup>12</sup> Heryanto, Ariel, 'Becoming Religiously Hip: Middle Class Muslims in Indonesian Pop Culture' Presentation at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, 1 November 2010.

<sup>13</sup> In his blog entries about *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, Bramantyo makes no mention of polygamy. However, in the public comments section, the issue of polygamy is one of the main topics of discussion. See for example 'AAC Bajakan!!!' 24/02/2008, <http://hanungbramantyo.multiply.com/journal/item/12>, accessed 17/11/2010.

lovers. According to Kurnia (2009: 54), *Berbagi Suami* shows that “polygamy causes trouble for all involved, but an end to these troubles will come only from shared efforts by men and women to eliminate the practice.”

As Eric Sasono (2008a) notes, *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* is not concerned with the social dimensions of Islam unlike *Berbagi Suami*, because Islam is presented as confident and morally superior. This is encapsulated in the convert narrative (*muallaf*) of Maria, the Coptic Christian, who desires Islam throughout the film. She is the ‘other’ character of the story, through whom the character of Fahri is compared and differentiated. Since Fahri is a ‘passive’ character (Sasono, 2008a) whose actions are rarely of his own volition, Maria’s desire is the means by which Fahri is legitimized as a man and as a Muslim. Thus throughout the film Maria is presented as trying Islam, by wearing a red headscarf, and learning verses of the Koran which she then proudly recites to an amazed Fahri (Paramaditha, 2010). Her death occurs in the rapture of praying ‘in the Muslim way’ under Fahri’s tutelage, and it signals her conversion to Islam. In the final scene of the film her spirit says to Fahri ‘Praise Allah you have found your soulmate, Fahri’.<sup>14</sup> Not only is her conversion complete, her death allows Fahri and Aisha to continue their true love.

This ending plays an important function in the way *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* performs Islam (Paramaditha, 2010). Once Maria has fulfilled her function in the story, she no longer serves any purpose, since Fahri and Aisha are soulmates. This reflects the ambiguous position of the *muallaf* in Islam, as both encouraged but not fully accepted. This is commonly experienced by Chinese Indonesians who convert to Islam (Hew, 2010) because their Chinese ethnicity precludes them for

---

<sup>14</sup> The original dialogue in Indonesian is: “Insyah Allah kamu sudah mendapatkan jodoh kamu, Fahri.”

being accepted as authentic Muslims and doubts are always raised about their commitment to the faith. This *muallaf* narrative prompted questions about the ability of Islam to tolerate other faiths, and especially whether the opposite conversion would be allowed to pass (a Muslim converting to Christianity example. See Paramaditha, 2010). Nevertheless, this is an indication of the triumphant and superior Islam that *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* presented.

Others were however not impressed with *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, and were rather blasé about the publicity it received and the way in which it became the bastion for Islamic posturing. Anthropologist Teuku Kemal Fasya (2008) dismisses claims that the film represents something new in terms of Islam and pop culture. He says the film “is not a story about Islam and Egypt, but only a two-bit love story, for teenagers who cling to these high school romances.”<sup>15</sup> Most filmmakers I spoke to struggled to explain its success, often resorting to the reasoning that because most Indonesians are Muslims, an Islamic film would surely sell. Senior producer Hatoek Subroto postulated that:

The current market before *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* was released, the mainstream market was horror, horror films and sex comedies. They sold well. But after the success of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* and *Laskar Pelangi* it seems that films with good stories without horror or sex can sell. Maybe audiences are bored with horror, with sex comedies too.<sup>16</sup>

All this prompts comparison with the 1987 film *Catatan Si Boy* (‘Boy’s Notes’), which similarly and successfully combined Islam and pop culture. Director

---

<sup>15</sup> “Film ini bukan kisah tentang Islam dan Mesir, tetapi hanya cerita cinta picisan, untuk remaja tanggung yang bergelayut dengan romantika SMA.” Teuku Kemal Fasya ‘Ayat-ayat Pop (Cinta)’ *Media Indonesia*, 17 April 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Hatoek Subroto, personal interview, 10 December 2008. “Pasar sekarang sebelum *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* beredar itu market pasar mainstream kan horor, film horor dan filem itu komedi seks. Itu yang laku. Tapi setelah *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* dan *Laskar Pelangi* sukses ternyata filem yang bagus pun ceritanya bukan horror bukan ada seks juga laku. Memang mungkin penonton sudah bosan ya kalau horor, komedie seks juga begitu.”

Bramantyo acknowledged that Fahri is ‘*sangat si Boy sekali*’ (‘very much like Boy’),<sup>17</sup> noting that the only difference is that Fahri is not rich like Boy.

Boy is a suave university student, handsome and popular who also remembers to pray (*sholat*) and avoids the lustful advances of young women. He is in many senses the ‘perfect’ man. Made at the height of the New Order, and produced by Sudwikatmono, the film offers what David Hanan calls the “teenage ego ideal consonant with the values of Suharto’s New Order” (2008a: 55). *Catatan Si Boy* “sells the dream of wealth combined with goodness and handsomeness”,<sup>18</sup> just as *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* does, argues Sasono (2009). This should not negate the fact that *Catatan Si Boy* showed that one could be both modern and Islamic at the same time, and the two need not be in contradiction. Based on a popular radio show on Prambors, a youth radio station in Jakarta, the film was also a hit with audiences, with many copying Boy’s style of hanging prayer beads from the rear-view mirror in his car. Fahri is remarkably like Boy, from the sunglasses he wears (Ray-Ban Aviators), to the fact that they are both the object of affection for multiple women.

In agreeing with Hanan’s interpretation, Sasono (2008a) points out the important difference between Boy and Fahri. Boy is embedded in Indonesia, and operates in the social context of Indonesia even if it is the world of the rich and mobile. His cultural orientation is towards the West, and at the end of the first film, departs for the US to continue his studies. Fahri by contrast, is removed from the social problems of Indonesia as a character placed in the ‘sanctuary’ of Egypt. It means, argues Sasono (2009), that problems of faith and its application to the

---

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Hanung Bramantyo. ‘Hanung Bramantyo: “Agama Hanyalah Medium”’ *Jaringan Islam Liberal*, 1 November 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Original reads: “mimpi yang dijual adalah kekayaan yang bergabung dengan kebaikan dan ketampanan” (Sasono, 2009).

world are dealt with esoterically as problems of scripture, rather than as practical problems that challenge Fahri or his attitudes - meaning that Fahri's dilemmas are the product of his personal crises to do with love, rather than products of social conditions. This, Sasono believes, squarely embeds *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* in the realm of middle class fantasy and their social conformity, in which Islam is presented as a form of safe escapism (2009). Essentially then, *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* reveals the aspirations of the new Muslim middle class in Indonesia, which Sasono summarizes as the 'channeling of love and academic degrees' (2009).<sup>19</sup>

Consequently Sasono, like Veronika Kusuma (2008), reads *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* as part of the commodification of Islam. In the past decade there has been the growth of "an emerging market for [...] Islamic values" (Kusuma, 2008), including celebrity tele-preachers such as Aa Gym (Hoesterey, 2008), books, music, and fashion, especially *jilbab gaul* (fashionable headscarves) for women. Observers note that this Islamic marketplace correlates with economic development and the emergence of a Muslim middle class and their desire for religious expression (Fealy, 2008). "Islam appears to be no longer simply a set of rituals, beliefs and doctrines, but it is also a symbolic commodity relevant to social class demands for lifestyle, modesty and enjoyment" (Hasan, 2009). Sasono therefore reads the 'conformity' and the inability of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* to articulate a strong vision for Islam as evidence that in contemporary pop culture the market dominates. Such commodification of Islam remains contentious, especially amongst those who think that Islam should not be reduced to a commodity for consumption (Imanjaya, 2009b; Sasono, 2010). Kusuma (2008) thus suggests there is now a "battle between market forces and Islamic messages."

---

<sup>19</sup> 'penyaluran hasrat cinta dan gelar kesarjanaan.' (Sasono, 2009).

Neither reason can explain why *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* captured the imagination of a nation, and generated so much interest and controversy. Eric Sasono, who has developed the most sophisticated analysis of the film, points out how ‘fragile and uncertain’ Fahri is as a central character,<sup>20</sup> suggesting that he is, in essence, an inadequate hero. Contextualizing *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* therefore requires an excursion back into the history of Islam and Islamic films in Indonesia.

### 6.3 History of Islam and Film

As both Kusuma (2008) and Sasono (2008) note, there is a long history of Islamic themed films in Indonesia. Typically Islamic films have taken the form of *dakwah*, or proselytization, whereby they rigidly preach to their audience about the correct interpretation of Islam, its virtues and why they should be better Muslims. This idea goes back to Usmar Ismail, who in a 1965 essay titled ‘Film Sebagai Dakwah’ (Film as Dakwah), encouraged filmmakers “to make films a media of [national] struggle and a media of Islamic proselytizing” (1983: 100).<sup>21</sup> These must not be simply ‘religious’ films (*keagamaan*), like *The Ten Commandments* (1956) made with commercial intent, but must affirm man as subject to Allah. The point, says Ismail, is to make films that are not just “art for arts sake” or “social realism ala Stalin” (1983: 100-101). These ideas were not only appropriate to the Indonesia of 1965 as a statement of artistic principles contra social realism, but also embodied the ideas of the period that film should be a medium of education and propaganda and in fact had the responsibility to do so.

---

<sup>20</sup> ‘rapuh dan bimbang’ (Sasono, 2008c).

<sup>21</sup> Original reads: “untuk menjadikan film media perjuangan dan media dakwah Islamiah.”

Friend and fellow filmmaker Asrul Sani disagreed with the idea that film should be a medium of *dakwah*. In 1959 he made possibly the first ‘Islamic’ film in Indonesia entitled *Titian Serambut Dibelah Tujuh* (‘A Bridge Made of Hair Sliced Into Seven’) about a young religious teacher who brings a modern conception of Islam to a conservative town. Islam as a monolithic entity is problematised in the conflict between modernization and conservatism. In a 2000 interview,<sup>22</sup> Sani reflected on the history of Islamic films in Indonesia, arguing that *dakwah* films are wrong in their approach. By focusing too much on the formal aspects of Islam, he says, “our films have been trying to replace the role of *kiai*.” This he argues is a reflection of Islam in Indonesia which is focused on rituals, rather than religiosity, and is reflected in the role of the priests (*kiai*) as interpreters of scripture. He avoids using the term ‘Islamic film’, advocating instead for a definition that “all films that try to go beyond the surface of life are religious films.” Despite being an important intellectual and figure in the film industry, Sani was only involved in two other Islamic films, both with director Chaerul Umam and both about school teachers.<sup>23</sup>

The trajectory of Islam in film during the New Order was subject to the regime’s desire to control and delimit Islam. When the film industry was revitalized with an open import policy, thus allowing in all sorts of ‘immoral’ content, Muslim groups felt betrayed that the regime they had helped gain power was now turning their back on them (Raillon, 1993: 202). Islam was of course a threat to the regime, as potent as communism (Anwar, 2009: 355), and the New Order directed much of its efforts in its first two decades in suppressing and depoliticizing Islam and Islamic organizations. Muslim groups were forced to give

---

<sup>22</sup> ‘Asrul Sani: Films Can Never Replace the Function of ‘Kiais’,’ *Tempo*, 12 November 2000.

<sup>23</sup> *Al Kautsar* (1977) and a 1982 remake of *Titian Serambut Dibelah Tujuh*.

up their political aspirations and the two largest Islamic mass organizations - Muhammadiyah and Nahdatul Ulama (NU) - concentrated on social work including welfare, hospitals and education. Muslim political parties were amalgamated in 1973 into the United Development Party (PPP, Partai Persatuan Pembangunan) a homogenized and thus ineffective 'Muslim' party.

The Islamic films that first come to mind from the New Order era would probably be the films that starred popular *dangdut* singer Rhoma Irama (b. 1947). Irama rose to fame in the early 1970s, known initially as Oma Irama, becoming Rhoma Irama after he made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1976.<sup>24</sup> Rhoma Irama was not only instrumental in modernizing traditional popular music into the more rock-orientated *dangdut* (Frederick, 1982: 105), but also used his music, and later films,<sup>25</sup> to proselytize to his audiences. Mostly these were lessons warning listeners about the vices of alcohol or lust, and encouraging people to turn to Islam. In his films, he often played himself – Rhoma Irama – a righteous rock-singer folk hero who was capable of standing up to corruption, carnal desire and other moral evils. Islam in his films was enacted as a guiding principle for action and never figured as the main concern of the story (Frederick, 1982). Often the women, as in *Bunga Desa* (1988, 'Village Beauty'), were either to be rescued (the prostitute) or embodied rural virginity (Sumi, the village beauty). Characters like Sumi would wear the *kerudung*, a traditional headscarf, rather than the *jilbab* common today.

Rhoma Irama was a popular hero of the lower classes, just as *dangdut* is lower class music. He was also the one of the first to combine Islam and pop

---

<sup>24</sup> 'R' was to indicate his aristocratic lineage (*raden*) and 'H' is an honorific for men who have completed the *hajj*.

<sup>25</sup> His acting career extended from 1976's *Oma Irama Penasaran* ('Oma Irama is Intrigued'), *Darah Muda* (1977, 'Young Blood') to *Tabir Biru* ('Blue Curtain') in 1993.

culture, although his commercialization of *dakwah* was not without its critics. His 1980 film, *Perjuangan dan Doa* ('Struggle and Prayer') engages with this debate, and has Irama's character delivering a defense of his pop Islam methods, arguing that the two were perfectly compatible. Frederick (1982) notes though that Irama was not alone in his use of pop culture for *dakwah*, especially as the political climate of the New Order did not allow Islam any political representation. Islamic literature had appeared in Indonesia in the 1920s (Laffan, 2003), but Irama's lead in proselytizing in the new popular media of music and film meant that Islam in New Order Indonesia had diversified beyond its limited roles and forms in pre-New Order Indonesia, and adapted to the political conditions of the period.

At the same time as Irama was rising to national stardom, key Muslim intellectuals such as Nurcholish Madjid developed the 'cultural Islam' argument as a means to re-orientate Islamic activity. They argued that pursuing politics was fruitless, and that Indonesian Muslims should build new connections with the people in culture (Hefner, 1993: 5). By reviving Islamic values, Madjid argued, Islam in Indonesia could escape the dilemma of politics given the New Order's deep suspicion of political Islam. Whilst this was seen as a capitulation to the New Order, or even worse, promoting secularism, these ideas encouraged a revival of Islam at the social level. Moreover, it allowed for the "manipulation of the political system from within" (Hefner, 1993: 8).<sup>26</sup> It coincided with a younger generation of mostly middle class Muslims on university campuses who were inspired and organized by the "rediscovery of religious commitment" (Watson, 2000: 216).

---

<sup>26</sup> Their ideas would inform such figures as Abdurrahman Wahid, head of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) from 1984, and later President from 1999 to 2001.

By the 1980s, a new genre of grandiose *dakwah* films appeared that used history, Islamic heroism and Islam-inspired social action to construct narratives about the arrival of Islam and the process of Islamization. They were aimed at popular audiences with martial arts sequences,<sup>27</sup> reminiscent of Hong Kong films, interspaced with sermons and speeches about the virtues of Islam. These included *Sembilan Wali* (1985, 'Nine Prophets'), set in the time of the Majapahit Empire (1293- c.1500), and based on the story of the nine prophets who spread Islam in what is modern day Indonesia. The prophets are presented as warriors of supernatural ability (*sakti*) who fight 'red scarved' bandits, an allusion to the followers of Siti Djenar, an esoteric contemporary of the *wali* who is censured in conventional history.<sup>28</sup> Red could, of course, also be read as the colour of communism. These *dakwah* films thus presented a very conventional and mainstream interpretation of Islamic history, which included promoting modernization and discrediting traditional beliefs (Sasono, 2010).

These *dakwah* films of the 1980s coincided with an increase in ideological and physical restraint of Islam by the New Order state entering its peak period of hegemony. Pancasila was confirmed as the official state ideology, and all organizations were required to adopt it as their sole ideological basis. This move angered Muslims who saw it as a move to put a man-made ideology before God. Frustrations were growing at the urban *kampung* level for poorer, marginalized Muslims, which erupted in Tanjung Priok in 1984, the poor Muslim port area of North Jakarta. A Catholic security officer had desecrated a local mosque and in

---

<sup>27</sup> Similar in this regard were the popular *Jaka Sembung* films, of which five or six films were made. Jaka Sembung is a folk hero of extraordinary fighting skill which he used to resist the Dutch colonizers and defend the people. He was identified as a Muslim because he sported an 'Allah' amulet and often led his people in prayer before the final showdown, but Islam was more incidental to his character.

<sup>28</sup> Siti Djenar was executed for his heretical beliefs.

the ensuing melee, the military opened fire and killed a dozen protestors, and many others were arrested for subversion (Burns, 1989).

For all the state's effort in trying to restrain the rise of Islam and resorting to violence as in the case of Tanjung Priok, Islam continued to grow as a powerful social force with a surprising result. "Once Islam was no longer associated with any single party, and once politicians recognized that the nation was experiencing an Islamic resurgence, all of the political parties began to advertise their commitment to Islam" (Hefner, 1993: 11).

By the mid 1980s, President Soeharto started losing support amongst his military powerbase (Hefner, 1993: 24). In response, Soeharto did what many thought was unlikely from a Javanist President who had been so anti-Islam, and began to court Muslims (George, 1998). This culminated in Soeharto going on the *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca) in 1990 (see Figure 5. below), and sanctioning the formation of the Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Se-Indonesia (ICMI, 'Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals'). ICMI was headed by Soeharto loyalist (and future president) BJ Habibie, and encapsulated many of the divergent forces present in Indonesian Islam at the time, including those who saw ICMI as a government ploy and others who saw it as useful to the expansion of Islamic politics (Hefner, 1993: 19-21). Its formation was linked to the growing importance of Islam in social and cultural life, and in particular aimed at the growing middle class whose allegiance the regime saw as essential to its continued legitimacy (Liddle, 1996; Machmudi, 2008: 68).



**Figure 5. Promotional Poster for 'Oh Allah! I Have Come'**  
 Featuring President Soeharto and his wife Tien as the lead characters in the film about their 1991 trip to Mecca. The film was never made. Source: Bintang (1991: 16).

The growing importance of Islam, and its ability to criticize the regime, was evident in two films that Eros Djarot was involved in at the end of the 1980s. *Tjut Nyak Dhien* (1988), directed by Djarot, won numerous awards at the FFI and was hailed as an exemplary film for the way it encapsulated a proto-nationalist resistance to the Dutch in Aceh at the turn of the century. Of particular note is the fact that the resistance leader Tjut Nyak Dhien, played by Christine Hakim, is a

devout Muslim who uses Islam as the ethical underpinning of her struggle.<sup>29</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Two, the boy-child Agam evokes GAM, the Free Aceh Movement. Shortly after *Tjut Nyak Dhien*, Eros Djarot was involved in *Kantata Takwa* (2008, ‘Devotional Cantata’),<sup>30</sup> a protest film against the New Order featuring members of the rock group Kantata Takwa (Iwan Fals, Setiawan Djody), poet WS Rendra and artist Sawung Jabo. The film expresses their opposition to the regime, shown in scenes of a massive rock concert in Senayan Stadium in Jakarta in 1990 and in theatrical representations of the state’s repression of free speech and creativity (van Heeren, 2010). Here, as Eric Sasono (2008b) explains, Islam becomes the spiritual guidance for behaviour and is used as “opposition to authority”. Islam is deployed as the only non-bankrupt ideology available to sustain and inform a project of resistance to the regime. In the closing scene, a sea of women wearing white *jilbab* has amassed on the beach and represents the purity and power of Islam as a force deployed for good.

The last Islamic film to be made under the New Order was a state-sponsored project that returned to the *dakwah* trope used in the 1980s. Using money from taxes collected on cinema admissions in Jakarta, a US\$2 million epic, *Fatahillah* (1997), was made to commemorate the 450th anniversary of Jakarta’s founding. Jakarta mayor Surjadi Soedirdja, who is listed as a producer, hoped that “together we can combine our strengths to support the national film industry whose current condition is worrying. Hopefully after *Fatahillah*, many producers

---

<sup>29</sup> Yet the film subtly insinuates that the story of Tjut Nyak Dhien had a lot in common with the contemporary struggle for independence in Aceh by GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka), the Free Aceh Movement. At the end of the film, as Tjut Nyak Dhien is captured by the Dutch, she blesses the boy child Agam before he flees into the jungle to evade capture. As is common practice in Indonesia, when she speaks to him she calls him Gam, an obvious allusion to GAM.

<sup>30</sup> Although filming was conducted in 1990 with plans for release in the early 1990s, the film was not finished and released until 2008 due to technical reasons. See Van Heeren (2010).

will make good films.”<sup>31</sup> It was not only a response to the increase in eroticism in local productions, but to the waning support for the regime, which the producers simplistically thought could be reversed by a *dakwah* film. Despite a massive mobilization of civil servants to see the film, as it was released in over 100 Jakarta cinemas simultaneously, the film flopped and has virtually disappeared from memory. One observer in Yogyakarta noted however that the film did bring a new audience to the cinema, notably families and students of *pesantren* (Fauzannafi, 2003). Within a year, the New Order had come to an end and a period of *reformasi* had begun.

#### 6.4 Two Post-1998 Islamic Films

Free from the prerogatives of the New Order, the production of Islamic films fell to individual producers and directors hoping to make commercially successful films. The first Islamic film to be made after 1998 was *Kiamat Sudah Dekat* (2002, ‘The End is Nigh’) by senior Islamic director and actor Deddy Mizwar (b. 1955). After working in *sinetron* for much of the 1990s, Mizwar made a film that stayed close to the narrative conventions of television and offered a light-hearted, simplistic love story. Mizwar plays a Haji (a man who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca) whose veiled daughter attracts the attention of rebellious biker and lapsed Muslim Fandy. When Fandy approaches the father, he is told that he has to marry the daughter if he wants to see her. To marry her he has to prove his Muslim credentials. Farid, a graduate of Al-Zahar University in

---

<sup>31</sup> “Kita bersama-sama menghimpun kekuatan untuk mendukung perfilman nasional yang saat ini memprihatinkan. Semoga setelah film *Fatahillah* akan banyak produser yang akan membuat film-film yang baik” ‘Film Fatahillah Dibuat Dengan Dana Rp 2,5 Miliar’ *Suara Pembaruan*, 17 November 1996.

Cairo and friend of the family, has already proposed to marry his daughter and Fandy will have to prove himself better than him. Fandy thus embarks on a process of learning how to be a Muslim, including the proper way of praying, reciting the Koran and dressing in Islamic attire. When the father comes to choose, he selects Fandy over Farid because he was truly sincere (*ikhlas*) in his efforts to be a better Muslim.

What *Kiamat Sudah Dekat* proposes is that Islam is just a matter of being more or less able to participate in the rituals and practices of Islam. Fandy represents a secular individual who must learn how to be Muslim again, and thus please the elder Pak Haji. Whilst the prospect of Fandy marrying his daughter is *kiamat* (a disaster), the father nevertheless chooses him over the more educated and upright Farid. In the closing marriage scene, we see Fandy partying with his biker friends, suggesting that in fact his becoming Muslim was more a charade than a sincere commitment to the religion, done simply to marry the pretty daughter, or that in fact his efforts were driven by lust, not sincerity. Not that it seems to matter; *Kiamat Sudah Dekat* is forgiving and meant to be a lighthearted comedy about the interface between the secular and the religious, a common theme in comedies.<sup>32</sup>

Just before *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* was released, Starvision released their film *Mengaku Rasul* (2008, English Title ‘The False Prophet’) as a commentary on the Ahamadiyah sect, a ‘deviant’ branch of Islam with its origins in late 19th Century India. Although Ahamadiyah had long caused disconcertion to more orthodox Islamic groups, in post-New Order Indonesia they were increasingly vilified and attacked by more fundamentalist groups, especially the hardline FPI (Front

---

<sup>32</sup> A similar meeting occurs in *Selendang Roker* (2009, ‘Shawl Roker’), when a secular rock group have to work together with an Islamic music group. The comedy is generated through the absurdity of the two groups getting to know and appreciate one another.

Pembela Islam, 'Islamic Defenders Front'). With the status of Ahamadiyah forced onto the political agenda, the Minister for Religion declared the sect illegal, effectively legitimizing the violence against them (Barker, 2008).<sup>33</sup> Although *Mengaku Rasul* does not explicitly name Ahamadiyah, its dramatization of the evils of a deviant preacher who takes over a *pesantren* had obvious parallels. Within this climate of animosity towards Ahamadiyah the film failed to garner a significant audience (at most 200,000) which producer Servia attributed to audience fear for being associated with the 'Ahamadiyah movie'.<sup>34</sup> He had thought to capitalize on a prominent issue, but misinterpreted how pop culture and Islam interact in contemporary Indonesia.

The *rasul* in the film is Kyai Samir, who takes over a *pesantren* in Java, deposing his more benevolent father and turning it into a cult of personality. Although the story centres on the city boy, Ajie, as he attempts to rescue his former girlfriend Rianti from the 'evil' *kyai*, it is the story of the *kyai* himself that is most revealing. The *kyai* teaches his followers that he is a prophet, and proves to them his divine nature by having his hand cut off in front of an amassed crowd, only to emerge moments later from his house, hand reattached. This 'miracle' causes people from the surrounding villages to become his disciples, fitting with his megalomaniacal plans. His plans are thwarted and normalcy is restored when an angry mob, from nearby villages, attack and set fire to the deviant mosque and its congregation.<sup>35</sup> The plot twist at the end reveals that the evil *kyai* Samir had a twin brother who he had used as the fall-guy to stage the miracle. The film thus

---

<sup>33</sup> Under Indonesia's system of limited religious pluralism only five religions are allowed (Islam, Protestantism, Hinduism, Catholicism, Buddhism). In 2000 President Abdurrachman Wahid lifted the 1965 ban on Confucianism, adding a sixth official religion.

<sup>34</sup> Chand Parwez Servia, personal interview, 17 July 2008.

<sup>35</sup> The evil *kyai* had also impregnated one of the village girls, and seduced Rianti into marrying him.

portrays the deviant sect as fundamentally driven by evil, and condones the use of mob violence and murder as a means of restoring the ‘true’ interpretation of Islam.

If we take these two films as representative of unsuccessful post-1998 Islamic films, of which there were a few more (see also Sasono, 2010), Islam is represented as a worldly religion. Fandy’s ‘conversion’ to Islam is not an intense experience, but rather one in which he adopts the formal aspects of being a Muslim, and being *ikhlas* was about his individual performance and not his religiosity. *Mengaku Rasul* is doctrinal in its approach, and portrays a deviant sect in order to promote a normative interpretation of the religion. Whilst this may reflect how a majority of Indonesian Muslims actually practice their faith, they are also the least likely to watch Islamic films that simply mirror their own life. Both films in essence portray a normative and secular Islam in contemporary life. *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* and *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* offered something quite different in terms of their mobilization of religiosity.

### **6.5 *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* and Tarbiyah**

If we return therefore to *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, immediately a new dimension becomes visible. *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* does not talk about Islam in Indonesia, but about Islam as a matter of personal faith and piety, linked to fantasy through the theme of love. This is the profound shift that has occurred in how the film presents and operationalises its Islam. It sets it apart from other Islamic films made during the New Order, and those considered in the previous section, by shifting the emphasis to the individual and how he or she can be a better Muslim in their everyday life. Never before have love and Islam come together so

effortlessly and been made to seem compatible such that love was a necessary precondition for being Islamic. This represents more than just the ideals or values of a new Muslim middle class, but is reflective of a revivalism within Indonesian Islam itself.

These themes in *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* come out even more strongly in *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* (2009, hereafter ‘KCB’), a two-part film based on another novel by El Shirazy. The fact that *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* was something of a fortuitous accident for its makers and producers also meant that it was not Islamic enough. It quickly became known that the film was not shot in Egypt but in India and Surabaya for reasons of cost, raising criticisms of the film’s authenticity and its commercial imperative.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the actor who played Fahri (Fedi Nuril) had kissed a girl in a previous film. In order to authenticate KCB’s Muslimness, the filmmakers made sure that the film was as *halal* as possible.<sup>37</sup> Both Imam Tantowi and Chaerul Umam are well-known Islamic filmmakers, and Umam agreed with El Shirazy who:

stipulated that the behaviour of the crew must be pious outside and inside the film. Not just pious in the film. I support his wishes.<sup>38</sup>

This was of course similar to how Umam and Tantowi had constructed *Fatahillah* a decade earlier, although now such practices resonated with a receptive audience through a more appropriate genre. In 1997 when *Fatahillah* was released, film was in decline and the filmmakers ambitiously hoped that it would not only proselytize Islam but also reinvigorate local film production. With *Ketika Cinta*

---

<sup>36</sup> The publicity material for *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* proudly displayed a ‘100% Jamin Mesir Asli’ (‘Guaranteed to be 100% Egypt’) logo.

<sup>37</sup> Although the producer behind the film, Leo Sutanto of Sinemart, is Chinese, he stayed out of the spotlight and allowed Heru Hendrianto to be the face of Sinemart.

<sup>38</sup> “Kang Abik memberikan syarat, karakter orangnya harus saleh di luar dan dalam film. Bukan hanya saleh di dalam film saja. Saya mendukung keinginan itu.” Chaerul Uman quoted in Haryadi (2008: 60).

*Bertasbih*, these practices were married to a film aimed at a young audience, stripped of the prosaic proselytizing evident in *Fatahillah*. What happened with *KCB* was that such desires to Islamicize the production process found confluence with a society ready for its message. In turn, all the actors and crew members maintained a pious façade, especially the women who all wore the *jilbab*, in keeping with contemporary standards of respectable Muslim dress.

At the same time, *KCB* took Islam further into the spectacle of pop culture by integrating the film into a television casting show to find the two lead actors. Hopefuls for the position had to participate in a televised casting competition, similar to shows such as *American Idol*. In addition to proving their acting skills to the judges, the participants had to undergo education to show that they could recite the Koran, had the right spirit, and had entrepreneurship skills like Azzam the lead character.<sup>39</sup> The process thus highlighted the Muslim credentials of the contestants, and assessed them accordingly. By using the casting contest format, *KCB* showed how integrated and compatible Islamic norms were with global pop culture formats.

The film itself offers a story not dissimilar to *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*. Azzam is a hardworking student at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, selling *tempe* (fermented soya bean curd) on the side to support himself and his family back home in Indonesia. His devotion and simplicity attracts Eliana, a *sinetron* actress and Westernized daughter of the Indonesian ambassador. Azzam however, is more interested in Anna, a similarly devoted Muslim girl, but she is engaged to marry the decadent Furqon. The film explores the conflicts and misunderstandings that the situation engenders. Finally graduating, Azzam returns to Indonesia with

---

<sup>39</sup> 'M. Cholidi Asadil Alam: Punya Kemiripan Kisah Hidup dengan Khairul Azzam', *Nyata*, 23 September 2008.

Eliana where they are swamped by the news media. Azzam returns to his village, overjoyed to see his mother and younger sister. Anna who had married Furqon, divorces him, and is able then to marry Azzam. Anna is an accomplished author and the daughter of a local *kyai*, and by marrying Anna Azzam becomes a *kyai*.

More than *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, Sasono (2009) sees *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* as articulating a set of aspirations for the Muslim middle class in Indonesia. Azzam is introduced as a poor but righteous student who by the end of the film has achieved upward mobility and social prestige. The Egyptian setting is emphasized with extensive location shots, foregrounding even further the ‘authentic Muslim experience’. Egypt and Indonesia are historically linked via the *Ruwaq Jawi* (Javanese Lodge) community of students who have studied at Al-Azhar University since the mid-nineteenth century (Laffan, 2003). Piety, which includes devotion to Allah, family and Islamic morality, is also enacted through Azzam’s entrepreneurship. To enclose this piety, homogamy is realized between Azzam and Anna, and conversely Furqon and Eliana who marry each other in the end, both reformed of their earlier secularism.

The origins of this middle-class piety lie in the underground *Jemaah Tarbiyah* (‘Educational Movement’) movement that developed during the New Order (Machmudi, 2008). The progenitors of this new piety movement had been sent by the remnants of the Masyumi Party to attend Al-Azhar University in Egypt in the early 1970s,<sup>40</sup> where they came into contact with the teachings of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwanul Muslimun*) and Hasan Al Banna in particular. Returning to Indonesia, and unable to direct their opposition to the Soeharto regime through political activity, the Tarbiyah scholars went to university

---

<sup>40</sup> Masyumi was an Islamic party active in the 1950s and 1960s, banned by Soekarno in 1960. Like other Islamic parties at the time, Masyumi was stifled by the New Order.

campuses, first in Bandung as the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII, ‘Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council’), and established courses and reading circles targeting *abangan* students (Galigo, 2000: 200).<sup>41</sup> As the programmes expanded to other campuses, the movement gained in power such that their activists held positions in student unions and in many places their courses were compulsory for all Muslim students. Their teachings proposed a cultural revolution by eschewing traditional and established forms of religious authority, and focused on developing the individual as a better Muslim, and by returning to the original texts of Islam (neo-Salafism).

Islam’s revival in Indonesia, based around the individual and piety, connects developments in Indonesia with a revival in Islam globally. Roy (2004) designates this as the search for a global *ummah* (Islamic community). Neo-Salafism, first propagated by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1930s, became the ideological platform through which a revivalist Islam was imagined and propagated. Neo-Salafism, as the name suggests, is a return to a ‘pure Islam’, devoid of its cultural and social baggage accumulated in Islam’s history of adaptation to local cultures and conditions. In Indonesia, Islam is syncretic in form, mixing with Javanism, Hinduism and Buddhism (Geertz, 1960), even amongst the more orthodox Muhammadiyah followers (Machmudi, 2008: 57-58). Where Islam was once embedded in particular societies and their cultures, neo-Salafism is orientated towards a global *ummah*, and is thus deterritorialised. For neo-Salafism globalization and pop culture are not a problem, but on the contrary, are essential to how their ideas can be propagated.

---

<sup>41</sup> *Abangan* refers to the followers of Indonesian Islam who are more nominal and syncretic in their beliefs. See Geertz (1960).

The presence of the *Tarbiyah* movement has come to public prominence in the past decade following the end of the New Order, although they have been integral to the revival of Islam over the past two decades. Notably, Tarbiyah members were involved in ICMI, but they are perhaps best known through the political party PKS (Prosperous Justice Party, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera). In 2004, the party received just over seven percent of the popular vote and went into coalition with the ruling Democratic Party. The current Minister of Technology Tifatul Sembiring, Minister for Youth and Sport Adhyaksa Dault, and Minister for Agriculture Anton Apriyantono are all from the PKS. Their entry into politics has been characterized by what Machmudi (2008) calls ‘purification and accommodation’, that in trying to bring their reformist principles to politics, they have also invariably had to negotiate and suppress some of their ambitions, notably in pushing for *syariah* law. Ultimately, their aim is to re-Islamicize Indonesian society but in becoming a formal political party in 1998, they have encountered the diverse reality of Indonesian Islam.

Rinaldo’s (2008) work on the female members of PKS provides an insight into how Indonesian Islam shifts away from ritual and dogma to personal piety. Using Bourdieu’s theories of social class, she argues that in the form of Islam practiced by PKS women, Islamic identity takes on the form of a consumption object, such that “particular pious practices among Indonesian Muslims are producing a new kind of middle class habitus that distinguishes women by class and approach to religion” (2008: 29). Rinaldo sees that this form of piety also enables the women to participate in the modern consumer economy such that they are “simultaneously producing modern selves” (2008: 38). Consumption which is typically associated with Westernization and therefore to be avoided, is

Islamicized and made entirely compatible with Islamic values. This then helps to account for the growth in the Islamic economy over the past decade (van Heeren, 2007).

Whilst most attention has focused on the political aspirations and fortunes of the *Tarbiyah* movement via their political party the PKS, it is in the cultural sphere that their ideas have found significant traction. Writers like El Shirazy are influenced by *tarbiyah* and incorporate their teachings into their work. He is also a member of the *Forum Lingkar Pena* (FLP, ‘Writing Circle Forum’), a writers’ network founded by “*tarbiyah da’wa* activists” sisters Asma Nadia (b. 1972) and Helvy Tiana Rosa (b. 1970) in 1991, with the aim of creating morally responsible, and thus Islamic, literature (Permata and Kailani, 2010: 84). Rosa, like El Shirazy, attempts to reengage with a young readership through her writing, offering “a ready-to-use manual drawing on Qur’an-based codes of conduct for everyday life” (Widodo, 2008). How El Shirazy articulates his position in a recent interview is thus insightful:

I don’t categorize this novel [*Ayat-Ayat Cinta*] as Islamic literature. I only categorize this novel as a novel of spiritual development. But, readers continually categorize it as Islamic literature. [...] I don’t see Islamic literature as having to feature a setting in the mosque, Mecca or Madinah. This is a viewpoint that needs to be debated.<sup>42</sup>

Whilst El Shirazy is denying the category of ‘Islamic literature’ by calling his work ‘spiritual development’, he shows how the emphasis is on the individual and how to be a better, more pious, Muslim. To suggest that there is such a thing as

---

<sup>42</sup> “Saya tak meletakkan novel itu sebagai sastra Islami. Saya hanya letakkan novel itu sebagai novel pembangun jiwa. Tapi, khalayak ramai kemudiannya meletakkan karya itu sebagai sastra Islam. [...] Saya tidak melihat Sastra Islam itu mestilah ciri-cirinya berlatarbelakangkan masjid, Makkah dan Madinah. Ini satu tanggapan yang mesti dibetulkan” El Shirazy quoted in Ali Bukhari Amir, ‘Habiburrahman El-Shirazy: AAC, penyebab dakwahnya lebih meluas’ *Harakah Daily*, 21 November 2008.

Islamic literature would be to acknowledge that there is an outside to Islam, an idea that is antithetical to his beliefs as a revivalist Muslim.

El Shirazy is himself a part of this realignment of Islam in Indonesia to more middle-class concerns, which is not only comfortable with pop culture but sees pop culture as a means by which *dakwah* can occur. Works such as *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* and *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* articulate and operationalize these new Muslim identities, have abandoned its commitment to social change, and instead focus on the individualization of faith and the realization of self through piety. They show the shift from ‘religion to religiosity’ amongst young middle class Muslims - that is, Islam moves from formal displays of religious observance to personal faith. *Tarbiyah* is important because it structures the way in which Islam has been rearticulated and re-imagined in contemporary Indonesia for many young people, especially for the middle class who are avid consumers of pop culture.

## **6.6 Expanding Islam: Hanung Bramantyo and *Laskar Pelangi***

At the centre of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* was its director Hanung Bramantyo (b. 1975), a graduate of IKJ who had made his first feature film with scriptwriter and friend Salman Aristo in 2005. Bramantyo describes himself in these early years as ‘secular’, in that religion did not figure in his life or his filmmaking, although he came from a Muhamadiyah background in Yogyakarta.<sup>43</sup> With the release of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* he found himself at the centre of debates about how ‘Islamic’ the filmmaker and the film were. Intan Paramaditha (2010) notes that this attention prompted Bramantyo to foreground his Islamic credentials by claiming that *Ayat-*

---

<sup>43</sup> Bramantyo, Hanung (2008b) ‘Ayat-Ayat Pribadi Seorang Sutradara’, *Jagad Pakeliran*, April 22, <http://hanungbramantyo.multiply.com/journal/item/13>, accessed 20 December 2010.

*Ayat Cinta* had made him understand and reappraise his Muslimness. So began his public cultivation of his Muslim identity, to appear more pious and religious. This fits, Paramaditha says, into the often unquestioned performative nature of being Islamic in Indonesia, where celebrities in particular, strategically realign their public presentation of self to fit social expectations. This was all the more necessary in Bramantyo's case because he had directed two horror films with references to 1965,<sup>44</sup> and was seen to be sympathetic to communism.

After *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, Bramantyo showed how fluid such conceptions of Islam are by directing three more Islamic films with very different concerns. Within six months, Bramantyo released *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* (2008, 'Woman in a Headscarf'), set in a conservative *pesantren* in coastal Java. The story focuses on Anissa, the precocious, proto-feminist daughter of a *kyai* who struggles against the patriarchy at various levels of her life. Bramantyo made the film to placate some of his critics, who felt that *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* promoted polygamy, and was therefore anti-woman. The book it was based on was commissioned by the Yogyakarta NGO YKF (Yayasan Kesejahteraan Fatayat), funded by the Ford Foundation (a prominent American philanthropic agency) and written by Abidah El Khalieqy (b. 1965) with the purpose of critiquing the culture of *pesantren* and *kyai*. In one of the many scenes that caused uproar, the books that Anissa had been using for her classes are burnt, including copies of Pramoedya Ananta Toer's *Bumi Manusia*, a novel still regarded as pro-communist.<sup>45</sup> These scenes were added by Bramantyo himself,<sup>46</sup> recalling Toer's

---

<sup>44</sup> *Lentera Merah* (2006) and *Sundel Bolong* (2007). See Chapter Four.

<sup>45</sup> In fact, the 1981 ban on the book remains in force, even though copies are available openly in book stores.

<sup>46</sup> 'Abidah El Khalieqy: "Saya Cinta Kiai dan Pesantren"' *Koran Tempo*, 15 February 2009.

own experience in 1965 when he was arrested for being a member of LEKRA and his books were burnt (Toer, 1999: 54).

Overnight, Bramantyo became a traitor to Islam as critics claimed the film showed a distorted picture of the religion and *pesantren*. The head of Mesjid Istiqlal, the country's largest mosque, Ali Mustafa Yakub, claimed that the film slandered (*fitnah*) *pesantrens*, although he had not, and would not, watch the film.<sup>47</sup> New Order era intellectual Taufiq Ismail (b. 1935) criticized Bramantyo in extremely harsh terms:

This young person wants to present himself as someone creative, super-liberal, open-minded, but only by showing the shortcomings and defects of the *ummat*, which he did with enthusiasm. [...] But indeed he is a leftist at heart, [that is] the trend for young people these days, they are not aware that they are letting themselves become agents of the Hammer and Sickle.<sup>48</sup>

Critics found it deplorable that Islam could be presented in such a negative way, claiming that it did not reflect reality, and insisted that the film should show the positive side as well. Bramantyo did little to placate these criticisms.

Soon after, Bramantyo released *Doa yang Mengancam* (2008, 'The Threatening Prayer'), a comedy about an itinerant worker in an urban market who questions his faith in God. Dissatisfied with his lack of success in life, Madrim first follows his brother's advice to pray more and seek guidance through Islam. After that fails, he curses god one night, and in his subsequent wanderings is struck by lightening. When he awakes, he has the power of being able to locate

---

<sup>47</sup> Reza Yunanto, 'Imam Besar Istiqlal: Perempuan Berkalung Sorban Fitnah Terhadap Pesantren' *detikNews*, 6 February 2009.

<sup>48</sup> 'Hanung, Kau Keterlaluan: Pesantren dan Kiyai Begitu Kau Burukkan' *Suara Islam*, 28 June 2010. Original reads: "Anak muda ini mau menunjukkan dirinya kreatif, super-liberal, berfikiran luas, tapi dengan mendedahkan kekurangan-kekurangan dan cacat-cela ummat, yang dilakukannya dengan senang hati. [...] Tapi memang pada dasarnya dia kekiri-kirian, mode anak muda zaman kini, tidak sadar mengangkat diri sendiri jadi agen muda Palu Arit."

people by looking at a photograph of them. As a result of this skill, he is recruited by the police who employ him to find criminals. This worries a big criminal boss, who then kidnaps Madrim and pays him to do nothing. Madrim then enjoys all kinds of material pleasures, but is spiritually empty, especially as he cannot locate his own wife who had gone missing. After intense soul-searching, Madrim realizes that he wants to go back to his old life in the market, and there marries a pretty girl and together they open a small restaurant.

Bramantyo's movements as a director between Islamic fantasy, feminist critique, and theological doubt showed that Bramantyo was not only a versatile director, but that he brought multiple versions of Islam to the screen. This versatility was repeated in his fourth Islamic film, *Sang Pencerah* (2010, 'The Enlightener'), a period dramatization of the life of Ahmad Dahlan, who established Muhammadiyah in 1912.<sup>49</sup> As a director he has retained significant agency in how Islam can be imagined and represented. As Paramaditha argues (2010), whilst there is significant social pressure to conform to Islamic norms in Indonesia, especially for the director associated with *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*, Islamic norms are not fixed or homogenous. Bramantyo may not be the most liked film director in Indonesia, but is perhaps proof that new generation filmmakers are not content with a homogenous interpretation of Islam in contemporary Indonesia. Each film asks different questions about faith, the role of Islam and the conflicts of interest that characterize society.

Bramantyo's ability to expand how Islam appeared in film was echoed in *Laskar Pelangi* (2008, 'Rainbow Troops'), a film released six months after *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* by Miles Productions. It defied expectation by attracting an audience

---

<sup>49</sup> Bramantyo has directed a third fourth Islamic film, *Sang Pencerah* (2010, 'The Enlightener'), but I was not able to view this film.

of 4.5 million, a number thought impossible after the audience figures of *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* (although the book it was based on was a bestseller). Set in Belitung, an island between Jakarta and Singapore famous for its large tin mine, the story revolves around a small Muhammadiyah school and its collection of colourful students as they struggle to keep their school open and to achieve scholastic success. The central character, Ikal, dreams of one day studying in the Sorbonne in Paris. *Laskar Pelangi*, the book, is autobiographical, and is based on the life experiences of author Andrea Hirata. There is a strong feel-good narrative of poor, marginalized children overcoming adversity. Islam is not the central concern of the film in the way that it was in the other films considered above. Nevertheless, the film is still commenting on how Islam fits into Indonesian society more broadly.

*Laskar Pelangi* the film portrays Islam as embedded in the fabric of communities, that provides educational opportunities to poor students, and that attracts the love of dedicated teachers. *Laskar Pelangi* shows the Muslim community living alongside other communities and faiths without seeming to promote any as better as any other. Islam appears in the film in its more traditional role, familiar to most Indonesians, as a part of the social fabric and lenient towards varying degrees of piety. This means that the Islam is more syncretic in form and recalls Geertz's work on *The Religion of Java* (1960). Islam is portrayed more as a setting and as a moral context rather than as a principle of self-realization.

As historical narrative, it is set in the 1980s when the New Order was at its peak. The tin mine, where Ikal's father works, represents the New Order economy. Economic imbalance in the New Order economy is made explicit by

resource-rich Belitung being home to such a poor community. The poor children have no other option for schooling except at the Muhammadiyah school. By contrast, the modern state school is well-equipped and regimented with its emphasis on uniforms, modern instruments such as calculators and scholastic discipline. A critical contrast is thus drawn between the ‘foreign’ state school, and the local Muhammadiyah school. When an inter-school street performance competition is staged, the state school presents a marching band, replete with pom-poms and regalia, straight out of an American high school film. By contrast the Muhammadiyah students, in a school that can barely stay open, invent their own tribal dance using found objects as props. Of course they win, and the film suggests how development under the New Order meant conformity and homogenization. The mood of nostalgia that underpins the film places Islam as a component of a simpler and better life. This is represented by the Muhammadiyah school and its connections to community, village and family life,.

Amongst fellow progressive filmmakers there was relief that *Laskar Pelangi* had out-done *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*. Producer Mira Lesmana made the following comment to me:

They were all praying that the film would be successful and watched by a lot of people. They didn’t want *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* to be the highest box-office hit in Indonesia. Because that’s what happened before *Laskar Pelangi*, and they don’t want that stigma [*sic*] of Islam to be the one that is approved by the people. So they were very happy after they know the film was successful. Again, come to us, ‘we are so happy that you have set the record because Islam in *Laskar Pelangi* is different to Islam in *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*.’ (Mira Lesmana, personal interview, 30 January 2009).

What both the subsequent films of Hanung Bramantyo and *Laskar Pelangi* do is to open the discourse of Islam in contemporary Indonesia by offering differing perspectives on the religion and its interpretation, application and role in everyday life.

## **6.7 Conclusion: Islam and Beyond**

By looking at the development of Islamic-themed films in Indonesia, this chapter has argued that the representation and thus interpretations of Islam in Indonesia are diverse and multiple, an understanding that was missed in the euphoria surrounding *Ayat-Ayat Cinta*. To be sure, *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* and *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* articulate a new paradigm in religiosity which can be traced to the *Tarbiyah* movement that was central to the renewed Islamization during the 1980s and 1990s. In these two films, the aspirations of a new Islamic middle class are also articulated and these are powerful images of aspiration, piety and Islamic revivalism. Seen in perspective however, Islam is still a contested cultural symbol as evidenced by the popularity of *Laskar Pelangi* released six months later. Filmmakers themselves play an important role in presenting these varieties of Islam, seen in this chapter through the work of Hanung Bramantyo.

Film, and pop culture more generally, is thus participating in a process of cultural definition and provides an important cultural forum in which the debate over Islam and Islamization is carried out in contemporary Indonesia. This is a debate that has been active since Islam first arrived in the fourteenth century, and Islamization thus needs to be seen from within the perspective of the *longue durée*. The representation of Islam post-1998 has been released from the prerogatives of the state, giving rise to previously underground or to individual

interpretations of Islam, but not from the dictates of history. Yet young filmmakers are not all free to make the films they want to make. In the next chapter I analyse the broader structure of the film industry, looking at how young filmmakers have negotiated the problem of capital and the existence of an informal oligopoly.

## 7.

# FROM INDIE TO BIG CAPITAL: THE CURRENT CONFIGURATION OF THE FILM INDUSTRY

### 7.1 Rebuilding an Industry

By 2008 film production in Indonesia had resembled an industry in terms of quantity and consistency of output. There were two new films a week in the cinemas, production was of consistent quality and involved dedicated companies and personnel, and many films were drawing audiences in the hundreds of thousands, if not millions.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, some commentators continue to characterize film production as being a ‘home industry’ (Effendy, 2008), claiming that production is still ad hoc, involving small enterprises rather than studios and thus lacking stability or infrastructure. These criticisms have been aired before (Anwar, 1988), and are used to criticize the current structure of the industry rather than understand the mode of film production and how it is a response to local conditions. It is indicative that young directors themselves, such as Ody Harahap, feel that filmmaking has come of age:

Filmmakers are now starting to survive [from filmmaking], meaning they can live from film, [although] occasionally making advertisements and sinetron for TV, [but] we can live from it. Although maybe not in the most correct way, meaning

---

<sup>1</sup> See ‘Film Indonesia’ [www.filmindonesia.or.id](http://www.filmindonesia.or.id) for information, including audience numbers.

we are offered poor-quality sinetron, but it is accepted by a different audience, in the villages, domestic workers and housewives.<sup>2</sup>

Over the past decade film production went from being a sporadic, individualized process to become substantially rationalized. Film workers themselves feel confident about filmmaking as a career and as a source of economic livelihood.

As seen in Chapter Three, talented young filmmakers revived film production post-1998 by making films that articulated to contemporary audiences. Despite their ability to make films that were culturally relevant, between 1998 and 2003 young filmmakers struggled to perpetuate production, given the struggles of finding sufficient capital. A film will cost on average one to five billion rupiah, about US\$100,000 to US\$500,000 an amount most individuals do not have spare. With this amount of financial outlay per title, one of the ongoing challenges for young filmmakers is to source and obtain capital for production.

Following the success of *Petualangan Sherina* and particularly *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* many new investors were attracted to film. They saw how popular local films were becoming for local audiences and thus the potential for profitable investment. Filmmakers found ready capital in private investors, many of whom were compatible with filmmakers' independent spirit. Yet over time, filmmakers would grow increasingly disillusioned with private capital, and would find themselves turning to the big production companies. By 2008 the position of young filmmakers had shifted again as director Rako Prijanto notes:

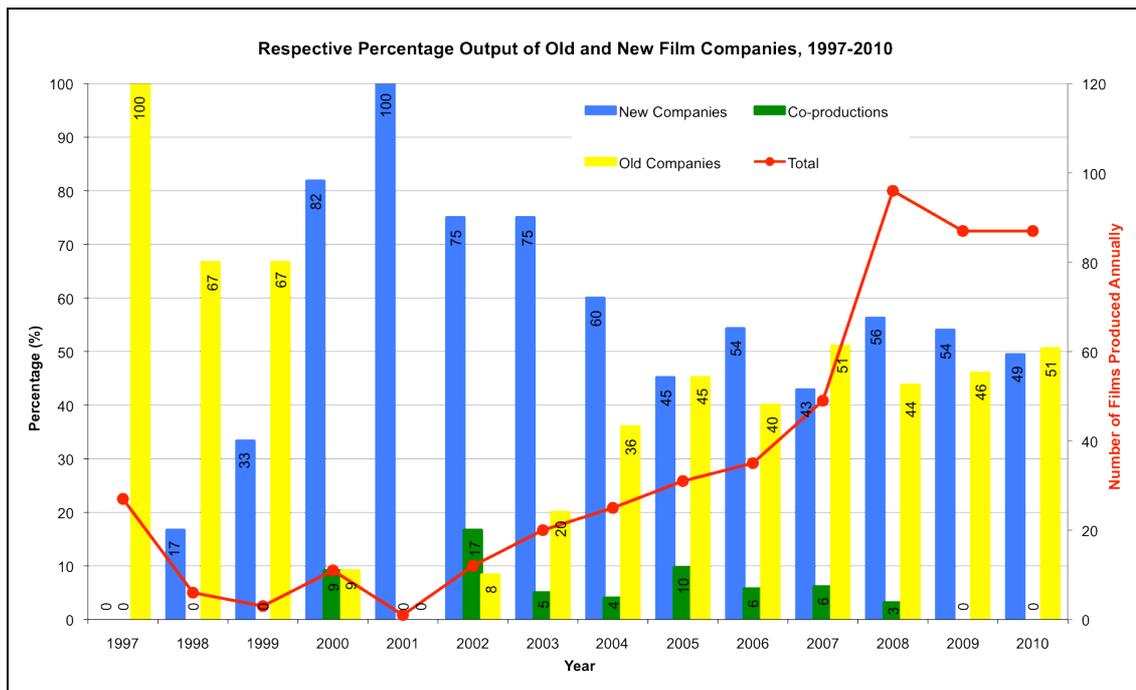
the young generation who were trying to revive local film, in inverted commas 'local films of high quality' have been somewhat pushed aside by them [big

---

<sup>2</sup> "Si pembuat film sudah mulai mau survive. Maksudnya bisa dibidang bisa hidup dari film, melencengnya ke iklan dan sinetron TV itu udah mulai hiduplah walaupun itungannya gak bener, maksudnya kita ditawarkan dengan sinetron yang haduh, tapi itu diterima di masyarakat yang lain, di desa, di pembantu, di ibu-ibu."

companies]. Why pushed aside? Because in a year these people in the middle, they can only at most make one film because they do not have the capital.<sup>3</sup>

It is no coincidence that most of these big production companies are the same producers who dominated the industry under the New Order.



**Figure 6. Production Ratio, Independent and Large Production Companies**

Source: Various

Old companies – Rapi Films, Multivision, Starvision, Indika, MD, Sinemart and Soraya Intercine – have not only returned but have returned to a position of dominance in the industry. For example, in Lebaran 2008, the traditional high-season for local films, five of the six films released in 21 Cinemas were from these old companies. The sixth was Miles Films’ *Laskar Pelangi* which went on to draw a record audience of over 4 million. One other film was released in Lebaran but it only aired in the few cinemas owned by the new Blitz Megaplex

<sup>3</sup> “Generasi muda yang tadinya mencoba untuk membangkitkan film nasional itu. Dalam tanda kutip ‘film nasional bermutu secara kualitas’ itu agak tergeser dengan mereka. Kenapa tergeser? Karena dalam satu tahun orang-orang ini yang di tengah ini, mereka hanya bisa bikin film paling satu karena mereka tidak punya kapital.” Rako Prijanto, personal interview, 11 August 2008.

company. This film was *Kantata Takwa* a film made by New Order critics including filmmaker Eros Djarot, musician Iwan Fals, and poet WS Rendra. The seven old film companies have been in the film industry since the late 1960s and early 1970s, or in the case of MD and Sinemart, grown out of old interests. During the downturn of the 1990s, they had all moved into producing for television, and did not return to film production in a major way until 2003. In the years since, they have reasserted their dominance. This chapter seeks to understand how that happened by proposing that together they form an informal oligopoly.

## 7.2 Seeking Private Capital

Actually there are a lot of potential investors. There are also lots of people with lots of money and they know that film is promising. But they are not in film, so they are hesitant to even part with 100 million because they are not in the field. That's why I make films that are not expensive.

This is to assure them that the risk is small. From the outset we have to be careful otherwise they might leave. Lots of investors have just left.

- Rudi Soedjarwo, personal interview, 19 July 2008.

Although the last ten years have seen many one-off filmmakers try their hand at filmmaking and never make another film, there has also been a sizeable number of new entrants who have wanted to continue making films and see it as a viable career option. For filmmakers from all backgrounds, obtaining funding for films is a continual problem and challenge given the costs and uncertainties involved. Nevertheless, the spirit of independence and confidence that had characterized the return to filmmaking in Indonesia led many young filmmakers to pursue and obtain capital from outside the industry. External, private capital

offered them opportunities to produce films whilst at the same time maintaining their autonomy and, to some extent, their creative independence.

In the six years following 1998, the number of new films and the attraction of local audiences produced a mood of optimism whereby many new investors were attracted to film.<sup>4</sup> Producer Shanty Harmayn of Salto Films identified this group of new investors as “Venture Capitalists, bankers, a variety of business people.”<sup>5</sup> Although their names do not always appear on film credits, in cases where they do, Harmayn is proven correct.<sup>6</sup> Film has also attracted some of the richest men in Indonesia, including aspiring film director Henry Riady, son of wealthy businessman James Riady of the LIPPO Group,<sup>7</sup> and tycoon Hashim Djojohadikusumo, brother of Prabowo Subianto.<sup>8</sup> Companies from other media sectors also produced films: music video and advertising company Rexinema, television stations TransTV and SCTV, and content providers for television (MNC, Prima Entertainment).

One prominent and productive new company, Maxima Pictures, established in 2005, encapsulates this paradigm shift in film production and the dynamics of the film industry. Maxima was established by people without any background in film; the owners, or ‘executive producers’, are Freddy Lingga and Chandra Lie, the owners of Sriwijaya Airlines, one of Indonesia’s largest airline

---

<sup>4</sup> Leo Sutanto, producer with Sinemart, says the following: “Because all of a sudden there are new production houses (PH), I am not saying that those who produce are those who do not understand film. I am worried that they think it is easy and pleasurable.” Original reads: “Karena dengan tiba-tiba bermunculan production house (PH) baru, saya tidak bilang bahwa yang sekarang banyak bikin itu adalah orang-orang yang tidak mengerti film. Saya khawatir karena mereka lebih tertarik pada mudah dan enaknyanya.” ‘Gairah Perfilman Bakal Kendur?’ *Behind the Screen*, 2005: 12-13.

<sup>5</sup> “Venture Capitalists, banker, beragam pelaku bisnislah.” Rusdi (2007: 18) a discussion about what it means to be a film producer with Nia Dinata (Khalyana Shira Films), Mira Lesmana (Miles Films), Erwin Arnada (Rexinema) and Shanty Harmayn (Salto Films).

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>7</sup> Henry Riady directed *Sepuluh* (2008, ‘Ten’) as part of his film course at Biola University in Los Angeles. The budget for the film was 12 billion rupiah.

<sup>8</sup> Djojohadikusumo is funding three military-nationalist films, *Darah Garuda* (2009, ‘Blood of Eagles’), *Merah Putih* (2010, ‘Red and White’), and an unnamed third film.

companies. Production is managed by Yoen K, a former marketing manager with Lion Air. Maxima have taken film production very seriously,<sup>9</sup> hiring a graphic artist from the USA to help them develop their brand and to design their promotional posters. In 2005 before producing films for the cinema, they co-produced television content with companies from Singapore as a means of establishing themselves.<sup>10</sup> In 2006-2007, their first year of feature film production, they released four films, each with an established director.<sup>11</sup>

The entry of these new companies and investors indicated how open the industry had become. The film industry of the New Order operated through a close knit network of producers and importers, all within the purview of Sudwikatmono. Getting into the industry required working through these existing players. Importing companies were particularly prone to increased concentration, with only four importers active in the 1990s.<sup>12</sup> In 1998, a range of new players entered the industry such as Salto Films (Shanty Harmayn) who set up an importing and production company and organized Jiffest, the Jakarta International Film Festival. At the time almost anyone could make a film and get it screened in the 21 Cinemas. New generation producer Mira Lesmana provided details of her production budgets (Sasono, 2007) as part of a campaign to reform taxes, signaling a move towards greater transparency. The number of 'how to' books,

---

<sup>9</sup> Yoen K, Personal interview, 18 July 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Media Development Authority, 'Singapore Media Companies Go Regional In Co-Productions With Leading Indonesia Partners' <http://www.mda.gov.sg/NEWSANDEVENTS/PRESSRELEASE/2005/Pages/30112005D.aspx>, 30 November 2005.

<sup>11</sup> *Cinta Pertama* (2006, 'First Love') directed by Nayato Fio Nuala recorded an audience of 300,000; *Lewat Tengah Malam* (2007, 'Past Midnight') directed by Koya Pagayo (Nayato Fio Nuala) recorded an audience of 300,000; *Bukan Bintang Biasa* (2007, 'Not an Ordinary Star') directed by Lasja F. Susantyo recorded an audience of 500,000; and *The Butterfly* (2007) directed by Nayato Fio Nuala (audience figures unknown).

<sup>12</sup> This is according to KPPU (2002). In 1999, according to 'Film Import Companies 1999' Direktori Industri Sinematografi, there were eighteen import companies listed in 1999. Four were 21-linked companies, and at least four others were in collusion with 21.

scripts, seminars and courses to help people get into filmmaking further supported this trend of demystifying the film production process. Many new generation filmmakers and producers speak regularly to the media, at public discussions and forums, as well as at seminars and courses for those aspiring to enter the industry.

For young filmmakers wanting to get into production, private investors represented their best chance of finding sufficient capital to make their first film. Young writer/director Awi Suryadi was one of them, and despite having no formal film education, he is now one of the most productive directors in the industry. He and his friend Thomas Nawilis decided they wanted to make their own film after returning from the USA, and sourced money from their friends. When I asked why they were willing to fund him, Suryadi simply replied

Because they also like film, they believe in the story too. That's all. Why not? So they gave it a go.<sup>13</sup>

Their film, *Gue Kapok Jatuh Cinta* (2006, 'I Give Up Trying to Fall in Love'), is a smart urban comedy about three boys who are luckless with love. Coming from middle class South Jakartan families meant that Nawilis and Suryadi had access to people with money. Having made his first film, Suryadi was able to establish himself as a director and attract further investment.

Even for Hilman Hariwijaya (b. 1964), a veteran of the film and television industry, private capital was his means to venture into producing himself after almost two decades as a writer and sometime actor.<sup>14</sup> Hariwijaya is best known as the author of the *Lupus* series of books and films from the late 1980s, about the adventures of the urban schoolboy Lupus. From 1993 to 2005, Hariwijaya worked

---

<sup>13</sup> "karena mereka juga suka film, they believe in the story juga, ya udahlah. Why not gitu. Jadi coba-coba deh gitu." Personal interview, Awi Suryadi, 6 June 2008.

<sup>14</sup> For more about Hariwijaya see T.Sima Gunawan, 'Hilman Hariwijaya: Bringing Lupus back to life after years of hiatus', *The Jakarta Post*, 28 July 2007.

as a writer for television station Indosiar. With his fiancée (now wife) actress Nessa Sadin, they funded and produced their own film *The Wall* (2007) with director K Dheeraj who they knew through television work. The fact that the film performed poorly with audiences and lost money was not a concern for Hariwijaya: *The Wall*, he said, was his way of learning how to produce a film.<sup>15</sup> With this knowledge, his production company Lupus Entertainment was now able to secure funding for further projects, such as *Anak Ajaib* (2009, 'Magical Child'), a children's film wholly funded by vitamin company Curcuma Plus.

Prominent independent production teams such as Miles Productions and Kalyana Shira continue to source private investment for their productions, even though they are established and well-known. Kalyana Shira for example have a foundation which handles the day to day operations of the company, funded by The Ford Foundation. For films, Miles producer Mira Lesmana says it is a struggle with every production. In Miles' most recent productions, they have teamed up with Islamic publishing company Mizan. Kalyana Shira (headed by producer Nia Dinata) sources much of their investment from overseas, catering their products to foreign markets with films about polygamy or women's issues. Generally however filmmakers are reluctant to reveal the identities of their sponsors, such as when I asked Kelvin Kustamaan, producer with Credo Pictures:

[they are] not known in the film industry, they are just normal people who have other business, they are interested in doing movie but they don't want to be involved in the process of making the movie.<sup>16</sup>

By using private investors young filmmakers maintain a significant degree of creative control over their productions, often by pitching their ideas to potential

---

<sup>15</sup> Hilman Hariwijaya, personal interview, 4 June 2008.

<sup>16</sup> Personal interview, Elvin Kustaman, 19 July 2008.

investors, rather than making films to order. This allowed indie-minded filmmakers to make the feature films they wanted to make whilst maintaining their independence.

One effort towards rationalization of the film funding process, without establishing a production company per se, was engineered by Adiyanto Sumarjono who set up Investasi Film Indonesia (IFI, 'Indonesian Film Investment') in 2005. IFI acts as the front company for a group of private investors to invest in film, thus reducing their individual risk by combining the contribution of multiple investors. Sumarjono says this was a group of his friends, professionals and other wealthy people with 'spare change' who did not know what to do with it, and thought to invest in film.<sup>17</sup> Sumarjono is himself a young lawyer working for a large multinational law firm. By 2008, IFI had funded five feature films, including *Garasi* (2005, 'Garage') in cooperation with Miles Films, *Alexandria* (2005) in cooperation with Rexinema, *Coklat Stroberi* (2007, 'Chocolate Strawberry'), *Coblos Cinta* (2008, 'Vote for Love') and *Radit & Jani* (2008). IFI simplifies the process for both filmmakers and investors by acting as middleman.

Although IFI facilitates funding for filmmakers, allowing filmmakers to concentrate on the creative aspects of filmmaking, private capital presents its own problems. Sumarjono's policy of keeping the identities of IFI's investors secret means that filmmakers do not know who is really funding their films, with no guarantee that the money is not dirty.<sup>18</sup> IFI may simplify the relationship between

---

<sup>17</sup> See also Ferdiansyah (2005) 'Obat Kuat untuk Film Indonesia' *Behind the Screen*, 34-35.

<sup>18</sup> In a recent interview with IFI investor Madiyan Sahdianto, he notes that IFI has around twenty investors. Many of the initial investors withdrew following the commercial failures of their early films. See 'Madiyan Sahdianto' IFI, 07 December 2009, <http://www.ifi.co.id/id/corporate/interview/86-madiyan.html>, accessed 8/01/2011. One of the listed

investors and filmmakers, but it does not necessarily ensure an open, upfront relationship between them. For producer Mira Lesmana,<sup>19</sup> the identities of the producers only became known to her when her film (*Garasi*, 2006) did not perform to the investors' expectations, and suddenly she found herself having to answer to them. She had no idea what the investors had been told, and felt uncomfortable now having to explain herself to a group of investors who knew little about film. Since then, she has chosen not to work with IFI.

Some curios include a film sponsored by the Jakarta Police (*The Police*, 2009), and the horror film *Enam* (2008, 'Six'), reportedly funded with the proceeds of corruption. The booming film industry also attracted commercial sponsorship in the form of branding and product placement, making it possible to fund an entire film this way.<sup>20</sup> Yet such arrangements have not always produced commercial success such as *D'Girlz Begins* (2006) sponsored by tampon manufacturer Softex and *Liburan Seru* (2008, 'Exciting Holiday') a children's film funded by powdered milk brand Dancow. In the case of *D'Girlz Begins*, the film was to be the culmination of a television competition to find three female actors as brand representatives, but the film directed by self-taught first-timer Tengku Firmansyah was a disaster. As producer Erwin Arnada noted however, that after the industry stabilized in 2004, corporate sponsorship was less in the form of cash.<sup>21</sup> Instead, companies preferred to supply products or services, or pay for co-branded advertising, such as the ubiquitous billboards in Jakarta, often paid for by cigarette companies.

---

producers for *Banyu Biru* (2004) is Kartadajaja Intan, Director of Investment Banking at the large European bank BNP Paribas.

<sup>19</sup> Personal interview, 30 January 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Erwin Arnada, personal interview, 16 June 2008.

<sup>21</sup> Personal interview, 16 June 2008.

Seeking private investment, whilst seeming to liberate filmmakers from the tainted old producers, is itself a double edged sword. Producer Shanker believes that the two have very different interests. Describing young filmmakers and their approach to filmmaking, he says:

It's their obsession. But what they do is use other people's money, they make their obsession. As long as they are happy, they are contented, they love the movie. They don't care, they don't worry about the investment, When you use money, borrow money to make films, what do you have to think? How to sell the movie. People forget that.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, young filmmakers similarly recognize the problems with dealing with private investors. Speaking from the creative side, Rudi Soedjarwo, who has dealt with many potential investors, is somewhat cautious:

The problem is sometimes tricky. There might be interests so we have to see eye-to-eye from the outset. Some give their money but their child acts. Some give their money but there is politics involved. Some give money but to sell their product. Some give their money at the outset because they are happy but halfway they change their mind. Now that is dangerous.<sup>23</sup>

Although many of his projects have been funded from private sources, such as the recent films *Sebelah Mata* (2008, 'One Eye') about boxing and *Liar* (2008, 'Wild') sponsored by state oil company Pertamina and motorcycle brand Suzuki, he dislikes the inconsistency it can bring to a film project.<sup>24</sup> Soedjarwo says it is his long-term goal to become a producer himself and thereby minimize his dependence on private investment.

---

<sup>22</sup> Personal interview, 22 August 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Rudy Soedjarwo, personal interview, 19 July 2008. "Tapi masalahnya kadang tricky ya ada kepentingan-kepentingan kita harus satu suara dulu lah. Ada yang taruh duit tapi anaknya maen, ada yang naruh duit tapi ada politikalnya, ada yang taruh duit tapi jualan produk dia. Ada yang taruh duit pas awalnya karena senang tapi sampai tengah tiba-tiba berubah nah itu bahaya."

<sup>24</sup> For *Sebelah Mata*, Soedjarwo said his investors had told him "You can do charity, but make sure my money is returned" ("ya elu boleh charity, tapi uang saya ya dibalikin dong").

In sum, the experience of working with private investment for many filmmakers has not always benefitted filmmakers. Filmmaking is itself a business fraught with difficulties, especially trying to make films that will appeal to audiences and therefore be profitable. With the additional hassle of dealing with private investors many filmmakers were prompted to reassess the value of private investment. Critically, it became apparent that private investment was unsustainable for the continued production of films. It is the unpredictability of private investment that Nan Achnas says is the problem:

Private investors, now there's a lot of people with money and they just want to try to invest. They are the one off. And then once it's successful they will invest again. But there are more stories of where they are just burnt from the experience in investing films and they don't want to do anything about it. These are a lot of people with extra money lying around. Stock investors, brokers and then conglomerates. Right now there's a lot of money going around if you want to make a film that you care to fill it with a political party. There's a lot of money. Golkar... wants to make a film. Golkar and you can get 5 miliar [billion rupiah] very easily. (Nan Achnas, personal interview, 13 September 2008)

In response to the problems of investment, over the past decade, but particularly in the period 2005-2006, filmmakers shifted towards large dedicated production companies. As unlikely as this might seem, the big production companies have experience and connections and importantly know the realities of film production.

### **7.3 The Old Production Companies**

Whilst new and independent filmmakers dominated film production in Indonesia between the years 1998 and 2003, old film producers continued

producing for television. When they attempted to return to producing films, they struggled to adapt to the new conditions. Rapi Films tried to emulate the success of *Petualangan Sherina* (1999) by making their own children's film *Joshua Oh Joshua* (2000). Despite the presence of child star Joshua Suherman, the film only attracted an audience of 50,000 compared to *Petualangan Sherina*'s 1.4 million. After the delays with *Reinkarnasi*, Starvision released two horror films, similarly citing *Petualangan Sherina* as having introduced a new spirit into the industry. Both of the films - *Kafir (Satanic)* (2002) and *Peti Mati (The Coffin)* (2003) - performed poorly. Both companies were still relying on old stories, old directors and old marketing techniques.

When they shifted to television in the 1990s and made *sinetron* and other content, the film production companies were able to continue the mode of production they had developed as film producers (Sen and Hill, 2000). Their production model was based on the producer deciding what type of film to make and then employing senior directors to make the film accordingly. Television had anyway attracted the traditional audiences of local films, and there was significant continuity between film of the 1980s and television of the 1990s. When these producers tried to return to film they employed the old film directors they knew from the 1980s and 1990s. The problem with the old directors was that "the language of their films no longer 'connects' with the contemporary audience" (Kristanto, 2007: xxv).<sup>25</sup> Whilst this model worked for *sinetron*, with lesser technical and narrative demands, and a more general audience, this could not work on the cinema screen where audiences were primarily teenagers who paid money for tickets. For these old producers, enriched through television, capital was not a

---

<sup>25</sup> "Bahasa film mereka tidak 'nyambung' lagi dengan penonton masa kini."

problem; their problem was one of creativity - ore specifically, how to make films for contemporary audiences.

In 2003, Ram Soraya of Soraya Intercine found the formula that would come to define how the old producers would return to popularity and thus profitable film production. This film - *Eiffel... I'm in Love* (2003) - was seen by an audience of three million, a record it held until 2008. Young Jakartan teen Rachmania Arunita (b. 1985), had written a teen romance novel called *Eiffel... I'm in Love* in 2000 and distributed it amongst her friends as a photocopy.<sup>26</sup> It was picked up by publishers, and became one of many popular novels that dealt with love and coming of age. Soraya Intercine bought the rights to the book and employed Arunita as a scriptwriter. To direct they hired Nasri Cheppy (b. 1950), an old director famous for directing the popular *Si Boy* series of films from the late 1980s. *Eiffel* is told from the perspective of Tita who slowly falls in love with Adith, a friend of the family who she initially finds abrasive and cold. Adith has in fact loved Tita from when they first met, but cannot express his love until they meet again in Paris and he confesses his love to her in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower. The film thus plays into fantasies about teen romance seen from the perspective of a modern girl who overcomes parental control to snare the perfect boy, enhanced by the exotic setting in Paris.

The key for the old companies was to employ the creative capital of young Indonesians, such as Rachmania Arunita or as would happen progressively, the slew of new directors. These young filmmakers knew the language of the youth, and knew how to construct stories that spoke to their audience. These same filmmakers lacked the finances for continual production. What the big companies

---

<sup>26</sup> See for example Hadriani, P. ““Sukses Ini Datang Terlalu Cepat”” *Koran Tempo*, 11 January 2004.

realized was that they had to employ these young filmmakers who had the creative capital appropriate to the contemporary audience. The dissolution of the i-sinema group in 2004 marked an important turning point, says Rako Prijanto, because the creative individuals

each took their own path. There are those who maintained their idealism like Mira Lesmana, Riri Riza, Nan Achnas, Nia Dinata. There are some from the young generation who pursued a different path with the already established companies.<sup>27</sup>

Nayato Fio Nuala was one such director who took the path with the big companies, making his first film *The Soul* (2004) with Starvision. Since then, he and his team have made over twenty films, almost all of them for the big production companies. He is now one of the most productive directors in the industry, and has earned the moniker ‘master of horror’ for the numerous horror films he has directed.

The rise of producer Leo Sutanto best encapsulates how the old producers would come to reassert themselves in the post-1998 film industry. Leo Sutanto began as a subtitler for importer Suptan, working his way up to become manager of the 21 Cinemas in the 1990s. After exiting 21 in 1997, he worked briefly in Indika, the production company of the Sudwikatmono business empire, but left in 1998 and joined with Gunawan Sulaiman, a former SCTV executive, in a new production company Prima Entertainment.<sup>28</sup> Sutanto gained a reputation for spending big on actors and rapidly established Prima Entertainment as a content provider for television. Sutanto worked closely with the i-sinema directors

---

<sup>27</sup> “tapi ada jalan masing-masing. Ada yang tetap stay dengan idealis mereka seperti Mira Lesmana, Riri Riza, Nan Achnas, Nia Dinata gitu. Ada juga generasi muda yang memang mencari jalan lain dengan industri-industri yang udah besar itu.” Rako Prijanto, personal interview, 11 August 2008.

<sup>28</sup> SCTV was part-owned by Sudwikatmono.

(discussed in Section 3.7), providing them with production capital in return for the television rights to their films.<sup>29</sup> In particular, he banked on the films to come from Jay Subiakto and Rizal Mantovani and being able to get a good price for a thirteen film package.<sup>30</sup> Later, he bought the rights to the *sinetron* series *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?*, following the success of the film. Sutanto realized that this young generation represented the future of film production, and by teaming up with the young *i-sinema* directors, Leo Sutanto was able to capitalize on their creative skills.

The return of the big producers was concomitant with the dissolution of *i-sinema*. Coupled with the instability and unreliability of private capital, many previously independent filmmakers saw that the big producers could provide them with a stable supply of capital to make films. Rako Prijanto explained that

At that time we had lots of enthusiasm to make a film. [...] ‘Indonesian films return again’. But what became our dilemma was that whilst we had plenty of enthusiasm [and] we had the manpower, we didn’t have capital. We didn’t have money. Now, that money we sought from the senior players in the industry at the time like Primavision, Multivision and now there is Sinemart.<sup>31</sup>

Whilst this may seem to have marked the end of independence this new accommodation was central to the systematization of filmmaking after 2004, and without it, sustained levels of production would not have been possible.

On the creative side, director Rako Prijanto exemplifies the process whereby young creatives found work with these senior producers. Beginning

---

<sup>29</sup> He is listed in the credits of the *i-sinema* films, and in Sentot Said’s *Titik Hitam* (2002, ‘Black Dot’) Prima Entertainment is listed as the producer.

<sup>30</sup> Suggested by Enison Sinaryo, personal interview, 15 August 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Original text: “waktu itu semangat kita tinggi untuk membikin sebuah film. [...] Film Indonesia bangkit kembali. Tapi yang jadi kendala kita adalah, semangat kita tinggi, sumber daya manusia kita punya, tapi kita tidak punya capital. Kita nggak punya uang. Nah, uang ini kita cari dari pelaku-pelaku industri yang sudah senior waktu itu kaya Primavision, ada Multivision, sekarang ada Sinemart.”

alongside Rudy Soedjarwo, Prijanto established himself as a competent scriptwriter and sometime actor. In *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?*, he assisted director Rudy Soedjarwo, and wrote the iconic poems that gave the film much of its romance and charm. Following *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?*, he worked on the spin-off sinetron with scriptwriter Jujur Prananto. His directing opportunity came from Leo Sutanto, who gave him a huge seven billion rupiah budget for his film *Ungu Violet* (2005).<sup>32</sup>

Then *Ungu Violet* became my first step. At the time I was at a loss. I am a nobody, I've never made a film, only ever helped others make films. I was only an assistant director. But Leo [Sutanto] gave me a big opportunity and I was given scope to work, as much freedom as possible to work on *Ungu Violet*.<sup>33</sup>

Of course, Prijanto was taken aback by such an offer, but giving him freedom to make his film was crucial for a young, idealistic filmmaker like himself. It also established the type of relationship between producer and director that would come to dominate in the film industry. Prijanto is now an established director in the film industry working for new independent companies such as Oriema and older companies such as Rapi Films. Without this opportunity from Sutanto, he may never have had the chance to direct.

This was to become the pattern for the old producers to transit back into film making after having not made any films for almost a decade. They quickly realized that in order to cater to contemporary audiences, they could not rely on old directors and old modes of storytelling. In fact, the old producers to some extent believe that they are the ones driving the contemporary industry:

---

<sup>32</sup> Almost double the four billion rupiah budget for *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?*

<sup>33</sup> "Nah *Ungu Violet* bisa menjadi langkah awal saya. Saya waktu itu bingung. Saya ini bukan siapa-siapa, saya belum pernah bikin film, cumin bantuin orang-orang bikin film. Saya cuma seorang asisten sutradara. Tapi Pak Leo memberi saya kesempatan yang begitu gedonya dan saya diberi keleluasaan untuk berkarya itu kebebasan untuk berkarya sebebaskan-bebasnya untuk *Ungu Violet* itu." Rako Prijanto, personal interview, 11 August 2008.

So the way I give them chance to become director for film, I give them the series, the film television, if they are good, then I give them chance to make movies (Chand Parwez Servia, personal interview, 17 July 2008)

The newcomers are actually disturbing the business actually. If they want to make film, they should work together with the... of course with the professional filmmakers. That's the right way. If you are a first timer, why do you want to take a chance? (Shanker RS, personal interview, 22 August 2008)

The key was to employ new generation directors as they were the ones with savvy and creative capital to be able to create films that connected with audiences. Young directors such as Rako Prijanto, Awi Suryadi, Ody Harahap, Nayato Fio Nuala, Viva Westi, Monty Tiwa and Hanung Bramantyo have all chosen to work with the larger companies in this way. This has come to be the pattern that has underpinned the increased production levels in the film industry.

#### **7.4 Outsourcing Production**

Acknowledging the importance of young filmmakers with the creative capital to make films that would connect with contemporary audiences also required a new mode of production. The young filmmakers who had been making films for a number of years had already developed their own networks and production methods, and wanted to maintain their independence whilst sourcing capital from the large production companies. As a result, an outsourcing system developed in which young filmmakers and their teams make films on order for the big production companies. Ideas for films usually come from these young filmmakers themselves, or can come from a producer, and are then developed by scriptwriters. "To work with a production house, we look for whatever connects:

there's an idea [for a film], someone wants to buy it" (Ody Harahap, personal interview, 28 October 2008).<sup>34</sup> Sometimes it takes as little as an SMS to offer an idea to a producer, and be given the go-ahead.<sup>35</sup> The budget is negotiated, and filming goes ahead with the final cut delivered to the producer within one to two months. For both filmmakers and producers, this kind of working relationship has its benefits, and suits the post-1998 film industry.

Given the problems associated with private and external capital discussed earlier, the big production companies provide young filmmakers with a stable source of production capital. Moreover, as film production companies, they already know the risks involved in filmmaking, and do not have unrealistic expectations about what a film can do commercially. Awi Suryadi, who describes himself as a 'freelance director', explains his position:

Because we don't have money ourselves at the moment. We prefer to contract ourselves to the big production companies. They are the ones who understand distribution, as well as marketing. We concentrate on the creative process.<sup>36</sup> [...] I'm flexible, it depends on the PH [Production House]. If the PH wants to contract me to make a film, I can do that. If they want to hire me just as director, I can do that too. I also want to invest in other businesses not solely as a filmmaker.<sup>37</sup>

Outsourcing has allowed young filmmakers to establish their own production companies. Some like Monty Tiwa's *Moviesta Pictures* has a large contingent of

---

<sup>34</sup> "Untuk kerja sama production house, kita cari yang connect saja, ada ide ada yang mau beli."

<sup>35</sup> Rudi Soedjarwo, personal interview, 19 July 2008.

<sup>36</sup> "Kita belum ada modal juga sekarang kita lagi lebih milih kita ngeborong aja deh dari PH-PH besar toh mereka emang udah ngerti distribusi, lebih ngerti marketing gitu kan, kita lebih ke proses kreatif." Awi Suryadi, personal interview, 6 June 2008.

<sup>37</sup> "Saya fleksibel, tergantung PHnya. Kalau PHnya mau ngeborong nih bikin film, ya saya juga bisa. Kalau cuma mau hire saya sebagai director juga bisa. Trus ya saya lagi mau coba ya mau invest di tempat lainlah bukan cuma sebagai filmmaker." Awi Suryadi, personal interview, 6 June 2008.

scriptwriters who can quickly convert a story idea into a shootable script, and deliver a completed film.

For the big production companies, allowing the young filmmakers to handle the creative side is not just convenient; it also means they can concentrate on being producers rather than initiating film projects. Even Sunil Samtani (b. 1968) of Rapi Films, acknowledges his predicament as producer. He explained to me his mode of operating with young directors:

I just feel like I try not to give my idea to them. I just get worried. They have to work on it, make a synopsis out of my idea, but is it going to work? I would rather have it from the locals. The local Indonesians. Because I feel the story is more local, and looks better. Because I might have this way of thinking. I like this kind of movie, but it's only going to work for the mid to high class. Which I don't want. I'd rather go for mid to low class. High class people they only go for the American movies. So I try to have the directors come up with a good story and bring it to me. If it works, it works.<sup>38</sup>

What Samtani is here acknowledging is that he is out of touch with the taste of popular audiences. His role is then as financier who relies on the creative capital of directors he employs. The day I spoke to him, writer/director Viva Westi had just dropped off a number of synopses, which Samtani was going to read and consider.

Likewise, Multivision, which has been producing content for television for two decades, now has a dedicated film department which handles film production. Headed by producer Wicky Olindo, and assisted by Ve Handojo, they are responsible for vetting script ideas and commercializing them to fit Multivision's business model. Handojo describes his work thus:

---

<sup>38</sup> Sunil Samtani, personal interview, 19 October 2009.

I dare to say that I don't have any room in my brain to read new ideas (laughs). Come up with an idea, and give it to me, and I will develop it. I can help you develop it. If you want to work with us, we develop their ideas, so that your movie will be in line with our line, with our line of business. The commercial movies. If you're not ready to commercialize your ideas, you'd better go to Kalyana [Shira], you'd better go to whatever. [...] A concept may come to me and I would say, just reading the paper, this will go for 300 [thousand] audience max, so can you work it on a budget under 1M rupiah? Can you make it with that budget? If you're not ready we're not going to do it. Things like that, analyze the script very fast.<sup>39</sup>

This kind of approach gives filmmakers a clear indication of their film's potential, as per the framework of a commercial company like Multivision.

Yet the outsourcing mode of production that has become dominant has left directors and creative teams in a position of compromise. Young filmmakers are caught between the demands of a production system, in which the organizational independence they fought so hard to attain following the end of the New Order is not always matched by the creative independence of being able to make the films in the way they want to. Awi Suryadi explained his dilemma in the following way:

Sometimes I think it's a shame that filmmaking in Indonesia is at a point where the system is quick and fast, because a lot of the directors work freelance, they get a contract and the system is wholesale or a package system. Like 'I give you this money, you make me a film' and of course they are looking to profit and so quality is compromised. That's a pity, but on the other hand I hang out with Nayato [Fio Nuala] because I think as a person he is great because he has this

---

<sup>39</sup> Ve Handojo, personal interview, 20 November 2008.

committed crew, because he has made a lot of films, and lots of people depend on him, they respect him.<sup>40</sup>

Hanung Bramantyo sums up his position in a similar way: “Directors are situated in a dilemma. On one side we have to save the national film industry, on the other we have to maintain our idealism.”<sup>41</sup> Given that there was so much expectation in the new generation filmmakers to be a bastion of expression and free speech, their decision to work with the old commercial producers has disappointed many observers.

Primarily the criticism leveled at directors is that they are participating in a system of cheap-and-fast production in which their skills as filmmakers are not valued.

Lots of our directors downgrade their standards just to... just to make a film. Obey the producer, do what the producer wants. Like Rudi [Soedjarwo] now makes films carelessly. Monty Tiwa, Jose [Poernomo] as well... I feel sorry for lots of these directors who are treated that way by producers. (Erwin Arnada)<sup>42</sup>

This is a sentiment shared by directors themselves, as Viva West attests:

Sometimes I think that as directors we compromise too much with producers. Like with MD [Pictures] my fellow directors have to follow what they want. Lots of them, like Multivision or whoever, have that condition. They don't care what

---

<sup>40</sup> “Sometimes saya pikir sayang ya perfilman Indonesia dibawanya kesini ma sistem kerja cepet dan murah, karena memang directors itu banyak yang freelance dapet kontrak dan sistemnya itu sistem borongan gitu atau sistem paket gitu. Ya, I give you this money, you make me a film tentunya mereka harus kejar profit kan ya kualitas yang dikompromi. Nah itu sebenarnya sangat sayang cuma on the other hand saya ngelayap sama Nayato karena I think as maksudnya sebagai man tuh dia hebat karena kru-kru nya sejahtera gitu, ya kan karena banyak film kan, banyak orang yang tergantung dengan dia gitu, sama respek kayaknya” Awi Suryadi, personal interview, 6 June 2008.

<sup>41</sup> “Sutradara berdiri pada posisi yang dilematis. Di satu sisi kita harus menyelamatkan industri perfilman nasional, di sisi lain kita harus mempertahankan idealisme.” ‘Jangan Bikin Film Kacangan’, *Behind the Screen*, 2(8), 2006: 11.

<sup>42</sup> “Banyak sutradara kita yang mendown-grade kualifikasi dirinya hanya gara-gara itu...gara-gara untuk mau bikin film. Nurutin produser, produser mau ini diturutin. Kaya Rudi sekarang bikin film juga udah sembarangan. Monty Tiwa, Jose juga... saya sih kasihan banyak sutradara-sutradara yang di-treat sama produser.” Erwin Arnada, personal interview, 16 June 2008.

you make as long as it sells. They don't care if the sound is inaudible, if the picture is unclear, if its not to standard, they don't care as long as they make lots of money, that's it.<sup>43</sup>

When Rudi Soedjarwo had immense success with *Pocong 2* (2006), made extremely cheaply, 'Rudy can do it' became the rebuttal for directors wanting bigger budgets for their productions. Luckily, says Jujur Prananto, Rudi's success did not last.<sup>44</sup>

Director Joko Anwar pejoratively calls directors who outsource themselves as 'directors for hire', contrasting them with directors like himself who have "something to say".<sup>45</sup> "For example someone gets a call from a producer to make a film, mmmm (he asks) what's the budget? One billion? Ok, I'll do it, what's the story?"<sup>46</sup> This would seem to be what Parwez did with Nayato: "I said don't think too much, I give you the title '*Ada Hantu di Sekolah*' [There's a Ghost in the School]. Just do it. Make it fun."<sup>47</sup> A film is reduced to a minimum budget and a vague concept, not even necessarily a story. Anwar believes that this system of contracts gives rise to very basic films, without concern for storytelling or quality.

Anwar's criticism is shared by others hoping for better 'quality' films and something of an indictment against the prevailing system of production. He

---

<sup>43</sup> "Kadang-kadang aku pikir sebagai sutradara kita suka banyak banget kompromi dengan produser. Kaya dengan MD pasti teman-teman director harus mengikuti apa yang mereka mau. Banyak ya kaya apa ya misal Multivision atau apa mereka pasti mereka juga punya. Mereka kan semata-mata terserah bikinya mau seperti apa yang penting film itu laku. Mereka tidak perduli mau suaranya tidak terdengar, gambar belang-belang, gak standart, mereka ga perduli asal mereka dapat untung banyak, udah." Viva West, personal interview, 5 June 2008.

<sup>44</sup> "Rudy aja bisa." Jujur Prananto, personal interview, 5 December 2008.

<sup>45</sup> 'Percakapan Joko Anwar, Edwin dan Eric Sasono' (2008), *Rumah Film*, [http://old.rumahfilm.org/wawancara/wawancara\\_jokoedwin\\_1.htm](http://old.rumahfilm.org/wawancara/wawancara_jokoedwin_1.htm), accessed 8/1/2011.

<sup>46</sup> "Misalnya seseorang dipanggil sama produser untuk bikin film, mmmm (dia tanya) berapa budget? Satu M? oke gue bikinin, ceritanya apa?" 'Percakapan Joko Anwar, Edwin dan Eric Sasono' *Rumah Film*, 2008, [http://old.rumahfilm.org/wawancara/wawancara\\_jokoedwin\\_1.htm](http://old.rumahfilm.org/wawancara/wawancara_jokoedwin_1.htm), accessed 8/1/2011.

<sup>47</sup> Chand Parwez Servia, personal interview, 17 July 2008.

perhaps credits filmmakers with too little autonomy and agency, and fails to see that the outsourcing system is not monolithic. All the big producers are not the same, and Anwar's own experience with MD Pictures may taint his perception. After *Janji Joni*, Anwar was contracted by MD Pictures to make *Kala* (2008, 'Dead Time'), a film noir set in a nowhere city, with a plot similar to *Dark City* (1999), about a detective hunting for clues. Anwar's producer for the film, Damiana Widowati, spoke of the nightmare they had with the MD Pictures producers:

they thought *Kala* is [a] horror movie. And then they found out it's not on the offline session [i.e. in post-production]. On the offline session! You don't understand. It means that they didn't read the script, right? Oh my god, it happened!<sup>48</sup>

This kind of indictment has given rise to a certain amount of suspicion about the commitment of the old producers to developing film and the film industry. Directors feel they are getting short-changed and are on the wrong end of developments.

Joko Anwar blames the lack of a system of distribution in the country and the lack of separation between distribution and the main exhibitor. Because the main cinema chain – 21 – is also the main distributor, there is no way to control what is released. In the current system a producer can book a release date, employ a director to make a film, print the film, and screen it. There is no quality control in this system, and this is where Anwar's gripe lies. As a result, he says, the local cinemas are full of half-baked films that are not made with an audience in mind, but rather made purely to a minimum budget. Another director, Ody Harahap, shares similar misgivings about the contract system, because the films he makes

---

<sup>48</sup> Damiana 'Dotty' Widowati, personal interview, 9 June 2008.

are not his, but are owned by the production company. This leads to many directors making poor quality films because they have no ownership stake in their films. Either way, directors remain in a dilemma in the contemporary industry, producing for the big production companies.

## **7.5 Oligopoly of the Old Producers**

The accommodation reached between producers and directors, or between capital and creativity, allowed the old producers to reach a position of dominance in terms of film production. In 2008 the seven big companies were responsible for sixty percent of the total films produced in that year. This however was not the outcome of their superior business acumen. Certainly their ability to return to profitable film production rested on the employment of the new generation of filmmakers and the utilization of their creative capital. I argue that their return to dominance was only made possible because of their structural position. Structurally, these old producers constitute an informal oligopoly that connects them to each other and to important industry infrastructure, including the major cinema chain in Indonesia. The origins of the oligopoly lie in the composition of the film industry during the New Order and its relationships were strengthened in the shift to television in the 1990s. Television expanded their revenue streams and gave the producers access to important networks within the broadcasting industry.

The dominance of the big producers in the New Order film industry has often been attributed to their non-*pribumi* race. It was believed that Chinese or Indians had some inherent ability to make money and so came to dominate based solely on their race. These ideas linking race to predisposition extend back to the 1950s, when Usmar Ismail said Chinese producers “have the nose to immediately

smell where money can be made and know as well how to exploit it” (1983[1954]: 53).<sup>49</sup> Later, when ethnic Indians entered the film business as importers, they were pejoratively characterized as “textile traders from Pasar Baru” (Peransi, 1997: 143). Friends Raam Punjabi, the Samtani Brothers and Harris Lesmana entered the film industry in the late 1960s and early 1970s after working together in Pasar Baru (Endah, 2005). Consequently, the ethnic minority Chinese and Indians, marginalized by ethno-nationalist criticism, found that their interests coincided and invariably worked together. Critics forgot that ethnic Indians had limited economic opportunities in the Indonesian economy, and that in fact Sindhis, like Raam Punjabi and the Samtani Brothers, were innovators within their own communities for working outside the textile trade (Thapan, 2002: 33). Moreover, they were well-placed to import Indian and English language films which were popular at the time, due to their transnational networks and command of the English language.

As noted earlier in Section 2.8, it was commonly known that by the late 1980s Sudwikatmono, President Soeharto’s cousin and foster brother, had monopoly control over film imports into Indonesia.<sup>50</sup> This followed the general pattern of the New Order economy whereby lucrative import monopolies were given to cronies at the expense of existing players in the market (Robison, 1986). Sudwikatmono had entered the film import business in the mid-1970s when brothers Bambang Sutrisno (Tan Shui Ying) and Benny Suherman (Tan Shui Liong) offered him a partnership in their film import company (Keng and Lin,

---

<sup>49</sup> Original reads: “punya hidung untuk segera mencium di mana untung bisa didapat dan tahu pula mengeksploatasikannya.”

<sup>50</sup> Budi Kusuma, Sri Pudyastuti, Tri Budianto Soekarno, ‘Kerajaan film impor’, *Tempo*, 22 July 1989.

2008).<sup>51</sup> It was quickly becoming apparent that Sudwikatmono operated under a different set of rules to everyone else: “we, the small importers had to align ourselves with the prevailing regulations, but PT Suptan quickly gained the autonomy to import Mandarin films freely” (Endah, 2005: 136).<sup>52</sup> As Sudwikatmono’s hold increased over film imports, other importers were left with few options as their film supplies dwindled. Existing film importers had to either align themselves with Suptan, find other business in the industry, or leave altogether. Sudwikatmono thus found a coterie of compliant importers who supported his position and who, in return, received import rights or capital to produce films.<sup>53</sup> These were the ethnic minority producers who already faced discrimination and criticism because of their race.

A similar pattern of co-option and partnerships characterized the rapid expansion of the 21 Cinemas, in the mid to late 1980s.<sup>54</sup> Sudwikatmono (1992) claims that he got the idea of the cineplex from a visit to the USA, but he also brought the more important idea of vertical integration. Using his import monopoly as his leverage, Sudwikatmono was able to expand his network of cinemas “joining with many friends outside Jakarta to establish the 21 Group in a number of provinces” (1992: 160).<sup>55</sup> In Central Java, for example, by working with PT Sanggar film (Bambang Widotomo), Subentra (Benny Suherman and Sudwikatmono) came to supply over 200 cinemas directly. Independent cinema owners in Jakarta, such as the owner of the iconic Megaria Cinema found that

---

<sup>51</sup> Up until the offer from the Tan brothers, Sudwikatmono was an ad-hoc producer with the PT Sugar Indah company, and had produced a number of films.

<sup>52</sup> “Kami, importir-importir kecil harus menyesuaikan diri dengan peraturan yang berlaku, tapi P.T. Suptan melaju dengan kelueluasannya mengimpor film Mandarin dengan bebas.”

<sup>53</sup> This was facilitated by the regulations that stipulated that importers had to fund local films as part of their import rights.

<sup>54</sup> Discussed in Section 2.8.

<sup>55</sup> “Kelompok saya memperluas cakrawala dengan mengikutsertakan lebih banyak teman-teman di luar Jakarta untuk membangun Kelompok 21 di berbagai daerah.” Sudwikatmono in Jauhari (1992: 160).

“rather than face bankruptcy, it is better for us to rent out”,<sup>56</sup> meaning to work with Subentra. Within three years, of the 66 *sineplex* in the country, 15 were ‘21’ cinemas and another 41 operated a split-income system with them.<sup>57</sup>

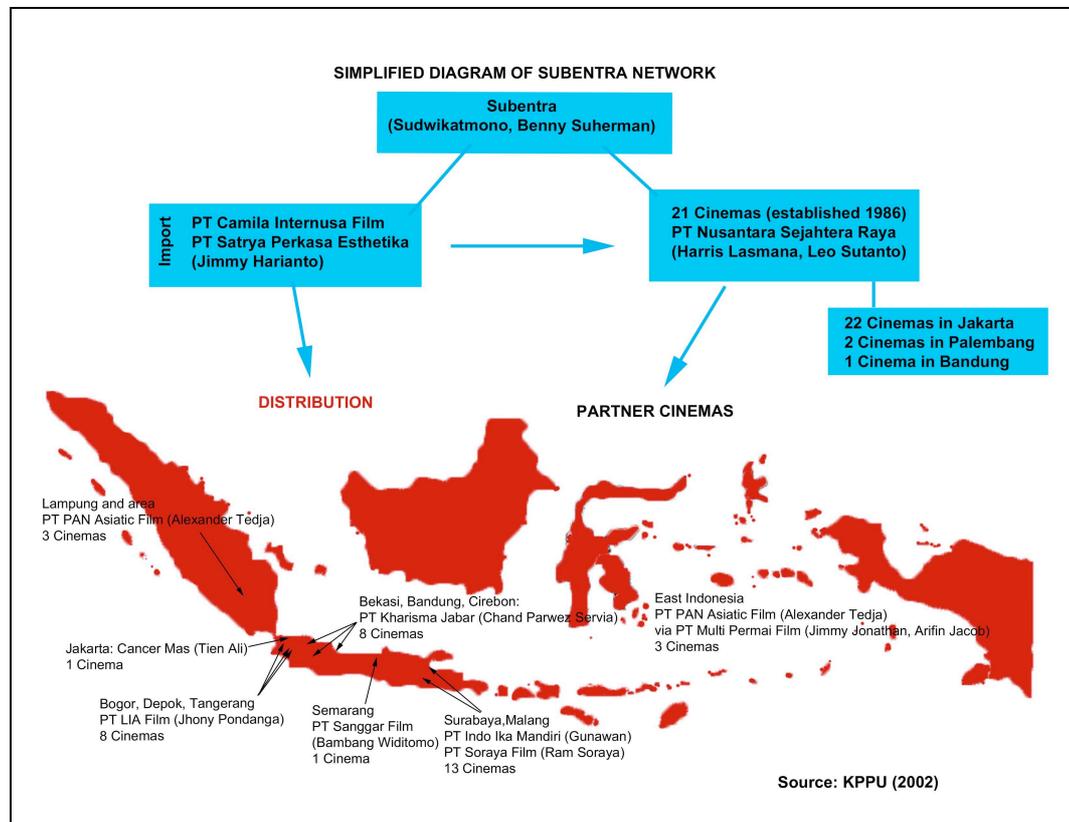


Figure 7. Sudwikatmono’s Network in the New Order Film Industry

Raam Punjabi is typical of this class of importer-producers who aligned themselves with Sudwikatmono. In his autobiography published in 2005, Punjabi presents himself as a realist who did whatever it took to realize his dream of becoming a successful businessman in the film industry. Thus, despite his obvious consternation at the “ever-tightening grip of the monopoly,”<sup>58</sup> he soon went into business with the very same monopoly, helping Subentra to convert their Kartika

<sup>56</sup> “Ketimbang bangkrut, ya mendingan kami sewakan.” Kusuma, Budi et al. ‘Kerajaan film impor’ *Tempo* 22 July 1989.

<sup>57</sup> Budi Kusuma, Sri Pudyastuti, Tri Budiarto Soekarno, ‘Kerajaan film impor’, *Tempo*, 22 July 1989.

<sup>58</sup> “Cengkeraman monopoli semakin menguat” Endah (2005: 180).

Chandra cinema into a four-screen multiplex,<sup>59</sup> thus providing the model for 21's subsequent expansion. Sudwikatmono promised that "with his help, the Kartika Chandra Cineplex would never be in short supply of good films because he controlled 100% of film imports."<sup>60</sup> When the first 21 brand Cinema was built at 21 Thamrin in Central Jakarta, Punjabi held a 30% stake.

Further collaboration was evident in a film magazine called *Majalah Film* published in the 1980s, with links to Harmoko, the Minister of Information. Harmoko, before becoming minister in 1983, was a journalist who had established the *Pos Kota* publishing group in the late 1960s, whose flagship tabloid was popular amongst lower class Jakartans. Under the *Pos Kota* umbrella, *Majalah Film* was founded with editors Harris Lesmana, Chand Parwez Servia and Jhonny Pondanga, then head of PT LIA Anugerah Semesta, owner of 21 brand cinemas in South Jakarta.<sup>61</sup> Day to day operations were managed by Johan Tjasmadi, the then head of the Association of Indonesian Cinema Owners (GPBSI). The magazine was not an industry publication per se, but intended for mass circulation with news about film, with a focus on the stars and upcoming films. It was clear however, that it gave form to some of the informal relationships in the industry between the Minister, producers and cinema owners as well as the industry body representing cinema owners.

---

<sup>59</sup> Benny Suherman and Bambang Sutrisno had a falling out in the early 1980s. Although they both continued in separate businesses with Sudwikatmono, Subentra, the company behind the 21 Cineplex was owned by Suherman and Sudwikatmono. They also operated Bank Subentra together. Bank Surya was owned by Bambang Sutrisno and Sudwikatmono. See Keng and Lin (2008).

<sup>60</sup> "Dia mengatakan, dengan bantuannya maka Cineplex Kartika Chandra tidak akan kekurangan pasokan film-film bagus karena dia menguasai 100% impor film." Endah (2005: 193).

<sup>61</sup> According to the 2002 KPPU (Komisi Pengawas Persaingan Usaha, 'Commission for the Supervision of Business Competition') investigation into the 21 Group, the board of PT LIA Angara Semesta consisted of Jhonny Pondaga as Managing Director, Harris Lesmana and Jimmy Harianto (21 owner) as Directors, Suryo Suherman as Principal Commissioner, Ruben Mulyadi dan Samuel Budiyo each as Commissioners.

By the 1990s however, many of the producers saw that television was a growing industry that offered far greater profits than cinema and so left film production. 21 cinemas had by this stage largely turned its back on local films, and screened almost exclusively Hollywood films. The few producers who remained in film production had shifted almost exclusively to making erotic titles for the few independent, non-21 Cinemas. These were distributed in Jakarta by Tien Ali of Cancer Mas Film, a producer, associate of Sudwikatmono and secretary general of the GPBSI (Association for Cinema Owners). Although the stability of the film industry in the 1980s had provided the big producers with substantial capital, producing for television would be where they would generate huge fortunes. In 1988, Raam Punjabi could afford to produce *Jakarta* (1988) with American actor Peter Noth, at a production cost of one million US dollars. As an indication of his wealth *Forbes* magazine in 2008 listed his wealth at \$US100 million, making him the 38th richest person in Indonesia.

## **7.6 The Old Producers Since 1998**

Together these producers form an informal oligopoly. It is informal because it is not operationalized through open collusion, but rather is asserted through the positionality of the big producers in the contemporary industry. These producers emerged with a shared experience of the New Order film industry which not only enriched them but solidified their positions subjectively, as ‘minority’ producers. Most important is their structural position in industry organizations such as the PFFI (Persatuan Produser Film Indonesia, ‘Association of Indonesian Film Producers’) and GPBSI (Gabungan Pengusaha Bioskop Seluruh Indonesia, ‘Organisation of Indonesian Cinema Owners’) and their stake

in the 21 Cineplex. Even though the Sudwikatmono is no longer active in the film industry, the big producers have retained their structural position in the industry, providing them with significant advantage and leverage over newer entrants. Moving to television in the early 1990s not only expanded their networks in the media industry, but gave them a stable supply of capital, which they could use for film production after 1998 when they felt the conditions were favourable again.

In the late 1960s, Raam Punjabi (b. 1943), Harris Lesmana (b. 1949) and brothers Gope T. Samtani (b. 1943) and Shanker Samtani (1937-2010, often credited as Subagio S.) were all close friends in Pasar Baru. The Samtani brothers were the first to enter the film business in 1968 as importers and distributors, and established their own production company, Rapi Films, in 1971. Punjabi entered the importing business by buying the active importer Indako Film in 1970,<sup>62</sup> and worked with his two older brothers Dhamoo and Gobind Punjabi. In 1971 they produced their first film, and went on to make many of the popular Warkop DKI comedies in the 1980s. Lesmana meanwhile worked in other companies before establishing his own production company PT Nusantara Film in 1976. After producing a number of award winning films in the early 1980s, Lesmana became managing director of PT Camila Internusa Film (import and distribution company of Subentra) and in 1987, the managing director of PT Subentra Nusantara (21 Cinemas). Raam Punjabi regards Harris Lesmana and Benny Suherman (the owner of the 21 Cinemas) as his ‘comrades.’<sup>63</sup>

Younger than this group, but one of the major players now, is Chand Parwez Servia (b. 1959). His brother owned cinemas in West Java, which Parwez

---

<sup>62</sup> In 1974 due to a government regulation, Indako changed its name to PT Panorama Films. Later the company was called Parkit Films and then Tripar. The company is now known as Multivision Plus, or MVP.

<sup>63</sup> “Teman seperjuangan saya, Benny Suherman dan Haris Lesmana.” Endah (2005: 140).

expanded, at the same time monopolizing distribution in West Java and integrating it with his chain of cinemas. Servia says of himself:

I start in cinemas from the third grade till high school and then I stopped because I need to go to university but at that time I still see everybody, see Raam [Punjabi], see Gope [Samtani]. People in the cinema business starting then... my brother started then. I'm always helping him. [...] My eldest brother is on Gope's age, Raam Punjabi's age. [...] I'm younger than them so... for me they are like my brothers. Harris Lesmana, maybe you know him also, the one who coming into 21. He is also like my mentor.<sup>64</sup>

Servia quickly expanded the cinema business to include distribution for the entire West Java region, and used this money to fund films:

Before we do cinemas we are funding Rapi Film, Parkit Film, Raam Punjabi and other's company. We give the money to... to ask them to create the movie that good for our market. Mostly it's good also for the market of Indonesia.<sup>65</sup>

In 1986, he began producing with the help of East Java distributor Hatoek Subroto (b. 1940) and Servia's first film as producer *Pacar Pertama* (1986, 'First Girlfriend') was co-produced with Camila Internusa (21 Cinemas).

From within Subentra/21 itself would also emerge two big producers in the post-1998 film industry. Leo Sutanto (b. 1947), mentioned earlier, came through the Suptan-Subentra companies first as a subtitler of Mandarin films then as General Manager of 21 Cinemas. Between 1997 and 1999, he worked as a producer in Indika Entertainment, the production arm of Subentra, but left in 1999 and formed a new production company Prima Entertainment with Gunawan Sulaiman from SCTV (also part owned by Sudwikatmono). Sutanto formed his own production company, Sinemart, three years later. Sutanto was succeeded as

---

<sup>64</sup> Personal interview, 17 July 2008.

<sup>65</sup> Chand Parwez Servia, personal interview, 17 July 2008.

producer in Indika by Shanker RS (b. 1966), a former producer in Multivision (1986-1995) and Starvision (1995-2005). Shanker helped expand Indika as a film production company, bringing his twenty years of experience working in the industry.

The 1998 financial crisis brought Sudwikatmono to the brink of bankruptcy, with both of his banks Bank Subentra and Bank Surya forced into liquidation. Benny Suherman took his share of Subentra, evident in the division of the Kartika Chandra complex on Jalan Jenderal Gotot Subroto in Jakarta which includes the Kartika Chandra Cineplex, the Hotel Kartika Chandra and the Mitra Building which houses the Indika Group of companies. Sudwikatmono's son Agus Lasmono (b. 1971) took over what was left of Subentra, renaming it Indika with its interests in mining, petrochemicals, entertainment and property, and he sits on the SCTV board as Independent Commissioner. Benny Suherman himself was under investigation for financial irregularities, and after fleeing Indonesia, installed his children as directors of the companies.<sup>66</sup> This also strengthened the hand of Harris Lesmana in 21 Cinemas.

In the period since 1998, the old companies have continued producing content for television, but have been attracted to film because of the unreliability and delays in payment from the television stations. Since 2002, Rapi Films has been run by Gope Samtani's son, Sunil Samtani (b. 1968),<sup>67</sup> although Gope and Subagio still serve as executive producers of the family company. In 2002, Dhamoo Punjabi left Multivision, and with his son Manoj Punjabi (b. 1972), formed a new company MD Entertainment. MD Entertainment has since expanded rapidly as a content provider for television, overtaking the once

---

<sup>66</sup> Suryo Suherman and Melia Suherman. See KPPU (2002).

<sup>67</sup> He actually joined Rapi in 1992, but left in the late 1990s to pursue other business.

dominant Multivision, and produced their first film in 2007 (*Kala*, 'Dead Time'). MD produces films as MD Pictures, and horror films under its subsidiary Mitra Pictures. Raam Punjabi, who still owns cinemas within the 21 Group, opened another cinema with businessman Abdul Latief in 2002,<sup>68</sup> the MPX Grande Boutique Cinema in Blok M Jakarta, known as a cinema for the local Indian community.

Hatoek Subroto during the 1990s had established Elang Perkasa, an equipment rental and film processing company. Although the 1998 crisis almost bankrupted him, he survived with money borrowed from film producers Handi Muljono (PT Diwangkara Citra Swara Film) and Madhu Mahtani (PT Andalas Kencana Film). Both of their post-1998 films were then funded by Subroto.<sup>69</sup> Other prominent players include Tien Ali (PT Cancer Mas), a former producer, cinema owner and film distributor for Jakarta; and Alexander Tedja, a businessman who owns the Blok M mall as well as a number of cinemas in Sumatra and Bangka and the film import company PT Pan Asiatic Film. Johnny Pondanga, who owns 21 Cinemas in South Jakarta (Lia Indah Swastika Film), is also a member of the GPBSI. He produced films in the 1990s, and recently co-produced *Rasa* (2009, 'Feeling'). As an example of their cross-connections, MD Pictures employs Karan Mahtani, son of Madhu Mahtani, as a co-producer and the MD Pictures subsidiary Mitra Pictures has employed both Firman Bintang, producer with Kanta Indah Film, and Madhu Mahtani as producers for their films.

Although these connections did not appear publicly as open collusion, connections were evident in a number of important film institutions. In line with

---

<sup>68</sup> Abdul Latief is a well-known businessman who owns the television station Lativi and Pasarraya Department stores amongst other things. He was Minister for Labour from 1993 to 1998 under President Soeharto.

<sup>69</sup> 2008 with *Rien Pembunuh Berantai* ('Rien The Wild Murderer') and in 2007 with *Roh* ('The Evil Spirit')

New Order regulations, all producers had been required to join the PPFII (Association of Indonesian Film Producers) as it was one of the institutions through which the state could exercise authority over the industry. Djamaluddin Malik had established the PPFII in 1954 to strengthen the bargaining position of producers vis-à-vis the state. As of 2008, the PPFII is headed by Raam Punjabi, and includes five of the big producers in the oligopoly.<sup>70</sup> Notably, independent producers such as Mira Lesmana, Shanty Harmayn and other new companies such as Maxima Pictures are not members of the PPFII.<sup>71</sup> For them, the PPFII was an irrelevant institution that did not represent their interests as young producers.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, the PPFII is the peak body representing producers and film companies, and is recognized by the government as such. They are, for example, in charge of selecting Indonesia's submission to the Oscars as well as sending delegations to international film markets.<sup>73</sup>

These close relationships are replicated in the organizational structure of the local committee for the Asia Pacific Film Festival which was to be held in Indonesia in 2008, although it was cancelled due to the monetary crisis. Established by Japan in 1954, the festival travels each year to a different Asian country. In Indonesia, Raam Punjabi is the central driver of the festival, and when I met him in 2008, he spoke enthusiastically about the festival and how it is held to promote Asian films between Asian countries.<sup>74</sup> It is also an arena in which the

---

<sup>70</sup> See Handry Satriago and Wayah S. Wirotto 'Indonesia Movie Industry: A Competitiveness Study' presentation at the Industry Panel, JIFFEST Jakarta 9 December 2008. Slides available at <http://www.inicp.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/presentation-for-acismall-file.ppt>, accessed 01/02/2010. See also Tjasmadi (2008: 165)

<sup>71</sup> See for example the interview with Nan Achnas where she discusses some difficulties of not being a member of PPFII. 'Nurman Hakim and Nan Achnas: Fighting against censorship' *The Jakarta Post*, 12 May 2009.

<sup>72</sup> See for example 'KONGRES PPFII Adisoerya Abdy Dicalonkan Lagi Raam Punjabi Menolak', *Disc Tarra*, 16 July 2001.

<sup>73</sup> Silvia Wong, 'Indonesia submits Love For Share as Oscar entry', *Screen*, 3 October 2006.

<sup>74</sup> Personal interview, Raam Punjabi, 17 August 2008.

relationships between government agencies (specifically the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and the Jakarta City Government) are forged with this group of producers. Members of the organizing committee for the festival include Gope Samtani as the Organizing Committee Chairman, Chand Parwez Servia as the Second Secretary, Harris Lesmana as Head Treasurer assisted by Harry Simon (former cameraman, now producer with Virgo Putra Film) and Jimmy D Herianto (21 Cinemas owner).<sup>75</sup> Other members include Hatoek Subroto and Punjabi's wife Raakhee Punjabi. Younger filmmakers like Mira Lesmana criticize the festival for being a parade of actors and actresses rather than a serious forum for promoting Asian films.<sup>76</sup> For these local producers however, it is another instance where they work together and in cooperation with the government.

A 2002 investigation by the Business Competition Supervisory Commission (KPPU)<sup>77</sup> went some way in exposing how the oligarchy was connected to the 21 Group. In a sign of the times, the NGO Monopoly Watch filed a case with the KPPU accusing the 21 Group of monopoly and unfair business practices.<sup>78</sup> A product of *reformasi*, Law No. 5 of 1999 (*UU No. 5 tahun 1999 Larangan Praktek Monopoli*) was instituted to break up existing business monopolies and prevent the formation of new ones. The investigation showed how powerful NGO groups had become in the immediate aftermath of *reformasi*, and conversely, how state patronage had declined for crony-protected businesses such as 21.

---

<sup>75</sup> Listed on the festival website 'Festival Committee' <http://www.52apff.com/festival-committee/>, accessed 26/10/2008.

<sup>76</sup> Personal interview, 30 January 2009.

<sup>77</sup> *Komisi Pengawas Persaingan Usaha*

<sup>78</sup> See Monopoly Watch (2002). They may have been sponsored by PT Swe Zhe Cinemas, a cinema owner in Makassar who was struggling to obtain Hollywood films from 21. See Nugroho Dewanto, Eduardus Karel Dewanto, Iwan Setiawan, 'Dominasi, Bukan Monopoli' *Tempo*, 7 April 2003.

In the KPPU investigation, the connections between PT Camila Internusa Film (import and distribution), PT Satria Perkasa Esthetika Film (import and distribution) and PT Nusantara Sejahtera Raya (cinemas, formerly PT Subentra Nusantara) were investigated. Of particular focus were the ownership structures of the three above-mentioned 21 companies and the ability of other companies to enter the import and cinema business. In the investigation that followed, only PT Nusantara Sejahtera Raya were found guilty of violating paragraph 27 of the law which stipulates that an owner cannot have interests in a number of companies that operate in the same industry. It was shown to be particularly true in Surabaya, where their partnership with local operator PT Sanggar Film meant together they controlled more than 50% of the local market. Suryo Suherman (son of Benny Suherman) and Harris Lesmana withdrew from many of these associated companies installing family members and associates in their place. The 21 group were largely cleared of monopoly practices as defined by the law.

What the KPPU investigation showed, at least, was that the 21 Group had lost some of its indemnity and protection, even if the ensuing KPPU investigation did not prove that they were engaging in unfair or monopoly practices. In 2009, the head of the Indonesian Cinema Owners Association (GPBSI) H. Djonny Syafruddin could confidently state that:

Now there is no monopoly at all. But, back in the 80s it's true there was a monopoly because of the familial connection between the owner of 21 and the state. And not just 21, all of it was monopolized. After reformasi, over the course of ten years, all this has changed.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in 'Sejarah Grup 21 Cineplex', *Warta Ekonomi*, June 2009: 49. "Sekarang tidak ada monopoli sama sekali. Tapi, dulu tahun 80-an benar ada monopoli karena ada hubungan kerabat antara pemilik 21 dan kekuasaan, dan bukan Cuma 21, dulu semua dimonopoli. Pasca reformasi melalui proses 10 tahun semua berubah."

The GPBSI, long an apologist for the 21 monopoly, could now admit that there was a monopoly whereas previous heads had denied it. Syafruddin's claim that it 'has changed' is questionable, especially when Syafruddin's definition of monopoly is based simply on the 'familial connection' between 21 and the state. Similarly, the KPPU investigation looked mainly at the formal aspects of the cinema business, and not at how they exercise their position in the market. The KPPU failed to see the oligopolistic relationships amongst these main figures, even if their businesses in a formal sense remained separate.

## **7.7 The Arrival of Blitz Megaplex**

Turning to the cinema business we can see how the dominance of 21 continued to play out after 1998. Although a few smaller cinemas opened after 1998, serious competition to 21 came in 2006 with the opening of a new cinema chain called Blitz Megaplex. In 2005, a Chinese entrepreneur Suryadi Yakin began importing Mandarin films and opened the small M2 Surya twin cinema in Mangga Dua, North Jakarta. It screens mainly Hong Kong and Korean films and caters to the ethnic Chinese who live in the area. Another businessman in Makassar opened the Swe Tze cinemas, and was central plaintiff in the KPPU case against the 21 Cinemas and their potential practice of monopoly. Neither of these two cinemas significantly challenged 21 due to their location, although Swe Tze was engaged in competition with 21 in Makassar. It was the arrival of Blitz however that upset the dominant position 21 had enjoyed for over two decades by building cinemas in the urban centres of Bandung and Jakarta.

The first Blitz cinema complex opened in 2006 to much fanfare in the city of Bandung, four hours drive south of Jakarta. Since the 1970s, Bandung had been

the sole domain of theatre owner and distributor Chand Parwez Servia. When I asked him about the arrival of Blitz, he said that the competition was good and ultimately benefited the audience.<sup>80</sup> Their arrival provoked Parwez to upgrade a number of his cinemas, converting some to 'XXI' (21's luxury brand), and to shut down those that were underperforming. What annoyed him, he told me, was that Blitz arrived proclaiming themselves as better, rather than as an alternative. He felt they had not given him face as the established cinema operator in the city. Although he initially supplied films to them, he stopped when he found that they were also reviewing films on their website, and felt this was not appropriate for a cinema to be doing. Whether true or not, the result has been that neither Parwez nor any of the oligopoly members give their films to Blitz (Mathari, 2008).

Soon after, Blitz opened two more cinemas in central Jakarta malls, one in the new Plaza Indonesia and the other in Pacific Place, with plans for more in the pipeline.<sup>81</sup> In a piece written about the Blitz Megaplex, reminiscent of commentary on 21 in the late 1980s, senior film journalist Yan Widjaya (2008) focused on the luxuriousness, expanse and social facilities of Blitz as it seeks a higher class audience. No detail was given about who was behind Blitz. Their tickets are priced higher than 21 and, given their locations, their audience pool is from a wealthier strata of cinema goers. Like much of the publicity surrounding Blitz Megaplex, however, little detail was provided about how such a large operation could suddenly appear and build upper end cinemas in a market dominated by one group with strong links to both the government and the main players in the film industry.

Blitz is headed by Ananda Siregar (b. 1975), a young banker and graduate

---

<sup>80</sup> Personal interview, 17 July 2008.

<sup>81</sup> As of January 2010, they have six different sites.

of the University of Chicago. Ananda Siregar is part of a new generation of US-educated investment bankers, with connections to the old conglomerates and networks of power in Indonesia. His father, Arifin M. Siregar, former Central Bank Governor (1983-1988), Minister of Trade (1988-1993), and Ambassador to the USA (1993-1997), oversaw the 1992 decision that officially handed the import monopoly to 21 companies.<sup>82</sup> Until 2002, Ananda Siregar worked in the bank restructuring agency (BPPN, Badan Penyehatan Perbankan Nasional, ‘National Bank Restructuring Agency’) that was established in 1998 following the collapse of Indonesia’s banks in the Asian Financial Crisis. Blitz’s investment came through Quvat Management, a company run by Siregar’s friend Tom Lembong, who had orchestrated the Djarum Group’s (brothers Budi Hartono and Bambang Hartono) takeover of BCA, one of Indonesia’s largest commercial banks, in 2002.

Siregar acknowledged that entering the cinema business, especially in Indonesia where the 21 Group had effective control of both the distribution and exhibition market, “is bound to be a tough battle.”<sup>83</sup> In fact, far from being a new and thus powerless cinema chain, Blitz is a well connected enterprise. In 2008 when Blitz opened a cinema in the new luxurious Mall of Indonesia, in Central Jakarta, they obtained this prime real estate no doubt because of their personal connection to the Djarum Group who owned the mall. Filmmaker Rudi Soedjarwo remarked to me:

This is what makes 21 afraid I think. Because if 21 wants to build a new cinema they have to wait for a mall to be built. They [the capital behind Blitz] can make

---

<sup>82</sup> See the letters between Minister of Trade, Arifin Siregar and Ambassador Carla A. Hills. [http://tcc.export.gov/Trade\\_Agreements/All\\_Trade\\_Agreements/exp\\_005435.asp](http://tcc.export.gov/Trade_Agreements/All_Trade_Agreements/exp_005435.asp), accessed 10/06/2010.

<sup>83</sup> Mukherjee, Andy. 2006. ‘Indonesia Has Many Hedge Funds, Few Risk Takers’, [http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601039&refer=columnist\\_mukherjee&sid=aviuxorqiG0Q](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601039&refer=columnist_mukherjee&sid=aviuxorqiG0Q), accessed 10/06/2010.

mall. These guys can make mall. That's the threat for 21, that I am sure of.<sup>84</sup>

Exactly who is behind Blitz remains a mystery.<sup>85</sup> Blitz's parent company PT Graha Layar Prima has remained very secretive about its investors and backers, and has only been represented in the media by manager Ananda Siregar and marketing manager Wendy Soewono. One other name emerged in 2009 when Blitz took their case to the KPPU, that of AM Hendropriyono as President Commissioner. AM Hendropriyono (b. 1945) was a prominent military commander during the New Order, and, briefly, a Minister of Transmigration in President Habibie's cabinet (1998-1999). He earned the moniker 'butcher of Lampung' following a 1989 military raid on the Islamic village Talangsari in South Sumatra, and later in 1999, led the army's brutal attempts to retain East Timor (Tanter et al. 2006). Blitz had been highly secretive about the composition of its board, and this represents the first revelation about the management structure of the company, indicating the significant weight it has assembled on its board.

Blitz struggled, however, in attracting local producers to play their films in their cinemas. In 2007, of the forty-eight films released, only nine played in Blitz cinemas, and all of these came from small, independent producers.<sup>86</sup> When local production increased in 2008, of the sixty-nine films released up to 22 October,

---

<sup>84</sup> Personal interview, 19 July 2008.

<sup>85</sup> Unsubstantiated rumours from a number of sources suggested to me that Tommy Winata and Aguan (Sugianto Kusuma) are prominent investors in the cinema chain. Both run the Artha Graha Bank, own the Pacific Place mall and operate Agung Sedayu, a property development company. My attempts to secure an interview with Tom Lembong, Ananda Siregar's friend and investment coordinator, were unsuccessful.

<sup>86</sup> *Long Road to Heaven* (prod. Nia Dinata), *Naga Bonar Jadi 2* (prod. Deddy Mizwar), *3 Hari untuk Selamanya* (prod. Mira Lesmana), *Opera Jawa* (prod. Garin Nugroho), *Koper* (prod. Richard Oh), *The Jak* (prod. Andibactiar Yusuf), *Quickie Express* (prod. Nia Dinata).

sixty-seven played in 21, and only fifteen in Blitz.<sup>87</sup> Blitz offered digital screening as a means of attracting local filmmakers who could not afford the high costs of transfer to celluloid, an offer a number of smaller producers took up. Notably, none of the films produced by large production companies screened in Blitz cinemas, especially *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* (2008). Given these conditions, Blitz brought its own case to the KPPU against 21 in 2009, accusing 21 of operating in collaboration with four distributors and six production companies, i.e. the oligopoly. After assessing the case, the KPPU rejected the petition from Blitz since their definition of monopoly does not cover cases of oligopoly, or of informal business arrangements as exists between 21 and film producers. Soon after, the KPPU became embroiled in a corruption scandal after it was revealed that some of its members had made favorable decisions in another case in exchange for bribes.<sup>88</sup> As a result, the impartiality of the KPPU was seriously questioned.

Most of the producers I spoke to rationalized their decision to avoid Blitz based on the fact that 21 offers a greater network of cinemas. Erwin Arnada from Reginema for instance says:

My films previously played in 21, not in Blitz. It is more a commercial evaluation. Of course it is better if both of them screen it. The more outlets there are the better it is for the producer.<sup>89</sup>

His sentiment was echoed by director Viva Westi:

---

<sup>87</sup> The two films that did not play in 21 were *Kita Punya Bendera* (prod. Hadi Marlan) a digital production, and *Kantata Takwa* (prod. Eros Djarot). The makers of *Kantata Takwa* were renowned critics of 21 and the New Order from the early 1990s.

<sup>88</sup> This was a case against First Media, a cable television company owned by the Lippo Group.

<sup>89</sup> “Film-film saya juga kemarin ditayangkan di 21, tidak di Blitz. Karena lebih kepada perhitungan-perhitungan komersial saja. Tapi memang akan lebih enak kalau dua-duanya memutar. Semakin banyak outletnya semakin bagus buat produser” Erwin Arnada, personal interview, 16 June 2008.

At the moment we can all say that if we supply Blitz, 21 will not be happy. There is a monopoly or whatever we don't really know what is going on there. For me, I'd prefer to go with 400 cinemas and be watched by lots of people rather than 3 cinemas [of Blitz]. The ambition of a director is to have audiences watch what she has made, [so] audiences can receive what the maker wants to express.<sup>90</sup>

During my research, many people hinted at intimidation by the 21 group over local producers, a charge 21 has always denied. One producer with a smaller company hinted at this when I spoke to him:

if we basically give Blitz the same copy as 21, the 21 group will... they have power to do something to our movie. And without the support of the 21 Group, we can't do much. And that's a business decision. (Kelvin Kustaman, producer Credo Pictures)

More vocal producers such as Nia Dinata, Mira Lesmana and Deddy Mizwar have however, successfully screened their films in both 21 and Blitz.

These issues go to the heart of the problem in Indonesian cinemas and are ongoing. 21's market dominance combined with the force of *reformasi* provided outlets for local production to seek and play to its local audience. Local productions have boosted the audiences and income for 21, beyond what 21 was earning from just screening Hollywood films. Its split-revenue system and direct distribution mean that local producers deal with one office, and do not need to negotiate with a dozen or more distributors in each province.<sup>91</sup> It also means that films that perform well are rewarded directly with income from the box-office.

Compared to the golden era of the 1980s when there were over 2500 cinemas

---

<sup>90</sup> "Untuk saat ini kita semua bisa bilang bahwa begitu kita masuk dengan Blitz, 21 tidak akan senang. Itulah adanya monopoli atau apa kita nga tahu di belakang. Tapi kalau aku lebih baik memilih 400 bioskop dan ditonton oleh banyak orang dibandingkan 3 bioskop ini. Karena cita-cita seorang sutradara adalah penonton bisa melihat apa yang dia buat, penonton bisa mendapatkan apa yang ingin disampaikan oleh si pembuat." Viva Westi, director, personal interview, 5 June 2008.

<sup>91</sup> Aan Anito, operational manager of 21 Cinemas, made this argument to me.

across the archipelago, in 2007 there were only 483 cinemas (959 screens) of which 21 controlled 67.6% (76.9% of the screens).<sup>92</sup> The 21 system has its benefits for local filmmakers, but its control of the market and the overall shortage of cinemas hinders any further expansion of the film industry, in terms of both profitability and audience access.<sup>93</sup>

At the same time, many of the smaller, independent filmmakers ultimately feel that the dominance of the 21 Group in distribution and exhibition is a problem. They feel that 21 unfairly benefits the larger production companies who are able to book release dates without a film even made, whereas smaller producers can only book a date after having produced their film. Some producers reported a waiting list of about a year. Others cite the lack of quality control in distribution that allows all sorts of films to be screened (Anwar, 2010). They worry that this will ultimately degrade the image of locally made films in the eyes of the audiences. Large producers also tend to blanket release their film by printing between fifty and a hundred copies, going for market saturation rather than optimizing their audience. Blanket releasing and 21's policies also pushes out the films already in the cinemas, sometimes even when they are performing well or are 'sleepers'. For the moment at least, the issues surrounding exhibition will not go away.

## 7.8 Conclusion

With the Asian Financial Crisis and *reformasi*, it appeared as if the old players in the New Order film industry had abandoned the industry altogether, if

---

<sup>92</sup> Teguh Prasetyo, 'Blitz Megaplex in Box-Office Brawl With Group 21 Over Alleged Monopoly', *The Jakarta Globe*, 30 August 2009.

<sup>93</sup> Producer Shanker RS was quite emphatic on this point when I interviewed him.

not bankrupted it. The openness of the film industry in the years from 1998 to 2003 allowed new filmmakers to enter the film industry, many of whom had the creative capital to make films that articulated to contemporary audiences. Over time however these young filmmakers sought capital with the old production companies because of the problems they experienced with private capital. As a result a new accommodation was reached between the old producers and young filmmakers willing to work with them.

By 2008 it was apparent that the film industry was dominated by a group of big producers, almost all of whom had connections in the New Order film industry and to the 21 Group. Together they constitute an informal oligopoly. In the early 1990s these producers had shifted to producing for television where they established themselves and enriched themselves, remaining largely in television until the early 2000s. In returning to film production they developed a working relationship with young creative filmmakers, utilizing their ability to connect with new audiences. The old producers were buoyed by their expanded capital generation from television, and by their membership of the important industry bodies and connections to the 21 cinema chain, which has given these old producers even greater leverage over smaller, newer and independent operators.

Even with the entry of Blitzmegaplex, a cinema company backed by big capital and powerful interests, 21 remains the dominant exhibitor in the country. The infrastructure of the film industry continues to echo the political economy of the New Order, both in the dominant 21 Cinemas and in the new Blitzmegaplex. Filmmakers have been frustrated by the lack of cinemas and by the propinquity between 21 and the big producers. Ultimately this may limit the expansion of the film industry as much of the nation's population remain out of reach of cinemas.

## 8.

### CONCLUSION: THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

Film artists can actually hold lots of discussions, meetings, whatever to make the space of Art Cinema a space that contributes to the development of our film [industry].<sup>1</sup>

- Ratna Sarumpaet, Head of the Jakarta Arts Council

What is clear is that my dream, and the dream of Mira [Lesmana], Riri [Riza] and Nan [Achnas], for our films to be successful in their own country is happening. It might be horror films, but these are films made by our own people.<sup>2</sup>

- Rizal Mantovani, personal interview, 5 November 2008.

#### 8.1 Film and its Cultural Economy

In analyzing the contemporary Indonesian film industry, this thesis has argued that the end of the Soeharto era and *reformasi* brought substantial change to the composition, structure and output of the Indonesian film industry. This thesis has presented a cultural economy of the film industry that has provided novel insights into the structure and form of cultural production in Indonesia. It has revealed the inner workings of the film industry as it was repopulated and revitalized to become an significant component in contemporary pop culture. Overall, this thesis makes important theoretical and empirical contribution to

---

<sup>1</sup> “Seniman film sebenarnya bisa melakukan banyak kegiatan diskusi, pertemuan, apa saja, untuk menjadikan ruang Art Cinema menjadi ruang yang bermanfaat untuk perkembangan perfilman kita.” ‘Aware Saja Tidak cukup, lho!’ *Behind the Screen*, 2(7), 2006.

<sup>2</sup> “Yang jelas adalah bahwa mimpi saya, mimpi Mira, Riri dan Nan untuk film kita itu berjaya di negeri sendiri itu sekarang is happening. Apakah itu horor, tapi itu udah film produk bangsa sendiri.”

studies of cultural production in Asia and to the history of Indonesian film in particular.

This study started by analyzing the concept of *film nasional* that was the de facto history of film in Indonesia and which dominated thinking about film during the New Order. *Film nasional* justified the state's ideological and institutional incursion into film, allowing it to effectively control the medium for its own purposes. The collapse of the New Order and the subsequent period of *reformasi* brought this era of state control to an end. Furthermore, the validity of *film nasional* as an analytical model was brought into question. *Film nasional* insinuated a normative dichotomy between art films and commercial films. *Film nasional* which had been the dominant paradigm during the New Order could not account for the transition that occurred after 1998, nor fully capture the extent and significance of cultural and economic change in post-1998 film production.

This thesis then proceeded to analyze the cultural economy of the revitalized post-1998 film industry. Chapters Three to Seven covered the multiple and complex ways that the social, economic and political changes after 1998 affected cultural production, and specifically film. A new generation of filmmakers repopulated the film industry, bringing their cultural sensibilities to filmmaking and refashioning the mode of film production. Yet they were unable to significantly challenge the position the LSF who continued to be seen as a limitation on the growth of film as an avenue for cultural expression. Nevertheless, by looking at the popular horror films, this thesis has shown how young filmmakers used a commercial genre to explore contentious issues to do with historical trauma. In the case of Islamic films, young filmmakers also engaged with a cultural legacy that extended a long way back in history. These

changes did not mean that the old structures of the film industry were no longer viable; rather, the old producers who form an informal oligopoly with the main cinema chain were able to reassert their dominance in the film industry.

To capture the ways that the end of the New Order altered the conditions of filmmaking in Indonesia it was argued that the complex of economic and cultural dimensions of film needed to be analyzed. The changes and continuities brought about by *reformasi* were not evident simply in one sphere, but occurred in multiple and complex ways across both economic and cultural dimensions. Chapters Three to Seven developed a cultural economy of the contemporary film industry showing the theoretical and empirical limitations of *film nasional* in this regard. For example, *Film nasional* could not account for the popularity of the horror genre and how the genre articulated to its viewers by allegorizing the residual trauma of the New Order. *Film nasional* would dismiss horror as simply a commercial genre without understanding the complex relationships developed between filmmakers, audiences and capital.

By using articulation to conceptualize how locally made films became popular again, this thesis has reinterpreted the place of the audience in Indonesian film. Pop culture in this way is historicized and shows how a pop culture industry responds to local conditions and how history plays into the formation and direction of cultural production. Without the audience it is easy to dismiss pop culture as nothing more than vacuous entertainment or as a fixed entity and treat the dynamism and local variations of pop culture as inconsequential. Articulation points to a richer, more dynamic relationship between production and consumption, and thus links pop culture to social change. Social, economic and historical factors all contributed to the decline, reformation and continuation of

the Indonesian film industry. Without some understanding of the audience and the cultural relevance of contemporary film this would have been impossible. In doing so this study has showed how an analysis of pop culture can avoid the trap of being 'ahistorical' whereby a universal theoretical framework is applied to a particular case without taking into consideration variations over space or time (Grossberg, 1995: 73). Film as pop culture in the context of Indonesia allows us to draw two broader conclusions. These are detailed in the following sections.

## 8.2 Historicizing Pop Culture

Developments in the film industry delineated in this thesis shed light on *reformasi* and its legacy in the decade following Soeharto's resignation. The early optimism that characterized opinions and analyses of *reformasi* has been tempered as many of the predicted social, cultural and economic changes have not come to fruition. In the sphere of politics, whilst the resignation of Soeharto and the subsequent era of *reformasi* were the result of middle class reformers and activism, the subsequent efforts by middle class reformers to penetrate the state apparatus would prove to be fruitless. Middle class reformers failed to establish a presence in government as a political party or as a coherent presence in society. Instead, they found that the political and business elite regrouped, and have "managed to survive and to reorganise their economic power" (Robison and Hadiz, 2004: 187). By the early 2000s, the energy of *reformasi* had largely evaporated and any reform agenda had stagnated.

Contemporaries of the 1998 activists and reformers moved into cultural production where they took advantage of the depopulated film industry and the opportunities available to them between 1998 and 2003. These new filmmakers

were young, educated and middle class, and agitated to establish themselves and their interests in film production. Whereas the middle class reformers largely failed in their efforts to enter the political structures of the Indonesian state, young filmmakers were somewhat more successful in repopulating the film industry and restarting film production which had largely been dormant in the 1990s. Their creative capital proved to be their key attribute as these young filmmakers made films that were able to articulate to local audiences. For these young filmmakers the cinema screen plays an important role in the propagation of culture.

The euphoria and optimism that characterized the years from 1998 to 2003 have largely dissipated. Young filmmakers found that although they had revitalized cultural production, they were less successful in reforming the structures of the film industry, namely eroding the dominance of the 21 network, reforming state agencies and censorship, and introducing more mechanisms to support local production. Instead, the regularization of production saw the re-entry of the big New Order production companies who were able to leverage on the capital accumulated from producing for television and on their informal oligopoly. Their return prompted a new accommodation between the young creative filmmakers and the big production companies. The ability of the old producers to reassert themselves as the dominant producers despite their absence during the years 1998 to 2003 was consistent with the return of New Order interests in other sectors of the economy.

Young filmmakers proved to be the key agents of renewal that the film industry needed to transition to the post-*reformasi* era. These young filmmakers provided the creative capital that was necessary to articulate to contemporary audiences. Their visual and narrative reimagining of the horror genre allowed

audiences to explore the residual trauma of the New Order without necessarily directly representing the violence of the New Order. This has been an important consequence of *reformasi* in that pop culture has provided a means to come to terms with the legacy of the New Order, independent of the success of *reformasi* in the political sphere. For the moment at least, cultural producers produce important cultural work in this post-*reformasi* era in light of their inability to more fully reform the structural conditions of cultural production. A similar process of reengaging with a long history of Islamization in the region was also evident in the debates around Islam and film that became prominent in 2008.

The accommodation reached between young creative filmmakers and New Order era production capital is emblematic of post-*reformasi* Indonesia. Not only did the two sides learn how to adapt to each other, but that it could be mutually beneficial. *Reformasi* also opened space for new production companies such as Salto Films and Miles Productions who form an integral part of the production ecology of the contemporary industry. Whilst analysts inclined to read *reformasi* purely in political terms might overlook pop culture, preferring to see it as socially inconsequential, not only are many of the broader trends of *reformasi* visible in the film industry, these new relationships bring greater clarity to the outcomes of *reformasi* and how it has reflects the relationships between old interests and emergent actors.

### **8.3 From State to Market**

Broadly this thesis has traced the transition from a state-determined film industry to one based on the market. With the concentration of opposition during the 1990s directed at the New Order state and its control of filmmaking, the era

after 1998 has opened up a range of market based forces and interests, many of which had not been visible during *reformasi*. In the period since 2003 the extent of these changes became visible as film production expanded and become more regular and standardized. One feature of a market based culture industry is the proliferation of interests and actors, operating largely free from the centrifugal forces of state regulation and Sudwikatmono's monopoly that had been predominant during the New Order.

The state remains important, especially through the LSF which continues to censor all films released in Indonesia, and to some lesser extent through other government agencies although this work is minor. Whereas during the New Order there was centralized control over the film industry, with private enterprise developed under the state's purview, the same cannot be said for the film industry after 1998. The state has been reluctant to be as involved in the film industry as it once was, due to a combination of the state's general retreat after 1998 as well as a lack of resources. In its place, a variety of new interests now populate the film industry, making the industry more open but at the same time less predictable. The state is simply one of a number of actors in this reconfigured film industry.

Audiences, once simply assumed, are now crucial in this new cultural economy, especially since they determine the revenue for producers far more directly. Whilst audiences remain unvoiced, there is a recognition amongst those in the industry that the audience is the guarantor of the industry's fortunes and that films need to be made that continue to cater to their interests. Elite critics continue to lambast audiences for their preference for 'cheap thrills' in the form of sex and horror, and want to see audiences return to more nationalistic and morally edifying content. However there is growing recognition amongst filmmakers and

observers alike that the popular audiences need to be taken seriously. This shift that sees audiences as active consumers rather than passive recipients accompanies the transition of film from national cinema to pop culture.

Beyond the audience who watches film are members of the broader public who have used films to further their political or moral agenda. This has largely focused on sexuality and is based on the old idea that film is a persuasive forum of decadent sexuality with a profound effect on the minds of viewers. Film is a relatively easy target due to the inability of filmmakers and the actual audience to defend their interests. These reactionary groups or individuals have been aided by a vacillating LSF who tend to side with the vocal, conservative critics in the face of controversy. Film as pop culture therefore continues to be the site of ongoing social tension and, to their detriment, young filmmakers have not been fully able to alter some of the enduring negative perceptions about pop culture.

Young, new generation filmmakers continue to be an important creative force in filmmaking. Market conditions would seem to require young creative filmmakers to collectivize their interests yet so far their efforts in this direction have been sporadic and unsustainable. Organizations such as i-sinema and Masyarakat Film Indonesia were not able to generate widespread support or convert their efforts into broader structural reform, either in terms of creative autonomy or government policy respectively. What remains to be seen is how a second wave of young filmmakers may shift the balance within the film industry, and whether young filmmakers who have been in the industry for a decade now can move into producing roles.

These complications and clashes of interests are a salient feature of the market era. Multiple film economies are in operation, with artistic filmmakers

following in the steps of Garin Nugroho from the 1990s, and using international film festivals as their means to gain cultural capital. Others have chosen to follow the commercial industry to engage with the politics of this mode of production. In this way, film in Indonesia has moved away from the dualistic national cinema/popular cinema paradigm that characterized film during the New Order, into a market environment in which film behaves as pop culture rather than national cinema. By using cultural economy this thesis delineated the ways in which film as a complex of cultural meaning and economic forces operates and captured this transition in pop culture. The Indonesian film industry, although localized in terms of its thematic concerns, its filmmakers and its audience, is nevertheless increasingly aligned with global forms of pop culture.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdullah, Taufik, H Misbach Jusa Biran and SM Ardan (1993) *Film Indonesia Bagian I (1900-1950)*. Jakarta: Dewan Film Nasional.
- Abshar-Abdalla, Ulil. (2008) "Poligami, Monogami, dan Kontradiksi Modernitas." Available from: <http://islamlib.com/id/artikel/poligami-monogami-dan-kontradiksi-modernitas/> [Accessed 17 November 2010].
- Adorno, Theodor (1991) *The Culture Industry*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ajidarma, Seno Gumira (1999) "Sinema Gerilya." In *Apresiasi Film Indonesia 4*, W.S. Suharto (ed), Jakarta: Direktorat Pembinaan Film dan Rekaman Video: 99-104.
- Ajidarma, Seno Gumira (2004) *The End of the Silent Period. Garin and the Next Generation: New Possibility of Indonesian Cinema*. 9th PUSAN International Film Festival. Pusan: 18-29.
- Ali Bukhari Amir (2008) "Habiburrahman El-Shirazy: AAC, penyebab dakwahnya lebih meluas." *Harakah Daily*, 21 November.
- Amin, Ash and Nigel Thrift, Eds. (2004) *The Blackwell Cultural Economy Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G (1977) "Religion and Politics in Indonesia Since Independence." In *Religion and Social Ethos in Indonesia: papers given at the annual set of public lectures on Indonesia*, Benedict R.O'G. Anderson, Mitsuo Nakamura and Mohammad Slamet (eds). Clayton: Monash University.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G (1983) "Old State, New Society: Indonesia's New Order in Comparative Historical Perspective." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 42(3): 477-496.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G, Ed. (2001) *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program.
- Andrie, Taufik (2007) "Air Mata Surga; Gerakan film independen Indonesia

- memadukan seni, teknik, dan mimpi." [Online]. Available from: <http://www.filmalternatif.org/?m=article.detail&id=27> [Accessed 23/09/2009].
- Antariksa (2005) "Bioskop dan Kemajuan Indonesia Awal Abad XX." In *Penghibur(an): Masa Lalu dan Budaya Masa Kini Indonesia*, Budi Susanto (ed), Yogyakarta: Kanisius: 123-148.
- Anwar, H. Rosihan (1981) *Sebelum Prahara: Pergolakan Politik Indonesia, 1961-1965*. Jakarta: Penerbit Sinar Harapan.
- Anwar, H. Rosihan (1988a) "Film Indonesia: Dari Home Industry Menuju Industri Modern." In *Festival Film Indonesia 1988*, Ilham Bintang (ed), Jakarta: Panitia Tetap FFI 1988: 59-68.
- Anwar, H. Rosihan (1988b) *The Indonesian Film Industry*. Seminar on Asian Films: Survival or Revival, Singapore, 26-28 January.
- Anwar, H. Rosihan (1999) *Reportase Wartawan Film Meliput Festival Film Internasional*. Jakarta: Pustaka Antara Utama.
- Anwar, H. Rosihan (2007) "Insan perfilman berpolitik lagi." *Pikiran Rakyat*, 20 January. Available from: <http://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/cetak/2007/012007/07/0104.htm>.
- Anwar, Joko (2010) "Karya Idealis dan Karya Komersial." *Rolling Stone*, 28 October [Online]. Available from: <http://www.rollingstone.co.id/read/2010/10/28/890/13/2/Karya-Idealis-dan-Karya-Komersial> [Accessed 02/11/2010].
- Anwar, Joko E.H. (2002) "New local films create stimulating phenomenon." *The Jakarta Post*, 28 December [Online]. Available from: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2002/12/28/new-local-films-create-stimulating-phenomenon.html>.
- Anwar, M. Syafi'i (2009) "Political Islam in Post-Soeharto Indonesia: The Contest Between "Radical-Conservative Islam and 'Progressive-Liberal Islam'". In Eric Tagliacozzo (ed), *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, movement, and the Longue Durée*, Singapore: NUS Press: 349-385.
- Appadurai, Arjun (1990) "Disjuncture and difference in the global culture economy." *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 7: 295-310.
- Ardan, S. M. (1992) *Dari gambar idoeop ke sinepleks*. Jakarta: GPBSI.
- Ardan, S. M. (2003) "Dari 'Loetoeng Kasaroeng' ke 'Jelangkung'." *Tempo*, 17

February.

- Ardan, S. M. (2004) *Jejak Seorang Aktor: Sukarno M. Noor Dalam Film Indonesia*. Jakarta: Aksara Karunin.
- Ardiansyah, Arif (2004) "VCD Bajakan Film Buruan Cium Gue Laku Keras." *Tempo Interaktif*, 23 August. Available from:  
<http://www.tempointeractive.com/hg/nusa/sumatera/2004/08/23/brk,20040823-15,id.html>.
- Arief, M. Sarief, Manimbang Kahariady and Yayan Hadiyat (1997) *Permasalahan Sensor dan Pertanggungjawaban Etika Produksi*. Jakarta: Badan Pertimbangan Perfilman Nasional.
- Arief, Sarief M (2010) *Politik Film di Hindia Belanda*. Yogyakarta: Mahatari.
- Arsuka, Nirwan Ahmad (2008) "Sensor dan Kebebasan." *Kompas*, 27 January.
- Barendregt, Bart and Wim van Zanten (2002) "Popular Music in Indonesia since 1998, in Particular Fusion, Indie and Islamic Music on Video Compact Discs and the Internet." *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 34: 67-113.
- Barker, Joshua (2001) "State of Fear: Controlling the Criminal Contagion in Suharto's New Order." In *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*, Benedict R. O'G Anderson (ed), Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program: 20-53.
- Barker, Thomas (2008) "Ahmadiyah and the Crisis of Indonesian Islam." *The Jakarta Post*, 11 July. Available from:  
<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/07/11/ahmadiyah-and-crisis-indonesian-islam.html>.
- Barker, Thomas (2010) "Historical Inheritance and 'Film Nasional' in post-Reformasi Indonesian Cinema." *Asian Cinema*, 21(2): 7-24.
- Barker, Thomas and Veronica Kusuma (2009) "The new law will put films back in the box." *The Jakarta Post*, 9 September. Available from:  
<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/09/09/the-new-law-will-put-films-back-box.html>.
- Batara, Bobby (2009) "Plagiarisme dan Film Indonesia." *Jakarta Beat* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.jakartabeat.net/film/194-plagiarisme-dan-film-indonesia.html> [Accessed 11/05/2010].
- Baulch, Emma (2002) "Alternative music and mediation in late New Order Indonesia." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 3(2): 219 - 234.

- Beck, Ulrich (2007) "The Cosmopolitan Condition: Why Methodological Nationalism Fails." *Theory Culture Society*, 24(7-8): 286-290.
- Benda, Harry J. (1965) "Decolonization in Indonesia: The Problem of Continuity and Change." *The American Historical Review*, 70(4): 1058-1073.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1990) "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation." In *Nation and Narration*, Homi K. Bhabha (ed), London: Routledge: 291-322.
- Biran, H Misbach Yusa (1986) *Snapshots of Indonesian Film History and Non-Theatrical Films in Indonesia*. Jakarta: National Film Council.
- Biran, H Misbach Yusa (1988) *Merenungkan Kembali Visi dan Langkah Besar Para Pelopor Perfilman dalam Mendorong Awal Perkembangan Industri Film Indonesia*. Penyegaran Tekad dan Semangat Joeng Insan Perfilman Dalam Memasuki Repelita V, Jakarta, 11 August 1988.
- Biran, H Misbach Yusa (2001) "The History of Indonesian Cinema at a Glance." In *Film in South East Asia: Views from the Region*, David Hanan (ed), Hanoi: SEAPAVAA: 211-252.
- Biran, H Misbach Yusa (2005) "Brief History of the Indonesian Film." *Journal of Film Preservation*, 69: 2-6.
- Biran, H Misbach Yusa (2008) *Kenang-Kenangan Orang Bandel*. Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu.
- Biran, H Misbach Yusa (2009) *Sejarah Film 1900-1950: Bikin Film di Jawa*. Depok: Komunitas Bambu.
- Blackburn, Susan (1999) "Gender violence and the Indonesian political transition." *Asian Studies Review*, 23(4): 433 - 448.
- Bodden, Michael (2005) "Rap in Indonesian Youth Music of the 1990s: "Globalization," "Outlaw Genres," and Social Protest." *Asian Music*, 36(2): 1-26.
- Bourchier, David and Vedi R. Hadiz (2003) *Indonesian Politics and Society: A Reader*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Bramantyo, Hanung. (2007) "Sundel Bolong" *Jagad Pakeliran* [Online]. Available from:  
[http://hanungbramantyo.multiply.com/journal/item/5/SUNDEL\\_BOLONG](http://hanungbramantyo.multiply.com/journal/item/5/SUNDEL_BOLONG)

- [Accessed 19/01/2010].
- Bramantyo, Hanung. (2008a) "AAC Bajakan!!!" *Jagad Pakeliran* [Online]. Available from: <http://hanungbramantyo.multiply.com/journal/item/12> [Accessed 17 November 2010].
- Bramantyo, Hanung. (2008b) "Ayat-Ayat Pribadi Seorang Sutradara" *Jagad Pakeliran* [Online]. Available from: <http://hanungbramantyo.multiply.com/journal/item/13> [Accessed 22 November 2010].
- Brophy, Philip (1985) "Horrority - The Textuality of Contemporary Horror Films." *Screen*, 27(1): 11.
- Bubandt, Nils (2008) "Ghosts with Trauma: Global Imaginaries and the Politics of Post-Conflict Memory." In *Conflict, Violence and Displacement in Indonesia* Eva-Lotta E. Hedman (ed), Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program: 275-302.
- Budianto, Lilian (2008) "Islamic romance novels make splash." *The Jakarta Post*, 2 March.
- Budiman, Arief (2006) *Kebebasan, Negara, Pembangunan: Kumpulan Tulisan 1965-2005*. Jakarta: Pustaka Alvabet.
- Budiman, Fajar (1990) *Eng, Ing, Eng... Kumpulan Kritik Fajar Budiman di Surat Kabar Harian Jayakarta*. Jakarta: Harian Umum Jayakarta.
- Burns, Peter (1989) "The Post Priok Trials: Religious Principles and Legal Issues." *Indonesia*, 47: 61-88.
- Chairil, Nova (2010) "Looking at both sides of the national cinema." *The Jakarta Post*, 28 April.
- Cheah, Philip, Ed. (2004) *And the Moon Dances: The Films of Garin*. Yogyakarta: Bentang.
- Choi, Jinhee and Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano, Eds. (2009) *Horror to the Extreme: Changing Boundaries in Asian Cinema*. TransAsia: Screen Cultures. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Cholid, Mohamad, Leila S. Chudori and Riza Sofyat (1990) "Sinepleks tanpa singa mengaum." *Tempo*, 48.
- Chua, Christian (2006) *Chinese Big Business in Indonesia: The State of Capital*. Sociology, National University of Singapore, Singapore.
- Chudori, Leila S. (1998) "Hasil Perdana Kuartet Sutradara Muda." *Tempo*, 7

December.

- Chudori, Leila S. (2001) "Sinema Indonesia Baru: Sebuah Daya Hidup." *Tempo*, 21 May.
- Ciecko, Anne (2006a) "Ada Apa Dengan Indonesian Cinema? (What's Up With Indonesian Cinema) Interviews with Filmmakers Riri Riza and Rudy Soedjarwo." *Asian Cinema*, 17(1): 90-107.
- Ciecko, Anne Tereska, Ed. (2006b) *Contemporary Asian Cinema: Popular Culture in a Global Frame*. Oxford ; New York: Berg.
- Clark, Marshall (2004) "Men, Masculinities and Symbolic Violence in Recent Indonesian Cinema." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 35(1): 113-131.
- Clark, Marshall (2008) "Indonesian Cinema: Exploring Cultures of Masculinity, Censorship and Violence." In *Popular Culture in Indonesia: Fluid Identities in Post-Authoritarian Politics*, Ariel Heryanto (ed), London and New York: Routledge: 37-53.
- Clover, Carol J. (1992) *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. London: BFI Publishing.
- Cohen, Matthew (2006) *The Komedi Stamboel: Popular Theatre in Colonial Indonesia, 1891-1903*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Collins, Elizabeth Fuller (2002) "Indonesia: A Violent Culture?" *Asian Survey*, 42(4): 582-604.
- Collins, Elizabeth Fuller (2003) "'Islam is the Solution' Dakwah and Democracy in Indonesia." *Kultur*, 3(1): 151-182.
- Creed, Barbara (1986) "Horror and the Monstrous-Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection." *Screen*, 27(1): 44-71.
- Cribb, Robert (1999) "Nation: Making Indonesia." In *Indonesia Beyond Suharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition*, Donald K. Emmerson (ed), New York: East Gate.
- Cribb, Robert (2002) "Unresolved Problems in the Indonesian Killings of 1965-1966." *Asian Survey*, 42(4): 550-563.
- Crouch, Harold (2010) *Political Reform in Indonesia after Soeharto*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Darmawan, Hikmat (2007a) "Dosa Asal Film Indonesia." *Kompas*, 20 March.
- Darmawan, Hikmat (2007b) "Dosa Film Indonesia." *Rumah Film* [Online]. Available from: [http://old.rumahfilm.org/artikel/artikel\\_dosa.htm](http://old.rumahfilm.org/artikel/artikel_dosa.htm)

- [Accessed 03/03/2010].
- Darmawan, Hikmat (2008) "Laskar Pelangi: Fiksi dan Alkemi." *Rumah Film* [Online]. Available from: [http://old.rumahfilm.org/resensi/resensi\\_laskarpelangi\\_1.htm](http://old.rumahfilm.org/resensi/resensi_laskarpelangi_1.htm) [Accessed 11/05/2010].
- de Klerk, Nico (2008) "'The Transport of Audiences': Making Cinema 'National'." In *Early Cinema and the "National"*, Richard Abel, Giorgio Bertellini and Rob King (eds). New Barnet: John Libbey: 109-117.
- Departemen Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Republik Indonesia (2008) *Draft Naskah Akademik Undang-Undang Perfilman*. Departemen Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Republik Indonesia: Jakarta.
- Dewan Film Nasional (1980) *Pola Dasar Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Perfilman Nasional*. Jakarta: Dewan Film Nasional.
- Dewanto, Nugroho, Eduardus Karel Dewanto and Iwan Setiawan (2003) "Dominasi, Bukan Monopoli." *Tempo*, 7 April.
- Dhakidae, Daniel (2001) "Lifestyles and Political Behavior of the Indonesian Middle Classes." In *Exploration of the Middle Classes in Southeast Asia*, Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao (ed), Taipei: Program for Southeast Asian Area Studies, Academia Sinica: 475-513.
- Dick, H. W. (1985) "The Rise of a Middle Class and the Changing Concept of Equity in Indonesia: An Interpretation." *Indonesia*, 39: 71-92.
- Dickson, Anne (2007) "This woman wants polygamy." *Inside Indonesia* Oct-Dec [Online]. Available from: <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edition-90/this-woman-wants-polygamy>.
- van Dijk, Cornelis (1981) *Rebellion under the banner of Islam : the Darul Islam in Indonesia*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Dinata, Nia (2005) "Apakah Sineas Indonesia Harus Menunggu?" *Kompas*. Available from: <http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0506/25/Jendela/1836314.htm>.
- Dittmer, Lowell (2002) "The Legacy of Violence in Indonesia." *Asian Survey*, 42(4): 541-544.
- Du Gay, Paul , et al. (1997) *Doing cultural studies: the story of the Sony Walkman*. Milton Keynes: The Open University.
- Dulwahab, Encep (2009) "Sensor dalam Penonton Cerdas." *Kompas*, 10

- December. Available from:  
<http://cetak.kompas.com/read/xml/2009/12/10/16063624/Sensor.dalam.Penonton.Cerdas>.
- Dwi, Bayu (2001) "Independent filmmakers express themselves." *The Jakarta Post*, 11 March.
- Effendy, Heru (2008) *Industri Perfilman Indonesia. Sebuah Kajian*. Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Endah, Alberthiene (2005) *Panggung Hidup Raam Punjabi*. Jakarta: Grasindo.
- Farid, Hilmar (2007) "Indonesia's original sin: mass killings and capitalist expansion, 1965–66." In *The Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Reader*, Kuan-Hsing Chen and Chua Beng Huat (eds). Abingdon: Routledge: 207-222.
- Fauzannafi, Zamzam (2003) "Catatan Kecil Pengalaman "Nonton" Film Fatahillah." *Clea*, 4: 35-43.
- Fealy, Greg (2008) "Consuming Islam: Commodified religion and aspirational pietism in contemporary Indonesia." In *Expressing Islam, religious life and politics in Indonesia*, Greg Fealy and Sally White (eds). Singapore: ISEAS: 15–39.
- Feith, Herbert (1962) *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Ferdiansyah (2005) "Obat Kuat untuk Film Indonesia." *Behind the Screen*: 34-35.
- Foulcher, Keith (1969) "A survey of events surrounding Manikebu. The struggle for cultural and intellectual freedom in Indonesian literature." *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 125(4): 429-465.
- Foulcher, Keith (1980) *"Pujangga Baru": Literature and Nationalism in Indonesia 1933-1942*. Adelaide: Flinders University Asian Studies Monograph No. 2.
- Foulcher, Keith (1986) *Social Commitment in Literature and the Arts: The Indonesian "Institute of People's Culture" 1950-1965*. Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University.
- Frederick, William H. (1982) "Rhoma Irama and the Dangdut Style: Aspects of Contemporary Indonesian Popular Culture." *Indonesia*, 34: 103-130.
- Frederick, William H. (1997) "Dreams of freedom, moments of despair: Armijn Pané and the imagining of modern Indonesian culture." In *Imagining Indonesia: Cultural Politics and Political Culture*, Jim Schiller and

- Barbara Martin-Schiller (eds). Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Centre for International Studies: 54-89.
- Galigo, Syamsul Bahri Andi (2000) "Harakah Islamiah Dan Era Reformasi Indonesia." In *Dakwah Gerakan Islam Alaf Baru*, Ahmad Redzuwan Mohd Yunus, Badlihisam Mohd Nasir and Berhanundin Abdullah (eds). Bangi Selangor: Jabatan Pengajian Dakwah dan Kepimpinan, Fakulti Pengajian Islam, UKM: 194-206.
- Garnham, Nicholas (1995) "Political Economy and Cultural Studies: Reconciliation or Divorce?" *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 12(1): 62-71.
- Garnham, Nicholas (2001) "Contribution to a Political Economy of Mass Communication." In *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords*, Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas Kellner (eds). Malden: Blackwell Publishers: 225-252.
- Geertz, Clifford (1960) *The Religion of Java*. Glencoe: Free Press.
- Geertz, Hildred (1963) *Indonesian Cultures and Communities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- George, Kenneth M. (1998) "Designs on Indonesians' Muslim Communities." *Journal of Asian Studies*, 57(3): 693-713.
- Gibson, Chris and Kong, Lily (2005) 'Cultural economy: a critical review' *Progress in Human Geography*, 29(5): 541-561.
- Goggin, Gerard (2006) *Cell phone culture : mobile technology in everyday life*. London: Routledge.
- Grossberg, Lawrence (1986) "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall." *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10(2): 45-60.
- Grossberg, Lawrence (1995) "Cultural studies vs. political economy: Is anybody else bored with this debate?" *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 12(1): 72-81.
- Gunawan, B. (1973) "Political Mobilization in Indonesia: Nationalists against Communists." *Modern Asian Studies*, 7(3): 707-715.
- Gunawan, T.Sima (2007) "Hilman Hariwijaya: Bringing Lupus back to life after years of hiatus." *The Jakarta Post* 28 July [Online]. Available from: <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2007/07/28/hilman-hariwijaya-bringing-lupus-back-life-after-years-hiatus.html> [Accessed 17/11/2010].

- Hadiz, Vedi R. (2000) "Retrieving the Past for the Future? Indonesia and the New Order Legacy." *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 28: 11-33.
- Hadriani, P. (2004) "Sukses Ini Datang Terlalu Cepat." *Koran Tempo*, 11 January. Available from:  
<http://www.korantempo.com/korantempo/koran/2004/01/11/Profil/index.html>.
- Hadriani P. (2007) 'Review of *Terowongan Casablanca*', *Koran Tempo*, 23 February.
- Hakim, Christine (2005) "Indonesian Cinema As Seen By..." *Journal of Film Preservation*(69): 5-12.
- Hall, Stuart (1981) "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular." In *People's History and Socialist Theory* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul: 227-240.
- Hanan, David (1996) "Indonesian Cinema." In *The Oxford History of World Cinema*, Edward Nowell-Smith (ed), Oxford: Oxford University Press: 690-693.
- Hanan, David, Ed. (2001) *Film in South East Asia: Views from the Region*. Hanoi: SEAPAVAA.
- Hanan, David (2004) "Garin Nugroho: Refusing the Stereotype, Challenges Posed by Indonesia's Filmmaker of the 1990s." In *And the Moon Dances: The Films of Garin*, Philip Cheah (ed), Yogyakarta: Benteng: 144-183.
- Hanan, David (2008a) 'Changing Social Formations in Indonesian and Thai Teen Movies.' In *Popular Culture in Indonesia: Fluid Identities in Post-authoritarian Politics*, Ariel Heryanto (ed), Abingdon: Routledge, 54-69.
- Hanan, David (2008b) *Garin Nugroho's West Papuan Films: The 'West Papuan Spring' and its Aftermath*. 17th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Melbourne, 1-3 July 2008.
- Hanan, David (2008c) "Moments of Renewal – Alternative Ways of Viewing Indonesian Cinema." [Online]. Available from:  
[www.upena.uitm.edu.my/publications/j02/j02\\_v2\\_2008/5.pdf](http://www.upena.uitm.edu.my/publications/j02/j02_v2_2008/5.pdf).
- Hanan, David (2010) "Innovation and Tradition in Indonesian Cinema." *Third Text*, 24(1): 107-121.
- Happy, S. and Leila S. Chudori (1991) "Langitku Di Rumah Pengadilan." *Tempo*, 20 July.
- Hariyadi (2010) *Islamic Popular Culture and the New identity of Indonesian*

- Muslim Youths*. 18th Biennial Conference of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, Adelaide, 5-8 July 2010.
- Harmoko (1977) *Berpijak Pada Bumi Indonesia*. Penyegaran Tekad dan Semangat Toeng Insan Perfilman Dalam Memasuki Repelita V, 11 August 1988.
- Harsono, Andreas. (2004) "Protes Terhadap Pelarangan Film Buruan Cium Gue" *Andreas Harsono* [Online]. Available from: <http://andreasharsono.blogspot.com/2004/08/protes-terhadap-pelarangan-film-buruan.html> [Accessed 29/01/2011].
- Haryadi, Rohmat (2008) *Saat Bioskop Jadi Majelis Taklim: Sihir Film Ayat-Ayat Cinta*. Jakarta: Hikmah.
- Hasan, Noorhaidi (2009) "The making of public Islam: piety, agency, and commodification on the landscape of the Indonesian public sphere." *Contemporary Islam*, 3: 229–250.
- Hatley, Barbara (1994) "Cultural Expression." In *Indonesia's New Order: The Dynamics of Socio-economic Transformation*, Hal Hill (ed), St Leonards: Allen & Unwin: 216-266.
- Hatley, Barbara (1999) "New directions in Indonesian women's writing? The novel 'Saman'." *Asian Studies Review*, 23(4): 449 - 460.
- Hayward, Susan (2005) *French National Cinema*. Abington and New York: Routledge.
- van Heeren, Katinka (2007) "Return of the Kyai: representations of horror, commerce, and censorship in post-Suharto Indonesian film and television " *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 8(2): 211-226.
- van Heeren, Katinka (2009) *Contemporary Indonesian Film: Spirits of Reform and Ghosts from the Past*. Universiteit Leiden, Leiden.
- van Heeren, Katinka (2010) "Reverberations of Kantata Takwa." *Asian Cinema*, 21(2): 92-113.
- Hefner, Robert W. (1993) "Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class." *Indonesia*, 56: 1-35.
- Heider, Karl G. (1991) *Indonesian Cinema: National Culture on Screen*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Heider, Karl G. (1994) "National Cinema, National Culture: The Indonesian Case." In *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema*, Wimal

- Dissanayake (ed), Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 162-173.
- Heryanto, Ariel (1990) "Introduction: State Ideology and Civil Discourse." In *State and Civil Society in Indonesia*, Arief Budiman (ed), Clayton.
- Heryanto, Ariel (1999) "Where Communism never dies: Violence, trauma and narration in the last Cold War capitalist authoritarian state." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2(2): 147-177.
- Heryanto, Ariel (2005) *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia; Fatally Belonging*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Heryanto, Ariel, Ed. (2008) *Popular Culture in Indonesia: Fluid Identities in Post-Authoritarian Politics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hew, Wai-Weng (2010) "Marketing the Chinese Face of Islam." *Inside Indonesia* Jan-Mar [Online]. Available from: <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edition-99/marketing-the-chinese-face-of-islam-07021258> [Accessed 29/01/2011].
- Hill, David T. (1994) *The Press in New Order Indonesia*. Murdoch: Asia Research Centre on Social, Political and Economic Change, Murdoch University.
- Hjort, Mette and Scott Mackenzie, Eds. (2000) *Cinema and Nation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hoesterey, James B. (2008) "Marketing Morality: The Rise, Fall and Rebranding of AA Gym." In *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, Greg Fealy and Sally White (eds). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies: 95-112.
- Holmes, James S. (1955) "A Quarter Century of Indonesian Literature." *Books Abroad*, 29(1): 31-35.
- Hooker, Virginia Matheson (1999) "Expression: Creativity Despite Constraint." In *Indonesia Beyond Suharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition*, Donald K. Emmerson (ed), Armonk: East Gate: 262-291.
- Huyung, Dr. (1951) 'Apa jang harus masuk dalam Undang2 Film Baru.', *Aneka*, 4: 17
- Huyung, Dr. (1952) 'Tjatatan Film' *Aneka* 7: 13.
- Igak, Satria Wibawa, Ed. (2009) *Isu Minoritas Dalam Sinema Indonesia Pasca Orde Baru*. Surabaya: Dewan Kesenian Jawa Timur.
- Imanjaya, Ekky (2007) "Who's Afraid of Democracy - The Politics of Freedom in Indonesia." *Cinemaya*, 1(4): 8-11.

- Imanjaya, Ekky (2009a) "Idealism versus Commercialism in Indonesian Cinema: A Neverending Battle?" *Rumah Film* [Online]. Available from: [http://old.rumahfilm.org/artikel/artikel\\_neverending\\_1.htm](http://old.rumahfilm.org/artikel/artikel_neverending_1.htm).
- Imanjaya, Ekky (2009b) "'When Love Glorifies God'." *Inside Indonesia* Jul-Sep [Online]. Available from: <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edition-97/a-when-love-glorifies-goda> [Accessed 16/11/2010].
- Sinematek Indonesia (1979) *Apa Siapa Orang Film Indonesia 1926-1978*. Jakarta: Yayasan Artis Film dan Sinematek Indonesia.
- Irawanto, Budi (1999) *Film, Ideologi dan Militer: Hegemoni Militer dalam Sinema Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Media Pressindo, Yayasan Adikarya IKAPI & Ford Foundation.
- Irawanto, Budi (2007) "Menakar Estetika Film Indonesia Populer." In *Kandang dan Gelanggang: Sinema Asia Tenggara Kontemporer*, Eric Sasono (ed), Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam: 114-124.
- Ishizaka, Kenji (2004) "Garin Nugroho: Fighting with Films." In *And the Moon Dances: The Films of Garin*, Philip Cheah (ed), Yogyakarta: Bentang: 100-116.
- Iskandar, Eddy D. (2006) *Bandung Tonggak Sejarah Film Indonesia*. Bandung: Pustaka Dasentra.
- Isla, Veronica (2010) "Challenging Grand Narratives on the Nation: ASEAN Independent Filmmakers' Indirect Participation in Development Discourse." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 11(3): 457-469.
- Ismail, Ifan Adriansyah (2008) "Laskar Pelangi: A Hesitant Warrior among 'Laskar Pelangi'." *Rumah Film* [Online]. Available from: [http://old.rumahfilm.org/resensi/resensi\\_laskarpelangi.htm](http://old.rumahfilm.org/resensi/resensi_laskarpelangi.htm) [Accessed 11/05/2010].
- Ismail, Usmar (1983) *Usmar Ismail Mengupas Film*. Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan.
- Jancovich, Mark, Ed. (2002) *Horror, the film reader*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Jassin, H. B. (1983) *Pengarang Indonesia dan Dunianya. Kumpulan Karangan*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Jassin, H. B. (1986) "The Literature of Revolution." In *Born in Fire: The Indonesian Struggle for Independence: an anthology*, Colin Wild and

- Peter Carey (eds). Athens: Ohio University Press: 28-33.
- Jauhari, Haris, Ed. (1992) *Layar Perak: 90 Tahun Bioskop di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Dewan Film Nasional; Gramedia Pustaka Utama
- Juliastuti, Nuraini (2006) "Whatever I Want: media and youth in Indonesia before and after 1998." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 7(1): 139-143.
- Karana, Kinanti Pinta and Markus Junianto Sihalo (2009) "'We Killed Balibo 5,' Former Indonesian Soldier Says." *The Jakarta Globe* 8 December [Online]. Available from: <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/we-killed-balibo-5-former-indonesian-soldier-says/346128> [Accessed 23/10/2010].
- Karya, Teguh (1988) "In Search of Ways and Means for Making the Film an Instrument of Expression." In *Histories and Stories: Cinema in New Order Indonesia*, Krishna Sen (ed), Melbourne: Monash University.
- Keng, Kim yung and Zheng wei Lin (2008) "Relationship between Chinese Businessmen and Local Elites in Malaysia and Indonesia." *Interfaces for Advanced Economic Analysis* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.kier.kyoto-u.ac.jp/coe21/dp/151-160/21COE-DP157.pdf>.
- Khoiri, Ilham (2008) "Setelah "Ayat-ayat Cinta" ...." *Kompas*, 22 June.
- Khoo, Gaik Cheng (2010) "Spotlight on the Films of Indonesian Filmmaker Edwin." *Asian Cinema*, 21(2): 135-149.
- Kitley, Philip (2000) *Television, nation, and culture in Indonesia*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies.
- Kleden, Ignas (1987) "Pop Culture: Criticism and Recognition." *Prisma*, 43: 3-7.
- KPPU (2002) *Putusan: Perkara Nomor: 05/KPPU-L/2002*. Jakarta: Komisi Pengawas Persaingan Usaha,.
- Kristanto, J.B. (2004) *Nonton Film Nonton Indonesia*. Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas.
- Kristanto, J.B. (2007) *Katalog Film Indonesia 1926-2007*. Jakarta: Nalar.
- van der Kroef, Justus M. (1970) "Interpretations of the 1965 Indonesian Coup: A Review of the Literature." *Pacific Affairs*, 43(4): 557-577.
- Kueh, Adeline Siaw-Hui (2003) *Pontianak and her Sisters: Representations of Monstrosity in Southeast Asian Popular Culture*. What Lies Beneath: Postgraduate Conference 2003, Melbourne, 6 November.
- Kurasawa, Aiko (1987) "Propaganda Media on Java under the Japanese 1942-

- 1945." *Indonesia*, 44: 59-107.
- Kurnia, Novi (2006) "Lambannya Petumbuhan Industri Perfilman." *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik*, 9(3): 25.
- Kurnia, Novi (2008) *Posisi dan Resistensi: Ekonomi Politik Perfilman Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: FISIPOL UGM.
- Kurnia, Novi (2009) "Berbagi Suami (Love for Share): The Discourse of Polygamy in a Recent Indonesian Film." *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* February [Online]. Available from: <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue19/kurnia.htm> [Accessed 17 November 2010].
- Kurnia, Novi, Budi Irawanto and Rahayu (2004) *Menguak Peta Perfilman Indonesia*. Jakarta and Yogyakarta: Kementerian Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata RI; Jurusan Ilmu Komunikasi, FISIPOL, Universitas Gadjah Mada; Fakultas Film dan Televisi, Institut Kesenian Jakarta.
- Kusuma, Budi, Sri Pudyastuti and Tri Budianto Soekarno (1989) "Kerajaan film impor." *Tempo* 22 July [Online]. Available from: <http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/cetak/1989/07/22/FL/mbm.19890722.FL23164.id.html> [Accessed 28/07/2009].
- Kusuma, Veronica (2008) "When religion sells: How cinema is used to create Muslim identities." *The Jakarta Post*, 27 September.
- Kusuma, Veronica (2009) *Hantu-Hantu dalam Film Horor Indonesia*. Kajian Media Departemen Film, Fakultas Film dan Televisi, Institut Kesenian Jakarta, Jakarta.
- Kusuma, Veronica and Ignatius Haryanto (2007) "Sensor Film di Indonesia." In *Ketika Sensor Tak Mati-Mati*, Ignatius Haryanto (ed), Jakarta: Yayasan Kalam.
- Kwok, Yenni (1998) "Betting on a Defender of the Faith: A tepid bid to fire up Indonesia's film industry." *Asiaweek* 15 August.
- Laffan, Michael Francis (2003) *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma Below the Winds*. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Lembaga Sensor Film (2008) "Jawaban Terinci Lembaga Sensor Film Bag.4." [Online]. Available from: <http://webs.lsf.go.id/> [Accessed 26/11/2008].
- Lent, John A. (1990) *The Asian Film Industry*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Lesmana, Mira and Shanty Harmayn (2004) "Menggugat Pemerintah dan

- Organisasi Film " *Kompas*, 4/12/2004. Available from:  
<http://www2.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0412/04/JIFFes/1414909.htm>.
- Levine, David (1969) "History and Social Structure in the Study of Contemporary Indonesia." *Indonesia*, 7: 5-19.
- Liddle, R. William (1996) "The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: a Political Explanation." *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 55(3): 613-634.
- Lowenstein, Adam (2005) *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Lubis, Mochtar (1992) *Budaya, masyarakat dan manusia Indonesia: himpunan "catatan kebudayaan" Mochtar Lubis dalam Majalah Horison*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.
- Machmudi, Yon (2008) *Islamising Indonesia: The Rise of Jemaah Tarbiyah and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)*. Canberra: ANU E Press.
- Maimunah (2010) "Indonesian Queer and the Centrality of Heteronormative Family." *Asian Cinema*, 21(2): 114-134.
- Mariani, Evi (2008) "Hanung Bramantyo: Hitting the right marks." *The Jakarta Post*, 23 March. Available from:  
<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/03/23/hanung-bramantyo-hitting-right-marks.html>.
- Marselli (1993) "Dunia Film Kita dan Karya Sastra." *Horison*, 7+8(28): 266-267.
- Marx, Karl (1852) *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. Available from:  
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/>,  
 accessed 31/01/2011.
- Mathari, Rusdi (2008) "Ayat-Ayat Monopoli Bioskop." *Rusdi GoBlog* [Online]. Available from: <http://rusdimathari.wordpress.com/2008/03/22/ayat-ayat-monopoli-bioskop/>.
- McGlynn, John H. (2000) "Silenced Voices, Muted Expressions: Indonesian Literature Today." *Manoa*, 12(1): 38-44.
- McGregor, Katharine E. (2007) *History in Uniform: Military Ideology and the Construction of Indonesia's Past*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- McRoy, Jay, Ed. (2005) *Japanese Horror Cinema*. Traditions in World Cinema. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Media Development Authority (2005) "Singapore Media Companies Go Regional

- In Co-Productions With Leading Indonesia Partners." 30 November [Online]. Available from:  
<http://www.mda.gov.sg/NEWSANDEVENTS/PRESSRELEASE/2005/Pages/30112005D.aspx>.
- Miles, Peter and Malcolm Smith (1987) *Cinema, Literature and Society*. London: Croom Helm.
- Miller, Toby, et al. (2005) *Global Hollywood 2* London: BFI Publishing.
- Mohamad, Goenawan (1975) "An Introduction to the Contemporary Indonesian Cinema." *Prisma*, 1(1): 75-82.
- Mohamad, Goenawan (1980) *Seks, Sastra, Kita*. Jakarta: Sinar Harapan.
- Mohamad, Goenawan (2005) *Sidelines: thought pieces from Tempo magazine*. Jakarta: Equinox Publishing.
- Monopoly Watch (2002) *Monopoli Bioskop 21 Cineplex Group. Position Paper 004/MW/VII/2002*. Jakarta.
- Moretti, Franco (2005) *Signs Taken for Wonders: On the Sociology of Literary Forms*. London and New York: Verso.
- Mukherjee, Andy (2006) "Indonesia Has Many Hedge Funds, Few Risk Takers." [Online]. Available from:  
[http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601039&refer=columnist\\_mukherjee&sid=aviuxorqiG0Q](http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601039&refer=columnist_mukherjee&sid=aviuxorqiG0Q) [Accessed 10/06/2010].
- Napack, Jonathon (1999) "Reborn Indonesian Theater Is Alive and Kicking." *The New York Times*, August 3, 1999. Available from:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/1999/08/03/style/03iht-theater.2.t.html?pagewanted=1>.
- Nef-Saluz, Claudia (2007) "Islamic Pop Culture in Indonesia. An anthropological field study on veiling practices among students of Gadjah Mada University of Yogyakarta." *Arbeitsblätter des Instituts für Sozialanthropologie der Universität Bern* [Online]. Available from:  
[http://www.anthro.unibe.ch/unibe/philhist/anthro/content/e1765/e1766/e4108/e4110/e4111/files4307/ab41\\_ger.pdf](http://www.anthro.unibe.ch/unibe/philhist/anthro/content/e1765/e1766/e4108/e4110/e4111/files4307/ab41_ger.pdf) [Accessed 30/11/2009].
- Negus, Keith (2002) "Identities and Industries: the Cultural Formation of Aesthetic Economies." In *Cultural Economy: cultural analysis and commercial life*, Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke (eds). London: Sage:

115-131.

- Nugroho, Garin (2005) *Seni Merayu Massa*. Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas.
- Nurhayati, Desy (2008) "SBY tearful, Kalla laughs." *The Jakarta Post*, 31 March.
- Nurmila, Nina (2005) "Polygamy and chickens." *Inside Indonesia* Jul-Sep [Online]. Available from: <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edition-83/polygamy-and-chickens>.
- Nyman, Mikaela (2006) *Democratising Indonesia: the challenges of civil society in the era of Reformasi*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.
- O'Malley, W.J. (1980) "Second Thoughts on Indonesian Nationalism." In *Indonesia: The Making of a Nation*, J.A.C. Mackie (ed), Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University: 601-614.
- Pandjaitan, Hinca IP and Dyah Aryani P (2001) *Melepas Pasung Kebijakan Perfilman di Indonesia: Catatan untuk Undang-Undang Perfilman Baru*. Jakarta: Warta Global Indonesia.
- Pané, Armijn (1953) "Produksi Film Tjerita di Indonesia: Perkembangannya sebagai Alat Masyarakat." *Indonesia*, 4(1-2): 5-112.
- Panitia Persiapan Loka Karya Perfilman Nasional (1978) *Masalah Perfilman Nasional*. Lokakarya Perfilman Nasional, Jakarta, 3-4 March 1979.
- Paramaditha, Intan (2007) "Pasir Berbisik and new women's aesthetics in Indonesian cinema." *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, 49.
- Paramaditha, Intan (2010) "Passing and Conversion Narratives: Ayat-Ayat Cinta and Muslim Performativity in Contemporary Indonesia." *Asian Cinema*, 21(2): 69-91.
- Pattisina, Edna C (2007) "Selamat Datang di Republik Hantu." *Kompas*, 22 March. Available from: <http://www.kompas.com/kompas-cetak/0703/22/daerah/3400248.htm>.
- Peck, Janice (2006) "Why We Shouldn't Be Bored with the Political Economy versus Cultural Studies Debate." *Cultural Critique*, 64: 92-125.
- Peransi, D.A. (1997) *D.A. Peransi dan Film*. Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Film.
- Permata, Ahmad-Norma and Najib Kailani (2010) "Islam and the 2009 Indonesian Elections, Political and Cultural Issues. The Case of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)." *Occasional Paper*. Bangkok: IRASEC.
- Phillips, Richard (2001) "To explore one of the dark episodes in Indonesian

- history." *World Socialist Web Site* [Online]. Available from:  
<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/sep2001/ganu-s19.shtml>.
- Prakosa, Gotot (2005) *Film Pendek Independen Dalam Penilaian: Sebuah Catatan dari Berbagai Festival 'Film Pendek dan Film Alternatif' di Indonesia*. Jakarta: Komite Film Dewan Kesenian Jakarta; Yayasan Seni Visual Indonesia.
- Prakosa, Gotot (2008) *Film Pinggiran: Antologi Film Pendek, Film Eksperimental, dan Film Dokumenter*. Jakarta: Yayasan Seni Visual Indonesia.
- Prasad, Ugoran (2001) "Indonesia's Filmmaking Renaissance." *Latitudes*, 7: 58-61.
- Prasetyo, Teguh (2009) "Blitz Megaplex in Box-Office Brawl With Group 21 Over Alleged Monopoly." *The Jakarta Globe* August 30 [Online]. Available from: <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/business/blitz-megaplex-in-box-office-brawl-with-group-21-over-alleged-monopoly/327014> [Accessed 10/12/2010].
- Priyono, Ami (1977) "Intoxicating Distractions Are Most Effective." *Prisma*, 7: 32-34.
- Pudyastuti R., Sri , Wahyu Muryadi and Indrawan (1994) "Suara dari balik seluloid yang panas itu." *Tempo* 25 June [Online]. Available from: <http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/email/1994/06/25/FL/mbm.19940625.FL2114.id.html> [Accessed 13/08/2009].
- Purdey, Jemma (2002) "Problematizing the Place of Victims in Reformasi Indonesia: A Contested Truth about the May 1998 Violence." *Asian Survey*, 42(4): 605-622.
- Purdey, Jemma (2006) *Anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia, 1996-1999*. Honolulu University of Hawai'i Press.
- Qardhawi, Yusuf (1997) *Sistem Masyarakat Islam dalam Al Qur'an & Sunnah (Malaamihu Al Mujtama' Al Muslim Alladzi Nasyuduh)*. Solo: Citra Islami Press.
- Rahman, Lisabona (2005) "History, Propaganda, and Perception: A Conversation on Gie." *Criticine* [Online]. Available from: [http://www.criticine.com/review\\_article.php?id=9](http://www.criticine.com/review_article.php?id=9).
- Raillon, Francois (1993) "The New Order and Islam, or the Imbroglia of Faith and

- Politics." *Indonesia*, 57: 197-217.
- Ricklefs, M.C. (2008) *A History of Modern Indonesia, Since c. 1200*. Houndmills and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rinaldo, Rachel (2008) "Muslim women, middle class habitus, and modernity in Indonesia." *Contemporary Islam*, 2(1): 23-39.
- Roberts, John (1999) "Dogme 95." *New Left Review*, I(238).
- Robison, Richard (1986) *Indonesia: The Rise of Capital*. North Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Robison, Richard (1996) "The middle class and the bourgeoisie in Indonesia" In *The New Rich in Asia: Mobile phones, McDonalds and middle-class revolution*, Richard Robison and David Goodman, eds. London and New York: Routledge: 79-101.
- Robison, Richard and Goodman, David (1996) "The new rich in Asia" In *The New Rich in Asia: Mobile phones, McDonalds and middle-class revolution*, Richard Robison and David Goodman, eds. London and New York: Routledge: 1-16.
- Robison, Richard and Hadiz, Vedi R. (2004) *Reorganising Power in Indonesia: The Politics of Oligarchy in an Age of Markets*, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Rodriguez, Robert (1996) *Rebel Without a Crew, Or How a 23-Year-Old Filmmaker with \$7,000 Became a Hollywood Player*. New York: Plume.
- Roy, Olivier (2004) *Globalized Islam : the search for a new Ummah*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rusdi, Prima, Ed. (2007) *Bikin Film, Kata 40 Pekerja Film!* Jakarta: Penerbit Majalah Bobo.
- Ryans, Tony (2004) *The Identity of Garin Nugroho. Garin and the Next Generation: New Possibility of Indonesian Cinema*. 9th Pusan International Film Festival. Pusan.
- Ryanto, Tony (2003) "The Screening of Indonesia." *Variety* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.variety.com/article/VR1117881415?refCatId=19> [Accessed 29/10/2009].
- Said, A. Umar. (2009) "Data-Data Kasus Pelanggaran HAM Semasa Orde Baru" *A. Umar Said - Personal Web Site* [Online]. Available from: <http://umarsaid.free.fr/Data->

- data%20kasus%20Ham%20semasa%20Orde%20Baru.html [Accessed 26/05/2010].
- Said, Salim (1987) "Film in Indonesia." *Prisma*, 43: 65-72.
- Said, Salim (1991a) *Pantulan Layar Putih: Film Indonesia dalam Kritik dan Komentar*. Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan.
- Said, Salim (1991b) *Shadows on the Silver Screen: A Social History of Indonesian Film*. Jakarta: The Lontar Foundation.
- Said, Salim (1992a) "Bioskop dalam Prespektif." In *Layar Perak: 90 Tahun Bioskop di Indonesia*, Haris Jauhari (ed), Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama: 141-146.
- Said, Salim (1992b) "FFI 1991: Catatan Seorang Jury." *Horison*, 2: 55-58.
- Said, Salim (1992c) "The Rise of the Indonesian Film Industry." *East-West Film Journal*, 6(2): 99-115.
- Said, Salim and John H. McGlynn (1991) *Cinema of Indonesia*. New York: Festival of Indonesia Foundation.
- Sani, Asrul (1988) "Sumbangan Jakarta dan Daerah Dalam Petumbuhan Perfilman Nasional." In *Festival Film Indonesia 1988*, Ilham Bintang (ed), Jakarta: Panitia Tetap FFI 1988: 79-84.
- Sani, Asrul (1997) *Surat-Surat Kepercayaan*. Jakarta: Pustaka Jaya.
- Saputro, Kurniawan Adi (2005) "Melihat Ingatan Buatan: Menonton Penonton Film Indonesia 1900-1964." In *Penghibur(an): Masa Lalu dan Budaya Masa Kini Indonesia*, Budi Susanto (ed), Yogyakarta: Kanisius: 149-186.
- Saroengallo, Tino (2006) "Laka-Liku Teori Perizinan Produksi Film." *Behind the Screen*, 2: 54-56.
- Sasono, Eric. (2006) "Lentera Merah: Gagal Jadi Penerang" *On Whatever* [Online]. Available from: <http://ericsasono.multiply.com/reviews/item/8> [Accessed 28/04/2010].
- Sasono, Eric (2007) "Dua Tahun Transisi Perfilman Indonesia: Catatan untuk tahun 2005-2007." In *Katalog Film Indonesia 1926-2007*, J.B. Kristanto (ed), Jakarta: Nalar: vii-xv.
- Sasono, Eric (2008a) *Beragam Representasi Islam dalam Beberapa Film Indonesia*. Film-Film Islam, Yayasan Salihara, Jakarta, 12 September 2008.
- Sasono, Eric (2008b) "Laa Ilaha Ilallah, Sambil Telanjang Dada." *Rumah Film*

- [Online]. Available from:  
[http://old.rumahfilm.org/esai/esai\\_kantatatakwa.htm](http://old.rumahfilm.org/esai/esai_kantatatakwa.htm) [Accessed 29/01/2011].
- Sasono, Eric (2008c) "Pertemuan Baru Islam dan Cinta." *Kompas*, 4 April.
- Sasono, Eric (2009) "Inspirasi Muslim Baru." *Koran Tempo*, 2 July.
- Satriago, Handry and Wayah S. Wirotto (2008) *Indonesia Movie Industry: A Competitiveness Study*. Industry Panel - JIFFEST, Jakarta, 9 December.
- Schwarz, Adam (1991) *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia's Search for Stability*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.
- Schwarz, Adam (1999) *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia's Search for Stability*. Second edition. St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Sembiring, Dalih (2009) "Mourning the Passage of Indonesia's Film Bill." *The Jakarta Globe* 8 September [Online]. Available from:  
<http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/artsandentertainment/mourning-the-passage-of-indonesias-film-bill/328748> [Accessed 30/08/2010].
- Sen, Krishna (1982) "The Image of Women in Indonesian Films: Some Observations." *Prisma*, 24: 17-29.
- Sen, Krishna (1983) "Indonesian Film History: In Search of a Perspective." *The Australian Journal of Film Theory*, 15/16: 113-131.
- Sen, Krishna (1985) "Hidden From History: Aspects of Indonesian Cinema 1955-65." *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*, 19(2): 1-55.
- Sen, Krishna (1994) *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order*. London and New Jersey: Zed Books.
- Sen, Krishna (1996) "Cinema Polic(ing)y in Indonesia." In *Film Policy: International, National and Regional Perspectives*, Albert Moran (ed), London and New York: Routledge: 172-184.
- Sen, Krishna (2003) "What's "oppositional" In Indonesian cinema?" In *Rethinking Third Cinema*, Anthony R. Guneratne and Wimal Dissanayake (eds). London and New York: Routledge: 147-165.
- Sen, Krishna (2006) "'Chinese' Indonesians in national cinema." In *Media and the Chinese Diaspora: Community, communications and commerce*, Wanning Sun (ed), London and New York: Routledge: 119-136.
- Sen, Krishna and David T. Hill (2000) *Media, Culture, and Politics in Indonesia*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

- Servia, Chand Parwez (2007) *Laporan Pengurus Pusat PFFI (Persatuan Perusahaan Film Indonesia), Masa Bakti 2004-2007*. Jakarta: Persatuan Perusahaan Film Indonesia.
- Setijadi-Dunn, Charlotte (2009) "Filming ambiguity: Young Chinese Indonesian filmmakers examine questions of Chineseness." *Inside Indonesia* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edition-95/filming-ambiguity> [Accessed 28/01/2011].
- Setijadi-Dunn, Charlotte and Thomas Barker (2010) "Imagining "Indonesia": Ethnic Chinese Film Producers in Pre-Independence Cinema." *Asian Cinema*, 21(2): 25-47.
- Setiyono, Budi. (2002) "Superdirector: One Man Show" *Budi Setiyono* [Online]. Available from: <http://budisetiyono.blogspot.com/2006/10/superdirector-one-man-show.html> [Accessed 13/09 2010].
- Sharpe, Joanne (2002) "Eliana Eliana: Independent Cinema, Indonesian Cinema." *Inside Indonesia* Oct - Dec [Online]. Available from: <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edition-72/eliana-eliana-independent-cinema-indonesian-cinema> [Accessed 31/01/2011].
- Siagian, Bachtiar (1964) *Ichtisar sedjarah perfilman di Indonesia*. Djakarta: Komite Nasional Indonesia untuk FFAA III.
- Siagian, Gayus (2006) *Menilai Film*. Jakarta: Dewan Kesenian Jakarta.
- Siegel, James T. (1998) *A New Criminal Type in Jakarta: Counter-Revolution Today*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Siegel, James T. (2001) "Thoughts on the Violence of May 13 and 14, 1998, in Jakarta." In *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*, Benedict R. O'G Anderson (ed), Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Studies Program.
- Sihar, Alex (2001) "Kemajemukan Karya Sinema Indonesia: Sebuah Cita-cita?" *Konfiden* [Online]. Available from: <http://videotek.konfiden.or.id/pages/makalah03.php> [Accessed 18/02/2010].
- Situmorang, Sitor (2004) *Sastra Revolusioner*. Yogyakarta: Mahatari.
- Sjuman Djaya (1977) "Films in the Hands of Petty Bourgeois." *Prisma*, 7: 28-31.
- Soemardjono (1979) *Perfilman Indonesia Masa Kini dan Nanti*. Lokakarya Perfilman Nasional, Jakarta, 3-4 March 1979.
- Soemardjono (1990) *Aspirasi Film Indonesia Pertama Setelah Perang Dunia II*.

- Darah dan Doa (1950) Karya H. Usmar Ismail. Forum Pembangun Wawasan, 6 April 1990.*
- Stoddart, Helen (1995) "Auteurism and film authorship." In *Approaches to popular film*, Joanne Hollows and Mark Jancovich (eds). Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press: 37-58.
- Stoler, Ann Laura (2002) "On the Uses and Abuses of the Past in Indonesia: Beyond the Mass Killings of 1965." *Asian Survey*, 42(4): 642-650.
- Storey, John (1997) *An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Strassler, Karen (1999) "Stories of Culture: Difference, Nation and Childhood in "Children of a Thousand Islands" an Indonesian Television Series." *SIGHTS - Visual Anthropology Forum* [Online]. Available from: <http://cc.joensuu.fi/sights/karens.htm> [Accessed 31/01/2011].
- Sudwikatmono (1992) "Sinepleks dan Industri Film Indonesia." In *Layar Perak: 90 Tahun Bioskop Di Indonesia*, Haris Jauhari (ed), Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama: 153-161.
- Suharto, WS, Ed. (1999) *Apresiasi Film Indonesia 4*. Jakarta: Direktorat Pembinaan Film dan Rekaman Video.
- Sumardjo, Jacob (1990) "The Audience Factor in the Production of Indonesian Films." In *Indonesian Film Festival 1990*, Salim Said (ed), Jakarta: Foreign Relations Division Indonesian Film Festival Permanent Committee: 71-76.
- Sumarno, Marseth and Nan Triveni Achnas (2002) "Indonesia: In Two Worlds." In *Being & Becoming: The Cinemas of Asia*, Aruna Vasudev, Latika Padgoankar and Rashmi Doraiswamy (eds). Delhi: Macmillan: 152-170.
- Suryakusuma, Julia I. (2004) *Sex, Power and Nation: An Anthology of Writings 1979-2003*. Jakarta: Metafor Publishing.
- Sutton, R. Anderson (2004) ""Reform Arts"? Performance Live and Mediated in Post-Soeharto Indonesia." *Ethnomusicology*, 48(2): 203-228.
- Suwardi, Harun (2000) "Indonesia." In *The Films of ASEAN*, Jose F. Lacaba (ed), Quezon City: ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information: 17-47.
- Suyono, Seno Joko and Dwi Arjanto (2003) "Dari Babi Ngepet hingga Jelangkung." *Tempo*, 17 February.
- Swift, Ann (1989) *The Road to Madiun : The Indonesian Communist Uprising of*

1948. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.
- Tagliacozzo, Eric, Ed. (2009) *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement and the Longue Durée*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Tambunan, Tulus (2006) "The impact of Foreign Direct Investment on poverty reduction: A survey of literature and a temporary finding from Indonesia." [Online] Available from:  
[http://web.mac.com/adrianpanggabean/Loose\\_Notes\\_on\\_Indonesia/Poverty\\_files/Tambunan\\_fdionpoverty.pdf](http://web.mac.com/adrianpanggabean/Loose_Notes_on_Indonesia/Poverty_files/Tambunan_fdionpoverty.pdf) [Accessed 21/6/2011].
- Tanesia, Ade (2003) "Demise of the People's Cinemas." *Latitudes* 25: 60-65.
- Tanter, Richard , Gerry van Klinken and Desmond Ball, Eds. (2006) *Masters of Terror : Indonesia's Military and Violence in East Timor*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Teuku Kemal Fasya (2008) "Ayat-ayat Pop (Cinta)." *Media Indonesia*, 17 April.
- Thapan, Anita Raina (2002) *Sindhi Diaspora in Manila, Hong Kong and Jakarta*. Quezon City: ADMU Press.
- Tjasmadi, HM Johan (1992) "Bioskop Masa Datang." In *Layar Perak: 90 Tahun Bioskop di Indonesia*, Haris Jauhari (ed), Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama: 186-192.
- Tjasmadi, HM Johan (2008) *100 Tahun Sejarah Bioskop di Indonesia (1900-2000)*. Bandung: Megindo Tunggal Sejahtera.
- Toer, Pramoedya Ananta (1998) *The Mute's Soliloquy: A Memoir*. New York: Penguin
- Toer, Pramoedya Ananta (2007) *The Chinese in Indonesia*. Singapore: Select Publishing.
- Toer, Pramoedya Ananta and C. W. Watson (1973) "It's Not an All Night Affair." *Indonesia*, 15: 21-79.
- Tombs, Pete (1998) *Mondo macabro: weird & wonderful cinema around the world*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Trencansky, Sarah (2001) "Final Girls and Terrible Youth: Transgression in 1980s Slasher Horror." *Journal of Popular Film & Television*, 29(2): 63.
- Tudor, Andrew (1997) "Why Horror? The Peculiar Pleasures of a Popular Genre." *Cultural Studies*, 11(3): 443 - 463.
- Turner, Graeme (1993) *Film as Social Practice*. London and New York:

Routledge.

- Watson, C. W. (2000) *Of Self and Nation: Autobiography and the Representation of Modern Indonesia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Webb, Cynthia (2010) "Nan Achnas: A life immersed in cinema." *The Jakarta Post*, 26 October. Available from:  
<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/10/26/nan-achnas-a-life-immersed-cinema.html>.
- Weintraub, Andrew N. (2010) *Dangdut Stories: A Social and Musical History of Indonesia's Most Popular Music*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wicaksono, Adi (2007) "'Dosa Asal' Film Indonesia." *Kompas*, 20 March.
- Widjaya, Yan (2008) "The Rise of Blitzmegaplex Beyond Movies." In *100 Tahun Sejarah Bioskop di Indonesia (1900-2000)*, HM Johan Tjasmadi (ed), Jakarta: Megindo Tunggal Sejahtera: 243-245.
- Widodo, Amrih (2008) "Writing for God: Piety and consumption in popular Islam." *Inside Indonesia* [Online]. Available from:  
<http://www.insideindonesia.org/edition-93/writing-for-god> [Accessed 29/01/2011].
- Wieringa, Saskia Eleonora (2009) "Sexual slander and the 1965-66 mass killings in Indonesia: political and methodological considerations " *ARI Working Paper* [Online]. Available from:  
[http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps09\\_125.pdf](http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/docs/wps/wps09_125.pdf).
- Wijaya, Herman (2008) "Film Indonesia Menggali Kubur Sendiri." *Pikiran Rakyat*, 6 August. Available from: <http://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/prprint.php?mib=beritadetail&id=26385> [Accessed 13/12/2009].
- Wijoseno, Gagah (2008) "Din Syamsuddin: Lawan Fitna dengan Ayat-ayat Cinta." *Detik News* 7 April [Online]. Available from:  
<http://us.detiknews.com/index.php/detik.read/tahun/2008/bulan/04/tgl/07/time/164434/idnews/919701/idkanal/10> [Accessed 20/11/2010].
- Winet, Evan Darwin (2009) "Between Umat and Rakyat: Islam and Nationalism in Indonesian Modern Theatre." *Theatre Journal*, 61(1): 43-64.
- Wong, Silvia (2006) "Indonesia submits Love For Share as Oscar entry." *Screen 3* October [Online]. Available from: <http://www.screendaily.com/indonesia-submits-love-for-share-as-oscar-entry/4028948.article> [Accessed

10/12/2010].

- Wood, Robin (2002) "The American Nightmare: Horror in the 70s." In *Horror, the Film Reader*, Mark Jancovich (ed), London and New York: Routledge.
- Young, Ken (1999) "Post-Suharto: a change of regime?" In *Reformasi: Crisis and change in Indonesia*, Arief Budiman, Barbara Hatley and Damien Kingsbury (eds). Clayton: Monash Asia Institute: 69-104.
- Yunanto, Reza (2009) "Imam Besar Istiqlal: Perempuan Berkalung Sorban Fitnah Terhadap Pesantren." *detikNews* 6 February [Online]. Available from: <http://us.detiknews.com/read/2009/02/06/113608/1080518/158/imam-besar-istiqlal-perempuan-berkalung-sorban-fitnah-terhadap-pesantren> [Accessed 22/11/2010].
- Zhang, Yingjin (2009) *Cinema, space, and polylocality in a globalizing China*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Zinoman, Peter and Nancy Lee Peluso (2002) "Rethinking Aspects of Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Indonesia and East Timor." *Asian Survey*, 42(4): 545-549.
- Zurbuchen, Mary S. (2002) "History, Memory, and the "1965 Incident" in Indonesia." *Asian Survey*, 42(4): 564-581.
- Zurbuchen, Mary S., Ed. (2005) *Beginning to Remember: The Past in the Indonesian Present*. Singapore: Singapore University Press.

## Newspaper and Online Sources

- ‘Abidah El Khalieqy: "Saya Cinta Kiai dan Pesantren"' *Koran Tempo*, 15 February 2009,  
<http://www.korantempo.com/korantempo/cetak/2009/02/15/Tamu/index.html>, accessed 22/11/2010.
- ‘Asrul Sani: Films Can Never Replace the Function of ‘Kiais’,’ *Tempo*, 12 November 2000.
- ‘Aware Saja Tidak cukup, lho!’ *Behind the Screen*, 2(7), 2006.
- ‘Balibo Ban Wins Rave Reviews From Indonesian Military’ *The Jakarta Globe*, 2 December 2009.
- ‘Betulkah soalnya hanya "wasdri"?’ *Tempo*, 17 December 1977.
- ‘Censorship relaxed, so boom time for Indonesia’s film industry.’ *The Straits Times*, 26 October 1978: 2.
- ‘Dari Babi Ngepet hingga Jelangkung’ *Tempo*, 17 February 2003.
- ‘Dua yang Terpasung’ *Tempo*, 10 April 2006,  
<http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/arsip/2006/04/10/LYR/mbm.20060410.LYR118692.id.html>, accessed 13/05/2010.
- ‘Film "9 Naga" Kesandung Poster dan Puser’, *Kompas*, 13 December 2005.
- ‘Film di Indonesia Itu Ajaib Banget’ *Koran Tempo*, 4 June 2006,  
<http://www.korantempo.com/korantempo/koran/2006/06/04/Layar/krn.200604.72911.id.html>, accessed 29/01/2011.
- ‘Film Fatahillah Dibuat Dengan Dana Rp 2,5 Miliar’ *Suara Pembaruan*, 17 November 1996.
- ‘Film semakin memprihatinkan’ *Tempo*, 29 December 1990.
- ‘Gairah Perfilman Bakal Kendur?’ *Behind the Screen*, 2005: 12-13.
- ‘Garin Nugroho: “Sinema Indonesia diselamatkan oleh Komunitas”.’ *Behind the Screen*, 2006, 2: 8-10.
- ‘Gunting Sensor Tetap Bergerak’, *Tempo* 11 May 2008: 86.
- ‘Hanung Bramantyo: “Agama Hanyalah Medium”’ *Jaringan Islam Liberal*, 1 November 2010, <http://islamlib.com/id/artikel/hanung-bramantyo-agama-hanyalah-medium/>, accessed 17/11/2010.

- ‘Hanung, Kau Keterlaluhan: Pesantren dan Kiyai Begitu Kau Burukkan’ *Suara Islam*, 28 June 2010, <http://www.suara-islam.com/news/berita/wawancara/964-hanung-kau-keterlaluhan-pesantren-dan-kiyai-begitu-kau-burukkan>, accessed 22/11/2010.
- ‘Jangan Bikin Film Kacangan’, *Behind the Screen*, 2(8), 2006: 11.
- ‘Ke Mana Duit Film, Palupi?’ *Tempo*, 17 November 1998, <http://majalah.tempointeraktif.com/id/cetak/1998/11/17/INT/mbm.19981117.INT97410.id.html>, accessed 30/07/2009.
- ‘Killed by Hollywood.’ *The Straits Times*, 4 November 1992: 12.
- ‘Killings of Balibo Five were deliberate, says former army colonel’ *The Australian*, 7 December 2009, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/killings-of-balibo-five-were-deliberate-says-former-army-colonel/story-e6frg6n6-1225807867013>.
- ‘Kisruh Jual-Beli Piala FFI’ *detikHot*, 21 December 2005, <http://movie.detikhot.com/read/2005/12/21/164825/503536/229/kisruh-jual-beli-piala-ffi>, accessed 08/12/2009.
- ‘KONGRES PPFi Adisoerya Abdy Dicalonkan Lagi Raam Punjabi Menolak’, *Disc Tarra*, 16 July 2001, [http://www.disctarra.com/main/main\\_news\\_info.aspx?nid=8479](http://www.disctarra.com/main/main_news_info.aspx?nid=8479), accessed 25/01/2011.
- ‘Indonesian actors, actresses slam film monopoly’ *The Straits Times*, 29 June 1991: 18.
- ‘Logika Film Hantu’, *Kompas*, 28 March 2010, <http://oase.kompas.com/read/2010/03/28/04523877/Logika.Hantu.Film.Kita>, accessed 20/11/2010.
- ‘Madiyan Sahdianto’ IFI, 7 December 2009, <http://www.ifi.co.id/id/corporate/interview/86-madiyan.html>, accessed 8/01/2011.
- ‘M. Cholidi Asadil Alam: Punya Kemiripan Kisah Hidup dengan Khairul Azzam’, *Nyata*, 23 September 2008, <http://www.sinemart.com/new/News.php?select=berita&sub=arsip&action=view&bID=176>, accessed 16/01/2011.

- ‘Melihat Poligami dalam Film Ketika Cinta Bertasbih’, *Republika*, 3 June 2009, [http://koran.republika.co.id/berita/54257/Melihat\\_Poligami\\_dalam\\_Film\\_Ketika\\_Cinta\\_Bertasbih](http://koran.republika.co.id/berita/54257/Melihat_Poligami_dalam_Film_Ketika_Cinta_Bertasbih). accessed 16/01/2011.
- ‘Menempatkan Seni dalam Konteks Budaya.’ *Tokoh Indonesia* [Online]. Available from: <http://www.tokohindonesia.com/ensiklopedi/u/umar-kayam/index.shtml> [Accessed 19/06/2010 2010].
- ‘Minister Backs Film Censorship Board’ *The Jakarta Post*, 11 January 2008: 9.
- ‘Nasib Perfilman Nasional Dikhawatirkan Kembali ke Zaman Orba Jumat’, *Kompas*, 24 July 2009, <http://entertainment.kompas.com/read/xml/2009/07/24/e152011/Nasib.Perfilman.Nasional.Dikhawatirkan.Kembali.ke.Zaman.Orba>, accessed 22/11/2010.
- ‘Nurman Hakim and Nan Achnas: Fighting against censorship’ *The Jakarta Post*, 12 May 2009, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/12/05/nurman-hakim-and-nan-achnas-fighting-against-censorship.html>, accessed 04/02/2010.
- ‘Percakapan Joko Anwar, Edwin dan Eric Sasono’, *Rumah Film*, 2008, [http://old.rumahfilm.org/wawancara/wawancara\\_jokoedwin\\_1.htm](http://old.rumahfilm.org/wawancara/wawancara_jokoedwin_1.htm), accessed 8/1/2011.
- ‘People Want East Timor Massacre Banned, Indonesian Military Says’ *The Jakarta Globe* 04/12/2009.
- ‘Pocong Terkubur Sensor’ *Tempo*, 17 October 2006.
- ‘Saya selalu dikambinghitamkan’ *Tempo*, 13 July 1991.
- ‘Sebuah Film Bermodal Darah Muda’ *Tempo*, 7 December 1998: 85.
- ‘Sejarah Grup 21Cineplex’, *Warta Ekonomi*, June 2009.
- ‘Sinema Indonesia Baru: Menggeliat Setelah Mati Suri’, *Tempo*, 21 May 2001.
- ‘Sinepleks tanpa singa mengaum’ *Tempo*, 27 January 1990.
- ‘Suzanna: “Syukur Bisa Menakut-nakuti Anda”’ *Tempo*, 17 February 2003.
- ‘They Are the New Kids on the Block’ *Tempo*, 7 December 1998: 86.

## APPENDIX

### Biographies of Prominent Post-1998 Filmmakers

(in alphabetical order)

**Abduh Azis**, b. 1967. History graduate of the University of Indonesia, moved into film as a production manager, producer and writer, most active in documentaries. Worked with Garin Nugroho on *Daun di Atas Bantal* (1997) and *Aku Ingin Menciummu Sekali Saja* (2003). Founder of Salto Films, an independent production company, and Jifest, both with Shanty Harmayn. Other films include *The Rainmaker* (2005) and *Pertaruhan* (2006). Between 2006 and 2009 he was program director for the Jakarta Arts Council (Dewan Kesenian Jakarta).

**Allan Lunardi**, b. 1976?. Film director and one half of new production company Credo Pictures. He is the son of Hatoek Subroto, the owner of the Elang Perkasa group of companies. Directs both sinetron and films, including *Karma* (2008) and *Summer Breeze* (2008).

**Aria Kusumadewa**, b. 1963. Graduate of IKJ (1990) with a graduation film was rejected by examiner Sumartono. Self-funded the feature film *Senyum yang Terampas* (1990) but with its failure became a director of music videos and sinetron in the 1990s. With his partner, actress Lola Amaria, made digital films *Beth* (2002) and *Novel Tanpa Huruf 'R'* (2003, 'Novel Without the Letter R'), both of which he failed to have screened in 21 Cinemas. Then absent from film Aria returned in 2010 with *Identitas* (2009, 'Identity').

**Armantono**, b. 1965. Scriptwriter who graduated from IKJ, and now teaches there. Worked with Garin Nugroho on *Daun di Atas Bantal* (1998), *Rindu Kami PadaMu* (2004), *Opera Jawa* (2006). Other films include *Impian Kemarau* (2004), *Mirror* (2005), *Virgin* (2005), *Heart* (2006), *Love is Cinta* (2007), *Jagad X Code* (2009), and *Tanah Air Beta* (2010).

**Chaerul Umam**, b. 1943. Senior director notable for his return to feature film directing *Ketika Cinta Bertasbih* parts 1 and 2 (2009). Protégé of Asrul Sani, entered filmmaking in the late 1970s with *Al-Kauster* (1977), the first of many Asrul Sani scripts he would direct. Known as an Islamic director, especially with the films *Titian Serambut Dibelah Tujuh* (1982) and *Fatahillah* (1997).

**David Poernomo**, b. 197?. Brother of Jose Poernomo. Worked mostly as a sound engineer for films, especially horror films but is also a photographer and television director. Became a film director for *Pulau Hantu* (2008, 'Ghost Island') for Multivision. Has since directed *Pocong vs Kuntilanak* (2009) and *Glitch: Tersesat Dalam Waktu* (2009). He runs production company Dapoer711 with his wife Dewi Poernomo, making advertisements, company profiles and video clips.

**Dimas Djayadinigrat**, b. 1973. Architecture graduate from Trisakti University. Music video and advertising director in the 1990s. Member of i-sinema, but only

made his first film with the Rexinema company on *Tusuk Jelangkung* (2003). Later directed *Quickie Express* (2007). He is more active as a director of advertisements.

**Djeaner Masa Ayu**, b. 1973. Prominent author and daughter of director Sjumandjaya. Rose to fame as an author of short stories, especially those that appeared in *Kompas*. Her first film was *Mereka Bilang Saya Monyet* (2008) based on one of her stories, winning her prizes at the 2008 FFI.

**Emil G. Hampp**, b. 1965. 1984 graduate of IKJ. Directed many films in the 1990s, many using 'purchased' names of other directors due to the fact that he was unaccredited. Moved to sinetron at the end of the 1990s. Returned to film production in 2008 with horror film *Tiren: Mati Kemarin* (2008, 'Tiren: Died Yesterday'). Continues to work mostly in television.

**Edwin**, b. 1981? IKJ graduate. Directed his first feature *Babi Buta Ingin Terbang* (2008, 'Blind Pig Who Wants to Fly') about being Chinese in Indonesia. Although not released in local cinemas, the film travelled to Rotterdam and other festivals, and was well-received. His *Kara, Anak Sebatang Pohon* (2005) became the first Indonesian short film to be screened at the Director's Fortnight, Cannes International Film Festival 2005.

**Erwin Arnada**, b. 1963. Arts graduate from Universitas Indonesia, became a journalist with various tabloids in the 1990s. Joined the Rexinema company to help promote and produce *Jelangkung* (2001). Notable films as producer include *Bangsai 13* (2004), *30 Hari Mencari Cinta* (2004), *Catatan Akhir Sekolah* (2005), and *Alexandria* (2005). Since 2006 he has been less active as a film producer. He is managing editor of *Playboy* Indonesia in Bali and teaches at the Next Academy.

**Garin Nugroho**, b. 1961. Most internationally prominent director of the 1990s. Graduate of IKJ, made documentaries that took him overseas. First feature film was *Cinta Dalam Sepotong Roti* (1991), made after a number of short films and documentaries in the 1980s. Continued to make features including *Bulan Tertusuk Ilalang* (1995), *Daun di Atas Bantal* (1997, 'Leaf on a Pillow') and *Puisi Tak Kuburkan* (1999, 'The Poet'). Recent work includes *Serambi* (2006, 'Verandah') and *Under the Tree* (2008).

**Hanung Bramantyo**, b. 1975. Graduate of IKJ (2002), studied briefly at Teater Populer, with Teguh Karya just before his death. His first film as director was *Catatan Akhir Sekolah* (2005, 'Final School Year Notes') with friend and scriptwriter Salman Aristo. Subsequent films included *Brownies* (2005), *Tarix Jabrix* (2008), and *Get Married* (2007). Recently he has turned to 'Islamic' themed films including *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* (2008), *Doa Yang Mengancam* (2008), *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* and *Sang Pencerah* (2010). His protégé, director Iqbal Rais has directed a number of films including *Si Jago Merah* (2008, 'The Red Hero').

**Hanny R. Saputra**, b. 1965. Graduate of IKJ in the 1990s. Directed a number of award winning sinetron including *Sepanjang Jalan Kenangan*. Has since been a prominent director with Starvision, and has directed many of their horror films.

Works include *Virgin* (2004), *Mirror* (2005), *Heart* (2006), *Love is Cinta* (2007) and *Pocong (The Real Pocong)* (2009).

**Harry ‘Dago’ Suharyadi**, b. 1969. Graduated from IKJ in 1995, with an award winning short film *Happy Ending* and acted in *Kuldesak*. He then worked in television, and made amongst other things the tele-movie *Mencari Pelangi* (1998, ‘Finding the Rainbow’) before being awarded a cultural exchange scholarship to Japan where he made *Pachinko and Everybody’s Happy* (2000). Back in Indonesia he continued to make films for television and feature film under the Guerilla Studios label. Works include *Ariel and Rangit* (2005), *Dikejar Setan* (2009, ‘Chased by Satan’), *Cinta Setaman* (2009, ‘Love Pottpourri’), and *Melodi* (2010, ‘Melody’).

**Hilman Hariwijaya**, b. 1964. Author of the *Lupus* books in the 1980s, a number of which became films. From 1993 to 2005, he worked for private television station Indosiar as a staff writer, writing sinetron. He moved to film as a scriptwriter, working mostly for larger production houses, some under his pseudonym Hilman Mutasi. With his fiancé (now wife) actress Nessa Sadin, he founded production company Lupus Entertainment which made *The Wall* (2007) with director K Dheeraj and then later *Anak Ajaib* (2009, ‘Magical Child’).

**Joko Anwar**, b. 1976. Graduate of ITB in Aeronautical engineering. Worked as the film critic for *The Jakarta Post* where he met producer Nia Dinata. He became a scriptwriter for films *Arisan!* (2003) and then writer-director for *Janji Joni* (2005, ‘Joni’s Promise’), *Kala* (2007, ‘Dead Time’), and *Pintu Terlarang* (2008, ‘The Forbidden Door’). He is also involved in other productions including as co-writer on *Fiksi* (2008, dir. Mouly Surya) and *Jakarta Undercover* (2006) as scriptwriter.

**Jose Poernomo**, b. 196?. Partner of Rizal Mantovani, productive music video director and also commercial films, especially horror. Films include *Angker Batu* (2007), *Tak Biasa* (2009), *Pulau Hantu* (2008) and *Pulau Hantu 2* (2008).

**Jujur Prananto**, b. 1960. Scriptwriter and 1984 graduate of IKJ. After a number of years assisting productions, in the art department for *Badai Pasti Berlalu* (1984), as assistant scriptwriter for *Opera Jakarta* (1985) and assistant director on *Tjoet Nya’ Dhien* (1988). He shifted to scriptwriting in 1990 because of his experience in writing short stories. A prolific writer of stories, a number of which became sinetron including *Parmin* (1994) and *Kado Istemewa* (1998). As scriptwriter for film his credits include *Petualangan Sherina* (1999), *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (2002), *Titik Hitam* (2002), *Ungu Violent* (2005), *Cintapuccino* (2007) and his own story *Doa Yang Mengancam* (2008). Currently works as a freelance writer.

**Lola Amaria**, b. 1977. Model, turned actress and producer. Won the ‘Wajah Femina’ (Face of *Femina*) modeling contest in 1997 and then starred in *sinetron Penari* (Dancer) directed by Nan Achnas. She continued to act in *sinetron* and in films including *Tabir* (2000), *Beth* (2001) and *Ca Bau Kan* (2002). She produced Aria Kusumadewa’s *Novel Tanpa Huruf R* (2002) and later directed *Betina* (2006) which won a NETPAC award in 2006. In 2009 she produced *Minggu Pagi di*

*Victoria Park* (2010, 'Sunday Morning in Victoria Part') a film about Indonesian domestic workers in Hong Kong. She is in a relationship with Aria Kusumadewa.

**Mira Lesmana**, b. 1964. Mira Lesmana (b. 1964) is a former IKJ student. She had spent her childhood in Australia, with her father the famous jazz musician Jack Lesmana, and on her return to Indonesia in 1983, enrolled in IKJ and had taken up directing at the insistence of her teachers. In television, she established herself as a respected producer, and had made, amongst other things, the iconic RCTI station ID. Through a contact, she was given the job of producing a documentary series for television to celebrate national development under thirty years of the New Order and, as she found out later, to propagandize the regime. The subsequent project became the thirteen episode *Anak Seribu Pulau* (1996, 'Children of a Thousand Islands') series employing nine young directors alongside Garin Nugroho, about children in different parts of the archipelago

**Nan T. Achnas**, born 1964 in Singapore. Currently lecturer in directing at the Jakarta Institute of Arts (IKJ). The third, and also an IKJ graduate, Nan Triveni Achnas (b. 1963) was similarly an established documentary director. Born in Singapore, her father was an advertising-executive in Malaysia where she was schooled. She returned to Jakarta in 1984, working at the English language daily *The Jakarta Post* before enrolling in IKJ in 1985. Her 1988 graduation film *Hanya Satu Hari* (1988, 'Only One Day') won the Grand Prix at the Young Cinema Film Festival in Tokyo in 1992. In 1990, she studied filmmaking in the Netherlands on scholarship, and in 1994-1995, studied film at East Anglia University. She returned to Indonesia and made documentaries for television and various government departments, later joining *Anak Seribu Pulau* as one of the directors.

**Nayato Fio Nuala**, b. 196?. Known as a prominent horror film director. Made *Ekskul* which became the focus of MFI protests in 2006. Reclusive director who works in Bogor, and many of his films are credited to aliases, including Chiska Doppert, Ian Jacobs and Koya Pagayo. Studied film in Taiwan, and returned to Indonesia in 1996 to work in television and advertising. Became involved with i-sinema, but made his first film with Starvision in 2002 (*The Soul*). He is the most productive director in the film industry, making more than five titles a year.

**Monty Tiwa**, b. 1976. Studied engineering at Kansas University from 1998 to 2002. Returned and worked as staff writer in TransTV, writing scripts for *Andai Ia Tahu* (2002), *Biarkan Bintang Menari* (2003) and *Vina Bilang Cinta* (2005). Joined Rudi Soedjarwo in Reload Pictures where they made *9 Naga* (2005), *Mendadak Dangdut* (2006), *Pocong 1* and *2* (2006). After breaking with Soedjarwo, he established his own production company Moviesta Pictures and has made films such as *Maaf Saya Menghamili Isteri Anda* (2007), *Barb13* (2008), *Kalau Cinta Jangan Cengeng* (2008) and *Keramat* (2009).

**Nia Dinata**, b. 1970. Daughter of disgraced businessman Dicky Iskandar Dinata who was indicted for corruption in the early 1990s. Attended Elizabethtown College, in Pennsylvania, moving to a film production course at New York University in 1994. On her return worked in television, and in 1999 established her own company Kalyana Shira. Her first independent feature film, *Ca Bau Kan* (2002), was notable for its Chinese characters and large budget. Moving more into

producing herself she then had commercial success with *Arisan!* (2004), *Janji Joni* (2005) and *Quickie Express* (2007). Kalyana Shira has also focused on women's issues with activist films *Berbagai Suami* (2006) about polygamy, and *Perempuan Punya Cerita* (2007) a compilation of women's stories by women directors.

**Ody C. Harahap**, b. 1972. Graduate of IKJ. Music video director who got his filmmaking break with Rexinema directing *Bangsai 13* (2004). Subsequent films include *Alexandria* (2005) and *Selamanya* (2007). Has since gone on to be a respected director with the hit films *Kawin Kontrak* (2008) and *Kawin Kontrak Lagi* (2008). Other films include *Ratu Kostmopolitan* (2010), and *Punk in Love* (2009),.

**Rako Prijanto**, b. 1973. Friend of Rudi Soedjarwo, acting and scriptwriter for films *Tragedi* (2001), *Bintang Jatuh* (2000) and *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (2002). Wrote the *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* sinetron series with Jujur Prananto, and directed his first film *Ungu Vilet* (2005) for Sinemart. Has since directed films mostly comedies including *D'Bijis* (2007), *Merah Itu Cinta* (2007), *Oh My God* (2008), *Benci Disko* (2009), *Krazy Crazy Krezy* (2009), *Preman In Love* (2009), *Roman Picisan* (2010) and *Pengantin Sunat* (2010).

**Rayya Makarim**, b. 1974. A scriptwriter, whose latest film *Jermal* (2008) screened at the Pusan and Rotterdam International Film Festivals. Makarim took Film Studies at Vassar College and later won a Chevening Scholarship to study at Goldsmiths College in London. Her first script for the television film *Mencari Pelangi* (1998) earned her a best script award. Since she has written scripts for Miles Film (*Rumah Ketujuh*, 2003), Salto Productions (*Pasir Berbisik*, 2001; *Banyu Biru*, 2005) and currently works at Ecco Films.

**Ravi L. Bharwani**, b. 196?. Graduated from IKJ in 1990. He then worked in advertising and television, but also produced documentaries and short films, some in collaboration with Garin Nugroho. His first feature film, *Impian Kemarau* (2004) was selected for many festivals all over the world and received the Asia New Talent Award in 2005 at the Shanghai International Film Festival. *Jermal* was presented in the official competition at the 2009 Rotterdam Film Festival.

**Richard Oh**, b. 196?. Graduate of English Literature and Creative Writing at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA. Former owner of bookshop Q-Books (closed in 2006) and author whose books include *Pathfinders of Love* (1999), *Heart of the Night* (2000) and *The Rainmaker's Daughter* (2004). Wrote and directed *Koper* ('The Suitcase') in 2006. Is an important intellectual, although he is not that prominent in the film industry. Confidant of writer Djeaner Masa Ayu, writer/director of *Mereka Bilang Saya Monyet* (2008).

**Riri Riza**, b. 1970. 1993 IKJ graduate and son of a Ministry of Information official, Riri Riza had by 1995, established himself as a talented advertisement, music video and documentary director. His IKJ graduation documentary *Sonata Kampung Bata* (1993, 'Sonata of the Brick Village'), won third place in the 1994 Oberhausen short film festival. At age 24 he worked as production manager on Garin Nugroho's *Bulan Tertusuk Ilalang*. During the 1990s he established himself

in music videos and advertising and became involved in *Anak Seribu Pulau*, directing two of the episodes. He would later partner with Mira Lesmana in her Miles Productions company. One of the four directors in Kuldesak, would continue in a productive partnership with Mira Lesmana with films *Petualangan Sherina* (2000), *Eliana, Eliana* (2002), and *Gie* (2005). Recent films include *Laskar Pelangi* (2008) and *Sang Pemimpi* (2009).

**Rizal Mantovani**, b. 1967. Son of a diplomat. Graduated from Architecture at Trisakti University in Jakarta and went to work with Richard Buntario in his production company Broadcast Design Indonesia. There he began making music videos from the booming MTV industry. In 1996 he established his own company Avant Garde Productions with Jose Poernomo to make music videos and content for television. From this partnership came the film *Jelangkung* (2001). Has since directed many horror films including the *Kuntilanak* trilogy (2006, 2007, 2008), *Kesurupan* (2008), *Mati Suri* (2009) and *Taring* (2010). He directs many of his films for MVP Pictures (Raam Punjabi).

**Rudi Soedjarwo**, b. 1971. Son of former Chief of Police Anton Soedjarwo. Studied overseas in the 1990s in San Francisco, returned to Indonesia. After failing to get directing work in television with Raam Punjabi, made his own digital films with Rako Prijanto (*Tragedi* and *Bintang Jatuh*). After meeting Mira Lesmana, worked as director on the hit film *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (2002), and based on its success, released *Rumah Ketujuh* (2002), a film made earlier and meant for television. After Rako Prijanto left, teamed up with Monty Tiwa, and began a productive partnership that included a film school for aspiring young directors. Together they made *Mengejar Matahari* (2004), *9 Naga* (2006), *Dendam Pocong* (banned), *Pocong 2* (2006) before they split up. Since he has had mixed success with films such as *Liar* (2008), *Sebelah Mata* (2008), although he still runs his film school Reload Pictures, where aspiring filmmakers pay to learn filmmaking, often with their fees being returned to them as wages from film projects.

**Salman Aristo**, b. 1976. Scriptwriter and later producer. Graduated from journalism at the Padjadjaran University, then worked in a variety of magazines. Began in film with Hanung Bramantyo, and for their first film *Brownies* (2004) won first script award at the FFI. Subsequent films include *Catatan Akhir Sekolah* (2005, 'Final School Year Notes'), *Jomblo* (2005, 'Single') and *Alexandria* (2005), and the two big films of 2008 *Ayat-Ayat Cinta* ('Verses of Love') and *Laskar Pelangi* ('Rainbow Troops'). Subsequently he moved into production including *Garuda di Dadaku* (2009, 'Eagle in My Chest'). He is married to Ginatri S. Noer, also a scriptwriter.

**Titien Wattimena**, b. 1976. Worked initially as an assistant director in music videos and television advertisements. Joined Rudi Soedjarwo as an assistant director and scriptwriter for *Mengejar Matahari* (2004, 'Chase the Sun'). Continued her career as a scriptwriter including films *Tentang Dia* (2005, 'About Him/Her'), *Cinta Pertama* (2006, 'First Love'), *Love* (2008), *D'Bijis* (2007), *Badai Pasti Berlalu* (2007, 'The Storm will surely Pass') as well as FTVs including *Sebatas Aku Mampu* (2006) which won the Vidya Prize for the best script at the 2006 FFI.

**Lasja F Susatyo**, b. 1970. Started as a music video director with Miles Productions (Mira Lesmana). Directed her first commercial feature with Virgo Putra *Lovely Luna* (2004), and went on to direct a number of other feature films including *Dunia Mereka* (2006), *Bukan Bintang Biasa The Movie* (2007), and the four director omnibus *Perempuan Punya Cerita* (2007).

**Upi** (formerly Upi Avianto), b. 1972. Worked initially freelance at Broadcast Design Indonesia (BDI, Richard Buntario), later having the opportunity to direct music videos and sinetron, including 'Malu' ('Shy') by pop group Shaden in 1998. Her first foray into feature films was as scriptwriter for *Tusuk Jelangkung* (2002) and *Lovely Luna* (2003) and then director for *30 Hari Mencari Cinta* (2004), all for Rexinema. She then directed *Realita, Cinta dan Rock 'n Roll* (2006) and was one of the four women directors in *Pertaruhan* (2008, 'At Stake') and then *Radit dan Jani* (2008). More recently she directed *Serigala Terakhir* (2009, 'The Last Wolf'), an action film, and *Red Cobex* (2010).

**Ve Handojo**, b. 197?. Currently head of the creative department of MVP Pictures. Began writing scripts for sinetron on the successful *ABG* (2002-2004) series and wrote the script for the spin-off film *Buruan Cium Gue* (2004, 'Kiss Me Quick'). He has since written scripts for the three *Kuntilanak* (2006, 2007, 2008) films, *D.O. (Drop Out)* (2008), *MBA: Married By Accident* (2008) and horror film *Toilet105* (2010).

**Viva Westi**, b. 1972. Actor discovered by Garin Nugroho for the film *Surat Untuk Bidadari* (1994). Working on this film landed her further acting and directing work, and Nugroho encouraged her to study at IKJ. After graduation in the early 2000s, worked in television, moving back into film to co-direct *Serambi* (2006), Nugroho project that was screened at Cannes and commercial films *Suster N* (2007) and *May* (2008). Recently she has written a number of films for director Nayato Fio Nuala, a close friend of hers.

# Details of Indonesian Films 1998-2010

1997 (20 film)	Release	Director	Scriptwriter	Studio	Producers	Executive Producer	Audience	Website	Comments
Alasan Cinta Tidak Menghindakan		Henry Faedi L. Tobing		PT Cikeri Maf Film	Muhlis S Murtana				
Batas Perampasan Habis		Henry Faedi L. Tobing		PT Cikeri Maf Film	Tan Ai, Sany Harzida				
Bawa, the Color of Love		Rosa Medri		PT Jagoi (Cakrawala Film & Video)	Henry Siman				
Daur di Atas Bantal		Gani Nugroho		PT Cikeri Halam Film					
Di Balik Cinta Teri		Wanar Sibohang		PT Andalas Kerencan Film	Muhlis S Murtana				
Fatihah		Cherrel Utami, Inam Tazawi		Pemuda DKI (GRSI)	Sugard Sulardi, Hal Johan, Jamad				
Gadis Menggoda		Emil G Himp		PT Rapi Film	Gopi T Samiani				
Gadis yang Terenda		Yony Soelaha		PT Soga Interece Film	Ban Soga				
Gadis 100%		Gedem Kemana		PT Damanglana Cinta Suara Film	Handi Muljono				
Gadis Sekali		Yony Soelaha		PT Damanglana Cinta Suara Film	Handi Muljono				
Gadis Sekali		Yony Soelaha		PT Soga Interece Film	Ban Soga				
Geram Cinta		Kawanan Sarinah		PT Damanglana Cinta Suara Film	Handi Muljono				
Kebahagiaan Sosial		Wanar Sibohang		PT Andalas Kerencan Film	Muhlis S Murtana				
Kekusutan Sekali		Kawanan Sarinah		PT Damanglana Cinta Suara Film	Handi Muljono				
Kisah Wanita Dalam AS (Negeri Kekun, Tebu)		Edda SS		PT Damanglana Cinta Suara Film	Handi Muljono				
Keajaiban Perawan		Wanar Sibohang		PT Andalas Kerencan Film	Muhlis S Murtana				
Kopi Malam		Henry Faedi L. Tobing		PT Lintang Swastika Film	Johy/Pondanga				
Permainan Malam		Sudaji Benda		PT Soga Interece Film	Ban Soga				
Pria Sempurna (Gadis)		Wanar Sibohang		PT Andalas Kerencan Film	Muhlis S Murtana				
Puncak Kemuliaan		Pika		PT Soga Interece Film	Ban Soga			<a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8F3Q8BA">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8F3Q8BA</a>	
Rahasia		Dede Yusuf		PT Keremata Sinemas	Chard Pravez Smita, Shanker RS, SCTV				
Rehatin Noda		Dani Yuda		PT Cikeri Maf Film	Tan Ai				
Semesta Wajra		Neman Berry		PT Vagabunda Film	Fery Angriawan				
Sentuhan Erotik		Neman Berry		PT Vagabunda Film	Fery Angriawan				
Sentuhan Tabu		Sudaji Benda		PT Soga Interece Film	Ban Soga				
Siput Erotik		Yony Soelaha		PT Soga Interece Film	Ban Soga				money from both the BPN and Habert BLS
Siti		Karelil Sumarno		Kem Nuhendra, Fakultas Film Teknikal KI	Kemal Alimpro, Mestryanto, Karelil Sumarno				
Sulan yang Suka		Henry Faedi L. Tobing		PT Cikeri Maf Film	Tan Ai				
Tak Cukup Hanyu Cinta		Kawanan Sarinah		PT Lintang Swastika Film	Johy/Pondanga				
Tranasi Perindukan		Kawanan Sarinah		PT Damanglana Cinta Suara Film	Handi Muljono				

1998 (5 films)	Release	Director	Scriptwriter	Studio	Producers	Executive Producer	Audience	Website	Comments
Gairah Membara		Golden Kasnara, Kaonawan Sumitrah		PT Diwangkara Citra Suara Film	Handi Muljono				
Kudesak	00/11/1998	Mira Lesmana, Nan Achmas, Riri Riza, Rizal Mantovani		PT Mediatama Inisiatif Lensa Karya	Mira Lesmana, Nan Achmas, Riri Riza, Rizal Mantovani		130000/140000		
Misteri Baryuwangi		Walner Sitohang		PT Andalas Kencana Film	Madhu S Mahiani				
Natsu Membara		Golden Kasnara		PT Diwangkara Citra Suara Film	Handi Muljono				
Pernikahan Membara		Golden Kasnara		PT Diwangkara Citra Suara Film	Handi Muljono				
<b>1999 (3 Films)</b>	<b>Release</b>	<b>Director</b>	<b>Scriptwriter</b>	<b>Studio</b>	<b>Producers</b>	<b>Executive Producer</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Website</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Kisah Veronica		Henry Farel L Tobing		PT Cancer Mas Film	Tien Ali, Sally Marcelina				
Menentang Natsu		Kaonawan Sumitrah		PT Diwangkara Citra Suara Film	Handi Muljono				
Pusi Tak Terkuburkan		Gann Nugroho		Yayasan Sains Esika dan Teknologi (SET), PT Kampan Multimedia	Gann Nugroho				

2000 (11 Films)	Release	Director	Scriptwriter	Studio	Producers	Executive Producer	Genre	Audience	Website	Comments
Beli		Ani Kusumadewa	Ani Kusumadewa, Rena C Mahyana	Siemata Film & Television	Mada N Sulisti			17200		made in digital
Bintang Jauh		Rudi Soedjano	Riwo Pribadi	Kepas Communication Digital Background Cirebon	Rudi Soedjano			14900		made in digital
Bintang (Lampiran/Dulu)		Frank Rompendey	Frank Rompendey	PT Pratama Visual Production	Jamar Gundakumaha		children			
Jakarta Project		Irida Yudhanita	Irida Yudhanita, Dendel Adhiana, Yusef Pando, Nufusandi Piliang	Kamari Citra, Layur Hingai	Jamar Gundakumaha	Noella Hanono				cost \$30,000
Jomblo Oh Jomblo	20122000	Eduar Piusa Sialit	Henry Yanya	PT Rapi Film	Citra Digital, Tech Solution, Rapi P Tjuna, Nufusandi Piliang, Vanda AS Malsamard			50000		made on the web of Peralapaga Siregar, but nowhere near as popular. Director of children's film, Cynthia Koeswoyo during in the 1970s.
Pachino & Everyone's Happy		Henry Sularyadi	Henry Sularyadi	Henry Sularyadi	Henry Sularyadi					made in Japan. Henry was an actor in Kulisak
Papar Berbek		Nani Achma	Nani Achma, Ezyza Makam	Sido Productions, Cahni Intermuz Film, Christie Makar Film, NIK	Shary Hermay, Desane Hartono	Shary Hermay, Uchik Masop AMN, Christie Makar, Henna Lamma	children			budget 4M+
Peralapaga Siregar	14062000	Eni Riza		PT Fides Production, PT Madakana Head Film	Mia Lamma		children	1400000	Budget 12M	
Peralapaga Tiur Pajalegh Dura	14062000	Eni Kusumo Nugroho	Eni Kusumo Nugroho, Tulus Sadono, Thomas S Yudi	PT Rapi Tiur Film	Edisa Nugroho, Swati Nugroho		children		<a href="http://www.suamendek.com/brand/14062000-0713064.htm">http://www.suamendek.com/brand/14062000-0713064.htm</a>	1,4M budget, screened for only 1 week.
Selamat Perayaan Jauh, Cinta		Enzer Siregar	Seno Gunasakelma, Fau Wijaya	Siemata & Tuli Cine Production	Enzer Siregar					Based on three short stories by Seno Gunata. First film. Screened at Jitra 2000
Tanggal		Rudi Soedjano	Riwo Pribadi	Kepas Communication	Rudi Soedjano	Mis Ewo Pratomo		15000		made and screened in digital
2001 (1 Film)	Release <td>Director <td>Scriptwriter <td>Studio <td>Producer <td>Executive Producer <td>Genre <td>Audience <td>Website <td>Comments</td> </td></td></td></td></td></td></td></td>	Director <td>Scriptwriter <td>Studio <td>Producer <td>Executive Producer <td>Genre <td>Audience <td>Website <td>Comments</td> </td></td></td></td></td></td></td>	Scriptwriter <td>Studio <td>Producer <td>Executive Producer <td>Genre <td>Audience <td>Website <td>Comments</td> </td></td></td></td></td></td>	Studio <td>Producer <td>Executive Producer <td>Genre <td>Audience <td>Website <td>Comments</td> </td></td></td></td></td>	Producer <td>Executive Producer <td>Genre <td>Audience <td>Website <td>Comments</td> </td></td></td></td>	Executive Producer <td>Genre <td>Audience <td>Website <td>Comments</td> </td></td></td>	Genre <td>Audience <td>Website <td>Comments</td> </td></td>	Audience <td>Website <td>Comments</td> </td>	Website <td>Comments</td>	Comments
Jelombang	8172001	Josa Purnomo, Rizal Marlowan	Rizal Marlowan, Adi Nugroho, Josa Purnomo	PT Rekreasi Multimedia Pratama, Averi Gede, PT Ecom Sili Karya	Josa Purnomo	Alex Kumara, Syntexa Yusuf	horror	1500000		





2024 (Q3 Final)	Release	Director	Scriptwriter	Studio	Producers	Executive Producer	Genre	Audience	Website	Comments
The 17th - Serenon	2017/2024	Hery Ch Hendi	Hery Ch Hendi, Nadia Marna	PT Kencana Sinema	Chand Prance Sinema	H Rizki Suciati, Bani Huseini	drama			Based on a suspense novel.
20 Hari Menakutkan Cerita	08/01/2024	Upe Amoro	Upe Amoro	PT Rekreasi Multimedia Prima	Danao Dyaningtyinggi, Eran Kristala	Eran Kristala, Eran Kristano	comedy			Upe Amoro's first film?
Arah Hantu di Selatan	23/11/2024	Keano Bayano	Egi Sald	PT Kencana Sinema Plus	Chand Prance Sinema, Sinar RS	H Rizki Suciati, Bani Huseini	horror			
Angin 1 Ciri (Pengantar Budaya)	11/05/2024	Inday Salsity, Nadia Rizkiana	Nadia Rizkiana	Layar Kaca Komunikasi, PT Sinarodi Prima	Ferry M Nurwan, Rika Sitadnyono SE, Inday Salsity					About the lives of children following the Red Storm.
Bahagia 13	18/12/2024	Chry Cheliano	Gumar Hengon, Chry Cheliano	PT Rekreasi Multimedia Prima	Danao Dyaningtyinggi	Eran Kristala, Chand Prance Sinema, Eran Kristano, H Rizki Suciati, Bani Huseini	horor			Qiy Huseini's first film as director.
Bermata	08/12/2024	Hening Bermanjo	Lisa Nurwanika, Hening Bermanjo, Satriana Akala, Eric Satrio	Sinarodi Prima	Lesi Satrio, Mery Christina, Nery Christina, Chry Cheliano	Ely Yandi Nurwan	drama	600000		First film from Hening, later to make Chand 2020. Shot in Yogyakarta. Not released in overseas.
Bulan		Mohammad Syarif Saibandi	Kriso Sumbel, Yenni L Dewi	Mahdi Production Theater 14	Mahdi Production	Feryanto Nugro, Feryanto Nugro, Nery Christina, Nery Christina	horor			First film from Hening, later to make Chand 2020. Shot in Yogyakarta. Not released in overseas.
Bulan Cumi-Cumi		Friso Purwono HW	Wj Wicaksono	Melatonin Plus Pictures	Bakar Prayogi	Gandri Purwati, Rizki Nurwan, Misy V Orono	drama			2024 in continuation of a long series. Shot the edition version still in discussion (2025)
CRIS		Andi H Nurwan	Chry Cheliano	Grandi Media Production	Feryanto Nugro, Feryanto Nugro	Lisa Cheliano, Feryanto Nugro, Lisa				
Di Seribu Sinar, The Movie		Purnomo A Chikal	Lesi Satrio, Tia TS	Sinarodi Prima, Lentera Film Production	Lesi Satrio	Ely Yandi Nurwan, Mery Christina, Chry Cheliano, Nery Christina	horor	800000		
Fajar		Syarif Satrio, Nury Nurwan Wijaya, Nery Christina	Yeni Satriawandana, Satriawandana, Andri Pratiwi, Hening	PT Indira Satrio Media, Nery Nurwan Production	Dody Satrio, Syarif Satrio		horor			Shared the two versions of the Indonesian Festival Indira after a 5-year competition on Indira.
Hororland	08/01/24	Gandjar Wabito	Gandjar Wabito	Sudabekmah, Via Kani Bangsa			children			Indira's 10th Anniversary. 100 million rupiah. Not released in the overseas.
Kendal - Samudra		Cheri Wicaksono	Tia Nurwan, Syarif Satrio, Chand Prance Sinema	PT Kencana Sinema Plus	Chand Prance Sinema, Sinar RS	H Rizki Suciati, Bani Huseini, Rizki Suciati	horor			
Kelala		Dandi Mawar	Makla Yana	PT Candi Candi Sinema	R Ghalwan Winandana					
Kuloggo & Siala Samudra	08/07/2024	Lumantono DS	Lumantono DS	Gary Satrio Group, MA Media Visual Production	Satrio Sinema	Andi Kaban	comedy			About industry of student producers at Samudra in 2024. Budget 1.5M.
Kendal 2	11/05/2024	Diana Kalliana	Diana Kalliana	Damian Sinema	Bani Kalliana, Diana Kalliana					
Mengapa Malah	22/07/2024	Rud Saibandi, Tera Yulianita	Rud Saibandi, Tera Yulianita	Sinarodi Prima, Syarif Satrio	Dani Nurwan, Feryanto Nugro	Lesi Satrio	drama			From a script competition held by the Department of Culture and Tourism (Dagun).
Panggih Pengantun Kaki		Uka Satrio	Chry Cheliano	Panis Tuar Film Komedi Lodge PT Jajay Cahaya Film & Sinema, Nery Nurwan	Bakar Prayogi					From a script competition held by the Department of Culture and Tourism (Dagun).
Pulangang 002 Jan	31/07/2024	Nurwan E Melati	Jajay Prance	Melatonin Plus Pictures	Bakar Prayogi	Gandri Purwati, Misy V Orono, Satrio Satrio				From a script competition held by the Department of Culture and Tourism (Dagun).
Roda dari Selatan	08/11/2024	Gani Nurwan	Gani Nurwan, Amoro	Yasasa SET	Gani Nurwan, Inday Nurwan					From a script competition held by the Department of Culture and Tourism (Dagun).
Sangat Siala	24/07/2024	Fajar Nurwan	Fajar Nurwan	Nagrasena	Andi Cheliano, Amoro					Released locally in Indonesia, Cinema, Yogyakarta and at Campus screenings.
Tan Bana (Wine or Puke)		Joni Nurwan	Joni Nurwan, Hening Marna	Joni Nurwan Film, Egi Production	Joni Nurwan	Chry Cheliano, Nery Nurwan	drama			Released locally in Indonesia, Cinema, Yogyakarta and at Campus screenings.
The Bombarier (Papan Kencana)	05/12/2024	Rizki Nurwan	Adventon, H Rizki Suciati, Rizki Nurwan	Rizki Nurwan, Satrio Film, Cheliano Production	Bakar Prayogi, Satrio Nurwan, Madya Nurwan, Madya Nurwan					Released at first in December 2024. Won Best Film in the Asian New Film Festival at the Singapore International Film Festival 2025. Released in 2025. Released in 2025.
Tan Tana & Kencana Bana the Movie	28/07/2024	Aditya Cheliano, Aditya Nurwan	Aditya Nurwan, Aditya Cheliano	PT Kencana Sinema	Aditya Cheliano		children			Released at first in December 2024. Won Best Film in the Asian New Film Festival at the Singapore International Film Festival 2025. Released in 2025. Released in 2025.
Viper (Kedua Kencana Depanannya)	11/11/2024	Hening & Satrio	Adventon	PT Kencana Sinema Plus	Chand Prance Sinema, Hening & Satrio, Madya Nurwan, Rizki Nurwan	H Rizki Suciati, Bani Huseini	drama			Released at first in December 2024. Won Best Film in the Asian New Film Festival at the Singapore International Film Festival 2025. Released in 2025. Released in 2025.







2007 (49 Films)	Release Director	Scriptwriter	Studio	Producers	Executive Producer	Genre	Audience	Website	Comments
3 Hari Untuk Siamyo	08/06/2007 Rai Riza	Sinar Ayu Masase	PT Miles Production, Sinarani Pictures	Mira Lesmana	Leo Sutarjo, Ely Yanti, Noor B. Toor, Julie Fraser, Julie Lebrocky	drama	300000	<a href="http://www.milesfilms.com/3h">www.milesfilms.com/3h</a>	Jiffst, HK, Pusan, Vancouver, London, Rotterdam, Göteborg, San Francisco
Arak-arak Borobudur	05/07/2007 Arwendo Armonikio	Arwendi Armonikio	Ampo Adami Film	SR Aniza, Sonny Wibisono			< 100,000		
Angkerbatu	26/04/2007 Jose Poernomo	Hilman Mulasi (Hilman Harnopuji)	Liquid Media, The Game In Paces, MYP Pictures	Jose Poernomo	Adhmad Nugraha, Dhanard, Yeyy Suprianti, Poernomo, Sarno, David Poernomo	horror			seems to be released again by MYP DVD unit, firm trying to build on association with Jalengkung
Balai Paal Berindu	29/01/2007 Teddy Soeriatmadja	Tien Watiema, Teddy Soeriatmadja	PT Asara Cakara Persana, PT Astra Trijaya Corporation, Sini Sini	Philipp Wirjadi, Ari Shannara, Dian Mediana	Die Triana, Salsabila, Clifton Teh	drama		<a href="http://www.balapaalberindu.com">www.balapaalberindu.com</a>	based on the novel by Marga T, WTC seems to be a Malaysian company
Bali Forever		Rina Melati	PT Jedyu Cahawada Film & Video	Harry Simon	Pingvy Simon	drama			Nominated to FFI 2007 for directing. Release of Birico, the Colour of Love (1997)
Berani Dalam Kukur	19/12/2007 Lingga	Aji Saputra, Freddy A	MD Pictures	Dharmo Pujabi, Manoj Pujabi	Shana Pujabi, Kera Maniani	horror	400000		same title as the 1971 film
Bulan Bintang Biosa Nya Nya	26/07/2007 Lajja Fauza Susanto	Lia Nurmalina, Tien Watiema, Maly Sasaw	Maxima Pictures, Maly Gesaw Pictures	Maly Gesaw, Farah M. Widyaji	Chandra Lie, Teddy Sudiono, Yani K, Oly M Hidayat		500000		
Burung-Burung Keras	25/02/2007 Jasanti, Cassius Handoyo	Cassius Handoyo, Dina Jasanti, Susanto Widjaja	Sports Production	Dina Jasanti		drama		<a href="http://www.burungburungkeras.com">www.burungburungkeras.com</a>	Bali Film Festival 2006 Special, Peringkat konfiden 2006

Chitaku Forever	20/12/2007	A Jump Bull	Lina Nurmaina, Nico DS	PT Kantia Indah Film, Preeti DV, Mohit NV	Budi Mulyono	Nicky RY, Lukman Rewa, Suresh Rewa		< 100.000		
Chitapucino	30/08/2007	Rudi Soedjirno	Icha Rahmanti, Jujur Pramanto	Shenart Pictures	Cindy Christina	Leo Sulanto, Ely Yanti Noor, Novi Christina, Heru Hendriyanto, Mitzy Christina	drama	400000	<a href="http://www.chitapucino.com/">http://www.chitapucino.com/</a>	based on the novel by Icha Rahmanti
Coklat Stroberi	14/06/2007	Ardy Octavianand	Upi	PT Investasi Film Indonesia	Adiyanto Sunardiyo, Upi, Kristiho Damar Alam Sunardiyo	Sendi Sugiharto, Madiyan Sahdianto, Adiyanto Sunardiyo				
DBliss	01/02/2007	Rako Prijanto	Tlien Walmirna	PT Rapi Film	Gope T Santiani, Subagio S			700000		cost 1.8M
Film Horor	29/11/2007	Toto Hoefi	Toto Hoefi	Inkita Entertainment	Shanker RS	Kristuafji Legopranowo	horror	900000		Obvious and acknowledged reference to Scary Movie. Meant as a parody of horror films. Includes a parody of Riri Reza returning his Piala Citra, a reference to the Ekskul/FI incident.
Ganderwo	09/06/2007	KK Dheeraj	Tarun Mathur, KK Dheeraj	K2K Production	KK Dheeraj		horror		<a href="http://www.ganderwofilm.com/">http://www.ganderwofilm.com/</a>	
Get Married	11/10/2007	Hanung Bramantyo	Mustar Yasin Pemeran	PT Khairisma Starvision Plus	Chand Parwez Servia			1400000 / 2200000		Won Bast Director. Bast Editing and Bast Supporting Adress at FFI 2007.
Hantu	08/09/2007	Adriano Siraga	Adriano Siraga, Shafa Wijanarko	Grandiz Media Production	Negard, Vincentisus Theyo	Chandra Willin, Stanley Willim, Richard Husada	horror		<a href="http://www.hantu.biz/">http://www.hantu.biz/</a>	
Jakarta Undercover	22/03/2007	Lance	Joko Anwar, Erwin Arnada	PT Velvet Silver Cinema	Erwin Arnada, Luna Maya	Erwin Arnada, Stephen Walangiang, Teuku Sultian Azwar, Abdy Emest	drama			a spinoff from Raxinema. Velvet Silver Media is an arm of Erwin Arnada's Playboy publishing enterprise.

Jelangkung 3	10/04/2007	Angga Dwimas Sasongko	Ginatri S. Noer, Ewin Arnada	PT REXINEMA MULTIMEDIA Pratama	Ewin Arnada, Eko Kristanto								
Kala	19/04/2007	Joko Anwar	Joko Anwar	PT MD Pictures	Dharmo Purnjati, Manoj Purnjati, Shania Purnjati						700000		First film from MD Pictures. Cost 7 billion rupiah (US\$600,000).
Kamulah Satu-Satunya	12/07/2007	Hanung Bramantyo	Key Mangunsoeng, Rediwa, Hanung Bramantyo	Oreima Film	Daniel Rahmad, Reza Hidayat, Vena Amisa						300000		
Kangen	23/08/2007	Nayato Fio Nuala	Ve Handoyo	Multivision Plus Pictures	Raam Purnjati	Gobind Purnjati, Wicky V Ollindo					380000	<a href="http://www.mvppictures.net/kangen">http://www.mvppictures.net/kangen</a>	non-horror film by Nayato
Kuntulanak 2	10/10/2007	Rizal Mantovani	Ve Handoyo	Multivision Plus Pictures	Raam Purnjati	Gobind Purnjati, Wicky V Ollindo, Rizal Mantovani					300000-400000 / 550000 / 1300000		
Lantai 13	07/07/2007	Helly CH Karati	Bon Astrevita, Capluk	PT Kristisma Starvision Plus	Chand Parvez Servia	Fiaz Servia, Busial Nawawi					550000		
Leak	22/03/2007	Achiel Nasrun	S. Dalimunte	PT Ganesa Perkasa Film	Masnah Kishore, Chandir B. Subakti IS								About 40 copies of the film. Shot in Bali, similar to Leak (1979).
Legenda Sunda Belong	18/10/2007	Hanung Bramantyo	Erik Tiwa, Hanung Bramantyo	PT Rapi Film	Gopa T Santani, Subagio Santani						450000		an attempt to remake Sunda Belong
Lewat Tengah Malam	03/08/2007	Koya Pagayo Nayato	Ery Sofid	Maxima Pictures, Media Entertainment, Factory Films	Salam R, Ody Mulya	Teddy Sudiono, Yoen K.					horror	300000	

Opera Jawa	06/09/2007	Garin Nugroho, Arturo GP	Armaniono, Garin Nugroho	SET Film Production, New Crowned Hope	Garin Nugroho	Simon Field, Keith Griffiths	art			
Pocong 3	10/11/2007	Monty Tiwa	Monty Tiwa	Sinemart Pictures	Novi Christina, Mitzy Christina, Cindy Christina, Heru Hendryarto	Eliy Yanti Noer	horror	600000 / 1300000		third in the pocong series, without Rudi Soedjarmo however.
Pulau Hantu	31/10/2007	Jose Purnomo	Jose Poernomo, Benny Akhmad Basuni	MVP Pictures, Liquid Media Production	Raam Punjabi	Wicky V, Olinde, Aditan Uliana, Inan Kusumo, David Poernomo	horror	720000		
Quickie Express	22/11/2007	Dimas Djayadiningrat	Joko Anwar	Kalyana Shira Films	Nia diNata, Elza Hidayat	Constantin Papadimitriou, Dije Tianan	comedy	1300000 / 1100000		Festivals including LA 2008, Amsterdam 2008, Udine Far East FF Italy 2008, Pucheon Fantastic S Korea 2008
Roh (The Evil Spirit)	11/01/2007	Abok Suharto	Keshna Armand	MM Creations, PT Layar Cipta Karyamas Film	Madhu Mahani, Hatোক Soebrolo, Jay Mahani	Sagar Mahani	thriller	100000		
Sang Dewi	08/02/2007	Dwi Ijalang	Dwi Ijalang, Jeremias Nyangoen	Big Daddy Production, Sarvision	Adrianus Yoga D.		drama		<a href="http://www.21cinplex.com/movie.cfm?id=1698">http://www.21cinplex.com/movie.cfm?id=1698</a>	
Selamanya	19/07/2007	Ody C Harahap	Sekar Ayu Asmara	MVP Pictures	Raam Punjabi	Gobind Punjabi, Wicky V, Olinde	drama	500000 / 550000		DVD seems to be self-released by MVP
Suster N (Dendam Suster Ngesot)	25/11/2007	Viva Westi	Syamahan, Viva Westi	PT Virgo Putra Film	Ferry Angrawan		horror	400000	<a href="http://sistem.blogspod.com/">http://sistem.blogspod.com/</a>	all female crew. 2M cost.
Suster Ngesot The Movie	10/05/2007	Arie Azis	Awir Eham	MD Pictures	Dharmo Punjabi, Manoj Punjabi	Shama Punjabi, Karan Mahani	horror	770000 / 800000		Second film from MD following Kala.

Tentang Cinta	11/08/2007	Sony Gaokasak	TW, Karma Gaokasak	PT Karisma Starvision Plus	Chard Parwez Servia	Fiaz Servia, Bustal Nawawi	drama		<a href="http://www.tentangcinta.com">www.tentangcinta.com</a>	class movie
Terowongan Casablanca	22/02/2007	Nanang Istabudi	Faldin Martha	Indika Entertainment	Shanker RS	Kristuaji Legopranowo	horror	1200000 / 1500000	<a href="http://www.terowongancasablanca.com">www.terowongancasablanca.com</a>	
The Butterfly	06/12/2007	Nayati Fio Nuala	Tlien Waitimena	Maxima Pictures, Cinema Factory, Melly Goeslaw Pictures		Teddy Sudiono, Yoen K, Chandra Lie	drama			
The Photograph	05/07/2007	Nan Achmas	Nan Achmas	Triimages, Salto Films, Les Petites Lumieres	Shanty Harmain, Paqulia Wicajaja-Arief, Nan Achmas, Natadra Devils		drama	< 100,000		
The Wall	13/09/2007	Kumar Pareek	Hilman Harwijaya	Lupus Entertainment	Hilman Harwijaya, Nessa Sadin	B. Waluyo S Diana	horror	< 100,000		First self-produced film from Hilman Harwijaya.



















Pengaruh Sifat-Sifat	19/10/2009	PKP Praktek	Manajemen	PKP Praktek	PKP Praktek			
Sistem Manajemen	31/10/2009	Manajemen	Manajemen Praktek	Manajemen Praktek	Manajemen Praktek	Manajemen Praktek		
Manajemen Keuangan	02/11/2009	Manajemen	Manajemen Praktek	Manajemen Praktek	Manajemen Praktek	Manajemen Praktek		

2010 (86 Films)	Release Director	Writer	Production House	Producers	Executive Producer	Genre	Audience	Website	Comments
14*	28/01/2010 Nuryato Fio Nuala	Ey Sngi, Eka D Sibero, Via Westi	Servision Plus	Charo Perez Servis	Fiaz Servis, Busti Nawawi	drama	5/29/73		
3 Hari 2 Dunia 1 Cinta	01/07/2010 Bani Selawan	Bani Selawan	Mizan Productions	Pulut Widjanto	Hadar Bajir, Gengsar Sireno, Aweana Sedili				
3 Perhentian Tenggara	30/12/2010 Iqbal Fala	Ben Sitorching	Rapi Films	Opke Samiani, Sidiqjo S	Sani Samiani, Shau TM, Serya V M, Senu Samiani	comedy			
7 Hari, 7 Cinta, 7 Wanita	20/08/2010 Robby Ertanto Saefikam	Robby Ertanto Saefikam	Anak Negeri Film	Inara Kelle, Ravi Budiman					Only screened in Blitarngapak (digital)
Afil (Pernikahan Cinta Yang Memainkan)	11/03/2010 Nuryato Fio Nuala	Via Westi	Servision Plus, Inda Picture Productions	Charo Perez Servis	Fiaz Servis, Busti Nawawi, Reza Servis, Anni Dido Servis	horror			
Abah! Pergalan Beas	29/04/2010 Nuryato Fio Nuala	Peguh PS Adnanja	Mira Pictures, BIC Productions	Frihan Bintang					
Aku dan Dia	28/10/2010 Afrizal Abdul Rachman	Afrizal Abdul Rachman, Nitya Bayu	One Star Productions, cefaruu.com	Afrizal Abdul Rachman	Amr Hamzah, Permata Nita Dewi	comedy			
Alangkah Lucunya Negeri Ini	15/04/2010 Dedy Kevlar	Mufar, Yehi	Cita Sirena	Zaini Zain	Ghaliwati Winanegara		392325		
Asan Berdang	18/02/2010 Heffl Kerat	Cassandra Massardi	Marna Pictures	Opj Maya Hidayati	Yeni K, Teddy Sutopo	comedy		<a href="http://www.asanberdang.com">http://www.asanberdang.com</a>	
Bintang Cinta Itu Ada	04/03/2010 Sepjwa Top	Aya Gunawan, Dermawan Wilheono, Tegajika	Genezia Creative Industry	Bulqiel Ajiyoga, Tyas A, Meilin	Suzono H Suringgal, Heman Paria	Drama			
Bekel Bekur	08/04/2010 Adianto Singsa	David Rendi, Siwani, Heri Surohyono, Rudi Sihli, Byu SG Triono, Charal Rival	Squarbox Films, The Agency	Damiana Widowati	Eli Wicoro, David Wicoro, Jan Show	Comedy			New short stories about Jakarta.
Bekel Bekel	27/11/2010 Pamboon, Rizki Marpaung, Anggun Sriyandana, Sreni, Sri Satri	Tien Watiwena	Ziara Pictures, Thecode Pictures, Babukalim, Demaga Films	Tien Watiwena, Miska Taurisa					
Belum Cukup Umur	04/03/2010 Nuryato Fio Nuala	Via Westi	Handmade Film	Albert Poudaga					
Bidadari Jakarta	01/07/2010 Nining Ibtisadi	Jenny S Johansyah, Anni Hidayati, Alby, Linda Rinihan	PT Mega Multi Media	Linda Rinihan, Nanning Ibtisadi	Sannico, Indra Zulfeiyah				
Cantik Tapijaya Gula Kurlanak	08/12/2010 Van Sempaja	Van Sempaja	Vicent Pictures	K, Lukta, Wong Fai San		horror/comedy			
Cinta 2 Hari	01/04/2010 Bani Selawan		Wannab Pictures	Zaini Zain					
D Love	28/07/2010 Heffl Kerat	Amonia D	Bintang Timur Film, Dreamcatcher Pictures	Fanny Nasy, Heffl Kerat	Bambang Eftandi, Manggi De Riva			<a href="http://www.dlove.co.id">http://www.dlove.co.id</a>	Released in Lebanon.
Dawai 2 Amana	08/09/2010 Endri Palta, Asep Kusdinar	Asep Kusdinar	Falconi Films, Rumah Keesil 23	Erna Pelita	Roma Irma, HB Naveen				Released in Lebanon.
Demi Dewi	06/05/2010 Charles Gozali	Charles Gozali	Magna Entertainment	Linda Gozali, Rana D Mahadi	Henrick Gozali, Winky Wirawan, Wulan Gurita, Olan Wapudadi	drama			second film from Charles Gozali
D Bawal Langit	18/03/2010 Gunung Nusa Pella, Opik Tomboali	Opik Tomboali, Yei, Gifeng, Rella Hermanto	Opik Tomboali Film	Opik Tomboali,	Dian Firdaus				
D Dasar Sepalajaya	19/03/2010 Paul Agusta	Paul Agusta, Kerika Uliha, Leon Agusta	Ketekuna Pictures, PT Vasi Ilmaga Media	Lapuna WK, Paul Agusta	Ian Mochtar, Margaret Rose Gladys Agusta, Andie Lube				Funded by Rotterdam Film Festival. Screened in Indonesia internally.

Diperiksa Selain	18/02/2010	Perencana Kampan	Cherry Samantha	MM Creations	Sagar Kim		horror		
Gay & Lesbian	00/11/2010	Karyo Rio Nuala	Viva West, Ery Solid	Baavia Pictures					
Fanu Buncah Daeng Bulan	04/02/2010	Shedy Renna		KCK Production	KC Dheraj				
Fanu Tanah Kasri	00/11/2010	Frida Purwo Fiv	Ade Ac	Makina Pictures	Ody Mulya Hidayat		horror		<a href="http://www.hardanilkuar.com/">http://www.hardanilkuar.com/</a>
Fari Unik Kencana	07/01/2010	Ranga Dwina Saengko	Ghani S Ngar, Sahari Akiso	MNC Pictures, VSiema					
Heart 2 Heart	00/11/2010	Karyo Rio Nuala	Tien Widiana	Kharisma Servision Plus	Chand Pawanw Servis				
I Kow What You Did On Facebook	15/07/2010	Ami Suryadi	Achanele Ercid, Ami Suryadi, Adhitya Adji	Satelites Madentment, Digital Film Maker	Stinker RS	Fery Yudiantodja, PMS Tandra			
Idi! Botongan	08/07/2010	Ami Aziz	Nurmalia	Kanti Indah Firm	Budi Mulyono	Budi Mulyono, Koo Saengyo	drama		
Jakarta Magrib		Sahari Akiso	Sahari Akiso						
JINX (Pembasa Saji)	04/02/2010	Muhammad Yusuf	Juzzi Mu, Muhammad Yusuf	Slyfer Picara, D'Coar Entertainment	Haris Nizan	Sajono Sutirno			
Kabayan Iridi Mulyono	23/12/2010	Gantur Saengyo	Casandra Masardi	Servision Plus	Chand Pawanw Servis	Fiaz Servis, Busati Nawari, Reza Servis, Mithuan Mubsin Nizar	comedy		
Kaini Kaini Peranan	25/02/2010	Nayabo	Randy Adid	Rapi Firms	Gaga T, Sembli, Saengyo S		horror		
Lastar Cilik	25/06/2010	Suzaki Is	Shina Bhanasa Sh	Genesa Pekeasa Firms		Masahil Kabinje			
Lastar Permai	30/09/2010	Konyi Twa	Eric Twa, Monyi Twa	Kharisma Servision Plus	Chand Pawanw Servis		comedy		
Luhai Balah Pngung Jangin	08/09/2010	Frida Purmono		Makina Pictures	Ody Mulya Hidayat	Tedy Sutono, Yoni K, Chandra Lie, Fandy Lingga			Released in Lebanon.
London Virginia	02/12/2010	Alio Gendary	Cheerly Anella T, Kadhima Adri	OKU Production	Cheerly Anella T	OKU Production, Reme Sonata			
Love And Endless	22/04/2010	Ame Telling	Bang Irawati, Icai Hidarwan	Pura Pictures,	Ardi Coko ST, Aldo Banar	Pura Permai, Januri			
Love In Peah	30/12/2010	Frida Purmono HW	Tien Widiana	MD Pictures	Dharmo Pungki, Manoj Pungki	Shania Pungki, Kean Mahani			
Maldana X	07/10/2010	Lucky Kuswandi	Agisyah Kani, Khalid Kasibong, Lucky Kuswandi	Kalyana Shira Producer	Nai Dhuha	Constanta Papadimitrou, Dita Triana, Kristiadi Legopranwo, Odo Dhanari			
Maha Inayat	29/10/2010	Ody Wiroo	Nurmalia	Kanti Indah Firm	Budi Mulyono	Megawati Simbo	action		
Maidi	10/08/2010	Hany Dago Saharyadi	Hany Dago Saharyadi	Inajala Firms, Geniya Firms, Dago Fim Koberang					
Menculik Miyabi	08/09/2010	Frida Purmono HW	Bang Marqun, Rediya Dika	Makina Pictures	Ody Mulya Hidayat	Tedy Sutono, Yoni K, Chandra Lie, Fandy Lingga			447/453 <a href="http://www.keenunjab.com">www.keenunjab.com</a> with Japanese poem star Maria Ozawa

Mendua Impian	15/04/2010	Harung Brinjanto	Ther Widiana	Dapur Film	Bernhard Sulistio				
Mengaji Raj di Victoria Park	10/06/2010	Julia Amara	Ther Widiana	Practical Production	Sawang Moko Damar Purnih Dewl Umnya Fachman				
Nakanya Anak Mada	28/07/2010	Nyajo Rio Nuala	Farah Mandala	Mira Pictures	Kean Mahani				thriller
Nyebut Kera	02/11/2010	G. Scheffano	Cassandra Masarati	MD Pictures	Dharmo Purnih, Manoj Purnih	Karan Mahana, Sana Purnih			comedy
Nut For Sale	24/06/2010	Nyajo Rio Nuala	Viva West	Rapi Films	Gope T. Saman, Sulojo S Saman	Sani Samanti, Shalu Malani, Sonya V M. Senu Saman			about profiling self dancers. "Keragaman tak untuk dijam"
Nyanyi Lomba Sialam	01/12/2010	Lisla Fauziah	Shaw Ayu Masse						intended to raise awareness about HIV
Obama Anak Menung	01/07/2010	Johan De Rantau, Damani Damara	Damani Damara	Multision Plus Pictures	Ram Purnih	Wicky Y Chindo, Gohard Purnih			Story about US President Barack Obama's childhood in Jakarta.
Pendaur Hantu The Movie	02/03/2010	Almasyah	DO Production	Cila Binar Production	Almasyah, Aslul Puweli				Based on a television series.
Pengakuan Seorang Pelacur	00/11/2010	Andrew Timothy							
Pengantin Putih Biru	23/08/2010	Nyajo Rio Nuala	Ery Solid	Kanis Indah Film, BIC Production	Budi Mulyono	Hm Fiman Bintang			
Pengantin Surat	00/11/2010	Rako Prijanto	Raditya Mangunsoyo, Kinan Samael	Rapi Film	Gope T. Saman, Sulojo S Saman	Sani Samanti, Shalu Malani, Sonya V M. Senu Saman			comedy
Pengantin Topeng	15/07/2010	Am Surjadi	Am Surjadi	Besinema, Project 771	Eko Kristiano	Alano D Cahari, Bermano Lunardi, David Mandardi, Yanti Kusanto, Ayu Benara			http://www.besinema.co.id/
Pengula Treakhir 2	14/10/2010	Jueki	Cassandra (Massardi?)	Dwengdera	Megawati S	Budi Mulyono			
Pocong Jumat Kilau	23/08/2010	Nyajo Rio Nuala	Ery Solid	Rapi Film	Gope T. Saman, Sulojo S Saman	Sani Samanti, Shalu Malani, Sonya V M. Senu Saman			
Pocong Keliling	08/07/2010	Viva West	Aber AC	Maxima Pictures	Ogi Mulya Hidayat	Tedy Sulojo, Yoni K			honor
Pocong Rumah Angker	16/12/2010	Koya Papayo	Ery Solid	Mira Pictures, BIC Production	Hm Fiman Bintang	Michael Allan, Diang NS			honor
Ratu Koti Meneoplah	27/09/2010	Oy C. Harahap	Oy C. Harahap	MVP Pictures	Ram Purnih	Gehing Purnih, Wicky Chindo			comedy
Rajuan Awah Pemasaan	20/09/2010	Assad M. A. Ferry Jay	Melony	KCK Productions	KC Dhesral				
Radi Cekak	17/08/2010	Uji	UPI	Sarvision Plus	Chand Parwez Sirvia	Fuz Sirvia, Bustil Nawak, Reza Senda			383236
Ruilhan Kerntak Perawan	14/10/2010	Yoyok Dimprik		KCK Productions	KC Dhesral				Comedy conference with American pornographic scenes. Big F film.
Rokkap	21/10/2010	Bahar Gunung Rona Tarisang Sari, Renda yoy		Promised Land Pictures	Inga Rosandi Kandung				drama
Roman Pilsan	20/09/2010	Rako Prijanto	Raditya Mangunsoyo	MD Pictures	Dharmo Purnih, Manoj Purnih				

Ramah Dara	22/01/2010	Mo Brothers	Mo Brothers	Goryah Pictures, Meran Production, Gantilan Visuals, Mediacorp Rainier Pictures	Dillon Tio, Fredie Yoo, James Toh, Qing Chew	Eric Kioo, Mike Whiam, Charles Tio, Daniel Yun, Harjono, Yong Chi Keung, Teddy Stenson, Hornady Seseawan	horror	379258	
Selena		Hornady Seseawan	Anisa M. Arasy	CinePro	Aldo Baran, Hornady Seseawan		drama		
Sung Pencerah	09/08/2010	Hanung Bramantyo	Hanung Bramantyo	MVP Pictures	Raan Purjabli	Gohnd Purjabli, Hanung Bramantyo, Wicky V Olinde		1108600	Released in Lebanon.
Satu Jam Saja	07/10/2010	Ario Rakabek	Rano Karno	Kamos Film		Samy Karno		401649	
Selindur (Tuk) Semai	00/06/2010	Iqbal Rais	Hisham Mubali, Lani Jaya	Millennium Vitarna Film		Sofie Nurati, Lisyo Azari			
Sebab Kita Jaja (SKJ)	08/04/2010	Lukonde	Tanda	Sarvision Plus	Chand Parvez Serbia	Fiaz Serbia, Basal Nawari			Hanung Bramantyo has a cameo as a "Peugas Tolier"
Selamat Berdiali	22/07/2010	Asasi M. Ferry Juy	Melony	KCK Productions	KK Chweirai		thriller		Adopsi inside Roy Marjan
Selangkah (9 Langkah Mencapai Cinta)		urelasear7 Winda E. Melalaka	Selar Ayu Amara	MVP Pictures	Raan Purjabli	Gohnd Purjabli, Wicky V Olinde, Hazelili Syarif			
Sengaja Bujuk	04/11/2010	Iqbal Rais		MVP Pictures	Raan Purjabli	Gohnd Purjabli, Rajesh Purjabli			
Sevan Facebook	21/10/2010	Helli Kardt	M. Ilhamka Nazam Anggoro	Doctor Entertainment, Timur Merah Production	Harris Nazam, Andy Shaik	Sergio Sutrisno	horror		
Sei... Jadiin Aku Simpson	14/01/2010	Hanny A. Siburua	Cassandra Massardi	Vigo Pura Film	Ferry Angriawan				
Selanjutnya Keperawatan di Jember	02/12/2010	Joko Nugroho	Joko Nugroho	Senna Film	Gohnd Purjabli		drama		
Sweetheart	30/09/2010	Hanny A. Siburua	Cassandra	Vigo Pura Film	Ferry Angriawan		drama		
Taman Air Bata	17/06/2010	Ari Shasale	Armanono	Ariana Pictures	Ari Shasale	Nis Shasale, Zulikarnen, Gunawan Rahajo	drama		
Tanjung	29/04/2010	Rizal Manjwani	Ailin Sidiq	Raja Films	Geza T. Samani, Sahejo S Samani	Sani Samani, Shahi Muliati, Sonya V. M. Senu	horror		
Telokem!	18/03/2010	Koyu Pagayo (credited by)		Banana Pictures	Luell Lurman Hakim		horror		Technical advisor Nyayo, marketed as a "real, unedited" recording. "It's real"
The God Babe	13/03/2010	Arie Azis	Lingga Mana	Kanta Film	Megawati S.	Budi Mulyono	comedy		
The Sexy City	29/03/2010	Helli Kardt	Helli Kardt, Daniel Tio	PT. Vigo Pura Film, Timur Merah Film	Helli Kardt	Ferry Angriawan	drama		
Time	01/09/2010	Toko Heedi	Toko Heedi	Mega Entertainment	Rajendra Singh	Ananda Singar, Ayu Yohana, Sallia Fernandez			Ananda Singar is the manager of Bizmagplex.
Train (Mail di Bandung)	01/04/2010	Arie Azis	Abbe Ac	Maxima Films	Oxy Muhyi Hidayat	Teddy Sutisno, Yoen K	horror	418347	
Toliet 105	14/01/2010	Hatawan Triyana	Melody Muchanayak, Va Handopo	MVP Pictures	Raan Purjabli	Gohnd Purjabli, Wicky Olinde	horror		

## List of Interviews Conducted

- Abduh Azis** (Producer and current Head of the Jakarta Arts Council), 6 August 2008.
- Adiyanto Sumarjono** (Producer, Investasi Film Indonesia), 16 July 2008.
- Allan Lunardi** (Director and Producer, Credo Pictures), 19 July 2008.
- Anonymous 1** (Former employee of production company), 18 July 2008.
- Awi Suryadi** (Director, 24ant), 6 June 2008.
- Bakri MM** (Drs. former Head of the Film Department, 1985-2008), 21 November 2008.
- Chand Parwez Servia** (Producer, Starvision), 17 July 2008.
- Damiana Widowati (Dotty)** (Producer, Salto Films), 9 June 2008.
- Dimas Djayadiningrat** (Director), 12 November 2008.
- Elvin Kustaman** (Producer, Credo Pictures), 19 July 2008.
- Emil G. Hampp** (Director), 10 July 2008.
- Enison Sinaro** (Director and IKJ Lecturer), 15 August 2008.
- Eric Sasono** (Film Critic and founding editor of *Rumah Film*), 25 September 2008.
- Eros Djarot** (Director), 22 October 2008.
- Erwin Arnada** (Producer, Reginema), 16 June 2008.
- Hanung Bramantyo** (Director, Dapur Films), 30 May 2008.
- Harry “Dagoe” Suharyadi** (Director, Writer, Producer), 24 November 2008.
- Hatoek Subroto** (Producer and Elang Perkasa boss), 10 December 2008.
- Hendrick Gozali** (Producer, Garuda Films), 19 June 2008.
- Hilman Hariwijaya** (Producer and Writer, Lupus Entertainment), 4 June 2008.
- Jujur Prananto** (Scriptwriter), 5 December 2008.
- Koko Sunarso** (Navirindo), 18 July 2008.
- Lasja F. Susatyo** (Director), 22 November 2008.
- Mira Lesmana** (Producer Miles Films), 30 January 2009.
- Monty Tiwa** (Director and Writer, Moveista), 26 September 2008.
- Nan T. Achnas** (Director and IKJ Lecturer), 13 September 2008.
- Ody Harahap** (Director), 20 October 2008.
- Raam Punjabi** (Producer, Multivision Plus), 17 August 2008.

**Rako Prijanto** (Director), 11 August 2008.

**Rayya Makarim** (Scriptwriter), 7 August 2008.

**Richard Oh** (Writer and Director), 11 August 2008.

**Riri Riza** (Director), 30 September 2008.

**Rizal Mantovani** (Director), 5 November 2008.

**Ronny P. Tjandra** (Jive Entertainment, home video arm of Blitz), 7 August 2008.

**Rudi Soedjarwo** (Director, Reload), 19 July 2008.

**Rudy S. Sanyoto** (InterStudio owner), 16 September 2008.

**Salman Aristo** (Scriptwriter and Producer), 4 December 2008.

**Seno Gumira Ajidarma** (Writer and Lecturer at IKJ), 19 November 2008.

**Shanker RS** (Producer, Indika Entertainment), 22 September 2008.

**Sunil Samtani** (Producer Rapi Films), 19 October 2009.

**Thomas Nawilis** (Actor and Director), 30 May 2008.

**Titie Said** (Head of the Indonesian Censor Board), 28 May 2008.

**Ukus Kuswara** (Director of Film, Department of Tourism and Culture), 31 October 2008.

**Ve Handojo** (Scriptwriter, Multivision Plus), 20 November 2008.

**Viva Westi** (Scriptwriter and Director), 5 June 2008.

**Wendy Soeweno** (former Marketing Director Blitz Megaplex, CEO Jive Entertainment), 17 July 2008.

**Yoen K** (Producer, Maxima Pictures), 18 July 2008.