

# THINKING ANTHROPOLOGICALLY THROUGH INDONESIAN CINEMA

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WINTER 2017-18  
Block Seminar  
Room 353, Bergius Villa

**W**hat is the nature of human freedom? And what conditions are most conducive to its cultivation? How has the Islamic reform movement affected Indonesian conceptions of personal ambition, romantic intimacy and political participation? To what extent have local conceptions of sexuality, gender and social class been shaped by more global trends? And, more specifically, how have ideals of human flourishing and collective life been transformed by developments in new media, international travel and the rise of transnational capital and consumerism? These are some of the questions informing the current anthropological study of Indonesia. But they are also questions that lie at the center of several recent Indonesian films. This seminar puts anthropological scholarship in conversation with Indonesian cinema to explore their respective styles of enquiry, and compare their responses. All films will be presented with English subtitles.

## Course Requirements

- Read the syllabus.
- Complete and careful reading/viewing of all required course material. All reading materials are available on the Moodle website.
- Attendance at all sessions and **active participation** in seminar discussion are mandatory.
- A written essay of 3000 words. The essay is due **Friday, February 9**. Please plan accordingly. The essay question is included below; further details will be distributed in class.
- All work must be completed on time; **no extensions** will be granted for this course, except on grounds of major life disruption.
- Bring pen or pencil and paper to every session for taking notes and other in-class work.
- **No screens.** Laptops, tablets & cellphones are not to be used in class. Seminar sessions are carefully designed to develop critical thinking skills. Screens interfere with this process. Exceptions will be made for learning disabilities or special needs evidenced by doctor's note.

## Course Objectives

- A working familiarity with the current literature on Indonesian cinema;
- A representative knowledge of central themes and issues depicted in recent Indonesian films;
- A comparative understanding of anthropological and filmic depictions of Indonesian history, culture and society;
- A critical awareness of key theoretical questions that closer attention to cinema – and popular culture – may raise for anthropology, and vice versa.

## The Essay

*How does Indonesian cinema address current social and political issues?* With specific reference to one or more filmic genres (e.g. horror, action, romance), argue convincingly for an answer to this question. Support your argument with evidence from the course readings and films—including both (a) the required materials and (b) selected background reading. Although it is not mandatory, you may also use additional materials—found either online or through the bibliographies for the course readings. Please do not forget the “Additional Background Materials” provided on the Moodle site. Further details will be distributed in class.

### A Course in Six Conversations

As a 'block seminar', this course is organized around a series of six conversations, five of which will focus in detail on a recent Indonesian film viewed during class time. The final session will be devoted to reflecting on what we have learned to date, and preparing for the final essay. For each of the five initial conversations, you will be provided with both a list of **required readings** and **background** materials. The required texts must be read *before* the class meeting in question. (In one case, there is also a film to be viewed before the class meeting.) The background materials are there for further reading, and especially to help you in writing the final essay (as above).

### Contextual Reading: Indonesia and Indonesian Cinema

*These books, articles and websites may be consulted for additional background on Indonesia and Indonesian cinema—particularly for context as you prepare to write your essay. Several of these items are directly available online, as indicated.*

For **general background** on the history and cultures of Indonesia, the following works are recommended:

- Vickers, A. (2005) *A History of Modern Indonesia*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1991) *This Earth of Mankind*. New York: Morrow. [This is the first book in the author's *Buru quartet*, which also includes *Child of all nations*, *Footsteps* and *House of glass*.]
- van Klinken, G. & W. Berenschot (2014) *In Search of Middle Indonesia: Middle Classes in Provincial Towns*. Leiden & Boston: Brill.
- Aragon, L. (2000) *Fields of the Lord: Animism, Christian Minorities, and State Development in Indonesia*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Keane, W. (2007) *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter*. Berkeley etc: University of California Press.
- Koentjaraningrat (1985) *Javanese Culture*. Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Ricklefs, M.C. (2006) *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the 14th to the Early 19th Centuries*. Signature Books. Norwalk, CT.: EastBridge Books.
- Picard, M. & R. Madinier, (2011) *The Politics of Religion in Indonesia: Syncretism, Orthodoxy, and Religious Contention in Java and Bali*. New York & London: Routledge.

Three commonly cited '**classics**' in the study of Indonesian cinema include the following:

- Heider, K.G. (1991) *Indonesian Cinema: National Culture on Screen*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Said, S. (1991) *Shadows on the Silver Screen: A Social History of Indonesian Film*. Jakarta: The Lontar Foundation.
- Sen, K. (1994) *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order*. London: Zed Books.

As Paramaditha (2017, below) has noted in her review of the current literature, **more recent scholarship** has moved beyond these earlier works—both to ask new questions, and to engage a body of post-1998 films that differ markedly from their Soeharto-era predecessors. Some important examples include the following:

- Paramaditha, I. (2017) 'Film Studies in Indonesia: An Experiment of a New Generation'. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*. 2017(3/4): 357-75. Open access.

- Barker, T.A.C. (2011) *A Cultural Economy of the Contemporary Indonesian Film Industry*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. National University of Singapore. Available online through ProQuest Dissertations (HEIDI).
- van Heeren, K. (2012) *Contemporary Indonesian Film: Spirits of Reform and Ghosts from the Past*. Leiden: KITLV Press. Open access: <http://tinyurl.com/y7baoczt>
- Downes, M. (2016) *(Un)toward Progress: Stories of Modernity and Development in Indonesian Film and Fiction*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Australian National University. Available online through ProQuest Dissertations (HEIDI).
- Izharuddin, A. (2017) *Gender and Islam in Indonesian Cinema*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1007/978-981-10-2173-2
- Murtagh, B. (2013) *Genders and Sexualities in Indonesian Cinema: Constructing Gay, Lesbi and Waria Identities on Screen*. London: Routledge.
- Hanan, D. (2017) *Cultural Specificity in Indonesian Film: Diversity in Unity*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heryanto, A. (2014) *Identity and Pleasure: The Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Paramaditha, I. (2014) *The Wild Child's Desire: Cinema, Sexual Politics, and the Experimental Nation in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. New York University. Available online through ProQuest Dissertations (HEIDI).

### **Additional Resources on Film in Contemporary Indonesia**

*The following websites include articles, reviews and commentary on current films. Some material may be in Indonesian. While Google Translate ([translate.google.com/](http://translate.google.com/)) does **not** provide reliable translation for scholarly purposes (e.g., for use in your essay), it **can** often give you a general sense of the topics and questions under discussion—and potentially point you to additional materials.*

- A simple **Google** search is often extremely helpful for finding details on specific films, directors, production houses, etc). It may also turn up full movies (e.g., on YouTube, dailymotion.com, Vimeo, etc.), some of which are subtitled in English.
- Recent trailers and some movies can also be streamed on the **IndoXXI website**. The English interface is accessible at [en.indoxxi.net/nonton-film-indonesia-terbaru](http://en.indoxxi.net/nonton-film-indonesia-terbaru)
- The **Film Indonesia** site offers box office numbers ([filmindonesia.or.id/movie/viewer#.WdcbWNuB2uo](http://filmindonesia.or.id/movie/viewer#.WdcbWNuB2uo)) and film synopses. It is a commonly cited source in the current scholarship. The primary interface is in Indonesian. But, if you search for a film title, you can then click “English version” for many of the film summaries.
- The Indonesian **Film Censorship Board** ([www.lsf.go.id](http://www.lsf.go.id)) is also an important resource for recent statistics. Google translate can help you navigate the site.
- **CinemaPoetica** ([cinemapoetica.com/](http://cinemapoetica.com/)) describes itself as ‘a collective of film critics, journalists, researchers, and activists in Indonesia’. The site offers critical analyses and essays on contemporary Indonesian film. It is an excellent resource.
- As its name suggests, **Sinopsis Film Baru** ([sinopsisfilmbaru.com](http://sinopsisfilmbaru.com)) provides synopses of current films. The text is in Indonesian. Again, Google translate may be helpful.
- For those interested in going further, a reliable online **Indonesian-English dictionary** can be accessed here: [sealang.net/indonesia/dictionary.htm](http://sealang.net/indonesia/dictionary.htm)
- A discussion of other current sites may be found in Paramaditha 2017 (see above).

## Course Schedule

Date	Time	Meeting
Friday, October 20. 2017	13-16:00 c.t.	Introductory Session
Friday, October 27. 2017	13-17:00 c.t.	Film + discussion
Saturday, October 28. 2017	13-17:00 c.t.	Film + discussion
Friday, November 3. 2017	13-17:00 c.t.	Film + discussion
Saturday, November 4. 2017	13-17:00 c.t.	Film + discussion
Friday, November 10. 2017	13-17:00 c.t.	Film + discussion
Saturday, November 11. 2017	13-17:00 c.t.	Discussion + essay prep
Friday, February 9. 2018	no meeting	Final essays due

### Course Introduction

Friday, October 20. 2017

There is no preparatory reading or viewing required for this session.

### Islam Today: Steering a Straight Path

Friday, October 27. 2017

#### In-class viewing

- *Hijrah Cinta* (Indra Gunawan, 2014)

#### Required reading

- Fealy, G. (2008) 'Consuming Islam: Commodified Religion and Aspirational Pietism in Contemporary Indonesia'. In Fealy, G. & S. White (eds.) *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Pages 15–39.
- Hoesterey, J. & M. Clarke (2012) 'Film Islami: Gender, Piety and Pop Culture in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia'. *Asian Studies Review*. 36: 207-26.
- Heryanto, A. (2014) 'Cinematic Battle'. *Identity and Pleasure: The Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture*. Singapore: NUS Press. Pages 49-73.

#### Background reading

- Sasono, Eric (2013) 'Islamic Revivalism and Religious Piety in Indonesian Cinema'. In Daniels, T.P. (ed.) *Performance, Popular Culture, and Piety in Muslim Southeast Asia*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. Pages 45-75.
- Widodo, A. (2008) 'Writing for God: Piety and Consumption in Popular Islam'. *Inside Indonesia*. 93: <http://www.insideindonesia.org/writing-for-god>

- Weintraub, A.N., ed. (2011) *Islam and Popular Culture in Indonesia and Malaysia*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Hoesterey, J.B. (2015) *Rebranding Islam: Piety, Prosperity, and a Self-Help Guru*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Barkin, G. (2014) 'Commercial Islam in Indonesia: How Television Producers Mediate Religiosity Among National Audiences'. *International Journal of Asian Studies*. 11(1): 1–24.
- Jones, C. (2010) 'Materializing Piety: Gendered Anxieties about Faithful Consumption in Contemporary Urban Indonesia'. *American Ethnologist*. 37(4): 617-37.
- Smith-Hefner, N. (2007) 'Javanese Women and the Veil in Post-Soeharto Indonesia'. 66(2): 389-420.
- Hasan, N. (2013) *The Making of Public Islam: Piety, Democracy and Youth in Indonesian Politics*. Yogyakarta: Suka Press.
- Hefner, R.W. (2011) 'Where Have all the *Abangan* Gone? Religionization and the Decline of Non-Standard Islam in Indonesia'. In Picard, M. & R. Madinier, R. (eds.) *The Politics of Religion in Indonesia: Syncretism, Orthodoxy, and Religious Contention in Java and Bali*. Pages 71-91. London & New York: Routledge.
- Ricklefs, M.C. (2012) *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to Present*. Singapore: NUS Press.

### Middle Class *Cinta*: How Deep Is Your Love?

Saturday, October 28, 2017

#### In-class viewing

- *Ada Apa dengan Cinta 2* (Riri Riza, 2016)

#### Required reading

- Reeve, D. (2014) 'Diaspora Power'. *Inside Indonesia*. 115 (Jan-Mar). [www.insideindonesia.org/diaspora-power](http://www.insideindonesia.org/diaspora-power)
- Ingham, S. (2014) 'Defining the Nation?' *Inside Indonesia*. 115 (Jan-Mar). [www.insideindonesia.org/defining-the-nation](http://www.insideindonesia.org/defining-the-nation)
- Smith-Hefner, N. (2007) 'Youth Language, *Gaul* Sociability, and the New Indonesian Middle Class'. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*. 17(2): 184-203.
- Jones, C. (2003) 'Dress for *Sukses*: Fashioning Femininity and Nationality in Urban Indonesia'. In Niessen, S., Leshkovich, A.M. & C. Jones (eds.) *Reorienting Fashion: The Globalization of Asian Dress*. Oxford & New York. Pages 185-213.

#### Background reading

- Pinches, M., ed. (1999) *Culture and Privilege in Capitalist Asia*. London: Routledge.
- Barker, T. (2017) 'Travels and Travails: Cosmopolitan Muslims in Indonesian Cinema'. *Cinema Poetica*. <https://cinemapoetica.com/travels-and-travails-cosmopolitan-muslims-in-indonesian-cinema/>
- van Klinken, G. (2014) 'Cosmopolitan Indonesia'. *Inside Indonesia*. 115 (Jan-Mar). [www.insideindonesia.org/cosmopolitan-indonesia](http://www.insideindonesia.org/cosmopolitan-indonesia)
- Chua, B.H., ed. (2000) *Consumption in Asia; Lifestyles and Identities*. London & New York: Routledge.
- van Klinken, G. & W. Berenschot (2014) *In Search of Middle Indonesia: Middle Classes in Provincial Towns*. Leiden & Boston: Brill.

- Jones, C. (2004) 'Whose Stress? Emotion Work in Middle-Class Javanese Homes. *Ethnos*. 69(4):509-28.
- Nilan, P. (2013) *Adolescents in Contemporary Indonesia*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Heryanto, A. (1999) 'The Years of Living Luxuriously'. In Pinches, M. (ed.) *Culture and Privilege in Capitalist Asia*. London & New York: Routledge. Pages 159-87.
- Nilan, P. (2003) 'Romance Magazines, Television Soap Operas and Young Indonesian Women'. *Review of Indonesian and Malaysian Affairs*. 37(1): 45-70.
- Parker, L. (2008) 'Theorising Adolescent Sexualities in Indonesia—Where "Something Different Happens."' *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific*. 18. [intersections.anu.edu.au/issue18/parker.htm](http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue18/parker.htm)
- Smith-Hefner, N.J. (2005) 'The New Muslim Romance: Changing Patterns of Courtship and Marriage Among Educated Javanese Youth'. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*. 36(3): 441-59.

### Sex and the City: We 'Other' Jakartans

Friday, November 3, 2017

#### In-class viewing

- *Lovely Man* (Teddy Soeriaatmadja, 2012)

#### Required reading

- Paramaditha, I. (2011) 'City and Desire in Indonesian Cinema'. *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*. 12(4): 500-12.
- Boellstorff, T. (2004) 'Playing Back the Nation: *Waria*, Indonesian Transvestites'. *Cultural Anthropology*. 19(2): 159-95.
- Davies, S.G. (2015) 'Surveiling Sexuality in Indonesia'. In Bennett, L.R. & S.G. Davies (eds.) *Sex and Sexualities in Contemporary Indonesia: Sexual Politics, Health, Diversity and Representations*. London & New York: Routledge. Pages 29-50.

#### Background reading

- Wieringa, S. (2002) *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*. Basingstoke, Hampshire UK: Institute of Social Studies/Palgrave Macmillan.
- Oetomo, D. 'Gender and Sexual Orientation in Indonesia'. In Sears, L.J. (ed.) *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*. Durham: Duke University Press. Page: 259-69.
- Paramaditha, I. (2014) *The Wild Child's Desire: Cinema, Sexual Politics, and the Experimental Nation in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. New York University. Available online through ProQuest Dissertations (HEIDI).
- Bennett, L.R. & S.G. Davies, eds. (2015) *Sex and Sexualities in Contemporary Indonesia: Sexual Politics, Health, Diversity and Representations*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Priyatna, A. (2015) "'I Am a Woman:'" Portraying Womanhood in the Auto/Biography of an Indonesian Transsexual Celebrity'. *MetaSastra*. 8(2): 211-24.
- Murtagh, B. (n.d.) 'The New Homonormativity in Indonesian Cinema?' Available online: [abeh.org.br/arquivos\\_anais/B/B002.pdf](http://abeh.org.br/arquivos_anais/B/B002.pdf)
- Murtagh, B. (2013) *Genders and Sexualities in Indonesian Cinema: Constructing Gay, Lesbian and Waria Identities on Screen*. London: Routledge.
- Boellstorff, T. (2005) *The Gay Archipelago: Sexuality and Nation in Indonesia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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## Horror as Return of the Repressed

Saturday, November 4, 2017

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### In-class viewing

- *Mall Klender* (David Poernomo, 2014)

### Required reading

- van Leeuwen, L. (2011) 'Celebrating Civil Society in the Shopping Malls'. In *Lost in Mall: An Ethnography of Middle-Class Jakarta in the 1990s*. Leiden: KITLV Press. Pages 153-95.
- Duke, B. (2015) 'Remembering May 1998'. *Inside Indonesia*. 119 (Jan - Mar). [www.insideindonesia.org/remembering-may-1998](http://www.insideindonesia.org/remembering-may-1998)
- Barker, T.A.C. (2011) 'History, Violence and Horror Films'. In *A Cultural Economy of the Contemporary Indonesian Film Industry*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. National University of Singapore. Pages 157-93. Available online through ProQuest Dissertations (HEIDI).

### Background reading

- Heryanto, Ariel (1999) 'Rape, Race, and Reporting'. In Budiman, A., B. Hatley & D. Kingsbury (eds) *Reformasi: Crisis and Change in Indonesia?* Clayton: Monash Asia Institute. Pages 299-334.
- Winarnita, M.S. (2009) 'The tragedy of May 1998'. *Inside Indonesia*. 95 (Jan - Mar). [www.insideindonesia.org/the-tragedy-of-may-1998](http://www.insideindonesia.org/the-tragedy-of-may-1998)
- van Heeren, K. (2012) *Contemporary Indonesian Film: Spirits of Reform and Ghosts from the Past*. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- Sutandio, A. (2014) *Historical Trauma and the Discourse of Indonesian-ness in Contemporary Indonesian Horror Films*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Ohio University. Available online through ProQuest Dissertations (HEIDI).
- Siegel, J.T. 'Early Thoughts on the Violence of May 13 and 14, 1998, in Jakarta'. *Indonesia*. 66: 74-108.
- Strassler, K. (2004) 'Gendered Visibilities and the Dream of Transparency: The Chinese-Indonesian Rape Debate in Post-Suharto Indonesia'. *Gender and History*. 16(3): 689-725.
- Purdey, J. 'Anti-Chinese Violence and Transitions in Indonesia: June 1998 - October 1999'. In Lindsay, J. & H. Pausacker (eds.) *Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*. Singapore: ISEAS Publications. Pages: 14-40.
- Madrid, R. (1999) 'Islamic Students in the Indonesian Student Movement, 1998-1999: Forces for Moderation'. *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*. 31(3):17-32.
- Sontag, S. (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Paramaditha, I. (2011) Questions on Witnessing Violence. *The Jakarta Post*. April 4, 2011. [intanparamaditha.org/questions-on-witnessing-violence-the-jakarta-post-2011/](http://intanparamaditha.org/questions-on-witnessing-violence-the-jakarta-post-2011/)

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## Histories of Violence and Forgetting

Friday, November 10, 2017

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### In-class viewing

- *Headshot* (Timo Tjahjanto & Kimo Stamboel, 2016)

NB: The **required reading** is on the next page...

**Required reading/viewing**

- View film: *The Act of Killing* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9mazRs9Gys>).
- Cribb, R. (2013) 'Review: An Act of Manipulation?' *Inside Indonesia*. ([www.insideindonesia.org/review-an-act-of-manipulation](http://www.insideindonesia.org/review-an-act-of-manipulation))
- Zurbuchen, M.S. (2005) 'Historical Memory in Contemporary Indonesia'. In *Beginning to Remember: The Past in the Indonesian Present*. Seattle: University of Washington Press. Pages 3-37.

**Background reading**

- Wilson, L. (2015) *Martial Arts and the Body Politic in Indonesia*. Leiden: Brill.
- Sen, K. (2010) 'The Language of Violence in Indonesian Cinema'. *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film*. 8(3): 203-12.
- Hobart, M. (1985) 'Violence and Silence: Some Limits in the Anthropological Understanding of Bali'. Unpublished essay. [www.criticalia.org/asia/violence-and-silence.pdf](http://www.criticalia.org/asia/violence-and-silence.pdf)
- Dwyer, L. & D. Santikarma (2003) "'When the World Turned to Chaos:' 1965 and Its Aftermath in Bali, Indonesia'. In Gellately, R. & B. Kiernan (eds.) *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pages 289-305.
- Nordholt, Henk Schulte (2002) 'Genealogy of Violence'. In Columbijn, F. & J.T. Lindblad (eds.) *Roots of Violence in Indonesia: Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*. Leiden: KITLV. Pages: 33-62.
- Duncan, C.R. (2013) *Violence and Vengeance: Religious Conflict and Its Aftermath in Eastern Indonesia*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University press.
- Sidel, J.T. (2006) *Riots, Pogroms, Jihad: Religious Violence in Indonesia*. Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.
- Ryter, L. (2001) 'Pemuda Pancasila: The Last Loyalist Free Men of Suharto's Order?' *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*. Anderson, B.R.O'G, ed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications. Pages: 124-55.
- Anderson, P. (2009) *Violence Performed: Local Roots and Global Routes of Conflict*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

**Tying the Whole Room Together**

Saturday, November 11, 2017

There are no formal reading requirements for the final session, in which we will have an open discussion of key themes and questions, followed by a detailed overview of what is expected in the final essay.

