PART 2

Film discourse practices
Histories, heroes, and monumental frameworks

FILM HISTORY: NEW ORDER PATRONAGE OF FILM PERJUANGAN AND FILM PEMBANGUNAN

Historiography is as much about contemporaneous imaginations of society as it is about the past. In this section I discuss representations of Indonesian film history of the New Order and the film genres which represented its ideologies and discourses about the past. Historians and scholars in literary criticism have reflected on the structures of representation and interpretation in historical discourses. Historian Hayden White (1999) in his article ‘Literary theory and historical writing’ considered the way in which the techniques of historiography and literature overlap each other. White argues that historical discourse is by definition an interpretation of past events by means of narration. In the process of narration facts are only part of what constitutes the understanding of a historical event. The way in which the facts are cast in communicating or explaining an event also affects the meaning of facts. Or, in the words of literary theory scholar Linda Hutcheon (1988:89): ‘the meaning and shape are not in the events, but in the systems which make those past “events” into present historical “facts”’. I have chosen to focus on two specific time-bound genres, which typified New Order rule and historiography: film perjuangan (struggle [for Independence] film), which was actually created under the Old Order of President Soekarno, and film pembangunan (development films).

Film-maker, writer, and academic Trinh Minh-ha (1993:190) has argued that the colour red symbolizes different things in different cultures (for instance: joy, anger, warmth, or impurity): ‘To say red, to show red, is already to open up vistas of disagreement. Not only because red conveys different meanings in different contexts, but also because red comes in many hues, saturations and brightnesses, and no two reds are alike’. Picking up on this theme, I study the context of such dominant modes of engagement as the
use of heroes and authority figures in *perjuangan* and *pembangunan* films. In addition, I analyse the creation of particular connotations of these aspects both in national and transnational political discourses.

The first *film perjuangan*, fictional films with plots revolving around the struggle to gain Indonesian Independence from Dutch colonial rule, were produced around 1954. The majority of these films recounted stories of Indonesian heroes fighting against the Dutch colonizers throughout the whole of the colonial period. Between 1958 and 1965 in particular, films extolling the struggle for Independence were produced in large numbers. This production ran parallel to and supported Soekarno’s national political rhetoric. In 1958 his call for a ‘Return to the Rails of the Revolution’, a slogan that involved the assertion that the ‘right to wield governmental power […] lay with those who led the Revolution’, and the consequent availability of funding for films about the struggle for Independence strongly stimulated their production (Feith 1962:554, as quoted in Sen 1994:36).

Quite apart from the president’s rhetoric, the broader political setting also exerted an enormous influence on film production and other aspects of the world of cinema. In the early 1960s, Indonesian cinema was caught up in the national polemics comprehensively dividing Indonesia starkly into ‘left’ and ‘right’. The thought behind this division can be traced to Soekarno’s increasingly radical national politics. In 1957, relying on the support of the army, he overthrew the multiparty democracy that had been established in Indonesia after 1949, replacing it with what he called ‘Guided Democracy’.1 In the following years, the government grew more authoritarian, more nationalistic, and more anti-Western. In a very intricate juggling act Soekarno tried to balance power between the Indonesian army, which had made enormous political and economic gains in the early years of Guided Democracy, and the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI, Indonesian Communist Party), which could be counted on to provide a considerable portion of Soekarno’s mass support base. By 1959, PKI was ‘the most energetic and militant supporter’ of Soekarno’s radical nationalist politics, which championed anti-imperialism and anti-feudalism’ (Mortimer 1974:79, as quoted in Sen 1994:28).

The nation was polarized into left and right. The left was connected to the Communist Party, which displayed a growing tendency to align itself with the president. The right was associated with a number of army, liberal, and Islamic parties, which were

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1 For a discussion on Soekarno’s rule, see Legge 1972.
enjoying growing support from the governments of Western capitalist nations, particularly the United States and Great Britain. Mirroring the politics of the time, film-makers were also divided into left and right. Leftist film-makers and members of cultural organizations affiliated with PKI especially tended to be actively engaged in linking film to national and nationalist politics. They saw their role as trying to articulate a cultural critique and model for a film culture of opposition to Hollywood cinema. Leftist film organizations and film-makers also vociferously supported the periodic bans that were imposed on films from Hollywood and Britain, as part of Soekarno’s policies of Confrontation against what he perceived as the encroachment of Anglo-American power in Asia.2

Krishna Sen has shown that in this setting, films about the revolution made by film-makers on either side of the divide articulated differences in constructing post-Independence imaginations of Indonesian society. She points out that the two most prominent film-makers of the time, Usmar Ismail and Bachtiar Siagian, produced different narratives about the revolution. In historical films set in the context of the revolutionary war, Usmar Ismail, who received his film education in the United States and could be associated with the right, focused on the private psychological world of his characters, who were without exception heroic fighters. In each of his films Ismail used a standard pattern in which the ‘hero-villain’ represented a ‘good-evil’ juxtaposition of the pejuang (revolutionary) versus the penjajah (the colonial rulers) (Sen 1994:45-6). Alternatively, leftist film-maker Bachtiar Siagian chose to explore the historical and social situation of his characters. His stories deviated from the common nationalist narrative formula in not representing ‘us’, the Indonesian nation, against ‘them’, the Dutch, but in focusing on a social revolution in which the struggle against foreigners included an attempt to identify and challenge the structure of repression within Indonesian society itself (Sen 1994:45).

President Soeharto and his New Order regime came to power after the coup of 30 September 1965. During that night six senior generals and, by mistake, one lower-ranking officer were killed. The New Order blamed PKI for staging the coup and with the coming to power of this regime, leftist film texts were erased. In the aftermath of the coup, films produced by leftist film-makers were banned or destroyed, and many alleged communist film-makers were killed or imprisoned. Simultaneously a total reversal of anti-imperialistic film policy was set in motion, and the ban on films from Hollywood

and Britain was lifted. In New Order national film history, nationalist cinema and the film perjuangan films, which contained stereotypical juxtapositions, were assiduously cultivated. Usmar Ismail was transformed into a tokoh (prominent figure) in Indonesian cinema, and the films about the revolution that he had produced were held up as examples of what the basis of national cinema should be. Other kinds of film texts, such as those of Bachtiar Siagian and other ‘leftist’ film-makers, were consigned to oblivion.

Under the New Order, Usmar Ismail and his films about the revolution came to represent the basis of national cinema in Indonesian film history. After 1965 he was hailed as the father of Indonesian cinema. Furthermore, the day on which the shooting of his film Darah dan doa (released as The long march in English) commenced, 30 March 1950, was marked as Hari Film Nasional (Day of National Film). Usmar Ismail was appointed the father of Indonesian cinema for two reasons: on account of the subject matter of his films and because of his anti-leftist pro-Western position in the politics of the film industry in the 1960s. Usmar’s political stance was particularly apparent in an article he wrote in 1970, called ‘The dark era of national film history’. In this article, he placed the forces led by the Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (LEKRA, Institute of People’s Culture, the key cultural mass organization affiliated to PKI) and PKI in opposition to the forces of democracy in the film world. Sen (1994:35) mentions that the spirit and words of the title of that article have since been reproduced in almost every account of Indonesian film history under the New Order.

Under this regime the revolution films produced by Usmar Ismail received many plaudits, and there were many imitators creating the same type of film perjuangan. With a few exceptions, the New Order perjuangan films either consisted of narratives about heroes of (New Order) Indonesian history, or were based on folk stories about such fictitious heroes as Si Pitung and Jaka Sembung. Films of the latter type tended to feature stereotypical images of aggressive, bearded, red-headed, swearing Dutchmen. A phrase very often used by colonial rulers in these films was ‘Gottverdomseg’ (Dutch for ‘Goddamnit’, pronounced in an Indonesian way). As

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3 For more about characteristic traits and narratives of Usmar Ismail’s films, see Sen 1994:21-2, 38-41.
4 There were some dissenting voices, most notably that of R.M Soetarto, who was representing the Indonesian government when the Japanese studio Nippon Eiga Sha was handed over to the Republic of Indonesia on 6 October 1945. This was the day that he wished to see commemorated.
5 Ismail 1983. The article, entitled ‘Sejarah hitam perfilman nasional’ in Indonesian, was published on 6 October 1970 in the newspaper Sinar Harapan under the pseudonym S.M. Ameh.
the background to the films about the fictitious heroes was also the struggle for Independence, many schoolchildren and Indonesians in general accepted these fictional tales as real historical accounts (Eddy 1993). The basic ingredient of all perjuangan films, whether those which survived the coup of 1965 or those produced under New Order rule, was that their themes revolved around heroes and heroism, as were those in the films by Usmar Ismail.

Whereas the foundation of Indonesian film history was represented by the production of film perjuangan, the New Order was represented by the genre of film pembangunan (development films). Films in this genre epitomized the political strategy and vision of the New Order government, which was based on the encouragement of economic development and modernization. Particularly during Ali Murtopo’s term of office as Minister of Information (1978-1983), the Dewan Film Nasional (DFN, National Film Council) stimulated the idea that films should portray ‘the struggle of scientists, technocrats, and others to improve the prestige of the nation’ (Sen 1994:120). Once again in the New Order pembangunan films the focal characters were heroes; but now the protagonists were heroes of development who came to the village to teach the local, traditional people how to become modern, to trust the national government, and to distrust the villain, usually represented by local, traditional, spiritual leaders or shamans (Sen 1994:120-2). These propagandist pembangunan films were generally screened by mobile cinemas travelling from one village to another.

Both in their content and in the practice of their distribution, films in this genre ran parallel with the course adopted in the promotion of films and development policies of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in the early 1950s. In 1953 the agency was assigned the task of producing and distributing a massive number of political and ‘pedagogical’ films to so-called Third World countries. Set in the rivalry of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, the distribution of these films was part of the official development policy of the US government. Linked to the Point 4 Development Programme launched by President Truman in 1949, this policy was implemented to ‘win the hearts and minds of the non-Communist world’ (Naficy 2003:192). In August 1953, Truman initiated USIA policy contrived to

[...]tell people throughout the world the truth about official aims and acts of the US, to expose and counter hostile efforts to distort those aims and acts to present a broad and accurate picture of the life and culture of American people (Naficy 1984:190).
As a consequence, specific countries in the Third World, primarily those thought to be susceptible to communist ideology, were subjected to an enhanced marketing campaign, which included the distribution of American films and documentaries (Naficy 2003:192). Iranian film-maker Hamid Naficy wrote that in Iran this meant that American-made films were shown to schoolchildren and rural populations using mobile film vans, as well as being presented to the general public in commercial cinemas.

The USIA films that Naficy had to watch and review when he was a schoolboy show a remarkable resemblance to New Order development films. Naficy (2003:193) states that USIA films used a certain formula: ‘The world of the village is shown to be disturbed by a disease, such as tuberculosis or dysentery, but soon stability and calm is restored thanks to an external agent.’ Naficy (2003:193) continues: ‘The diegesis of these films was peopled with a central character (usually a young boy such as Said who suffers from tuberculosis), and a central authority figure (such as Doctor Khoshqadam) who treats him.’ Both the restoration of order and the central role of an (external) authority figure are identical to the New Order development films. In this context Sen (1994:121) has remarked that ‘In serious films dealing with social issues […] the solution to rural anarchy comes from outsiders who are professionals.’ Under the New Order, the restoration of order was a fundamental part of development and other films. As Sen argues, almost every film produced during the New Order followed the same pattern. It depicted a situation in which order was overturned, requiring the combat of disorder, followed by a restoration of order at the end of the film (Sen 1994:159; Sen and Hill 2000:146). In short, these films were cast in the same mold as the USIA films. In films such as Desa di kaki bukit (Village at the foot of the hill, Asrul Sani, 1972), Dr. Siti Pertiwi kembali ke desa (Dr Siti Pertiwi returns to the village, Ami Prijono, 1979), and Joe turun ke desa (Joe comes back to the village, Chaerul Umam, 1989) such external authority figures as doctors and engineers safeguard village life from harm.6

Parallel to the political discourse and stance of the United States’ government in the promotion of USIA policy films in the early 1950s, the modes of engagement of film pembangunan of the post-1965 New Order government can be linked to the then political discourses and policies which were dominated by anti-commu-

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6 For a detailed description of Dr. Siti Pertiwi kembali ke desa, a New Order propaganda film promoting the government’s rural health scheme, its education programme by sending out urban volunteer workers as set out in the Second Five Year plan, and the transmigration programme, see Sen 1994:121-4.
nism and pro-development ideologies. It is very likely that USIA policy was also implemented in Indonesia in the 1950s. Presumably the production and distribution of *gelora pembangunan* films, those films, mostly documentaries and newsreels, about successes in development screened in cinemas and shown in villages by mobile cinema units under the auspices of the Perusahaan Film Negara (PFN, State Film Corporation), were stimulated by USIA policy. The financial aid and assistance granted by America in the 1950s to help establish the Indonesian film industry was conceivably also part of USIA strategies. Krishna Sen mentions that under the Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA) programme, in 1950 the PFN received US$ 500,000 from the American government for new film equipment. In addition, the US government paid for ten experts to be stationed in Indonesia for six years to oversee the implementation of the scheme. Moreover, a number of Indonesians working in cinema were sent to the US to train in various aspects of film-making under the Colombo Plan and TCA (Sen 1994:25).

Besides Usmar Ismail, such other film professionals as Asrul Sani (poet, intellectual and film director), Jayakusuma (academic and expert on traditional theatre), Nya Abbas Acup and Wahyu Sihombing (both film directors), and Soemardjono (highly respected senior film editor), who had all received their education in American academic and professional institutions too and were also committed to anti-leftist pro-Western film politics, held some of the key positions in film schools and professional cinematic bodies after 1965 (Sen 1994:38). However, I was not able to find any data that explicitly mention USIA involvement in supporting the Indonesian film industry, the training of film-makers, or the production and distribution of propaganda development films. Still, if the same kind of film texts were produced by the USIA, inspired by the same kind of political discourses and policies, it would seem fair to draw the conclusion that *film pembangunan* must have been produced for similar reasons.

Naficy (2003:193) argues that the US policy of technological transfer and development aid was based on the perception of ‘underdevelopment’ as a threat to the homogenization of the world, in order to create global markets founded on Western consumerist ideology. Naficy described how the majority of the chief authorities in the USIA films dispensing well-being and prosperity were Point 4 development agents and physicians. He argues that ‘[these] figures invoked and legitimized by proxy the power, knowledge, competence, authority, and, indeed, the right of both the Iranian government (by whom they were employed) and the entire West-
ern economic and industrial apparatus (which trained and sponsored them) to solve indigenous local problems’ (Naficy 2003:194). The heroes of film perjuangan, and particularly the authority figures in film pembangunan of the New Order, were used in the same way and endorsed the same ideology. They legitimized and supported New Order rule and its development policies, driven by the desire to become part of the modern globalized (capitalist) consumerist world.

FILM AND HISTORIOGRAPHY: PROMOTION AND REPRESENTATIONS OF NEW ORDER HISTORY

As well as promoting its development policy through film, the regime used propaganda films to present its version of national history. Both the production and distribution of films which featured propaganda messages had been part of the mediascape ever since the medium of film entered Indonesia. First under Dutch colonial rule (1900-1942) and later under the Japanese occupation (1942-1945), various propaganda films were produced for the edification of national and transnational audiences. After Indonesian Independence in the 1950s, the PFN began producing short propaganda films. These films were generally designated film gelora pembangunan (‘zeal for development’ films), and were intended to arouse enthusiasm for modernization among the Indonesian rural masses.7 These films, and later under the New Order other films produced by different government institutions, tended to be crammed with messages about the benefits of development. They also included instructional films showing how the development policies of the different government departments should be implemented (Prakosa 1997:185).

Gelora pembangunan films and instructional films that encouraged development were shown either at mobile cinema screenings or in cinemas before the feature film was screened. In the 1980s, the films also began to be broadcast on the state television channel TVRI. Most of these films were labelled documentaries. As

7 Prakosa 1997:184. I think the production and distribution of these gelora pembangunan films in the 1950s was instigated by USIA policy. Writing about USIA films in Iran, Naficy says that these encompassed films from the United States dubbed in Persian/Farsi, as well as newsreels created specifically for the Iranian market. These newsreels dealt with the US Point 4 Programme, military and development programmes, activities of the royal family, earthquakes, a variety of human interest stories from the US, as well as programmes about improving primitive health, nutrition, and agricultural methods (Naficy 2003:192).
they overtly promoted government doctrines, the genre of documentaries was equated with propaganda (Prakosa 1997:190, 198). The films were all much of a muchness. Nearly all documentaries opened with the image of an aeroplane, followed by a map that set out the compass bearings, the plane landing in some remote area, and the image of native people doing their local dance to welcome the plane and the visitors it had brought.8 The aim of the documentary was to depict the success of a particular development project, or the exoticism of the preferably remote area, or a combination of both. All was accompanied by a voice-over, using a particular documentary pitch, with some ‘cheery’ music typically associated with this type of film playing in the background. Gotot Prakosa claims few viewers were charmed by the New Order documentaries. They were simply too predictable and therefore boring. Consequently, as this unpalatable fact became apparent, a more sophisticated approach was embarked on and propaganda messages were wrapped up in drama fiction narratives. In 1983 the majority of development instruction and propaganda films used drama to get their messages across (Prakosa 1997:194).

Around the same time at which drama documentaries (docudrama) or fiction films were being used to spread New Order propaganda, there was a heightened interest in producing films about Indonesian history. In 1978 Brigadier General Dwipayana, the chief presidential image-builder, was installed as head of the Pusat Produksi Film Negara (PPFN, Centre for State Film Production, the former PFN). After 1965, PPFN had produced only a limited number of newsreels and documentaries. It had been reduced to operating mainly as a film-processing studio. Resurrected under Dwipayana’s supervision, the state-run production company was given new tasks and resources (Sen 1994:66). Obsessed by ideas about the need to educate the young in their national history because of an imminent shift of generations, Dwipayana was committed to the production of big-budget feature films about New Order history and the heroic role of the head of state. In 1979 the production of films that represented key narratives of New Order history commenced.

Krishna Sen and David Hill (2000:11) have noted that ‘Explicitly in film and television the New Order defined the media as vehicles for the creation of a ‘national culture’ that would allow uncontested implementation of its development policies and more generally its authoritarian rule’. Next to this creation of a ‘national culture’, film was also an instrument to portray and strengthen the
‘national fiction’ (Anderson 1983) of the regime. The New Order based its legitimacy to rule on certain key narratives rooted in a constructed past. These key narratives developed into a ‘national fiction’ that shaped the depiction and imaginations of the nation. The most insistent of these narratives were based on three historical events. Under the New Order, these events were referred to as though they were film titles themselves: the Serangan Umum (‘General Attack’; the six-hour penetration of Yogyakarta by the Indonesian forces on 1 March 1949 led by Soeharto); the Peristiwa G30S/ PKI (‘The Incident of the 30 September Movement/Indonesian Communist Party’); and Supersemar, the acronym for Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret (11 March Instruction), which placed the mandate to rule Indonesia firmly in Soeharto’s hands in 1966.9

A film was made featuring each of these three ‘highlights’ of history. These were intended to represent, pass on, and sanction the New Order version of the said historical events. The General Attack was actually represented twice. The first film about this event was produced in 1979. Janur kuning (Yellow coconut frond, Alam Surawijaya) focuses on Soeharto as the historical and narrative hero. The second film was produced in 1982. Serangan fajar (The dawn attack, Arifin C. Noer) is also about the General Attack, but not only about Soeharto. The film has three interlinked stories – ‘the aristocratic family, ‘the poor family’, and the ‘war of Independence’ – and depicts Soeharto in a more symbolic role.10 Both films were big-budget productions. The first was funded by revenues from the president himself and, even though this was not acknowledged officially, from the state oil company Pertamina. The second film was produced by PPFN (Sen 1994:90, 97), which also produced the film Djakarta 1966 (Arifin C. Noer, 1982), about the signing of the instruction of 11 March 1966. Djakarta 1966 concentrated on the chronological structure of this event (Kristanto 2005:227). However, soon after its premiere the film was taken out of circulation and during the New Order it was archived to be irretrievable in the Pusat Perfilman Haji Usmar Ismail (PPHUI, Haji Usmar Ismail Film Centre) in Jakarta. Presumably the reasons for its vanishing act were some very positive reviews of the film praising the representation of President Soekarno, its storyline focusing on the lives of two fictitious students and not on particular tokoh, and the nuanced depiction of good and bad (Arifin 1989; Anirun 1989).

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9 Birgit Meyer drew my attention to the fact that references to historical events in Indonesia were presented as if they were the titles of films.

10 For a detailed description of the films, see Sen 1994:90, 97.
The most important historical narrative and film of the New Order regime was about the coup of 1965. The film *Penumpasan pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (Eradication of the treason of the 30 September Movement/Indonesian Communist Party, Arifin C Noer, 1982), 271 minutes long, is a docudrama that followed the exact details of the official New Order history of the events surrounding the coup (Kristanto 2005:231). The account of the 1965 coup was extremely relevant to the way in which the country was ruled under Soeharto. In her book *History in uniform*, which discusses the central role of the Indonesian military in the production of official history, Katharine McGregor (2007:109) has argued that ‘The official version of the coup attempt was used to define Indonesian core values, including a commitment to religion and morality’. The New Order version stated that PKI and PKI alone was the mastermind behind the coup and was therefore totally culpable. New Order official history, as it was printed in history books and taught in schools, suggested that after the Madiun Affair in 1948, in which PKI rebelled against the central government, the Communist Party had insidiously built up its strength. Over the years, the party infiltrated and indoctrinated leftist and communist members of the military forces and directed the latter to rebel against the legitimate authority.11 Plans were made to oust the government of President Soekarno and install PKI in power. On the night of 30 September 1965 a group of young army officers under the leadership of Colonel Untung, aided and abetted by members of PKI, abducted six senior generals and one lower-ranking officer, and brutally slaughtered them. Chaos followed, but order was restored when troops under the control of Major General Soeharto captured Untung and crushed the communist leadership (Mackie and MacIntyre 1994:10).

The urgent need for the restoration of ‘peace and order’ in the wake of events of 1965-1966 was the imperative factor cited to validate the repressive rule of the Soeharto regime. Passed over in silence in New Order history, but providing the very basis of its rule, was the purging and subsequent mass slaughter of presumed communists and leftist-orientated individuals that was unleashed by the coup of 1965. The post-G30S terror campaign of 1965-1966 is estimated to have led to the massacre of between 500,000 and one million people. Another half a million people were imprisoned without trial, many for more than a decade. The New Order diligently fuelled the fear of a possible recurrence of the chaos that had proved so destructive in the aftermath of the coup. PKI was

11 Sulistiyo 1997:55-6. There were at least five versions of who was behind the coup. For more details, see Sulistiyo 1997:55-69.
accused of being a seething source of evil, opposed to the state ideology Pancasila, and the party was subsequently demonized in the mass media. The accusations of being a communist had repercussions on whole families, a contagion passing on from one generation to the next. To the very end of Soeharto’s rule, Indonesian people were repeatedly warned about the persistent ‘latent danger of communism’. When forces opposed the New Order government they were invariably accused of espousing communist ideologies. The fear of a recurrence of the events of 1965-1966 and of the harsh repercussions which befell anyone accused of being a communist, was a powerful tool wielded to achieve the precious order so desired by the New Order.

The film Penumpasan pengkhianatan G30S PKI was produced by PPFN. Its production commenced in 1982 and it was finished two years later. The film, with the revealing initial title Sejarah Orde Baru (SOB, History of the New Order), was based on the work of the military historian Nugroho Notosusanto. In 1981, when plans were made for the production of the film, Dwipayana, the head of PPFN, believed such a film could only be made under close government supervision (Sen 1994:82). G30S/PKI was produced to present the ‘historical facts’ behind the coup. In a speech that President Soeharto delivered to the parliament of the Fourth Development government in 1984 before the compulsory screening of the film, he stated that the purpose behind the making of G30S/PKI was to inform the people, particularly the younger generation, about the dark side of Indonesian history, urging them to exercise vigilance so as to ensure that such an incident would never happen again (Atmowiloto 1986:6). Dwipayana supported the president’s standpoint and argued that now that the older echelon of army officers and bureaucrats had been replaced by a younger generation, it was essential that those who were infants at the time of the coup in 1965 be informed of the ‘facts’ about ‘the viciousness of PKI’. He believed that by watching the film they would not side with and be seduced by communist ideologies (Atmowiloto 1986:5).

12 The Pancasila refers to the five-principle Indonesian state ideology implemented after Indonesian independence. The five principles are: 1. Belief in the One Almighty God (Ketuhanan Maha Esa), 2. Just and Civilized Humanity (Kemanusiaan yang adil dan beradab), 3. The Unity of Indonesia (Persatuan Indonesia), 4. Democracy guided by the consensus of deliberations amongst representatives (Kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh hikmat kebijaksanaan dalam permusyawaratan/perwakilan), 5. Social justice for all Indonesian people (Keadilan social bagi seluruh rakyat Indonesia).

13 For more on New Order historiography and the implication of the military in its construction of the past, see McGregor 2007.
Dwipayana was not alone in his idea. Within a few months of the film’s release, many government officials and bureaucrats began the task of organizing mandatory screenings for members of the Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (ABRI, Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia), government officials and bureaucrats, and schoolchildren. The New Order government never actually initiated these first screenings formally. However, it was not very long before the film was being used officially as a vehicle to transmit the New Order’s representation of the past. In 1984, G30S/PKI was made part of a compulsory screening programme in schools and government departments on 30 September. Moreover, it was also made part of the curriculum of the Pendidikan Sejarah Perjuangan Bangsa (PSPB, Education in the History of the Struggle of the Nation) for history classes in schools. In this guise it was screened in ‘P4 Pancasila’ classes, state ideology indoctrination courses which were also obligatory for university students and civil servants. To date, the film is the single most screened, and presumably most-watched of all Indonesian films (Kristanto 2005:231; Sen and Hill 2000:148). A crucial aspect of the distribution and exhibition of G30S/PKI was the government’s ceaseless propaganda that the film depicted historical facts, and showed the one and only true version of the events surrounding the 1965 coup.

Under New Order rule, no other films dealing directly with the 1965 coup were produced. As the film G30S/PKI was already there to represent the historical facts of the coup, all other films, which might have presented other versions of the subject, were precluded. There were only three other films that were set in the context of the struggle against communism. The first of these, Operasi X (Operation X), was produced in 1968 by the ‘devoutly Islamic and anti-communist’ film-maker Misbach Yusa Biran (Kristanto 2005:73; Sen 1994:81). The second, Penumpasan sisa-sisa PKI Blitar Selatan (Operasi Trisula) (Extermination of the remnants of PKI of South Blitar (Operation Trisula), BZ Kadaryono), was produced by PPFN in 1986. It dealt with the capture of communists in East Java in 1965-1966 and was presented in the form of a docudrama. As the plot of the film was so startlingly black and white, completely devoid of any nuances, it was perceived as being pure, unadulterated propaganda.\footnote{Kristanto 2005:290. The closing scene of the film addresses the idea of propaganda for development so blatantly that it borders on the farcical. By employing the same ‘cheery’ music score that was generally used in propaganda documentaries and the inescapable voice-over, this scene rips the film out of its historical context and places it in the rhetoric of the New Order present.}

\footnote{From 1980 under the New Order students and civil servants had been compelled to follow a mandatory state-sponsored indoctrination course in the state ideology Pancasila. These sessions were known as P4, short for Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila (Directives for Instilling and Implementing Pancasila).}
third film, produced for television with the title *Terjebak* (Trapped), directed by Dedi Setiadi, was produced in 1996. The soap’s production was initiated by the 1996 Committee of the ‘Day of Commemoration of the Sacred Pancasila’, which also supplied the outline of the screenplay. Its theme was the riots that flared up after state troops attacked the office of the political opposition party Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI, Indonesian Democratic Party) on 27 July 1996 and it unashamedly represented the members of this party as part of ‘current communist activities’.

Above I mentioned the important role of heroes and authority figures in *film perjuangan* and *film pembangunan*. Furthermore, I alluded to the emphasis on the restoration of order as an inevitable ingredient in all New Order films. New Order history films shared both these traits. Obviously, in films about the highlights of New Order history the hero was Soeharto. The head of state was represented as both the hero of the struggle for Independence and of the 1965 coup. Importantly, the films emphasized that after the coming to power of the New Order after 1965, order was restored in the nation. Another recurrent feature in New Order films dealing with history was the juxtaposition of sources of ‘evil’ versus ‘good’, whereby ‘good’ sources were associated with Islam. In many films set in the past, both those dealing with New Order historiography as well as fictional historical tales, the protagonists were pious men or women. To give an example, both *G30S/PKI* and *Operasi Trisula* contain a scene in which brutal men (communists) violently storm into a Mosque and the house of pious Muslims respectively. There they attack innocent people who are praying, and trample on the Quran. These antagonists are depicted clearly showing contempt for Islam.

In other scenes in both films there is no doubt that the good are religious. In *Operasi Trisula* all protagonists are adherents of Islam as indeed they are in the film *G30S/PKI*. However, the latter is more subtle in that it also highlights the Christian background of General Padjaitan. In the scenes in the film that feature Padjaitan and his family at home, Western classical music (which many Indonesians may assume to be ‘Church music’) is played. The camera also captures crosses on the wall. Likewise, in New Order films set in the past and based on fictional heroes, Islam was depicted as the nurturing source of the good which defeats all evil. For example, the films about Betawi (native Jakarta) folk legend Si Pitung and comic book character Jaka Sembung, which

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were produced in the 1980s, refer to Islam as an aid to overcoming problems.\footnote{17}

The opposition between evil communism and good Islam in the historical films was part of the political discourses of the regime. Communists were accused of not believing in God, and generally speaking atheism was equated with communism. In *History in uniform* McGregor suggests that the manner in which the bodies of army generals and lieutenant were dumped in the well at Lubang Buaya (Crocodile Pit) was particularly offensive to followers of Islam. She moreover mentions that in the first published army version of the coup attempt it was noted that the coup had failed first and foremost because of ‘the hands of God’ (McGregor 2007:69-70). However, McGregor also points out that particularly in New Order historiography of the late 1970s and early 1980s, Islam, mainly in its radical form, was represented as a threat to the Pancasila and national stability. Only by the late 1980s concessions were made to support the promotion and practice of Islam as a religion, as opposed to political Islam. At that time President Soeharto had re-evaluated the Muslim vote after the implementation of the ‘sole foundation’ (*asas tunggal*) legislation – which required all organizations to make Pancasila their sole basis – and had made a move towards embracing Islam personally (Liddle 1996:614). Accordingly, in New Order representations in film, but also in museums and textbooks, followers of such ‘extremist’ and political Islamic groups as Darul Islam (House of Islam), who strove for an Islamic state after Independence, were presented as ‘crazed bandits devoid of religious feelings’ (Heider 1991:105) rather than as Muslims who used the religious teachings properly.\footnote{18}

The use of religion (mostly Islam) as the source of good in films was also part of a new code of ethics for film-making, which was launched by the Film Council in 1981. One of the instructions in this Ethical Code was that ‘Dialogue, scenes, visualization, and conflicts between the protagonist and antagonist in the story have to focus on devotion to and the glorification of the One and Only God.’\footnote{19} New Order historical films represented the past with modes of engagement which emphasized heroism and contrasted the sources of evil with religion. Hence, it may come as no surprise

\footnote{17} See for example the description of the films *Jaka Sembung sang penakluk* (Jaka Sembung the conqueror, Sisworo Gautama, 1981) and *Si Pitung beraksi kembali* (Pitung strikes again, Lie Soen Bok, 1981) in Kristanto 2005:217, 224.
\footnote{18} McGregor 2007:187, 191-2. For more on the political background and representations of the threat of extreme Islam and Islamic terrorism, see McGregor 2007:176-95.
\footnote{19} ‘Dialog, adegan, visualisasi, dan konflik-konflik antara protagonis dan antagonis dalam alur cerita seharusnya menuju ke arah ketakwaan dan pengagungan terhadap Tuhan YME.’
that, as mentioned in the first section, some believed that films about the fictional characters Pitung and Jaka Sembung, which applied similar narrative devices, represented real-life national heroes. In Part Three I shall examine ideas and representations of heroes, reality and religion in film in more detail.

‘Film in the framework of’: G30S/PKI and Hapsak

The ways in which audiences read films do not necessarily coincide with the intention of film-makers. Presumably to safeguard and drive home one particular reading of (propaganda) films as much as possible, under the New Order these films were subjected to the practice of ‘framing’. The films were screened in the ‘framework’ (dalam rangka) of a particular event or (special) occasion. In 1997 the writer and scholar Umar Kayam launched the notion ‘art in the framework of’ (kesenian dalam rangka). In his article Kayam pointed out the practices of neo-feudalism, which were rooted in such different fields of Indonesian society as politics, business, bureaucracy, education, and the arts. Referring to the latter, Kayam argued: ‘In the field of the arts, these are constructed with reference to the supremacy of the authority in power and within a colossal presentation of ‘art in the framework of’ the ritualization of the nation’. Kayam’s phrase ‘art in the framework of’ can be easily transferred to the convention of screening ‘films in the framework of’: the practice of positioning and framing films in a specific context among other things to influence their assessment by their audience. New Order history films in particular lent themselves to screening in specific frameworks connected to national celebrations and commemorations of historical events. On national holidays, or on other particular occasions of collective remembrance, these films

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20 See for example theories about the practice of ‘reading against the grain’, which emerged in the 1970s feminist, gay and lesbian readings of Hollywood cinema. In these readings the Hollywood films, which were made from a heterosexual perspective, were decoded from the perspective of different sexualities. Since then a great deal of research has been done on the discrepancies in ideas between those who produce films and those who consume them. For example, Umberto Eco put forward the theory that the audiences possess a power of selectivity to exposure, perception, and interpretation to reshape texts to fit the audience needs (Eco 1989). For other research on alternative or oppositional readings and freedom of audience perceptions of texts, see Ang 1991, 1996; Lang and Lang 1985; Jhally and Lewis 1992; Liebes and Katz 1990; Livingstone 1991; Real 1982. For theories about the encoding and decoding of texts, see Hall 1980; Morley 1980; Radway 1984.

Histories, heroes, and monumental frameworks featured on television, in cinemas, and at mobile cinema screenings. This linking of films to the commemorations or celebrations of historical events was one element in a strategy to furnish and empower the New Order’s ‘invention’ of the past (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983).

In this section, I analyse the ‘frames’ and practice of ‘framing’ films connected to the concept of ‘film in the framework of’. My analysis covers the most extreme example of the practice of framing a film under the New Order: the role of the film G30S/ PKI as part of the annual celebration – and media event – of the Hari Peringatan Kesaktian Pancasila (Day of Commemoration of the Sacred Pancasila, henceforth Hapsak). I use the term ‘media event’ as it was coined by Dayan and Katz (1992). However, in contrast to Dayan and Katz (1992:22), who discussed live events in democratic nations, the media events of the New Order had a totalitarian background. Therefore some traits in the media events as postulated by Dayan and Katz will be alien to Hapsak.

The production of films to promote key narratives of the history of the New Order alone was not enough. To reach the goal of consolidating the New Order version of history, the films about the 1949 General Attack on Yogyakarta and the Incident of G30S/ PKI were also assimilated into celebrations of collective remembrance. One exception was the film about the 11 March Instruction, which was denied the same treatment and status as the other films. As mentioned earlier, soon after production the film Djakarta 1966 somehow disappeared. The first special screening of the film Janur kuning was held on 1 March 1980, in the context of the commemoration of the General Attack. Ten days later, on 11 March, the film was presented to the public as part of the celebration of the 11 March Instruction. Until the mid-1980s, every 1 March Janur kuning was shown on television to commemorate and pass on New Order images of national history. Thereafter the more successful film Serangan fajar replaced Janur kuning. Because of the more modest role of Soeharto, audiences perceived Serangan fajar to be less blatant propaganda. Pengkhianatan G30S/ PKI was also connected to the commemoration of a historical event: the coup of 1965. Every year from the mid-1980s until 1997 the film was broadcast simul-

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22 For example, the concept that media events and their narration are in competition [my italics] with the writing of history in defining the contents of collective memory should, in the case of Hapsak, be read as being in conjunction with the writing of (New Order) history enacted in the event (Dayan and Katz 1992:211). I use the term to connect the screening of the film G30S/ PKI to a ‘preplanned’ mediatized event which highlights ‘some central value or some aspect of collective memory’, and ‘is broadcast live on television’ (Dayan and Katz 1992: ix, 5-9).
Contemporary Indonesian film

taneously on all national television channels on the evening of 30 September as part of the annual commemoration and celebration of Hapsak on 1 October.

_G30S/PKI_ was screened for the first time on the Indonesian state television channel TVRI in the framework of Hapsak on 30 September 1985. After the advent of private television stations in 1993, all commercial broadcasters participated without exception. The simultaneous screenings became part of the ritual of Hapsak which formed a national holiday of the New Order. From 1967 onwards, every year early in the morning on 1 October a military ceremony was held at the Monumen Pancasila Sakti (Sacred Pancasila Monument). The ceremony was broadcast live on television, and rerun a couple of times during the day. The Pancasila monument was built in Jakarta in 1973 near Lubang Buaya, the dry well in which the bodies of the murdered generals were found. A marble column was constructed around the well-head, and at some distance from the well stands the Pancasila monument. It consists of a huge stone shrine with a bronze relief representing the New Order version of events as they took place on the night of 30 September 1965. Embellishing the top of the shrine are statues of the murdered generals and officer in a defiant stance, with the national symbol of the mythical eagle-like bird Garuda bearing a plaque with the five symbols of Pancasila on its chest in the background. There is another plaque, which reads: ‘We the generals perished to defend the honour of the sacred Pancasila.’ Furthermore, an old wooden school building, the place where according to New Order history the abducted generals were tortured and mutilated by members of PKI, has been made into a museum with a diorama. On display are human-size puppets of the abducted generals, tied to chairs and ‘bleeding’ as they are tortured by male and female ‘communists’.

In the background an audiocassette plays sound fragments of the film _G30S/PKI_.

23 Until 2001 the Hapsak ceremony was broadcast live on television. Under the presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001), and particularly under the presidency of Megawati Soekarnoputri (2001-2004), the commemoration was downplayed. In 2000 the government changed the name Sacred Pancasila Day to Commemorative Day for the Betrayal of Pancasila (Peringatan Hari Pengkhianatan (terhadap) Pancasila). In that same year Megawati, who as vice-president served as inspector of the ceremony due to the president’s absence, did not carry out the second part of the ceremony during which President Soeharto customarily visited the diorama, the preserved well and the Pancasila monument. Since then it was only inserted in small segments in the daily news programmes. When Megawati was president herself in 2002 and 2003, she did not attend the ceremony; nevertheless, it continued to be held. Since the installation of Susilo Bambang Yudoyono as president in 2004, the Hapsak ceremony has been restored. At least until October 2008, the president presided over the ceremony as usual.
Every 1 October the field around Lubang Buaya would be filled with representatives of the military and groups of schoolchildren, lined up in regimented fashion. At the back of the ranks of the military and schoolchildren, enormous placards bearing the images of the murdered generals would be erected. Under the trees near the old school building, an orchestra consisting of around 200 children, selected from both primary and high schools, would play the national anthem and other songs extolling bravery and urging remembrance. Among the guests invited to attend the ceremony would be the president, military officials, members of parliament, foreign diplomats, and relatives of the murdered generals. The broadcast of Hapsak invariably followed the same pattern. Before the ceremony commenced, either a studio discussion was held or such old archive material as newsreel footage was shown, while a voice-over recounted the New Order account of the events; sometimes there was a combination of both. Every time this account began by enumerating particular events leading up to the 1965 coup, before focusing on the coup itself and the heroic deeds of Major General Soeharto. It always ended with a warning about the ever-present latent danger of those who sympathized with communist ideologies. Thereupon the studio would switch over to Lubang Buaya to show the arrival of the president and vice-president and their wives.

Each year the composition of the ceremony consisted of two parts, beginning with a solemn service of observance and ending with a livelier commemorative component. The former commenced with the arrival of the president, who would advance to a podium where, once he had taken up his position, a colonel would ask for his permission to begin the service. After that, the national anthem would be played and the president, as master of ceremonies, would authorize the beginning of the observance by ordering the participants to bow their heads. Following a minute's silence the national anthem would be played again, after which another component of the service would begin. During this part of the ceremony, four documents – the text of the Pancasila, the first lines of the National Constitution of 1945, the Ikrar (pledge or charter, to honour and defend the Pancasila), and a prayer – were read by parliamentary ministers. The Ikrar document would be signed as proof that the ceremony had taken place that year. The documents would be handed over by high-school students, two boys and two girls, dressed in uniforms resembling those worn by the navy; they would march to the officials, hand over the documents, and then march back to their places in military
fashion. The service would be closed by order of the president and concluded by the playing of the national anthem.

In the second part of Hapsak the president and vice-president and their wives, followed by foreign diplomats, would pay a visit to the well, the monument, and the old school building-cum-museum. This completed, the president would shake the hands of the wives and relatives of the murdered generals. Finally, at the end of the ceremony he would listen to the orchestra of school children. Often the president would shake the hand of the conductor and pat the soloist (a small boy either singing or playing violin) who had just performed the touching melody ‘Gugur bunga di taman bakti’ (Fallen flowers in the garden of devotion, composed by Ismail Marzuki) on the shoulder. As the president left Lubang Buaya the orchestra would play an upbeat song paying tribute to bravery. In this second part of the ceremony every year the television commentator could be heard to repeat the same ‘mantras’ as the president and his company were filmed walking from one site to another. These mantras began by mentioning various treacheries perpetrated by communists, starting with the rebellion against the central government in Madiun in 1948, up to the coup of 1965. Then he or she would sum up the content of the pledge, which stated that those who attended the ceremony (and watched the television programme) were aware of the coup perpetrated against the legitimate government attempted by PKI and its 30 September Movement, which had ushered in ‘a national tragedy culminating in the vicious and inhumane death of the heroes of the Revolution’.

This national tragedy had been allowed to occur as the result of a lack of caution about the actions of PKI, which had deliberately deceived a part of the Indonesian people in its attempts to eradicate Pancasila and its denial of the oneness of the Indonesian nation. In conclusion, the commentator would warn that the Indonesian people should remain vigilant to the latent danger of communism. In the meantime, as a background to the voice of the commentator, the orchestra of schoolchildren could be heard playing national songs of remembrance and bravery.

Both the outline and gist of the media event Hapsak and the screening of the film *G30S/PKI* as part of the commemoration of the 1965 coup were components in a conscious effort to refurbish collective memories.

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24 The phrases ‘kejam dan keji’ (brutal and vicious) and ‘di luar batas-batas peri kemanusiaan’ (beyond the bounds of human dignity) were repeatedly used when referring to communists.

25 For more on collective memory and monuments, see Lasswell 1979; Mosse 1980; Nora 1984.
media events can be perceived as electronic monuments, and this label can also be applied to the film *G30S/PKI*. As an annual rite commemorating the 1965 coup it served to buttress the power bases of the New Order regime. The four elements forming the nucleus of the Hapsak media event were: the frequent screening of the same newsreel images before the Hapsak commemoration would begin; the standard use of specific nationalist songs; the repeated citation of certain ‘mantras’ and the commentator’s seemingly endless reiteration that the account consisted of historical ‘facts’; and the emphasis on the ‘latent danger of communists’. The event was to ensure that history would be remembered in a particular way, thereby propagating and fertilizing New Order representations of Indonesian history. However, these elements were also responsive to contemporaneous political needs. In an article about the basis for and changing context of the Hapsak commemoration, McGregor points out the subtle changes of the meaning of the day during the course of the New Order. She shows how over time the day became an occasion on which such new enemies of the regime as extremist Islam and other possible political threats to the regime, labelled ‘atheists’, were defined in response to changing political circumstances.\(^\text{26}\)

The film *G30S/PKI* as an electronic or audio-visual monument to the New Order was produced to create and bolster collective memories. Initially it was used to serve as a ‘medium of memory’ which transferred ‘sets of images’ of a social understanding of events, represented as memory (Watson 1994:8); later it was transformed into a monument. It can be accepted as a monument of the New Order not least because of the status it achieved and the position it assumed as part of official discourses and strategies advocating a certain version of history. This bestowed on it an enormously influential position in Indonesian collective memory. In 2001, senior journalist and founder of Tempo magazine Goenawan Mohamad quoted a survey that showed that more than 80 per cent of the respondents believed that the film presented a factual account of the event.\(^\text{27}\) The film was made widely known

\(^{26}\) McGregor 2002. McGregor demonstrates that Hapsak initially served just as a means to reaffirm the army’s claim to have led the nation in a righteous victory over communism. In the early 1980s, the meaning of the day expanded to include threats to Pancasila from Islam as well as communism. Over time, the commemoration became a means to redefine the label ‘communist’ and apply it to any opposition. Finally, in the 1990s, Hapsak acquired an increasingly religious nature. By then the day had become a celebration of opposition to atheism rather than an affirmation of Pancasila (McGregor 2002:66).

\(^{27}\) Mohamad 2001:131. ‘[K]ejadian-kejadian yang digambarkan dalam film tersebut adalah benar-benar terjadi’. 

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through the mechanisms of its distribution and exhibition as an essential part of Hapsak, as well as through the extensive compulsory screening programmes mentioned earlier. In contrast to the Pancasila monument, which was physically confined to Lubang Buaya, Hapsak and the film _G30S/PKI_ were not bound to a place, but were mobile. Hapsak, and the screening of _G30S/PKI_ on the eve of Hapsak, travelled to its audiences; if the television happened to be turned on, the event would enter the space of Indonesian households through its simultaneous broadcast on all national television channels.

But, in contradistinction to Hapsak, the film _G30S/PKI_ was not restricted to television alone. Every 30 September it was and could be attended in Indonesian cinemas across the country, where the film was screened as part of the history curriculum, making it obligatory viewing for schoolchildren. _G30S/PKI_ even travelled abroad, where it was screened at Indonesian embassies as part of the state-constructed P4 Pancasila training course for Indonesian students and bureaucrats. The films _Janur kuning_ and _Serangan fajar_ can also be interpreted as mobile audio-visual cultural monuments of the New Order. Both films represented historical key narratives of the regime and were accorded a treatment comparable to the film _G30S/PKI_. They were screened on 1 March in the framework of the commemoration of the General Attack, or at other celebrations or occasions connected to Indonesian Independence. In the case of _Janur kuning_ (1979) and _Serangan fajar_ (1982), the audio-visual monuments were produced even before physical version of the historical incident was constructed: the monument dedicated to the General Attack, the Monumen Yogya Kembali (‘Return of Yogyakarta’ Monument), was built as late as 1985. However, because the films were never made compulsory as _G30S/PKI_ was, they never achieved the monumentality accorded that film.

The linking of New Order films about history to events commemorating the past is an example of the use of film ‘in the framework of’. In its connection to Hapsak the film _G30S/PKI_ offers an extreme example of this practice. Besides the New Order history films, there were other films also screened in particular frameworks. These frameworks were not necessarily connected to national holidays or celebrations of the past or of the

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Histories, heroes, and monumental frameworks

state, even though they were often used in this fashion. In the case of the New Order history films, the rhetoric of framing was fashioned to provide a two-pronged thrust: to give a form and context for the way the films were intended to be read, and to make the watching of these films a rite of commemoration.

CONCLUSION

Certain genres emerge in certain times and reflect contemporaneous socio-political inclinations. This phenomenon can be found in the production of particular film genres and the traits they exhibit, the discourses about these genres and their meanings, and the position they are assigned in discourses and in national film history. In early discussions about the new genre of independent film in

To give a few examples of films that were made for certain events, or certain events of which the screening of films was an important part, between 1993 and 1997: In 1993 the films Janur kuning, Detik-detik Proklamasi (Seconds of the Proclamation [original title: Detik-detik Revolusi, Seconds of the Revolution], 1959, Alam Surawidjaja), Lelah membela (Blazing battle 1982, Imam Tantowi), Operasi Trisula dan Kereta api terakhir (The last train, 1981, Moehctar Soemodimedjo) featured ‘in the framework of’ the Day of Heroes (Hari Pahlawan) on 10 November, and in 1994 on National Film Day (Hari Film Nasional) (Jambore film 1993). In 1994 the film Saur sepuh (Satria Madangkara) (What the ancestors say [knight of Madangkara] 1988, Imam Tantowi) was screened ‘in the framework of’ providing the public with information about transmigration, and to stress the importance of ‘unity and integrity’ (‘Penyuluhan transmigrasi dengan film’, Berita Yudha, 18-7-1994). Also in 1994, to counter the film Death of a nation by John Pilger, which is an account of human rights violations by the Indonesian state in East Timor, the Indonesian version presenting the ‘true historical facts’ about East Timor was produced (Pemerintah akan buat film 1994). It was planned to screen this ‘counter-propaganda’ film in July 1995 ‘in the framework of the Day of the Integration of East Timor (Hari Integrasi Daerah TimTim), and again in August ‘in the framework of the Commemoration of 50 Years of Indonesian Independence (Peringatan 50 Tahun Indonesia Merdeka) (Kolaborasi DPRD 1995). Elsewhere during the commemoration of the golden jubilee of Indonesian Independence various films were screened, amongst them Janur kuning, Serangan fajar, Soerababea 45 (Surabaya 45, 1990, Imam Tantowi), Perawan di sektor selatan (Maiden in the south sector, 1971, Alam Surawidjaja), Enam jam di Yogya (Six hours in Yogya, 1951, Usmar Ismail) (‘Mendikbud Wardiman hadiri pemutaran film perjuangan untuk pelajar’, Jayakarta, 18-8-1995). In 1996 a ‘personal audio-visual monument’ to ‘Ibu Tien’ (Mother Tien), the then recently deceased wife of President Soeharto, entered production with the title Kasih ibu selamanya (Mother’s enduring love) (Handiman 1996; Ibu Tien 1996). Furthermore, in 1996 the television soap Pelang keadilan (Sword of justice) was produced and screened in the framework of the golden jubilee of the Indonesian police force. The soap featured six police officers and ‘horrific killing scenes’ in an effort to teach offenders against the law a lesson (Enam anggota Polri 1996). Finally, between 1996-1997 the film Fatahillah (1997, Imam Tantowi and Chaelur Umam), recounting the founding of Jakarta, was produced as part of a project of the Governor of Jakarta; the film was to be screened on 22 June 1997 in the framework of the 470th birthday of the capital (‘Pemda DKI Jakarta gaet GPBSI memproduksi film Fatahillah’, Jayakarta, 9-8-1996).
the autumn of 1998, confusion arose about how to understand this Reformasi genre. Because of its name, it was sometimes thought that the themes of film independen were drawn from the struggle for Indonesian independence, just as were the familiar film perjuangan, Film perjuangan, film pembangunan, and docudrama/propaganda documentaries were important film genres of the New Order. These genres reflected its rule and rhetoric, and were linked from the perspective of film history to New Order discursive practices. The genres acquired a meaning idiosyncratic to the way in which they were used during the Soeharto regime.

An analysis of the conventions in text production and consumption of New Order history and development films exposes the socio-political climate of the time. These genres contained parallel modes of engagement of the New Order version of the past and of its concomitant ideologies. History and development films invariably contained the same kind of characters (heroes, authority figures), and themes (restoration of order, ‘good’ Islam combating its selected source of evil (often communism), and claims to represent factual reality). These features mirrored the dominant discourses on how to characterize society under New Order rule. I hasten to stress that the dominant narratives and generic conventions of heroes and authority figures, claims to factual reality, and the restoration of order are not restricted to either Indonesia as a nation or the New Order alone. On average, worldwide film texts feature heroes, the victory of good over evil, and a restoration of order. In performing this function, documentaries and films present truth claims in many different contexts. However, as Trinh Minh-ha (1993:195) has argued, the colour red and its symbols do not have an absolute and universal signification. The value it is attributed varies between one culture and another and also proliferates within the confines of each culture.

Likewise, the film genres and films that were representative of New Order historiography and its ideologies delineated the dominant socio-political discourses of the regime. In this account, an important element was found in the socio-political context of New Order rule and its resemblance to the political climate in Iran in the 1950s. Both countries adopted an anti-communist stance and exhibited virtually identical films promoted by USIA film policies.30 The logical corollary is that the production of film texts and the

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30 McGregor (2007:220) has pointed to similar anti-communist discourses in the politicized militaries of Brazil and Burma. Moreover, she argues that in such communist states as the People’s Republic of China and the former USSR, overtly political educational content also upheld the deeds of heroes and strongly emphasized martial patriotic themes (McGregor 2007:37).
promotion of certain genres can be seen as part of a political discourse, outlook, and policy which involved, but simultaneously transcended, Indonesian boundaries. Another element addressing the context of New Order politics was the unrelenting promotion and advocacy of the head of state (mainly in the film \textit{G30S/PKI}) as a hero and an authority figure, who restored order after the 1965 coup, protected Indonesia against communism, and was therefore entitled to rule the nation. Examining discourse practices at the intersection of text production and consumption, the account of the convention of screening films in the framework of a particular event or occasion also opened a window to New Order political affairs. The examples of New Order historical films, and particularly the connection of \textit{G30S/PKI} to the media event Hapsak, leave no doubt about the way the films, and indeed the past, should be read and remembered.\textsuperscript{31} To screen the films as part of rites of commemoration was to assign a uniform shade of red to historiography.

\textsuperscript{31} On dissident readings and the way in which \textit{G30S/PKI} was interpreted by critical audiences during the New Order, see Sen and Hill 2000:148-50. For comments on \textit{G30S/PKI} after about ten years of reform, see for example the online discussion at http://www.indowebster.web.id/archive/index.php?t=19475.html (accessed 19-12-2011).