Katinka van Heeren, *Contemporary Indonesian Film: Spirits of Reform and Ghosts from the Past*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012, xii + 239 pp. ISBN 9789067183819. Price: EUR 31.69 (paperback).

This book grows out of a dissertation, and is based on extensive fieldwork, conducted periodically from 2001 to 2005 in several cities in Indonesia. As its title indicates, Van Heeren's account explores a variety of practices in contemporary Indonesian cinema, in which the legacy of the New Order's film policies and practices interferes with the spirit of the Reformation era. Exploring issues through the lens of cinematic practices, the author exposes elements of the struggle of Indonesian society to define its collective identity and social reality after the fall of the dictator Soeharto.

Organized in three parts (plus an introduction and conclusion), each section consists of two chapters. The first part focuses on *mediation* practices, such as production, distribution, and exhibition, during and after the New Order period. In the first chapter, Van Heeren sketches the extent to which these practices were subject to the New Order's national and transnational politics of representation and imagination—what images and representations of Indonesian reality viewers were to be allowed to see. Pre-censorship, film format, film festival policies, and what she calls the 'cursive practices' (*praktik miring*) of films determined how or whether films were produced, promoted and distributed; films were expected to propagate and represent New Order values, state politics, and an idealized image of the Indonesian nation (p. 49). In the second chapter, she analyses how New Order film mediation practices both changed and continued after the fall of Soeharto. As she examines new, alternative genres and channels for distribution and exhibition, Van Heeren argues that, while new media technologies and changes on the political scene have led to the rise of side-stream film production and distribution channels, the New Order legacy has not entirely disappeared. Furthermore, these alternative practices are very much connected with the discourse of the Third World Cinema, and reflect the tension between the dominant power of the New Order and transnational, over against local culture and identity (p. 77).

In the second part of the book, Van Heeren looks at what she calls 'modes of engagement', or at the ways particular generic features, narrative styles, and conventions of Indonesian cinema are used as part of the discourse about history and events in Indonesian society. Chapter three discusses

how films about the history of the nation, or films that were screened in the framework of New Order patriotic holidays, were used by the regime both to promote and to legitimate its own version of national identity and history. In chapter four, she goes further to delve into the variations and continuities of these modes of engagement after the stepping down of President Soeharto. Here she discusses the production of counter-history films, the rise of *film Islami*, and Islamic television programming in the framework of *Ramadhan*. She argues that the rise of *Film Islami* can be seen as an alternative and oppositional cinema pertaining, on the one hand, to the language of post-colonial cinema but, on the other, based on the ideology of Islam. The use of the *Ramadhan* framework, in her view, has much to do with commercial motives.

The last part of the book explores film narratives: how specific film genres, and the composition of stories within these genres, are connected with power relations, thus defining how Indonesian identity and reality are represented and imagined. Horror and Islamic films are the focal point. In chapter five, Van Heeren contrasts the emblematic figure of the *kyai* (Islamic preacher) with that of the ghost, both featured in horror films produced in the New Order era and after. She also contrasts the formats of horror films produced for theaters with those intended for television, thus demonstrating how the horror genre both represents and imagines specific audiences and communities. In chapter 6, she goes more deeply into the discourse of Islamic morality as representative of modern Indonesian reality. Focusing on the controversy around the film *Buruan Cium Gue* (Kiss Me Quick, 2004) and the public dispute it engendered over film censorship regulations, she discusses the rising image of Islam in Indonesian audiovisuals after the Soeharto era. While taking a central role in national moral discourse, Islam has been increasingly used as a political and commercial tool in Indonesia (p. 184).

The book contains helpful lists of acronyms and abbreviations, and a glossary of terms popular in the world of Indonesian cinema, all of which are helpful to those who are not familiar with it. However, since the book draws largely from Sen's *Indonesian Cinema; Framing the New Order* (1994), reading this monograph alongside Van Heeren's book, particularly its first three chapters, is highly recommended. Finally, this book forms an important part of the growing body of literature that explores the audio-visual mediascape in post-Soeharto Indonesia. This literature remains sparse;

sparser still are works based on extensive research. After Kitley's *Television, Nation and Culture in Indonesia* (2000), this book is, as far as I know, the latest comprehensive exposition on the subject. The publication of this dissertation in book form is thus an important contribution for understanding current Indonesian cinema in particular, and the Indonesian mediascape in general.

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