



# Cultural Specificity in Indonesian Film

*Diversity in Unity*

**DAVID HANAN**



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Cover illustration: Garin Nugroho and crew filming a scene for *Bulan Tertusuk Ilalang* (English title: 'And the Moon Dances'), SET Film Workshop and National Film Council, 1995. (Courtesy of Garin Nugroho)

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*for Lita and Maya*

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For my part, I was involved in numerous cultural relations and educational projects that grew naturally out of researching a field only known to a few non-Indonesians. These projects included the translation of dialogue and the preparation of English subtitles for Indonesian films to be shown abroad; film preservation projects that ensured the survival of a number of Indonesian films that might otherwise have been lost; the screening of Indonesian films at Australian film festivals, at universities and schools, and on Australian television; and eventually the distribution of Indonesian films internationally on DVD via a website at Monash University.

On the Indonesian side, all this gave me unprecedented access to many aspects of the Indonesian film community. Most importantly, I had access over many years to the large film collection at Sinematek Indonesia, the main archive for feature films in Indonesia. My regular visits to Indonesia also facilitated frequent dialogue with staff members of the Faculty of Film and Television at the Jakarta Institute of the Arts—many of them distinguished filmmakers—and access to the milieu, activities and personnel of filmmaking collectives, such as Teguh Karya's Teater Populer and Garin Nugroho's SET Film Workshop; and also to various film festivals in Indonesia, whether this be the Annual FFI (Festival Film Indonesia) or the more recent Jogja-Netpac Asian Film Festival and the Jogjakarta-based Festival Film Dokumenter, as well as to one-off seminars conducted

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David Hanan  
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## EPIGRAPHS

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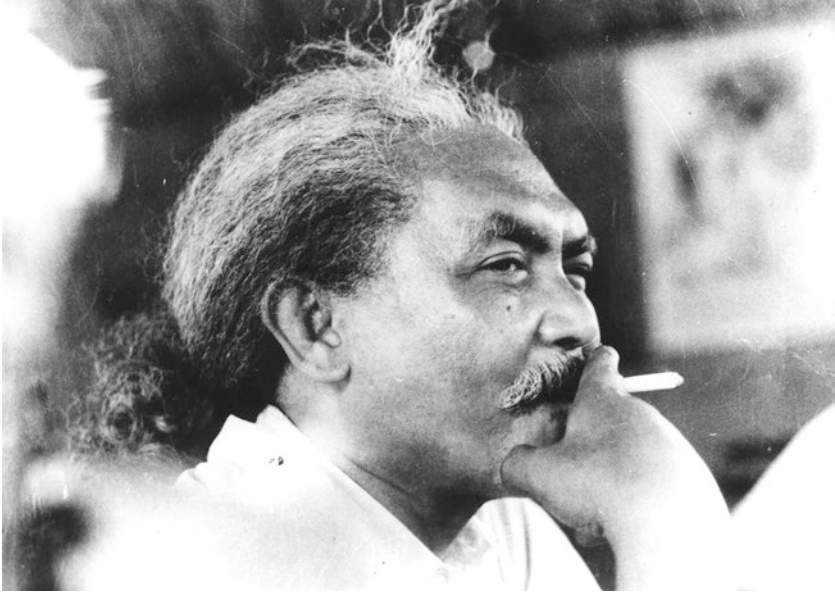
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## Introduction

### IN THE WORDS OF A FILMMAKER ...

In December 1983, a few weeks after having arrived in Jakarta to commence viewing of films at the film archive, Sinematek Indonesia, I attended an evening screening of a newly completed film, held at the Film Centre Usmar Ismail, where the archive is located. At this preview I was invited by the director of Sinematek Indonesia, H. Misbach Yusa Biran, to meet a number of staff from the film school in Jakarta, the Faculty of Cinematography at the Jakarta Institute of the Arts, most of whom were filmmakers or well-known film technicians. Among them was the retired film director, Djadoeg Djayakusuma, who was also a distinguished Faculty member. To initiate a conversation I asked him whether they had any particularly creative and talented students at the Jakarta Arts Institute, and what kinds of work they were doing. Djayakusuma almost took umbrage at this, and, speaking to me in English (he had studied in the USA and in India) told me, quite tersely, as I remember it, that the important thing for students was not to distinguish themselves as *'auteurs'*, which was a Western value, but to become aware of the numerous diverse societies and cultures in Indonesia, and to begin to learn what these cultures could offer them, as filmmakers.

In Indonesia Djayakusuma was a famous director who had commenced making films in the early 1950s, and was now a colourful and eminent figure at the film school, passing on his knowledge to the younger generation (Fig. 1.1). The importance of regional cultures to the nation,



**Fig. 1.1** Film director Djadoeg Djayakusuma (1918–87) (Courtesy of Sinematek Indonesia)

and to Indonesian identity, was a value to which many Indonesians subscribed, and as I discovered, Djayakusuma had long been acknowledged as an authority on aspects of Indonesian regional cultures, as well being a notable film director. One of the films he had directed in the early 1950s, *Harimau Tjampa* ('The Tiger from Tjampa'), set in the highlands of West Sumatra in the ethnically Minangkabau, matrilineal society, is widely regarded as the most substantial, still extant early feature film made by Indonesian nationals in a regional area, the nation having won its independence from Dutch colonialism only three years earlier, in late December 1949. Moreover, Djayakusuma over the subsequent ten years or so had followed up this early film with some unique and varied experiments in incorporating aspects of regional cultures into feature films. As I was to learn, however, this interest in culture and cultural diversity was not limited to Djayakusuma. The well-known contemporary Indonesian director, Garin Nugroho, who commenced making feature films in 1991, has continued to pioneer the making of films in regional areas, shooting the first

Indonesian feature ever made in West Papua, and earlier shooting a feature on the island of Sumba in Eastern Indonesia, because he too believes it is important to recognize that Indonesia is a multi-ethnic society with a widely diverse population, and that the cultural systems of regional societies should be respected.<sup>1</sup>

Discourses of the importance of regional cultures, of cultural specificity and of cultural differences, are very common in Indonesia, where the national motto since 1950 has been ‘Unity in Diversity’, and this emphasis is found in many areas of the media, from the token performances of regional dances on television testifying to the cultural diversity of regions, particularly during the highly centralized Suharto era, to the omnipresent tourist guidebooks. Nevertheless, the statement by Djayakusuma is of a different order and magnitude, contesting the whole notion of the *auteur* and of *auteurist* theory as a criterion of value relevant to the Indonesian film world, and suggesting that ‘*auterism*’ (the singular importance of the individual imagination) is a typically Western concept. Not all the people teaching at the Jakarta Institute of the Arts Faculty of Film and Television would take such a strong view discounting the idea of the *auteur*. Djayakusuma was a director whose originality and capacity for innovation lay precisely in reproducing regional cultures on screen, or in making films that investigated approaches to doing so, and part of his strength was his willingness to study these cultures as part of his work as a filmmaker.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, most of the staff at the Jakarta Institute of the Arts, both in the 1980s and today, would share Djayakusuma’s view that an understanding of the cultures of Indonesia, and their richness and diversity, was an important element in the education of an Indonesian filmmaker.

Of course the question arises: what is meant by culture in this context? Raymond Williams has affirmed that culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. He begins his exposition of the usage of the word with an account of the origins of the word ‘culture’ in Latin, and its general use in late medieval England, seeing it as a word describing physical processes related to the ‘tending of natural growth’. Nevertheless, in his exposition of its various forms of develop-

<sup>1</sup>See Garin Nugroho, ‘Foreword’ to Aryo Danusiri and Wasmi Alhaziri, eds, *Pendidikan Memang Multikultural: Beberapa Gagasan*, Jakarta, SET dan Ragam, 2002.

<sup>2</sup>For further information about Djayakusuma, see Satyagraha Hoerip, ed., *Dua Dunia Dalam Djadoeg Djajakoesoema*, Jakarta, Dinas Kebudayaan DKI Jakarta bekerjasama dengan Institut Kesenian Jakarta, 1995.

ment in England, France and Germany, Williams does arrive at three basic meanings:

once we go beyond the physical reference, we have to recognize three broad active categories of usage. The sources of two of these we have already discussed: (i) the independent and abstract noun which describes a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development, from C18; (ii) the independent noun, whether used generally or specifically, which indicates a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general, from Herder and Klemm. But we have also to recognize (iii) the independent and abstract noun which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity. This seems often now the most widespread use: **culture** is music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film. A **Ministry of Culture** refers to these specific activities, sometimes with the addition of philosophy, scholarship, history. This use, (iii), is in fact relatively late.<sup>3</sup>

As Williams argued, the ‘noun which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity’ appeared to be the most widespread use of the word culture, at least in the English language at the time he was writing. But in Indonesia, as I was to learn, the word ‘culture’ (*‘kebudayaan’*) most commonly ‘indicates a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group’, though not humanity in general, where a different word is used (*‘kemanusiaan’*). For Djayakusuma, then, the most natural use of the English word culture was in relation to the particular way of life of each of the many cultures of Indonesia, though with the added implication that these cultures contained forms of knowledge, which might be found both in the way they conducted their daily lives and work, and in their traditions, including their rituals and their unique, traditional art forms. Of course in Western societies over the last 30 years this conception of culture has become more frequently invoked, due to the introduction and increasing prevalence of ideas of multiculturalism, particularly as it pertains to migrant communities, where migrant communities are conceived as having cultures, but where dominant communities conceive of themselves as the norm. Nevertheless, while the culture concept is the focus of extensive debate within anthropology and cultural studies,

<sup>3</sup>Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, revised edition, New York, Oxford University Press, 1985, 90.

my emphasis here has been to draw attention to the differences between the popular use of the term ‘culture’ in Western society and in Indonesia.

Writing in 1977, Marxist anthropologist Joel Kahn argued that the importance of the discourse of ethnicity (or regional cultures) in Indonesia should not be underestimated, for it is ‘a part of the observable empirical reality of Indonesia and even a strong factor in motivating behaviour’.<sup>4</sup> However, Kahn continues, while the strength of the discourse of ethnicity in Indonesia should not be underestimated, it does not, in fact, correspond to the social structure, being part ‘of a disjuncture between class relationships and the way they are perceived’. Following Kahn, to take the culture concept as unproblematic, even as it is used by Djayakusuma in the context of the filmic representation of regional areas, is too simple. There are a number of questions. For one thing, it is possible to critique traditional ways of life and traditional art forms, and at least one Indonesian filmmaker made attempts to do this in his films as early as the late 1950s, the Marxist filmmaker, Bachtiar Siagian, a near contemporary of Djayakusuma. Second, the contemporary ethnographic filmmaker, Aryo Danusiri, who has at times worked with Garin Nugroho, has argued that in Indonesia the very notion of multi-ethnicity has often been used in a tokenistic way, with regional cultures being celebrated by the central government using media stereotypes (particularly during the Suharto New Order period) at the same time as regional areas were being suppressed economically and politically by the same government, using the army to do so.<sup>5</sup> For Danusiri, the real problems for regional societies, many with vital living traditions, lay in the besetting multidimensional conflicts of religion, natural resources, power relations between the central and district governments, alternative histories of each region, and economic issues generally.<sup>6</sup> To this one might add the different rights and roles accorded to women in the different regional societies. Despite these considerations, there are compelling accounts of ways in which important distinguishing features of regional cultures are to be found, not only in the

<sup>4</sup> Joel Kahn, ‘Ideology and Social Structure in Indonesia’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 20 (1), 1978, 109.

<sup>5</sup> Aryo Danusiri, ‘Filming Indonesia: Between Mythical and Critical Multiculturalism’, paper written for the Second Festival of Visual Culture, NAFA, Joensuu, Finland, October 2002, subsequently published as a pdf file in the DVD *Three Documentaries about Aceh by Aryo Danusiri*, Melbourne, Monash Asia Institute, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

art forms of regional communities but in forms of community organization, as discussed, for example, by Carol Warren in her book on community organization in Bali.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, there is the question of the origins and evolution of the culture concept in Indonesia itself, how this notion of culture as attaching to a community had arrived in Indonesia, whether it was an indigenous concept or a derived concept, and what strength it has had as a discourse within the society. The commonly used word for tradition in Indonesia is *adat*, an Indonesian-Malay word derived from the Arabic ‘habit’, though the notion of a local set of customs and traditions preceded the coming of Islam to Indonesia. For example, from the early sixteenth century onwards, the Minangkabau in West Sumatra markedly retained their traditional matrilineal social arrangements (where the family home and subsistence rice farming land were the property of women) that preceded Islam, but began to incorporate Islam within the original framework.<sup>8</sup> The valorization of regional cultures in Indonesia received tremendous stimulus from Dutch anthropologists in the period of the reforming ethical policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when progressives in Dutch society came to emphasize the need to engage with and understand Indonesian regional cultures, their customs and their laws. The primary example of this is the work of the Leiden University based Dutch legal scholar, Cornelis van Vollenhoven, who in the early twentieth century developed a project to codify the traditional legal systems (*adat* law) of numerous regional societies of Indonesia.<sup>9</sup> At the same time the concept of culture, although used, was not one prioritized by the Indonesian nationalists, in the first half of the twentieth century, for two reasons. First, what the nationalists were seeking was an independent nation, so that to emphasize ethnic and cultural differences in the period of the struggle for independence would be to introduce a

<sup>7</sup> Carol Warren, *Adat and Dinas: Balinese Communities in the Indonesian State*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1993.

<sup>8</sup> Taufik Abdullah, ‘Adat and Islam: An Examination of Conflict in Minangkabau’, *Indonesia* 2, October 1966, 1–24; Christine Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism in a Changing Peasant Economy: Central Sumatra, 1784–1847*, London and Malmö, Curzon Press, 1983, 117–25. Dobbin reports that spirit worship and the central role of the shaman in the society continued after the conversion to Islam.

<sup>9</sup> See the discussion of van Vollenhoven’s views, and their implications for subsequent anthropology, in Joel S. Kahn, *Culture, Multiculture, Postculture*, London, Sage Publications, 1995, 84–7 and passim.

discourse of difference rather than unity, particularly at the height of the struggle for independence after the Second World War, when the Dutch had managed to reoccupy the outer islands of the archipelago.<sup>10</sup> Second, it was felt that the Dutch had indeed taken over the culture concept, for, following van Vollenhoven and the ethicists, cultural differences of different regional peoples was a major discourse in the late colonial period, used by Dutch conservatives as well as by progressives, not only for the original purpose of developing laws more suitable for particular peoples, but often to signify that which was traditional and therefore ‘not modern’. Once the new nation had been formed as a united political body in late 1949, as could be expected, people in regional areas, especially those in outer islands occupied by the Dutch in the period 1946–49, began to demand recognition of their regional interests and regional differences. Attempts were made to address this, one measure being the adoption, early in the next year, of the national motto ‘*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*’ (literally ‘They are not one, but are of the same kind’) commonly translated as ‘Unity in Diversity’, which signified an acceptance of diversity as well as being an affirmation of unity.<sup>11</sup>

Within these debates around cultures, traditional and modern, we can see that there are two levels. On the one hand there is an interest in the cultural differences and the cultural specificity of regions. On the other hand there is the question of what constitutes Indonesian culture as a whole. In the mid 1930s the founder of the literary journal *Poedjangga Baroe*, Sutan Takdir Alisyabana, initiated a debate, arguing that ‘a modern Indonesian culture’ needed to incorporate progressive elements of Western culture. He was opposed by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, the founder of the Taman

<sup>10</sup>Herbert Feith and Lance Castles, eds, *Indonesian Political Thinking: 1945–1965*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1970, 316–18.

<sup>11</sup>‘*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*’ is a phrase from a fourteenth-century Javanese epic poem, *Kakawin Sutasoma* by Empu Tantular, promoting tolerance between Hindus and Buddhists. The circumstances under which this motto was adopted are instructive. The coordinating minister of the committee that, in 1950, under the supervision of Sukarno adopted the national motto and designed the national symbol, was Sultan Hamid II of Pontianak, West Kalimantan, who had been identified with Dutch attempts to create a loose federation of Indonesian states, rather than the unitary Republic proposed by Sukarno, and who was himself involved in a rebellion in January 1950. So the idea of unity in diversity should be seen as a creative political discourse, subject to tension and to strain. For an account of the politics at the time, see George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1952, 448–55.

Siswa nationalist schools, and others, who argued that Western culture was ‘materialist, intellectual and individualist’, and hence was inimical to indigenous Indonesian cultures.<sup>12</sup> In 1959, however, at the time of the introduction of Guided Democracy, *kepribadian nasional* (national personality or national characteristics) was listed as one of the fundamental principles in the manifesto of the new political system.

### STUDIES OF CULTURAL SPECIFICITY IN FILM IN JAPAN, INDIA AND ‘THE THIRD WORLD’

A number of writings on the cinema, emerging since the late 1970s, and also developments in film practice, some emerging even earlier, have influenced this book. Among them are Noel Burch’s book, *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in Japanese Cinema*, on culturally specific uses of film form in films by Japanese directors, especially Ozu, Mizoguchi and Kurosawa; Teshome Gabriel’s advocacy of cultural resistance in the cinema and the importance of cinema representing a society in culturally specific terms, in his *Third Cinema in the Third World*; and, even earlier, the manifestos of the Argentinian filmmakers, Solanas and Getino, and their predecessors, arguing for a Third Cinema, manifestos so influential for Gabriel.<sup>13</sup> In Australia in the late 1970s there emerged the possibility of Aborigines making films about their communities, as seen in Essie Coffey’s *My Survival as an Aboriginal*, but also in ground-breaking transitional collaborative works, *Two Laws* and *Wrong Side of the Road*, in which authorship was no longer simply that of white filmmakers. Over the next few years, this led to the emergence of significant Aboriginal filmmakers

<sup>12</sup>Ki Hadjar Dewantara, ‘Some Aspects of National Education and the Taman Siswa Institute of Jogjakarta’, *Indonesia* 4, October 1967, 150–68. The context of Dewantara’s work is provided in Ruth T. McVey, ‘Taman Siswa and the Indonesian National Awakening’, *Indonesia* 4, October 1967, 128–49.

<sup>13</sup>Noel Burch, *To the Distant Observer*, London, Scolar Press, 1979; Teshome H. Gabriel, *Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation*, Ann Arbor, MI, University of Michigan Research Press, 1982. To an extent Gabriel’s early work is an academic formalization of positions announced in Solanas and Getino’s manifesto ‘Towards a Third Cinema’ and in the writings of Frantz Fanon, in particular his three phases of the native writer-intellectual in his development towards national consciousness. See Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, ‘Towards a Third Cinema’ in Bill Nichols, ed., *Movies and Methods*, vol. I, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1976, 44–66, and Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York, Grove Press, 1963, 207–48.

in Australia, themselves engaging with their own cultures in film.<sup>14</sup> Later in the 1980s there appeared writings on the formal uniqueness of Indian cinema, particularly in the Bombay cinema and in its relation to its audiences, most notably in essays by Ashish Rajadhyaksha, and then by Ravi Vasudevan.<sup>15</sup> One might even argue that Christian Metz's second major book, *Language and Cinema*, with its stress on identifying codes specific to cinema in contrast to codes non-specific to cinema, and its distinction between cinematic codes and cultural codes, shifted the discussion of film away from an emphasis on the singular vision of the *auteur* or even simply on genre, as the source of the material of a film, and opened up the possibility of seeing—in a more systematic way—a film as at times a dialogue between a cinematic author, and the codes and frames of references of a society.<sup>16</sup> More recently, in academic writing there has been a shift away from an interest in cultural specificity to the dynamics, impact and possibilities in globalization.<sup>17</sup>

Noel Burch's *To the Distant Observer* is primarily a study of film form, concerned particularly with how certain radically 'anti-illusionist' tendencies in traditional Japanese aesthetics are found in the work of some major Japanese film directors, most particularly in the early films of Ozu and Mizoguchi in the 1930s, and in subtle ways in works by Kurosawa in the 1950s—through Kurosawa's interplay of abstract patterns and narrative denotation—all creating alternatives to dominant modes of representation in the West, particularly to what Burch terms the institutional mode of representation, which he regarded as illusionist in its formal stratagems. Burch sees this difference in representational modes as stemming from the adoption by these filmmakers of aspects of the aesthetics of the Heian court (794–1186) and of the Edo period (1603–88), whether the influences are *tanka* poetry (short poems allowing for polysemy rather than linearity), Noh drama, *ukiyo-e* woodblocks, or Bunraku puppetry and

<sup>14</sup>For a recent discussion of *Two Laws*, see Therese Davis and Cassi Plate, 'Surrendering Control: *Two Laws* as Collaborative Community Film-making: An Interview with Carolyn Strachan and Alessandro Cavadini', *Studies in Documentary Film* 2 (2), 2008, 149–68.

<sup>15</sup>Ashish Rajadhyaksha, 'Neo-traditionalism: Film as Popular Art in India', *Framework* 32–3, 1986, 20–67; Ravi Vasudevan, *The Melodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 204.

<sup>16</sup>Christian Metz, *Language and Cinema*, The Hague, Mouton, 1974, 34–5 and passim.

<sup>17</sup>For an early example, see Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, eds, *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 1996.

Kabuki theatre. Similarly, in writings about early Indian cinema, Ashish Rajadhyaksha specifies ways in which long-standing traditions of representation and performance in India were newly reproduced in early twentieth-century Indian cinema. For example, in his 1918 film, *Shri Krishna Janma*, early Bombay filmmaker, D.G. Phalke, not only retells mythological stories, but combines secular spaces with sacred spaces, including scenes in which members of the public from various castes pray to the figure of Krishna, and where the film's audience are placed in a position emulating that of the praying protagonists.<sup>18</sup> In *The Melodramatic Public: Film Form and Spectatorship in Indian Cinema*, Ravi Vasudevan sees much modern Bombay cinema creating a 'narrative community', a different order of cultural and political subjectivity.<sup>19</sup> Fundamental to this are direct address, frontality, tableau mode of representation, iconicity and iconic figures, and *darshan* ('the power exercised by the authoritative image within Hindu culture'), together with traditional music resonant of particular communities.

Here it should be noted that both Burch and the Indian authors are primarily concerned with systemic formal differences, which in their particular combinations may be said to produce or encourage different kinds of viewer–film relation. In my study of Indonesian cinema, however, it has not appeared to me that Indonesian cinema as a whole, nor the work of particular directors, is distinguished by a formal uniqueness, amounting to a unique and culturally specific mode of representation. So the question arises, in what ways, other than in film form and mode of representation, can cultural differences be found in a film? In the main this book addresses how, in the study of the cinema, one can engage with cultural codes that are not purely film specific codes.

Teshome Gabriel's pioneering *Third Cinema in the Third World* (1982) is not so much a study of Third World Cinema but the formulation of what constitutes a radical Third World Cinema, which recognizes the particular conditions of the people of emerging nations, and is to be known as Third Cinema. At the core of Gabriel's writings is a conception of how Third Cinema is derived from the people and their culture. For Gabriel, Third Cinema is to be based on traditional values and textual and perfor-

<sup>18</sup>Ashish Rajadhyaksha, 'The Phalke Era: Conflict of Traditional Form and Modern Technology', *Journal of Arts and Ideas* 14–15, 1987, 47–78.

<sup>19</sup>Vasudevan, *The Melodramatic Public*, passim, but especially 69, 119–23 and 277.

mance forms of societies and cultures which, for much of their populations, still contain, in meaningful ways, many features of an oral culture, even while participating in some sectors in literate modernity.<sup>20</sup> Gabriel's position then is not very different from that of the Indonesian director, Djayakusuma, particularly his rejection of *auteurism*, though Gabriel adds the proviso that in a radical Third World Cinema the folk culture itself needs also to be subject to critical inspection. In his comparative analysis of 'oral' or 'folk art', Gabriel avows that 'while ... the community issue is at the heart of Third World traditional culture, the issue of the individual is at the base of Western or print culture'.<sup>21</sup> He also correlates these distinctions with examples of ways in which some aspects of film form are more appropriate to express a traditional society. So, for Gabriel, the close-up may be less relevant to Third Cinema, with its need to represent groups and group cohesiveness, while the long take and the wide-angle shot can encompass different kinds of intra-group relatedness, and also signify the relationship to nature.

Gabriel—along with others advocating a Third Cinema, such as Solanas and Getino—in his early writings sets up systematic sets of binary oppositions between a culturally specific radical Third Cinema and a monolithic Hollywood. He also distinguishes between different kinds of films made in the Third World: those assimilating themselves to Hollywood styles of entertainment; those where there is some indigenization of production and style, but with a tendency to romanticize the traditional culture; and 'the combative phase', or 'Third Cinema', where film becomes an ideological tool and is owned by the nation and the people. Numerous debates have proliferated around aspects of Gabriel's earlier work.<sup>22</sup> But in his later work Gabriel's emphasis changes. He no longer contrasts films, and sets of films, in terms of systematic binary oppositions, nor stipulates categories for different kinds of Third World films, but now emphasizes the diversity of cultures found in societies and the diversity of people's needs, and their different senses of space, time and value. For example, in his later work Gabriel sees African cinema in terms of metaphors of journey, and of the nomadic. For me, in writing this book, what is important about Gabriel's

<sup>20</sup> Gabriel, *Third Cinema in the Third World*, 95.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>22</sup> See the essays in Jim Pines and Paul Willemsen, eds, *Questions of Third Cinema*, London, BFI Publishing, 1989, and in Anthony R. Guneratne and Wimal Dissanayake, eds, *Rethinking Third Cinema*, New York and London, Routledge, 2003.

work is not his binary oppositions nor even his categories, but his initial proposition about the importance of cultural specificity and how one defines it in a particular context. Despite the enthusiasm today for globalization and the global in the local, there are still many questions about the local, how one defines it, and in what ways the local can be culturally resistant to a pervasive and dominant global.

### THE TERM ‘CULTURE’ IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THIS STUDY

In this book I address primarily issues of cultural specificity and cultural and political resistance in Indonesian cinema—and related innovation—over a 60-year period. Within this framework, I will be addressing two separate issues with regard to the notion of cultural specificity. First, there is the notion presented by Djayakusuma, of the task of filmmakers to engage with specific wisdoms of regional societies and their cultural specificity. This will be addressed most directly in an early chapter examining regionalism in the Indonesian cinema, but numerous films made in and about regional areas are discussed elsewhere in this study.

But second, there is the issue of the cultural difference of Indonesia and the Indonesian archipelago as a whole, in contrast to the West, or in contrast, even, to other societies, particularly those societies outside of South East Asia. Here the differences are not so much the various different regional specificities perceived by an Indonesian within Indonesia, in terms of languages and *adat*, but broader kinds of specificity, cultural dominants found generally within the region of the Indonesian archipelago, which may be perceived by an outsider as broad cultural differences, in contrast to what they have come to expect in their own non-Indonesian society, in the same way that Indonesians frequently draw attention to what they regard as typically Western-coded behaviour. Without trying to theorize a single ‘national culture’, aspects of this topic of broad cultural dominants will be addressed most particularly in two chapters on body language in Indonesia, and its representation in the work of some key Indonesian filmmakers, and also in a subsequent, speculative chapter on women in the context of cultural difference. In the case of both kinds of specificity, one may ask, how are these kinds of specificity characteristically addressed by Indonesian filmmakers, and by which filmmakers? What are the forms by which, and the conditions under which, such issues are explored in Indonesia, and how conscious and sustained is this exploration? Have the approaches changed over