Show of Force

film, ghosts and genres of historical performance in the Indonesian genocide

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CONTAINS
DVD

Show of Force:
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§ Abstract

This thesis is a critical reflection on Vision Machine's North Sumatran film project, articulating a cinema practice that seeks to address a genocide that has barely been investigated. The primary footage comprises extensive interviews, re-enactments and dramatisations of the various practices and procedures that constituted the core of the 1965-66 Indonesian genocide in Sumatra's plantation belt. The participants in these dramatisations and enactments are, for the most part, death squad leaders and members who participated in the killing. This data, comprising over 100 hours of video, constitute revelatory primary research into the history and operation of the Indonesian genocide. This research forms the historical context for the project, and is therefore summarised in the thesis. The reflection on the epistemological, cultural and historical status of these re-enactments constitutes the basis for the core argument of this thesis.

To this day, in North Sumatra, the *genocidaires* remain largely in power. This fact transforms our film project into a unique laboratory for exploring the cultural politics of film, media and history within a context of victory and impunity. Specifically, the project examines the ways in which historical narrative – inevitably told by victors – becomes an instrument of terror within a spectral economy of terror. This project is both an intervention into this economy, as well as an analysis of its mechanisms and protocols. As such, the thesis comprises both completed films, extracts from works-in-progress and this writing, and lies at the intersection of the disparate fields of cinema studies, Indonesian area studies, trauma studies and film practice.

This thesis proposes a theory of performativity, spectrality and genres of historical performance; specifically, it is argues that spectres are performatively conjured as the obscene to any symbolic performance – including both historical acts as well as their rehearsal and re-staging in re-enactment, testimony, or dramatisation; such spectres constitute a power that may be claimed by the performer. This power interacts with actual structures of power, as well as processes that seek to record, circulate or excavate such historical performances, including our filmmaking process. In the case of this film project, perpetrators are lured by the apparatus of filmmaking into naming names and revealing routines of mass murder hitherto obscene to official histories, and they do so through dramatisations and re-enactments manifestly conditioned by the codes of film and television genres. This latter point reveals the complex ways in which remembrance is always already well-rehearsed, scripted and *generic*. Thus does the research excavate (by catalysing) perpetrators' performative use of film genres to conjure as a spectral force that which must remain obscene to the codes of genre. And thus does the research excavate (by miming) the way genre fashions historical narratives into instruments of terror.

As perpetrators of the genocide name names and reveal secrets, the process by which they seek to claim and manifest their spectral power is short-circuited by the filmmaking process, which condenses a miasmic spectral into specific ghosts. By shorting one circuit, the filmmaking closes another through which the process of remembrance, working through and redemption may begin for survivors. From this emerges an understanding of both the filmmaking process and its products (i.e., the completed films) as filmic interventions into a spectral economy of terror.

This thesis describes a film practice that is necessarily a social practice, at once producing works and *doing work*. Building on models of collective filmmaking developed by Jean Rouch and George Stoney, we incorporate experimental production techniques including spirit possession, re-narration, infiltration, and genre-based fiction filmmaking in order to define a new model for film production that the author has termed "archaeological performance". Moving beyond the interview-based approaches of Lanzmann and Ophüls, archaeological performance suggests a hybrid and interventionist form of cinema adequate to addressing a history whose very incoherence has served as an instrument of terror.

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Show of Force – Practical Components

DVD 1 – The Globalisation Tapes

- *The Globalisation Tapes* (2003), 70 mins, colour.

DVD 2 – Snake River

- *Snake River* (2004), 11-minute compilation of Rahmat, Arsan Lubis and Saman Siregar's interviews and re-enactments at the Sungai Ular river.

- *Snake River* (2004), 37-minute compilation of Rahmat, Arsan Lubis and Saman Siregar's interviews and re-enactments at the Sungai Ular river, with commentary by survivors of Saman Siregar's Komando Aksi death squad.

DVD 3 – Show of Force Compilation 1
(film material subject to critical reflection in the text.)

- Saman Siregar Presents Saman Siregar
- The Magical Saman Siregar
- Saman Siregar Kills Misbach Twice
- Gunawan on Colby, Colby on Siregar
- Saman Siregar at Ludruk Performance
- Gunawan Possessed by William Colby

DVD 4 – Show of Force Compilation 2
(film material subject to critical reflection in the text.)

- Saman Siregar Narrates Rahmat Shah I
- Saman Siregar Narrates Rahmat Shah II
- Lukman's Family Re-enacts Arrest
- Arsan Lubis Casts Himself
- Arsan Lubis as Cecil B. De Mille

Preface

§ 0.1 Scholarly Apparatus and Contribution to the Field

This project is a critical reflection on Vision Machine's North Sumatran film practice, articulating and including a cinema practice that seeks to address a genocide that has barely been investigated and remains excluded from most histories of the region.[1] As such, the research comprises both completed films, extracts from a work-in-progress, and this writing, and lies at the intersection of the disparate fields of cinema studies, Indonesian area studies, the interdisciplinary field of trauma studies and film practice. Theoretical and historical insights obtained through primary research make substantive contributions to Indonesian area studies, bringing those to bear on a theoretical and discursive fNgatiemwork that draws together cultural studies and film theory – all within the context of a directly activist and interventionist film practice.

This interdisciplinary approach has made manifest issues of spectrality, performativity and historiography, and these theoretical conclusions comprise a key discovery of the project and a central component of the arguments below. Briefly, we argue that spectres are performatively conjured as the *obscene* to any symbolic performance – including both historical acts as well as their rehearsal and re-staging in historical narrative, re-enactment or performance – and constitute a power that may be claimed by the performer. This power, it is

[1] While definitions of "genocide" invariably include the systematic destruction of an ethnic, religious or racial group, they are divided over whether or not to include "political" groups. (American Heritage and Webster's include political groups, while the Oxford English Dictionary does not.) The Genocide Conventions (1948) do not include political groups, and this for precisely political reasons, but many social scientists define the systematic murder of large segments of any unarmed political group as "genocide" (see Fein, 1993b:12-13). (It is worth noting that neither the OED nor the Genocide Conventions would apply to the Cambodian genocide.) Fein (1993a:798-99) usefully refigures "genocide" to hinge upon "ideology" and representation, arguing that genocide occurs when a group and its very existence, however defined, is figured by the perpetrators as being incompatible with the continued existence of a nation in the process of reinventing itself ideologically, and thus is violently destroyed by the state or state-sponsored actors. Interestingly, this, what Fein labels "ideological genocide", encompasses both the seemingly religious-racial-ethnic Nazi genocides as well as the 1965-66 Indonesian politicide. For the purpose of this project, I adopt Fein's definition, one no longer contentious in the fields of trauma studies and sociology. Indeed, the fact that *penumpasan* (annihilation or extermination) is the figure used by Indonesian official histories to describe the campaign against the PKI suggests using Fein's concept of ideological genocide.

argued, interacts with actual structures of power, as well as processes that seek to record, circulate or excavate such historical performances, including our filmmaking process. Circuits by which perpetrators of the Indonesian genocide seek to conjure spectral power are short-circuited by the filmmaking, which condenses a miasmic spectral into specific ghosts, inaugurating a process of remembrance, working through and redemption. From this analysis emerges an understanding of both the filmmaking process and its products (i.e., the rushes and the completed films) as filmic interventions into a spectral economy of terror – interventions whose repercussions will remain unknown until long after the films are completed and distributed, particularly in Indonesia. This process, both as practice and as theory, constitutes the most significant findings of the research, and has broader implications for historiography, trauma studies, genre studies, and, especially, any scholarship on the role of media in history.

In analysing the status of footage documenting the re-enactments, interviews, and dramatisations of Indonesian genocidaires, the project proposes a theory of performativity, spectrality and genres of historical performance that builds on and synthesises the work of cultural theorists such as Michael Taussig, Judith Butler, James Siegel and Walter Benjamin, and, to a lesser extent, the theoretical practice of Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, and J.L. Austin.

The research offers significant new findings, including revelatory primary research into the history and operation of the Indonesian genocide, both as it was executed in North Sumatra by the Indonesian military, as well as foreign involvement in the coup d'état that precipitated the massacres. In another contribution to Indonesian area studies, the project offers insight into the cultural politics of terror in North Sumatra, and its relationship to spectral as well as actual structures of power. Here, our work is indebted, in particular, to the writings of James Siegel and Benedict Anderson, both of whom offered substantial advice in the latter phases of the project. (Siegel himself has collected testimony of killers' from the 1965-66 massacres, largely in the province of Aceh, just to the northwest of where our project was based.)

As a film project, the work offers fresh formal and critical challenges to the field of documentary film that has, recently, been theorised under the umbrella of "trauma studies". Particularly relevant is the film work of Claude Lanzmann and Marcel Ophüls, as well as the work of trauma theorists such as Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub. Formally, the film project moves beyond the interview-based approaches of Lanzmann and Ophüls to an interventionist practice that explores the relationship between genre and historical performance – including re-enactment, dramatisation and interview. Formally, our experiments with possession, re-narration, intervention and infiltration build on both the filmmaking and research of Jean Rouch. Moreover, we have sought to apply these techniques to a film form and production method adequate to addressing a history whose very incoherence has served as an instrument of terror. This has generated a new modality of film production that we have termed "archaeological performance", another original contribution of the research. Essential to this work has been the rigorous questions posed by the films of Godard and Miéville, as well as Latin American political filmmakers such as Patricio Guzman, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino.

Given that the project is situated in the autumn of Indonesia's regime of state terror, we have sought to develop a *collaborative* film practice that is also an interventionist social practice. Here, experiments draw on the film practices of Jean Rouch and George Stoney, as well as the radical pedagogies of Myles Horton, Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire.

Finally, we are as indebted to various Sumatran artistic and magical knowledges as we are to the academic knowledge cited above. These include *kebal* (invincibility), *perdukunan* (shamanism), *panggil roh* (calling ghosts), *kuda kepang* (the horse possession dance), not to mention *gamelan*, *wayang kulit* (Javanese shadow puppetry), *wayang orang* (the same, but performed with humans rather than puppets) and *ludruk* (an improvisational form of popular theatre performed by troupes that travel from village to village).

§ 0.2 PhD Components

As a project that excavates, re-fNgatiems and performs the multiple histories of a genocide, it has generated over 200 hours of footage. For these reasons, it is impractical to submit a body of work that does justice to the full scope of the practical work undertaken over the past four years. Rather, the submissions embody *critical moments* in the practice that form the basis for the critical reflections that constitute this thesis. These submissions are not intended to illustrate the arguments rehearsed here, nor does this thesis limit its discussion of the filmmaking to the practical submissions offered here. Rather, the PhD attempts to draw together the diverse strands of the film and critical projects in a dialogue between theory and practice that gives a sense of the richness and scope of the work.

The PhD thus comprises this written thesis, as well as two edited practical submissions: *The Globalisation Tapes* (2003, 70 mins), a completed film in which the collective production practices and basic historical research were begun; and *Snake River* (2004, 36 mins and 11 mins), comprising two film compilations built around the enactments and interviews of Sumatran genocidaires. Additionally, I include the two-disk *Show of Force Compilation DVD,* a compilation of those film scenes that form the basis for significant critical reflection in the text. When film material is referenced in the thesis that is included in neither the edited practical submissions or the compilation DVD, this is noted in the text. Such material is readily available to be viewed upon request.

§ 0.3 Notes on the Collaboration

Documentary filmmaking is always a collaborative process. Vision Machine is a collaborative project consisting of filmmakers, theorists and activists based in London, Sumatra and Java. *The Globalisation Tapes* is, as described in the text, a collaboratively produced project. *Snake River* was filmed and edited entirely by myself, with translation assistance from Taufiq Hanafi. The written dissertation is entirely my own. Whenever work was undertaken collaboratively, it is noted in the text. I am, of course, deeply indebted to all of my collaborators, without

whom such a project could never be possible. There are too many to name, but core collaborators include Christine Cynn, Shusaku Harada, Valentin Manz, Gunawan, Sukirman, Michael Uwemedimo and Andrea Zimmerman. Also essential have been my translators. During *The Globalisation Tapes,* these were Ari Adipurwawidjana and Iskandar Zulkarnain. During the production of *Snake River*, our work-in-progress exploring and intervening in the Indonesian genocide's spectral economy of terror, our translators include Erika Suwarno, Heri Yusup, Rama Astraatmadja and Taufiq Hanafi, each of whom has offered wisdom, advice and friendship, and made essential contributions to the overall project in so many ways as to defy summary or valuation.

§ 0.4 A Note on Translation

Translation from Indonesian and, occasionally, Javanese, occurred in two critical and independent phases: simultaneous direct interpretation during the shoot itself, and translation of rushes during post-production. My Indonesian is fluent, but when filming involves Javanese speakers or sensitive matters, I prefer to work with a translator, who often doubles as a sound recordist. I edit without translation, but subtitles or English-language transcripts are necessary for collaborating with non-Indonesian speakers such as Andrea Zimmerman and Michael Uwemedimo.

Time permitting, all footage is transcribed in Indonesian, and then translated into English, logged by cassette number and time code. However, when a particular scene must be edited and subtitled quickly, I cut the footage without a translation, consulting a translator during the subtitling process only for those passages where there is a degree of uncertainty; a full transcript is made later. With more than 200 hours of footage, several important scenes remain untranslated, and many more remain unsubtitled.

This thesis incorporates English-language transcription of film passages relevant to the argument. In all translation, there is of course a pitch towards both fidelity and accuracy, however it should be stated at the outset that the very notion of *intercultural translation* is a key moment of the argument of this thesis. Such

translation is inevitably a process of exchange, concerning the movement of foreign words into Indonesian (see especially chapter 3) – and indeed a foreign filmmaker into Indonesia – as well as this author's attempts to render spoken Indonesian into written English.

Within the text, the film passages transcribed are often uninterrupted by filmmaker questions or interventions, and generally this indicates the relative unimportance of translation for the filming of those particular scenes. However, when interview questions had to be repeated, this was often done by the translator, who would recognise more quickly than I that the film participants were not answering the question at hand. I represent faithfully such cases of translator intervention in the transcripts. In general, I will always cite both the translator present during the shoot, as well as the post-production translator.

§ 0.5 A Note on Names

The reader may notice many names in the text without surnames. Many Indonesian ethnicities use only one name.

Chapter 1 – History as Terror: the 1965-66 Indonesian genocide

§ 1.1 Forgetting to remember – the film practice's relationship to history

One thing still upsetting me, however, is that no one kept proper records of meetings or decisions. This led to my failure to recollect whether I approved an arms shipment before or after the fact. I did approve it; I just can't say specifically when.

– Ronald Reagan, Iran-Contra scandal admission[2]

I have found it so difficult to believe what people told me of what happened under the Khmer Rouge regime, but today I am very clear that there was genocide [...] It was so unjust for those people. My mind is still confused.

– Khieu Samphan, former Khmer Rouge leader[3]

The Indonesian army did not kill anybody, and I've never heard of civilian death squads.

– Kemal Idris
Indonesian Army General who oversaw the extermination of the PKI[4]

Toward the end of his life, Ronald Regan could remember nothing. The holes in his memory, into which slipped illegal arms shipments and much else besides, had opened alarmingly; his memory was all hole, from whose horizon neither fact, nor figure, nor image could escape. It was not so much that he had forgotten, it was that he could not remember.

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[2] Reagan (1987).

[3] See Mydans (2004).

[4] This is a complex denial, because he is also open about his role in the 'heroic struggle' against the PKI. This is a characteristic contradiction of a history that memorialises the victors but disavows the memory of its victims. Rather than deny that hundreds of thousands of people were killed, he blurs the issue by saying the killings happened on both sides, were not perpetrated by the army, and didn't particularly occur in 1965, but rather continuously since Indonesian independence, and that the PKI killed at least as many Muslims as the Muslims killed PKI. From a filmed interview with Vision Machine (20 July 2004; footage available upon request, Vision Machine cassettes I3-17 through 20.)

The mind of Khieu Samphan, by his own account, is still confused. Like Reagan before his memory became all black hole, he recognises that something happened, but he still just cannot say specifically what happened; he, too, has trouble remembering.

Both these shows of troubled recollection were staged within the purview of a judicial and forensic apparatus that affirmed the reality of a historical event whose details called for determination[5]. Plainly put, in both these cases there had been at least an admission that *something* had happened – something criminal, something terrible, something whose details needed to be remembered.

How much harder is a process of remembrance where no such apparatus exists, where no event is admitted to have passed?

The film practice and this thesis seek a film form that might adequately address and question a history that refuses to recollect its systematic violence within a judicial, ethical, or forensic fNgatiem, but which nonetheless conjures and casts the spectral threat of that violence; it is an intervention and investigation into history *as* terror; specifically, the history of the 1965-66 Indonesian massacres.

Official history is staged so as to exercise the massacres' power precisely by rendering them *obscene*. The systematic and deliberate nature of the massacres is

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[5] In *The New York Times*, Seth Mydans reports that

> United Nations experts have been working in Cambodia to prepare the groundwork for an international tribunal after an agreement in principle with the Cambodian government in 2004. Many political, technical and financial hurdles remain, however, and many analysts doubt the experts' prediction that a trial could begin as early as this year.
>
> The Cambodian side has been raising conditions and creating delays since 1996. Serious questions remain over both the political will of the government and the ability of its corrupt and ill-trained court system to play its part in a process that will mix both foreign and local judges and court officers.
>
> Nevertheless, the analysts say, the public pleading of Mr. Khieu Samphan, who was the nominal head of the Khmer Rouge government, is a sign that he is feeling the heat. (Mydans 2004)

This 'heat' is something architects, administrators, nor executioners of the Indonesian massacres have never felt. On the judicial complexities of the Iran-Contra affair, see, for example, Treanor (1998).

excluded from the official script; it waits in the wings. It is this literal obscenity that renders it threateningly spectral.

Wherever the official history is rehearsed, its obscenity operates; the cast of official characters conjures a spectral host that haunts offstage. The script is deliberately and necessarily incoherent, and it is not concerned with adequacy to actual events. It is not a history in the realist register. It is not recounted in order to refer; rather, it is rehearsed in order to exercise a power. It is a history in the performative register.

Michael Taussig, whose writings provide an essential theoretical context for this thesis, describes "the mediation of terror through narration, and the problem that raises for effective counterrepresentations" (1987:127). Our project attempts to make headway in analysing this problematic through a film practice and theoretical apparatus that re-casts the problematic's epistemology. Eschewing an epistemology of representation, we avoid considering narration as mediation of a past that can be made coherently and fully present; instead we consider historical narrative as a performance whose staging produces *effects*. It is these effects, and their present tense, that are our primary concern, and so we consider history as performative. We analyse how the elaborations and ellipses of the ceaselessly rehearsed histories of the period conjure terror, performatively bringing it into existence, or interacting with other conjurations, amplifying terror conjured by previous acts – whether acts of historical account (speech acts) or historical acts (the events that constitute the past). It is less a matter of producing effective counter-*representations* than intervening with counter-*performances*, that is, interventions capable of countering the spectral powers of terror conjured by history – in the sense of "the past" as well as narratives that claim adequacy to the past.

This film project's intervention into Indonesia's history of terror is to re-stage its performance for the camera, to re-fNgatiem it in a way different from its repeated rehearsals in schools, on national television, on days of official memorial. The aim is, in the first instance, to perform it in such away that the operations of its obscenity can be grasped, so that the spectres it produces can

enter the scene in a way that allows them to be addressed, acknowledged, contended with.

Shifting between memory and imagination, documentary re-enactment and genre restaging, the project attempts to make these insights available to a political and historical imagination that can draw the process of national- and self-imagining out from under the shadow and sway of catastrophe.

What Felman and Laub (1992) claim of literature, we claim here of cinema:

> Literature bears testimony not just to duplicate or to record events, but to make history available to the imaginative act whose historical unavailability has prompted, and made possible, a holocaust.

§ 1.2 Spectres of Indonesian Communism

A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of communism.

– Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*[6]

That Marx evoked communism's *spectral* power speaks to the position of the proletariat in a symbolic regime of commodity fetishism that renders invisible the exploitation of labour at the heart of the production process. The proletariat, in this account, is invisible yet essential, excluded from the symbolic regime of official histories and historiography: absent yet present, waiting in the wings, a haunting force, and thus its movement may, in its own manifesto, *conjure itself as a spectre.*

Communism becomes *spectral* at the moment when, inherent in the logic of commodity fetishism and the imperatives of ideology, the drudgery, suffering and general exploitation of the producing classes – i.e., the proletariat and, in much of the world, an assortment of landless agricultural workers and bonded labourers – become the *obscene* of our imaginary relationship to our actual

[6] See Marx and Engels (1848).

experience as daily consumers of the alienated products of their labour.[7] And this spectrality surely exerts a force, conjured again and again as the *obscene* of official histories and other symbolic performances of the "West's" encounter with communism in the west and, especially, in her former colonies.

The Cold War was, of course, not "cold" in those regions of the world undergoing decolonisation, where very real "wars of liberation" were fought by socialist-nationalist movements against economic and military elites backed by the US. But while the Cold War may not have been cold, it certainly was *spectral*, as a critical strategy in its conduct was the conjuration of communism again and again as a force figured to cast a global shadow. And this spectrality relied, in part, on the *obscenity* of the proletariat and the production process within the imaginary of commodity fetishism.

As former colonies were forcibly re-integrated into colonial economic patterns, the violence of such encounters was often excluded from the triumphalist language of "progress" and "freedom" that was used to describe the destruction of nationalist movements, rendering both the extermination of nationalist movements and the movements themselves invisible (the obscene) in both official histories and their mediation by the international media. A striking example of this may be found in *The New York Times,* where, less than one year after the Indonesian massacres of 1965-66, James Reston's report on the political and economic consequences of the genocide appears under the headline "A Gleam of Light in Asia"[8]; or, we might look at Guy Pauker's glowing 1973 RAND Corporation review of the New Order regime that came to power through the 1965-66 genocide; the report is called *The Indonesian Economic and Political Miracle.* By excluding massacre and terror from the symbolic performance of history, such glowing terms produce actual violence and terror as

[7] Here, I paraphrase Althusser's understanding of ideology as "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (2001:109). These imaginary relationships, constituting what we perceive as reality, exclude – that is, "render obscene" - the actual violence of the production process, and this is precisely the Althusserian update of Marx's account of commodity fetishism.

[8] Other examples abound in writing on the genocide. See, especially, Pauker (1967 & 1973) and Gardner (1997).

spectral, and, as this thesis will argue using the Indonesian massacres of 1965-66 as a case study, these spectres of terror become instruments of terror in their own right.

The phrase "on pain of extinction" occurs in Marx and Engels (1848), who wrote: "by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, [the bourgeoisie] draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls.[...]It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production."

On pain of extinction. Penumpasan, herein generally translated as "extermination", is the word used by Indonesian *genocidaires* to describe the destruction of the left-wing of Indonesia's nationalist movement. We could also translate it as "making extinct". This is, then, a project about extinction, and above all a project about the spectres of the extinct, and how, in particular, the spectres of the extinct are evoked and conjured as instruments of terror through the process of performing history.

The now-extinct Partai Komunis Indonesia (or PKI) was born in the East Java city of Surabaya on 9 May, 1914, when H. J. F. M. Sneevliet, a young Dutchman who had arrived in the Netherlands Indies one year earlier, founded the colony's first Marxist organisation, the *Indische Sociaal Democratische Vereniging* (The Indies Social Democratic Association) (Pauker 1969:275). In 1920, the Association changed its name to *Perserikatan Kommunist di India* (Communist Organization in the Indies), making it the first Asian communist party (Historical Branch 1965). In 1924, the party changed its name to Partai Komunis Indonesia, the change from "India" to "Indonesia" reflecting the vanguard role the party played *imagining* Indonesia as an independent nation, 21 years before independence would be declared.

In 1926-27, the PKI organised the very first armed nationalist rebellion against Dutch rule, leading to the arrest and exile of thousands of PKI leaders. Dutch authorities outlawed the PKI in 1927, more or less ending the party's activities in

the Indies until World War II (McVey 1965:353). During the years leading up to World War II, the PKI continued as an underground organisation, with Musso, an exiled communist activist who had been living in Moscow, returning to assume leadership in 1935 (Pauker 1969:276). The PKI joined the nationalist revolution, Indonesia's war of independence from the Dutch, from 1945-49, but its fortunes changed dramatically during the so-called Madiun Rebellion of 1948.

No matter what one's interpretation the events at Madiun, the PKI was brutally crushed by the Indonesian military, with the summary execution of 11 PKI leaders, including Musso, and the imprisonment of 36,000 PKI members and "sympathizers" (Pauker 1969:276). In a 17 July 2004 interview with the author, historian and translator Rama Astraatmadja suggests that probably hundreds, if not thousands, of civilians accused of being PKI were killed.[9]

The PKI's Madiun Rebellion is conjured in post-1965 Indonesian history books as a sign anticipating later PKI treason. Scholars are as divided over interpretations of Madiun as they are over the events of 1965 themselves. The official Suharto-era histories – and almost all English language accounts – simply accuse the PKI of rebelling in 1948 against the newly founded Indonesian government in the east Java city of Madiun; more explicitly ideologically motivated histories tend to accuse the PKI of attempting to launch by stealth its communist revolution after letting the nationalists win independence from the Dutch.

On the other hand, Wertheim (1956:82) argued that "the so-called communist revolt of Madiun [...] was probably more or less provoked by anti-communist elements". Kahin (1970:288) has suggested that the events leading to Madiun "may have been symptomatic of a general and widespread government drive aimed at cutting down the military strength of the PKI". Post-Suharto Indonesian historians have begun to reappraise the PKI's actions at Madiun as part of the

[9] Officers leading the campaign against the PKI at Madiun included General Haris Nasution and Kemal Idris, both of whom took leading roles in the 1965-66 genocide and invoked Madiun as proof of PKI treachery. Scott (1985:247) notes that "Nasution...called for the total extinction of the PKI, 'down to its very roots so there will be no third Madiun.'"

broader anti-colonial struggle. Several accounts hold that Madiun was actually a massacre of PKI troops by troops under the command of right-wing nationalist leader Hatta, possibly with payment of one million US dollars from US agent provocateurs seeking to ensure that independent Indonesia would not be socialist (Wardaya 2003; Cavanagh 2004). Anwar (1997) and Gardner (1997) also note US support for anti-communist troops at Madiun, with coordination via cables to Washington. Many scholars note that in 1948, the revolution was not complete (independence was only won in 1949); the Dutch still maintained control in many areas. In the east Java city of Madiun, near the heart of the Blora oilfields, there was a "nationalist" local government, but one consisting almost entirely of Javanese aristocracy who had worked loyally for the Dutch; there had been no local change in regime. According to Astraatmadja, the regional government, with the backing of Hatta's army, repelled a PKI-supported land reform campaign. At the same time, the government rejected demands to reform the distribution of oil profits (Dewan Redaksi 2003). Disenchanted with the lack of reform, pro-PKI troops and left-wing militias announced that independence had not been won at Madiun, and the so-called "nationalist" administration was not the legitimate Indonesian authority. They thus continued the campaign for a nationalist government in Blora (Dalhar 2004:12, 14-16).

Despite the Madiun disaster, the PKI enjoyed remarkable success in post-independence Indonesia. Notwithstanding occasional mass arrests of PKI members and sympathisers, the PKI grew "phenomenally" (Pauker 1969:276).[10] By the early 1960s, the PKI was the largest party in Indonesia, and the largest communist party outside a communist country, claiming 20 million members and affiliates, including party members and members of SOBSI (the federation of PKI-affiliated trade unions), the Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (or Lekra, the People's Cultural Institute), Gerakan Wanita Indonesia (or Gerwani, the Indonesian Women's Movement), Barisan Tani Indonesia (or BTI, the Indonesian Peasants' Front), and Pemuda Rakyat (or PR, the People's Youth movement).

[10] In the 1955 parliamentary elections, the PKI took 16.4 per cent of the vote, and in summer 1957, the PKI won 7,760,000 votes, an increase in electoral strength of 34 per cent over 1955. See Pauker (1969:276).

By 1958, the United States was concerned about the PKI's strength, and particularly its struggle for land reform, nationalisation of colonial-era plantations, and nationalisation of Indonesia's oil fields. In 1958, the CIA supported a massive rebellion in the resource-rich outer islands of Sumatra and Sulawesi. The US provided naval and air support for 42,000 CIA-armed Indonesian and Filipino troops under the command of a clutch of anti-communist outer island colonels and CIA advisors (Kahin and Kahin 1997). The plan was to create an independent country consisting of the outer islands, minus the overcrowded and relatively resource-poor Java (ibid). The name given to the rebellion was *Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia* (PRRI), or the Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia in Sumatra and *Perdjuangan Semesta* (Permesta, or "Universal Struggle") in Sulawesi (Scott 1985, Prouty 1976 and, especially, Kahin and Kahin 1997). Indeed, the 1958 invasion of Indonesia was the largest U.S. covert operation in its pre-Vietnam history, dwarfing the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba (Prouty 1976).

Army commanders loyal to Sukarno, or at least to the idea of a united Indonesia, managed to defeat the PRRI-Permesta rebellion, and Scott (1985) describes how, in response, the US massively stepped up military aid, surgically targeting its Military Assistance Programs to strengthen anti-PKI factions within the Indonesian army. US Ambassador to Indonesia Howard Jones (1971:324) explains that "By maintaining our modest assistance to [the Indonesian army], we fortified them for a virtually inevitable showdown with the burgeoning PKI." Scott (1985) describes:

> [T]he gradual cut off of all economic aid to Indonesia in the years 1962-65 was accompanied by a shift in military aid to friendly elements in the Indonesian Army: U.S. military aid amounted to $39.5 million in the four years 1962-65 (with a peak of $16.3 million in 1962) as opposed to $28.3 million for the thirteen years 1949-61. After March 1964, when Sukarno told the U.S., "go to hell with your aid," it became increasingly difficult to extract any aid from the U.S. congress: those persons not aware of what was developing found it hard to understand why the U.S. should help arm a country which was nationalizing U.S. economic interests, and using immense aid subsidies from the Soviet Union to confront the British in Malaysia.

> Thus a *public* image was created that under Johnson "all United States aid to Indonesia was stopped," [...] In fact, Congress had agreed to treat U.S. funding of the Indonesian military (unlike aid to any other country) *as a covert matter*, restricting congressional review of the president's determinations on Indonesian aid to two Senate committees, and the House Speaker, who were concurrently involved in oversight of the CIA. (Scott 1985:251, my emphasis)

The PKI was slated to win the elections scheduled for 1959, which would have made it the first communist party to attain power through the democratic process, without an armed insurgency. But, Pauker explains, "the Army, on which President Sukarno depended for protection against [the PRRI-Permesta rebellion] that threatened his regime, was not prepared to permit a Communist electoral victory" (1969:277). Thus, in May 1958, the army demanded that elections be postponed for six years (ibid). In a desperate attempt to salvage elections, PKI leadership publicly tried to downplay their electoral prospects, with PKI leader D.N. Aidit saying in a May 1958 interview that "It is not true that one party will be able to get the majority of seats in Parliament through the forthcoming elections. The PKI has estimated that it will not obtain more than 25 percent of all the votes" (cited in Pauker, ibid). Pauker notes that:

> These assurances were not satisfactory, and general elections were postponed. Then, in July 1959, Indonesia's parliamentary system was replaced by an authoritarian regime backed by the Army, Sukarno's so-called "guided democracy." (ibid)

Pauker's account is remarkable because, in almost all English-language histories of Indonesia, "guided democracy" is presented as a proto-communist dictatorship engineered by Sukarno with the support of a PKI too impatient to achieve power by democratic means.[11] Pauker's analysis, by contrast, suggests that it was the army who suspended democracy to prevent the PKI's democratic victory. The remarkable consequence of this analysis is that military dictatorship really began in the aftermath of the 1958 rebellion, and not in the wake of the 1965-66 genocide as usually suggested. Pauker's account also suggests that the 1958 CIA action was actually successful in that it indirectly prevented the communists from coming to power.

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[11] See, for instance, the "standard" English-language textbook on Indonesian history, M. C. Ricklef (2002), *A History of Modern Indonesia Since C. 1200.*

Pauker's history has an ironic and extraordinary credibility, because it comes from an internal RAND Corporation report, published largely for the benefit of American foreign policy makers. Indeed, Pauker took a leading role in training, advising and supporting pro-US Indonesian politicians and army generals. As Scott (1985) describes,

> [a] small group of U.S. academic researchers in U.S. Air Force- and CIA-subsidized "think-tanks" began pressuring their contacts in the Indonesian military publicly, often through U.S. scholarly journals and presses, to seize power and liquidate the PKI opposition. The most prominent example is Guy Pauker, who in 1958 both taught at the University of California at Berkeley and served as a consultant at the RAND Corporation. In the latter capacity he maintained frequent contact with what he himself called "a very small group" of [CIA-funded Partai Sosialis Indonesia] intellectuals[12] and their friends in the army.
>
> In a RAND Corporation book published by the Princeton University Press, Pauker urged his contacts in the Indonesian military to assume "full responsibility" for their nation's leadership, "fulfil a mission," and hence "to strike, sweep their house clean." Although Pauker may not have intended anything like the scale of bloodbath which eventually ensued, there is no escaping the fact that "mission" and "sweep clean" were buzz-words for counterinsurgency and massacre, and as such were used frequently before and during the coup. The first murder order, by military officers to Muslim students in early October, was the word *sikat*, meaning "sweep," "clean out," "wipe out," or "massacre."
>
> Pauker's closest friend in the Indonesian army was a U.S.-trained General Suwarto, who played an important part in the conversion of the army from a revolutionary to a counterinsurgency function. In the years after 1958, Suwarto built the Indonesian Army Staff and Command School in Bandung (SESKOAD) into a training-ground for the takeover of political power. SESKOAD in this period became a focal-point of attention from the Pentagon, the CIA, RAND, and (indirectly) the Ford Foundation.

I quote Scott extensively here, because his question about what Pauker really meant by calling on the Indonesian army to "sweep their house clean" may be answered by Pauker's own optimistic retrospective on the subsequent genocide, written for RAND just after the killings, *Indonesia in 1966: The Year of Transition:*

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[12] Partai Sosialis Indonesia, or PSI, was the intellectual and political entity behind the Indonesian leadership of the 1958 rebellion.

> In 1964 I had written: "The very size of the PKI has become its best defence. The author believes, Indonesian political culture being what it is, that the present Indonesian political elites are not likely to stomach the harsh measures that would be necessary to destroy the PKI now that it has millions of followers." I was wrong. In the aftermath of the September 30 affair, the Army liquidated without hesitation all cadres of the PKI which it was able to capture.[...]No legalistic constraints interfered with their summary execution or with the extermination of countless Communist families throughout the archipelago. (Pauker 1967:8)

From 1959, the PKI was on the defensive. We can understand 1959-1965 as a period when the PKI was frustrated by an authoritarian, army-backed system of "guided democracy", subject to an enormous black propaganda campaign, and the formation and militarization of anti-PKI youth groups. At the same time, the PKI's popularity grew; the PKI remained Indonesia's largest political party, albeit one with limited electoral prospects so long as democracy remained suspended.

Sukarno's own position during this time was ambiguous. He supported the left and the PKI in rhetoric, declaring Nasakom (a fusion of nationalism, religion, and communism) to be the ideology guiding "guided democracy"; his cabinet included many prominent leftists, but his power or will to enforce important policies – such as land reform – was extremely limited. For example, Dutch colonial plantations were nationalized, but given to the army who ran them as businesses with profits directly appropriated by army generals. And most importantly, land reform laws went un-enforced.

Throughout this period, the left's enormous grassroots base was intact, and struggled for the basic enforcement of the many reforms it had helped engineer during the years of parliamentary democracy between independence and 1959. The unions continued to fight for further nationalisation and better working conditions, while the cultural organisation, Lekra, brought populist theatre, music, and even cinema programs to the remotest plantation villages. Specifically, in North Sumatra, former SARBUPRI president Mustafa Margolan explained in a February 2004 personal interview that the union worked closely with the PKI peasants' organisation (BTI) to coordinate its labour demands with

the peasants' land reform strategy.[13] Even plantation workers who participated in the genocide (such as Rahmat Shah, Ma'il and Basmi, all of whom we interview) describe how SARBUPRI had successfully won a remarkable system of rations to ensure some degree of material stability for plantation workers during a period of hyperinflation. Struggles for better wages were focused on *catuh,* or in-kind payment in commodities. Thus, at the height of the inflation, the workers were comparably well off because they received payment in rice, sugar, salt, cooking oil, kerosene, milk, salted fish, vegetables, tempeh and eggs. Even some participants in the killings lament that after the killings the catuh were reduced only to rice, and low-quality rice at that.

Land reform was probably the most significant factor to create tension in Indonesian society. The BTI continued to fight for land reform. Indeed, a series of unilateral actions by the PKI to enforce land reform laws – squatting unused fields formally belonging either to army plantations or absentee landlords – led to clashes, particularly in Central and East Java and North Sumatra.[14]

But a violent backlash was brewing. The refusal of landowners and plantation managers to obey land reform law paved the way for serious class conflict in rural areas, as middle-class Indonesians who were affiliated with estate owners and managers rallied together, forming youth groups to protect their patrons from the demands of the generally non-violent but intimidating working class movements.[15] Often, these youth groups defined themselves as religious, as with

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[13] Footage of Mustafa Margolan's interview is available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I2-25 through 27).

[14] In 1964, a land clash erupted at Bandar Betsy in the North Sumatran regency of Simalungun. The dispute was centered on land formerly belonging to the Dutch (now Army) plantation but given to villagers to farm by the Japanese colonial government during World War II. The clash claimed the lives of numerous members of the PKI peasants' organisation, Barisan Tani Indonesia, as well as that of one army colonel. Like a local Madiun, the case was the center of an enormous propaganda effort to demonstrate PKI treason against the army in the plantation belt. Virtually all higher-level perpetrators of the 1965-66 massacres refer to Bandar Betsy as all the evidence they need of the PKI's murderous designs.

[15] For a clear picture of how relatives of plantation managers join anti-PKI youth groups in East Java, see Pipit Rochijat's *Am I PKI or Non-PKI?* Also, interviews with youth group-turned-death squad members (such as Saman Siregar) in North Sumatra suggest that many members of such groups had affiliations with plantation managers and land owners, either as security personnel (Saman Siregar), family members of plantation management (Buyung Berlan), local government officials (Jamal Hasibuan, Arsan Lubis), and relatives of traders profiting from favourable

the Muslim organisation Nadhlatul Ulama's *Pemuda Ansor* youth group. These groups defined themselves as struggling for religion against PKI atheism.

Some perpetrators of the subsequent massacres in North Sumatra repeat the official line that the PKI were anti-religious, while others, particularly Basmi from Dolok Mesihol, coherently describes how the PKI attended mosque and church at least as frequently as those who joined the paramilitary religious groups. Certainly, all survivors whom I have met claim to have always been and remain to this day as unassumingly religious as their non-PKI neighbours, and perhaps more so, for they almost always refer to justice being in god's hands. Moreover, from our interviews, survivors invariably seem bewildered as to why they were accused of being "anti-religious". While middle class, urban students with no contact with rural trade unionists and peasants may well have believed that the PKI were anti-religious, in the rural areas where much of our research has been conducted, it is hard to imagine that paramilitary group members believed that their neighbours were anti-religious, for they surely met them in the mosques.

For these reasons, the attempt to define the anti-communist youth as motivated by religion, in opposition to an atheist communism, suggests involvement and support from higher up. While Marxist doctrine may critique religion, and religion may have been proscribed in some communist countries, I have found no evidence that rural, rank-and-file ex-PKI understand communist theory as having anything other than a tolerant, liberal view of religion.[16] Thus, it is hard to imagine how it would have occurred to local anti-PKI organisations to paint the PKI with the brush of atheism.

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business relationships with plantation officials (particularly trucking firms such as TTP, grimly nicknamed by political prisoners "Tangkap, Tjingcang, Potong" or "Arrest, Mince, Slaughter") volunteered trucks and other equipment to help facilitate the slaughter.

[16] Indeed, Timbul, the younger brother of executed Pemuda Rakyat member, Lukman, describes the PKI recruiting new members of its peasant group by re-naming itself Barisan Tani Islam, or Muslim Peasant's Front; surely members thus inducted would have identified themselves as religious.

Indeed, evidence now suggests that the idea *did* come from higher up. Recently released documents reveal an enormous anti-PKI propaganda effort was launched by elements of the Indonesian military, the British MI6, the US Information Agency, and the CIA to "blacken" the PKI's name.[17] The Madiun Affair was invoked as a sign of PKI treason. The PKI was accused of plotting the murder of all religious Muslims, with vast death lists hidden in cadres' homes. The PKI was portrayed as agents of communist China, leading to pogroms against any ethnically Chinese Indonesians, including avowedly non-communist Indonesian businessmen and traders.[18]

Any estimate of the effectiveness of the propaganda campaign must surely take into account its erosion of international sympathy toward the PKI (something beyond the scope of this thesis); moreover, such an estimate cannot be based on an assessment of what people actually *believed* about the PKI. *Instead, it must*

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[17] See FRUS (2001:Doc 110) for direct evidence of a US role. See Scott (1985) for an overview on the US role. For remarkably detailed information on the role of MI6 propaganda, see Curtis (1996, 2003, and 2004), Lashmar and Oliver (1998, 2000), Hulami (2000), Budiardjo (2002), McCann (2002), and *The Independent* (1999). A secret memoir to the Foreign Office from British ambassador to Indonesia, Sir Andrew Gilchrist, noted "I have never concealed from you my belief that a little shooting in Indonesia would be an essential preliminary to effective change", cited in Curtis (1996).

[18] Rahmat Shah describes a 1963-64 campaign to force ethnic Chinese neighbours to adopt Indonesian names or leave Indonesia. In a February 2004 interview, Rahmat explains:

> In '64, at Rambung Sialang, all the big storekeepers and traders were Chinese. It was on Sunday, and it was us, eight of us, we already had an organisation. We'd already formed a group. We protested against Chinese citizens. We said, "Those who are Indonesian may live in Indonesia, but whoever holds Chinese citizenship, go back to China!" We raided their homes. They did not resist. If they resisted, we beat them to death. One house owner was Ba Gou. We asked him, what citizenship do you have? Chinese or Indonesian? Show us your identity card to prove it! So we checked his ID, and ordered him to change his name or else go back to China. When we protested at the Sei Buluh sub district office, we asked Indonesian Chinese not to use their Chinese names.

I should note that no ethnic Chinese in rural North Sumatra are Chinese nationals. Rahmat continues:

> So we now have a lot Chinese "disguising" their names. Their ID cards use their new names. Like Bin Hok, he changed his name to Junaidi, Abi Tia to Iskandar. That's what Indonesians should do. Don't use Chinese names. Ching-Chong, A Hok, Bin Hok, whatever. But if you are Indonesian, then you must have a name that sounds Muslim – I mean, Indonesian.

(Footage available upon request: Vision Machine cassette I2-22; production translation by Taufiq Hanafi, post-production translation by Rama Astraatmadja)

take into account what actions by opponents of the PKI it encouraged and made thinkable.[19] In any case, by now it is almost impossible to separate what people really believed about the PKI at the time from what they now *claim* they believed after 34 years of Suharto's rule, during which the public was more or less compelled to claim faith in the anti-PKI propaganda, performed again and again on television and in reports of the "latent PKI threat". That said, from personal interviews with numerous non-PKI survivors in rural Sumatran plantation villages, I have never heard that the PKI was violent, threatening, or anti-religious. By contrast, perpetrators of the genocide, such as Jamal Hasibuan, head of the death squads in Labuhan Batu regency, however, claim to have been terrorised by the PKI.[20] When asked to elaborate, Jamal says the principle terror was the discovery of death lists *after* the PKI had already been destroyed, while others death squad members fall back on the "fact" that the PKI was anti-religious.

Foreign involvement went beyond propaganda. Recently de-classified but still highly censored State Department documents reveal that on February 23, 1965, the 303 Committee – the inter-agency working group tasked with coordinating all US covert operations – was presented with a memorandum detailing the following covert action against the PKI:

> The program envisages continuation of certain activities which have been undertaken previously on a developmental basis plus other new activities which appear now to offer promise of success if implemented on a coordinated and sustained basis. The main thrust of this program is designed to exploit factionalism within the PKI itself, to emphasize traditional Indonesian distrust of Mainland China and to portray the PKI as an instrument of Red Chinese imperialism. Specific types of activity envisaged include covert liaison with and support to existing anti-Communist groups, particularly among the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*], black letter operations, media operations, including possibly black radio, and political action within existing Indonesian organizations and institutions. The estimated annual cost of this program

[19] This understanding of the effectiveness of propaganda owes much to Althusser's adoption of Pascal's formula for ideological indoctrination and belief: "Pascal says more or less: 'Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe'" (Althusser 2001:114).

[20] Footage of Jamal Hasibuan available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-104 through 105).

> is [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. These funds are available [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*]. (FRUS 2001:Doc 110; bracketed comments in original)

In a footnote, the State Department historian who compiled these documents explains that such efforts had been going on almost since the army suspended Indonesian democracy in 1959:

> On December 14, 1961, the Special Group (predecessor of the 303 Committee) agreed to spend *[text not declassified]* during FY 1962 "to support civic action and anti-Communist activities to be executed through [Indonesian] [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] instrumentalities" and [*text not declassified*] during FY 1962 and 1963 "to assist [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] in covert training of selected personnel and civilians, who will be placed in key positions in the [*less than 1 line of source text not declassified*] civic action program." (CIA Paper for the Special Group, December 11, 1961, and December 14, 1961, Minutes of the Special Group; ibid., Subject Files, Indonesia and Special Group Minutes, 12/14/61) (FRUS 2001:Doc 110, footnote 2; bracketed comments in original)

The covering note to the memorandum explained that the purpose of the covert operation was to "chip away" at PKI influence within Indonesia (FRUS 2001:Doc 110, footnote 1). The document concludes with the sentence, "It is recommended that the 303 Committee approve this program", but in another historian's footnote, we learn that even bigger projects were afoot, but precisely where, and under whose auspices remains unclear:

> The 303 Committee approved this paper on March 4. [*text not declassified*] of the CIA took the opportunity to urge "a larger political design or master plan to arrest the Indonesian march into the Chinese camp" based on the Maphilindo concept. **He argued a major effort was required** to prevent the United States from being excluded from Indonesia, suggesting that the loss of a nation of 105 million to the "Communist camp" would make a victory in Vietnam of little meaning. **McGeorge Bundy stated that as a major political problem, Indonesia was receiving attention, but it "could not be settled in the 303 forum."** (Ibid., 303 Committee Minutes, 3/5/65)
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> (FRUS 2001:Doc 110, footnote 3; bracketed comments in original; my emphasis in boldface)

Certainly:

> On March 16 Robert Barnett met with 10 U.S. oil company representatives, 2 U.S. rubber representatives, and a representative of Pan

> American Airlines to brief them on the Indonesian situation. (Memorandum of conversation, March 16; National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL INDON-US)[21]

It is reasonably clear that from 1962-1965, paramilitary youth groups were established, in part with aid delivered through various United States Military Assistance Programs, as well as government money funnelled through private foundations such as the Ford Foundation. The most ubiquitous organisation thus founded may have been the national civil defence teams (*Hansip,* or *Pertahanan Sipil*). In the plantations, Hansip basically functioned as security guards,[22] but no Hansip members whom we interviewed could remember any PKI affiliates being trained for this national program, despite their official eligibility;[23] indeed, as security guards, Hansip's remit may well have been to protect the plantations from land reform actions organised by BTI, as well as labour actions organised by the PKI-affiliated SARBUPRI (the Indonesian Plantation Workers' Union). In addition to Hansip, the censored documents above suggest a scenario first comprehensively argued by Scott (1985) in which US aid funded army liaison with – and the subsequent militarization of – anti-communist student, youth and religious groups.[24] Several members of these groups, including Arsan Lubis,

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[21] We can assume that the rubber interests are U.S. Rubber, then known as Uniroyal, and Goodyear, both with vast estates in North Sumatra. See FRUS (2001).

[22] Plantation belt villagers describe that Hansip has since been replaced by *satpam*, meaning simply "security guards".

[23] Footage available upon request of interviews with three Hansip members (Vision Machine cassettes I3-76 through 77 and I3-110 through 111).

[24] Scott (1985) observes that:

> Under the guidance of Nasution and Suwarto, SESKOAD [the army's military academy at Bandung] developed a new strategic doctrine, that of Territorial Warfare (in a document translated into English by Pauker), which gave priority to counterinsurgency as the army's role. Especially after 1962, when the Kennedy administration aided the Indonesian Army in developing Civic Mission or "civic action" programs, this meant the organization of its own political infrastructure, or "Territorial [Command]," reaching [...] down to the village level. As the result of an official U.S. State Department recommendation in 1962, which Pauker helped write, a special U.S. MILTAG (Military Training Advisory Group) was set up in Jakarta, to assist in the implementation of SESKOAD's Civic Mission programs.
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> SESKOAD also trained the army officers in economics and administration, and thus to operate virtually as a para-state, independent of Sukarno's government. So the army began to collaborate, and even sign contracts, with U.S. and other foreign corporations in areas which were now under its control.[...] But the most significant focus of U.S. training and aid was *the Territorial [Command's] increasing liaison with "the civilian administration,*

Rahmat Shah and Jamal Hasibuan, have described being trained and instructed to monitor the PKI, months in advance of the 1965-66 massacres, in anticipation of PKI treason.[25]

§ 1.3 Spectres of genocide

We can summarise thus: from the early 1960s, anti-communist Indonesian civil society was militarised by the Indonesian army, with aid from the United States and a vast propaganda effort coordinated by the United Kingdom. The anti-PKI religious, student and youth groups were given a paramilitary function that would provide the architecture for the 1965-66 genocide. Groups were given weapons and, several months before the genocide, tipped off by their army commanders that something was about to happen. Ever since the 1958 CIA invasion, a spectre was haunting Indonesia – the spectre of extermination.

PKI atheism, at least in the plantation belt, was very likely a *spectral* atheism, or a spectre of atheism, because PKI members went to mosque on Friday, prayed five times a day and observed the Ramadan fast as much as anybody else. But this spectral atheism conjures the spectre of extermination, because accusing the PKI of denying the spiritual is tantamount to accusing them of a spectral eliminationism – that is, a tendency in which they could *thinkably* exterminate their non-communist opponents. In Indonesia, and certainly in North Sumatra, the spiritual is a populated realm, with ghosts and spirits an inherent part of the quotidian. To accuse the PKI of atheism is to conjure them as a murderous power, albeit a spectral one, a spectre whose power derives precisely in its ability to imagine the extermination of a whole class of people in the same idiom with which it exterminates the realm of spirits – by refusing to believe. Furthermore, as "godless", the PKI, thus figured, are not operating from the ethical ground of religious morality. Thus, they are figured as knowing no bounds.

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religious and cultural organizations, youth groups, veterans, trade unions, peasant organizations, political parties and groups at regional and local levels." These political liaisons with civilian groups provided the structure for the ruthless suppression of the PKI in 1965, including the bloodbath. (Scott 1985:248-9, my italics)

[25] Interviews available upon request, Vision Machine cassettes I2-22 (Rahmat Shah), I2-28 through 30 and Nasution (1997) (Arsan Lubis), and I3-104 through 105 (Jamal Hasibuan).

And rumours abounded that the PKI was arming itself. Indeed, shortly before the genocide, in what probably was a desperate attempt at self-defence in the face of increasingly wellself-armed and well-organised anti-PKI paramilitary youth groups, PKI leadership requested arms to form a "fifth force", a kind of popular militia comprising the rural poor and landless. These unfulfilled requests surely seemed even more sinister when, in mid-September 1965, two weeks before the coup, a Malaysian newspaper, citing a Bangkok source which, in turn, cited unnamed Hong Kong sources, suggested that Beijing was smuggling arms to the PKI (Scott 1985:252). As Scott notes, "Such international untraceability is the stylistic hallmark of stories emanating in this period from what CIA insiders called their 'mighty Wurlitzer,' the world-wide network of press 'assets' through which the CIA, or sister agencies such as Britain's MI6, could plant unattributable disinformation" (ibid).

When the massacre finally occurred, it was not the PKI who did the killing. Indeed, the PKI were unarmed, and were the ones killed. They did not fight back. Like the Jews facing deportations to the east, PKI victims tended to go without resistance, often turning themselves in to be slaughtered at the local military command. Rumours of PKI weapons stockpiles turned out to be just that, rumours. But the spectral powers conjured by such rumours have proved more enduring, and continue to be wielded as instruments of state terror. The PKI's spectral power was conjured to counter its actual power, demonstrating the inseparability of spectral and actual fields of power. And this enormous conjuration of spectral power haunts Indonesia to this day.

§ 1.4 The Coup

On the night of 30 September-1 October 1965, six of Indonesia's top army generals were abducted and murdered in an abortive coup attempt. Commander of the armed forces, General Haris Nasution, escaped with his life, but a captain guarding him was executed, as was his young daughter, Ade Irma. The officers' were dumped in a disused well known as *Lubang Buaya* (crocodile hole) on Halim Airbase southeast of Jakarta. The movement was originally known as

Gestok (or *Gerakan Satu Oktober*, or October 1st Movement), but its name was quickly changed by Suharto to Gestapu (or *Gerakan September 30*) to evoke the spectre of the Nazi Gestapo.

For a few hours on the morning of 1 October, Gestapu came on state radio and announced the formation of a "Revolutionary Council", which claimed to control much of Jakarta, and explained that a council of generals who were plotting to overthrow the president had been killed in a bid to save Sukarno and the revolution.

Noted Indonesianist and cultural critic Benedict Anderson, whose persistent and incisive analysis of the 1965 coup and genocide provides an essential historical fNgatiemwork for this thesis and the filmmaking, writes that:

> The extraordinary mistakes made by the coup group – not getting Sukarno to sign on, appointing an absurd Revolutionary Council, demoting all senior officers in the army to Untung's rank of Lt. Col., not taking control of Kostrad – are so many that they look purposeful.[26]

Gestapu's rhetoric and above all its actions were so inept as to warrant suspicion. The demotion of all senior army officers guaranteed a loss of any support Gestapu might have enjoyed among higher ranking officers.[27] Equally implausible was Gestapu's cordoning off of all sides of Jakarta's central Merdeka Square, except that facing the Kostrad headquarters under Suharto's command (Scott 1985:243). This failure was "consistent with Gestapu's decision to target the only army generals who might have challenged Suharto's assumption of power" (ibid). Indeed, Gestapu killed virtually all of Suharto's immediate superiors, creating a power vacuum that only Suharto could fill. In his masterly review of circumstantial but compelling evidence of Suharto's involvement in Gestapu, Scott notes that:

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[26] Excerpted from an email from Benedict Anderson to the author dated 16 April 2004 in response to new information uncovered by the author concerning CIA involvement in Gestapu. (See discussion of Joe Lazarsky below.)

[27] From a personal interview with General Kemal Idris (20 July 2004). Footage available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-17 through 20).

> From the pro-Suharto sources – notably the CIA study of Gestapu published in 1968 – we learn how few troops were involved in the alleged Gestapu rebellion, and, more importantly, that in Jakarta as in Central Java the same battalions that supplied the "rebellious" companies were also used to "put the rebellion down." Two thirds of one paratroop brigade (which Suharto had inspected the previous day) plus one company and one platoon constituted the whole of Gestapu forces in Jakarta; all but one of these units were commanded by present or former Diponegoro Division officers close to Suharto; and the last was under an officer who obeyed Suharto's close political ally, Basuki Rachmat. (Scott 1985:245)

Benedict Anderson traces similar patronage between Suharto and the troops behind Gestapu:

> Almost all the key military participants in the September 30th Movement were, either currently or previously, close subordinates of Suharto: Lieutenant-Colonel Untung, Colonel Latief, and Brigadier-General Supardjo in Jakarta, and Colonel Suherman, Major Usman, and their associates at the Diponegoro Division's HQ in Semarang. When Untung got married in 1963, Suharto made a special trip to a small Central Javanese village to attend the ceremony. When Suharto's son Sigit was circumcised, Latief was invited to attend, and when Latief's son's turn came, the Suharto family were honoured guests. It is quite plain that these officers, who were not born yesterday, fully believed that Suharto was with them in their endeavour to rescue Sukarno from the conspiracy of the Council of Generals. Such trust is incomprehensible unless Suharto, directly or indirectly, gave his assent to their plans. It is therefore not at all surprising that Latief's answer to my question, 'How did you feel on the evening of October 1st?'—Suharto had full control of the capital by late afternoon—was, 'I felt I had been betrayed.' (Anderson 2000:9)[28]

Our research has produced the highest-ranking admission ever recorded of Suharto's role in Gestapu. In a 20 July 2004 interview, General Kemal Idris, widely regarded as one of Suharto's most zealous commanders of the extermination of the PKI, describes realising that Suharto was actually behind

[28] Both Anderson (2000) and Scott (1985) build here on Wertheim's 1970 analysis that Suharto possessed and exploited foreknowledge of the 30 September coup (Wertheim 1970). Anderson, in particular, lends his support to Wertheim on the basis of Col. Latief's defense before the Mahmilub, the extraordinary military tribunal set up both to mete out death sentences to PKI leaders accused of involvement in Gestapu, and, more importantly, to generate a historical record of confessions and testimony to support the army's version of the events (what soon would become the official history). Latief's defense was only de-classified after Suharto's 1998 resignation, and turned out to be a damning indictment of Suharto, but one about whose content Wertheim in 1970 could only speculate.

the September 30th coup, and thus a traitor.[29]

Predictably, within 24 hours of the "coup", the Revolutionary Council was crushed and power seized by forces allied to Suharto, then supreme commander of Kostrad – the army's strategic command. The murder of the generals was blamed on the PKI. Observers have argued that by excluding Sukarno from the "Revolutionary Council", Suharto was able to posture as a defender of Sukarno while actually seizing power from him (Scott 1985:242). The "gratuitous murder of the generals near the air force base where PKI youth had been trained allowed Suharto, in a Goebbels-like manoeuvre, to transfer the blame for the killings from the troops under his own command (whom he knew had carried out the kidnappings) to air force and PKI personnel" (ibid). Not surprisingly, Suharto's first two radio broadcasts reaffirmed the army's loyalty to Sukarno, and blamed the killing of the six generals on members of the PKI youth and women's groups, Pemuda Rakyat and Gerwani (ibid). The only evidence for this was the fact that PKI-affiliated organisations had previously held events at this airbase (ibid).

By October 4, 1965, forensic doctors reported to Suharto with detailed autopsies of each of the officers found in the lubang buaya. The reports, censored until 1999, revealed that the victims had all been shot at close range by military rifles (Anderson 2000:9). But on October 6, 1965, a seemingly well-rehearsed campaign in the mass media, by then completely under Suharto's control, was launched across Indonesia claiming that the generals' eyes were gouged out and penises cut off in a sadomasochistic orgy of violence perpetrated by Gerwani members (ibid). Women abducted and accused of being members of "the mutilation squad" were paraded before the world's media (see, for instance, NBC Special 1967). As Anderson notes, "These icy lies were planned to create an anti-communist hysteria in all strata of Indonesian society" (Anderson 2000:9) (Such lies continue to stage the PKI as a spectral threat, a latent threat that may rise again.)

[29] Vision Machine cassettes I3-17 through 20. It is worth noting that Kemal comes forward with this admission only after falling somewhat (though not dangerously) out of favour with President Suharto in the 1980s.

Regarding US involvement in the events, Scott (1985) notes that:

> [M]any Gestapu leaders [...] had been U.S.-trained. The Gestapu leader in Central Java, Suherman, had returned from training at Fort Leavenworth and Okinawa [...] in mid-August 1965. As Ruth McVey has observed, Suherman's acceptance for training at Fort Leavenworth "would mean that he had passed review by CIA observers." (Scott 1985:245)

In the months before October 1, Kostrad's (i.e., Suharto's) intelligence chief – but *not* the national intelligence chief –Ali Murtopo was pursuing a clandestine foreign policy unknown to President Sukarno and to Army Commander General Yani (Anderson 2000:10). Making use of CIA-backed PRRI-Permesta rebels now in exile in Singapore and Malaysia, Ali Murtopo forged secret relations with the leaders of two of Indonesia's enemies, Malaysia and Singapore, as well as the US (ibid).[30]

We recently uncovered new information linking the CIA to Suharto's shadow intelligence operation, and in particular to his intelligence chief Ali Murtopo. In a 14-15 June 2004 interview, deputy CIA station chief in Jakarta from 1964-66, Joe Lazarsky, explains that he knew that Nasution would be targeted six months before 30 September.[31] This is the very first time that foreknowledge of Gestapu has ever been admitted by a US official, and suggests a conspiracy with Suharto. Nasution, as the commander of the entire Indonesian armed forces, as the only named target, and as an alleged friend of the United States, would have been the appropriate person for the CIA to inform. Had he been informed, he surely would have taken measures to protect himself and would not have been asleep in his Jakarta home on the night of 30 September 1965 without having taken any extraordinary measures to ensure his family's security. But rather than inform Nasution, Lazarsky describes giving the information to Ali Murtopo, Suharto's intelligence chief. Suharto, then a mid-ranking general, was certainly not the

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[30] It is interesting to note that US-supported and funded Partai Sosialis Indonesia chief Sumitro was exiled to Singapore for his role as intellectual leader of the PRRI-Permesta rebellion. A traitor, he returned to Indonesia to become minister of trade immediately following Suharto's assumption of the presidency. His son later went on to marry Suharto's daughter and became commander of Indonesian troops in East Timor. For a history of Sumitro and his relations with the US, see Ransom (1975:93-116).

[31] Filmed interview shot by Christine Cynn following tape-recorded telephone conversations recorded by myself in May 2004. Both are available upon request.

"appropriate" person for the CIA to inform, and raises real questions about whether the CIA had clandestine plans with Suharto-Murtopo that bypassed Nasution.[32]

Nearly 20 years before this revelation, Scott (1985:243) suggests that the US might not have considered Nasution the reliable figure they claimed publicly: "[B]y 1961 CIA operatives had become disillusioned with Nasution as a reliable asset, because of his 'consistent record of yielding to Sukarno on several major counts.'" Scott also notes that "relations between Suharto and Nasution were also cool, since Nasution, after investigating Suharto on corruption charges in 1959, had transferred him from his command" (ibid).

Our new information from Lazarsky and Kemal Idris may indeed suggest a US-Suharto conspiracy, but much remains unknown, and probably will always remain so.

The subsequent political events in Jakarta leading to Suharto's assumption of the presidency are not contentious and are too well-known to be traced in detail here; the current research offers no new revelations in this area. Still, the following summary may be useful: Suharto moved swiftly against the PKI, and assumed emergency control of the country. Sukarno was sidelined as many of his cabinet members were either arrested or executed. Kangaroo courts called Mahmilub (*Mahkaman Militer Luar Biasa,* or extraordinary military tribunals) were set up to pass out death sentences to party cadres. Finally, on 11 March 1966, Sukarno was forced to sign a statement – the Supersemar (*Surat Perintah Sebelas Maret,* or 11 March instructional letter) – making Suharto acting president. Sukarno was

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[32] In a 16 April 2004 email to the author, Anderson suggests other possible CIA-Murtopo collaborations, noting

> the peculiar edition of the PKI newspaper Harian Rakjat which supposedly appeared on the morning of Oct 2, well after the coup failed. I've long had the feeling that this was a clever forgery. Virtually all the content is, as usual in a Saturday edition, general news not attached to any specific date, so could have been worked up by a CIA-Murtopo team in advance. Then insert the short statement of [communist] Party support for the G30S [Gestapu]. I've talked to several old HR [Harian Rakjat] hands and all deny any knowledge of the Oct 2 edition.

almost immediately thereafter placed under house arrest where, under deteriorating health, he ultimately died. Suharto assumed the presidency in 1967 upon the expiry of his mandate as acting president.

Essential to Suharto's successful manoeuvring, and surely demanding attention in its own right, was the genocide that swept Indonesia between October 1965 and April 1966. Almost all scholarship on the rise of the New Order focuses on political machinations in Jakarta. This in itself is a symptom of the effectiveness of the erasure from standard histories of the actual genocide, a catastrophe without which the political events at the centre would be impossible. In Rwanda, there was also a mysterious coup d'état before the 1994 genocide – the President's plane was shot down in suspicious circumstances.[33] It would be as if the lion's share of post-1994 scholarship on Rwanda focused almost exclusively on who shot down the plane, rather than examining the subsequent genocide and, in particular, how it was carried out. Along with a very few important writings, notably Robinson (1995), Cribb (1990), Rochijat (1985), Sulistyo (1997), Sudjatmiko (1992), Budiardjo (1991), Kadane (1990), and an oral history of the massacres recently commissioned by Jakarta's Lontar Foundation, our research constitutes certainly the most thorough investigation of the massacres in Sumatra, and adds significantly to our limited understanding of how the massacres were conducted nationally.

§ 1.5 The Genocide

Within several days of October 1, and in a response that appears to have been remarkably well rehearsed, General Suharto instigated a series of nationwide purges to consolidate his power.

The CIA provided radio equipment and arms; the MI6 provided black propaganda; the US military provided training and cash; the US State Department provided death lists, and the Agency for International Development

[33] The parallels with the coup triggering the Indonesian genocide are numerous: the Hutu president's plane was probably shot down by the same Hutu extremists who commanded the genocide, and who justified it by blaming Tutsi rebels for killing their president. See, for instance, Gourevitch (1999).

provided support for "youth groups" that were groomed to become death squads.[34]

With this assistance, General Suharto engineered and set in motion a killing machine whose chain of command reached into every region and every village, murdering alleged communists, trade unionists, organised peasants, members of the women's movement, and anybody else the army considered a threat. The campaign was deliberately organised so as to implicate the "masses": much of the killing, though under the supervision of the army, was actually carried out by paramilitary branches of political groups in competition with the PKI and affiliated organisations. As pro-Suharto, U.S. diplomat Paul F. Gardner observes, "[Suharto] did not wish to involve the army directly... he preferred instead [quoting Suharto], 'to assist the people to protect themselves and to cleanse their individual areas of this evil seed'" (Gardner 1997:229).

There is extremely limited information about how this occurred, though it is widely agreed that the areas with the most killing were in Central and East Java, Bali and North Sumatra (Anderson 2000, Cribb 1990). Our information from North Sumatra is largely consistent with Pipit Rochijat's memoir of the massacres in the East Javanese plantation region of Kediri (Rochijat 1985). Essentially, anti-communist youth groups were swiftly activated by army command to form death squads tooled for the destruction of the communists. In North Sumatra, these were called Komando Aksi.

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[34] For the CIA, State Department, and U.S. Defense Department's role, see, especially FRUS (2001:Docs 142-205) Regarding death lists, see, especially, FRUS (2001:Doc 185), along with the research of journalist Kathy Kadane. On May 21, 1990 Kathy Kadane, working for States News Service, published in *The Washington Post* "U.S. Officials' Lists Aided Indonesian Bloodbath in '60s" See also Michael Wines, "C.I.A. Tie Asserted in Indonesia Purge", in *The New York Times*, July 12, 1990. Wines's article contained criticism of Kadane's research by several of the U.S. officials whom Kadane had interviewed. In response to the *Times*, States News Service distributed a 20-page memorandum to newspaper editors defending the accuracy of Kathy Kadane's work and including excerpts from the interviews that Kadane had made with the top three U.S. Embassy officials in 1965: Ambassador Marshall Green; Deputy Chief of Mission Jack Lydman; and political section chief Edward Masters.

Apparently, this happened very fast. According to several North Sumatran death squad commanders,[35] even in a remote rural area on an outer island, by 7 October, the local military command had already ordered anti-communist youth groups to unite and form death squads. This would never have been possible had the military not perfected its "territorial command" structure in the years leading up to the coup. This structure transformed the Indonesian army into a giant octopus, with tentacles extending from Jakarta into every province, regency, district and village. This system, created, in part, with US support and training, was designed as the infrastructure for the army's counterinsurgency function – i.e., its "inevitable showdown with the burgeoning PKI" (See note 17, above, and Jones 1971:324).

Komando Aksi leaders whom we have filmed – specifically, Galang district commander Arsan Nasution, Labuhan Batu Regency commander Jamal Hasibuan and Medan city commander Soedirman – admit to receiving guns directly from the army. Like the *autodefensa* of Colombia, the Provincial Reconnaissance Units and 'counter-terror' teams set up by the Phoenix Program in Vietnam,[36] Komando Aksi provided local intelligence as to whom should be targeted, and they also performed abductions and arrests. When victims attempted to flee, or when authorisation was given in advance by the army, they would murder victims in local wells or in the plantations. The vast majority of victims were turned over to the army for processing at one of many TPU, or political prisons. While thousands became long-term political prisoners and, later, slave labour for the plantations, many were only held for a period of days

[35] Particularly, we refer here to the meticulous records kept by Arsan Lubis, commander of Komando Aksi death squads in the rural Galang district, Serdang-Bedagai Regency, in the North Sumatran plantation belt. He has provided much testimony, re-enactment, and a memoir which he is currently working with us to adapt into a film. One might expect Komando Aksi to have formed even earlier in urban areas, where word may be presumed to get around more quickly. In fact, Komando Aksi veterans from the North Sumatran capital of Medan describe being called to a meeting with the former commander of the North Sumatran military region (*Komando Daerah Militer,* or KODAM) General Manaf Lubis and ordered to merge their student and youth groups into a single action command (komando aksi) around the same date as that mentioned in Arsan's memoir. The fact that the army was already prepared to launch Komando Aksi in the countryside at the same time as in urban areas seems to indicate a high degree of coordination and advanced planning – confirmed by Arsan and other death squad members' claim that they were warned several weeks in advance that something was about to happen.

[36] For detailed descriptions of similar death squads in Vietnam, see Valentine (1990).

to months, and then returned to the death squads as part of a "quota" to be dispatched *en masse* in mass graves or along the banks of the larger and faster flowing rivers.

US interest in the massacres was keen. Joe Lazarsky describes meeting with Ali Murtopo to check names of PKI cadres off death lists (Kadane 1990 and Kadane 2002); US State Department political analyst Robert Martens, who worked at the Jakarta embassy compiling lists of thousands of PKI members to be captured or killed, is quoted as saying, "I may have blood on my hands, but sometimes that's not a bad thing" (Kadane 1990); aerogrammes containing names of people killed were sent from the Embassy to Washington (FRUS 2001:Doc 185). William Colby, then director of the CIA's East Asia division, and later head of the CIA, played a shadowy role throughout, arranging weapons deliveries, communications equipment, and other supplies code-named "medicines" (Prados 2003:144-57; FRUS 2001:Docs 166, 169, 171, 172, 173, 181, 187). A spectral presence, William Colby visited Jakarta from Saigon at the height of the killings, sleeping on the sofa in U.S. Ambassador Marshall Green's office (Prados 2003:153). Colby is said to have stayed up nights listening in on the radio system supplied by the US to the Indonesian army to help coordinate the massacres, monitoring the progress of the US-trained death squads as they worked their way down death lists provided by, in part, the US.[37]

The massacres swept the archipelago for roughly six months, constituting one of the largest and most systematic genocides of the twentieth century. Western governments, covertly and deeply involved, made no official protest, made little

[37] The story of Colby staying up nights listening to radio reports of the killings comes from a 25 July 2001 telephone interview with Kathy Kadane (recorded with extensive notes), who had interviewed Colby in relation to the US's provision of death lists containing the names of thousands of PKI cadres to be captured or executed. She did not have Colby's permission to share the transcript of his interview, and Colby himself died in 1996. When I described the scenario on 1 August 2003 to Colby biographer John Prados, who documented Colby's post-coup visit to Jakarta, he agreed that Kadane's story is "credible" (conversation likewise recorded with extensive notes). Regarding the death lists, see Kadane (1990), Wines (1990), and FRUS (2001:Doc 185). Regarding the US's provision of a radio system, see FRUS (2001:Docs 173, 187). See also Prados (2003:154). Further interviews conducted in April, May and June 2004 with Joe Lazarsky and US Embassy Political Officer Robert Martens – the man primarily responsible for drawing up the death lists – more or less confirm the print sources. (Recorded telephone interviews with Lazarsky and Martens are available upon request, as is video cassettes of Joe Lazarsky's interview with Vision Machine collaborator Christine Cynn.)

public mention of the slaughter, save the odd encouraging message of support.[38] The western press was equally mute.[39] Since, the events have been all but erased from official histories; no national or international juridical process has been launched, no investigation, no trials.[40]

No trials, no memorials, no days of public morning for the victims of the massacres. Martyrs were made of the "seven murdered generals [sic]",[41] however; their memorialisation served at once to justify, and mask the memory of, the massacres. Tales of ritualistic savagery inflicted on the generals were circulated widely; these tales of savagery served to conjure an overwhelming and spectral threat facing the nation – the "evil seed" as Suharto called it. In the face of this threat, the massacres were not murders, they were at once justice, self-defence, and victory. In any case, although North Sumatran Kostrad director Kemal Idris describes asking plantation companies for lists of union members to arrest, he goes on to reassure us that, "The Indonesian army did not kill anybody."

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[38] See Scott (1985), Pilger (2001) and Winters (1996).

[39] Mute perhaps on the massacres, but not on the Suharto victory. A Time magazine headline describes the coup as "The West's Best News in Asia". The US News and World Report ran the headline, "Indonesia: Hope . . . where there was once none". As noted above, The New York Times ran "A gleam of light in Asia".

[40] For continued analysis of impunity in Indonesia, and, particularly, how every attempt to create a tribunal for 1965 is stymied by the military, see Tapol Bulletin, online at www.tapol.org.

[41] In fact, only six generals were killed because Nasution escaped. Nevertheless, "seven murdered generals" has become a cliché naturalised by the sheer number of times it has been repeated in order to justify the genocide that these murders catalysed.

§ 1.6 Lubang Buaya – A History of Holes

> *Lubang Buaya* (Crocodile Hole) was the name for the area, within the Halim Perdanakusumah Air Force Base Perimeter [Jakarta], where the bodies of the assassinated generals were disposed of (dumped down a disused well). In 1965-66 a successful psychological warfare campaign was launched by the army to persuade anti-communist notables and political leaders that the PKI had secretly prepared thousands of comparable "holes" for their burial after execution.
>
> Benedict Anderson[42]

This psychological warfare campaign was part of a systematic extermination programme in which anywhere between 100,000 and 2,000,000 people were murdered.[43] These figures are impossible: on the one hand, they are radically deflated and kept from circulation (so as to shield the operation from the condemnation of the "international community of conscience"), and, on the other hand, higher figures, even inflated figures, are deliberately allowed to circulate threateningly.[44]

Such divergent estimates render attempts to count the dead, to recount their history, and to hold to account the murderers, fraught with terrible uncertainty. Yet this uncertainty is not merely terrible, it is an instrument of terror – the incalculability of the dead is also a calculated death threat. That is to say, the trail of noughts in these tallies are more precisely ciphers, in that they mark both mass

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[42] See Anderson (1985).

[43] See also Anderson (2000:8) for estimates as high as over 2 million. The CIA (1965) cites a figure of 100,000 in their own internal – but not secret – report, *Indonesia 1965: The Coup that Backfired.* The CIA obviously has an interest in under-estimating the number of dead. Cribb (1990) tentatively cites 500,000 dead.

[44] So, for instance, though the *systematic* terror of the massacres was down played for an international public, that very terror was deliberately conjured by the CIA six years later, when, going after Allende, they sent key figures on the left and the ultra-conservative right alike, cards, each day for a month, reading "Djakarta se acera." – Jakarta is coming. See Scott (1985:239-264) and Freed and Landis (1980:104-5). Here, the CIA invokes that which it did and denied as a spectre; or rather, as a spectral *refractor*, through which left and right are rendered as spectral but lethal threats to each other. The massacres are deliberately produced as spectral the better to serve as an instrument of terror . And thus word of the systematic terror must be excluded from official history, but kept in alive in a liminal, or covert, circuit of discourse. Thus terror is produced as spectre. See, also, Mira (1985).

graves and empty graves – graves waiting to be filled. They are threatening placeholders, as were the rumoured "crocodile holes" that supposedly awaited the anti-communist notables and political leaders.

A history of the massacres would be a string of such holes, and the ciphers in the tallies of the dead form an abysmal archipelago, a network of absences and silences haunted by whispers, and by a sometimes spectral, sometimes spectacular, violence. This history itself does not seek merely to deny or hide its violence, but to allow it to circulate as a haunting force that suddenly from time to time flares up in an awesome display of violence.[45] And thus it is a *spectral history*, insofar as the massacres themselves have been almost entirely excluded from public discussion, allowing their memory to hover as an omnipresent absence, haunting and terrifying largely because it remains unacknowledged.

If, in the writings about film and killing that follows, the language of ghosts, spectres and spectrality becomes almost too literal, this is doubtless a response to, and a working through, the language with which the dead – and their continued presence in old wells and unmarked graves – are remembered and narrated in North Sumatra. In the villages of Serdang-Bedagai Regency where the films are being made, extermination and the dead are inevitably thought through the idiom of ghosts, and explored through spirit possession (kemasukkan) and the calling of ghosts through a spirit medium (panggil roh). The prominence of spectrality and ghosts, as discursive register, evidences the hold exerted by the dead on the speech of the living. The language of ghosts figures the spectral not merely as a discursive construction but as a populated realm, and it is precisely this fact that allows us, in this writing, to trace the interaction between the massacres as spectre, on the one hand, and the quotidian, on the other; between *spectral forces* and actual forces; between the not-quite

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[45] From Vision Machine interviews with families of victims, the trauma of this spectral threat is always linked to the fear that the killings could happen again. "Kami masih trauma. Jangan sampai terulang lagi" (We still feel trauma. Let's hope it doesn't happen again.) Unlike in the psychological discourse, Indonesian trauma is dangerous even to admit, spectral and terrifying, because it is nothing other than the threat that the massacre will return, the spectral power of death conjured up in a séance of violence by a spectral state power.

present presence of a spectral past that continues to circulate as an instrument of terror, conjured through historical narratives and official forms of remembrance, on the one hand, and everyday life in the plantation belt, on the other.

Borrowing the register of ghosts from the project's participants in North Sumatra, "spectres", "spectrality" and "ghosts" become tropes in a theoretical apparatus for articulating a film practice and the history it excavates and performs. *Spectrality*, throughout, will refer to a general *force*, often a force of terror, that exerts its hold through its very miasmic incoherence. The spectral, as the name suggests, is conjured by historical narratives and rituals performing the official history that constitute elements of the past – including the massacres themselves – as neither present nor absent, allowing them, like rumour or ghost story, to insinuate themselves into the very fabric of everyday life, haunting the available spaces of social interaction, particularly between ordinary villagers and the state. A spectral force is pervasive, its source resists identification or location. *Ghosts*, by contrast, are spectres localised into persons, given identities, specific histories within particular families, and thus inserted into the weave of local familial and social relations. Unlike the spectral, ghosts are condensed and can be called, addressed, interrogated, cajoled, insulted and honoured in a whole series of performances that may comprise an apparatus of remembrance, memorialisation, mourning, and working through. Ghosts, as familiar localisations of the spectral that can be (precisely) co-ordinated, are potentially subversive, a power to counter the spectral force of the state.

Ghosts and spectrality are thus simultaneously: the way in which the mystical allure of power is discussed by participants, collaborators, and killers in the film; a register for articulating a relationship with the dead, with the past, and its hold on the present (not unlike Benjamin's concept of weak messianism); and a language for thinking through the very real, man-made, but ultimately mystical attractions of terror, trauma and power in a field of violence and power that seems to resist being simply demystified as the realm of ideology.

Chapter 2 – The Film Practice in the Plantation Belt

§ 2.1 Snake River

At the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., there is an anonymous and untitled folio of notes recording some of what little is publicly known of the 1965-1966 Indonesian genocide. A Sumatran massacre of 10,500 people is recorded in a typical entry as follows:

> CARD NO: 20 143
> DATE: NO DATE
> INDIVIDUAL: N. Sumatra
> ITEM: From North Sumatra came a report of the slaying of 10,500 prisoners, who had been arrested for PKI activities. Their bodies were thrown into the Sungai Ular [river].

The Sungai Ular, or Snake River, is a river distinguished only by its size, and relatively swift flow. It was for this reason that it was chosen as an execution site – unlike slower, smaller rivers, the Sungai Ular could be relied upon to carry the dead out to sea.[46]

Before the river meets the sea, it passes under the trans-Sumatran highway at Perbaungan, about 30 miles southeast of Medan, North Sumatra's capital city. Within sight of a bridge where the highway spans the river is one of the clearings in the plantation belt where the Sungai Ular was loaded with its nightly freight of bodies.

It is in this region that for the past three years Vision Machine Film Project, a collective of filmmakers, theorists and activists, has been working *collaboratively* with a community of Indonesian ex-political prisoners, former bonded plantation workers, and union activists (all based in North Sumatra), and in various *infiltrative* modes with former leaders of paramilitary death squads in

[46] Rivers like the Sungai Brantas, flowing from Kediri through Surabaya, in East Java, were choked. See Rochijat (1985), Cribb (1990), Hilton (2002) and Scott (1998). Indeed, at times the spectacle of a river choked with bodies appears to have been an intended consequence. As described below, there appears to have been training on various ways to display those dispatched under the cover of darkness – tying bodies to bamboo rafts, for instance, and literally flagging the rafts.

the same region. The work is a research into and performance of the region's history of terror.

§ 2.2 *The Globalisation Tapes*

Vision Machine's first Indonesia project was produced in 2001-2002, 10 miles southeast of where the Sungai Ular passes Perbaungan. There lies Belgian plantation giant Societé Financière's Bangun Bandar oil palm estate. One of the oldest palm oil plantations in the world, it was here that we produced *The Globalisation Tapes* in collaboration with a fledgling plantation workers' union, Serbuk, the Independent Plantation Workers' Union of Sumatra. The product of a collective production method, the 70-minute documentary was largely shot, written, and edited by members of Serbuk, who sought to explore their own forbidden history through film, and use it as a case study through which they could study the workings of contemporary corporate globalisation, from its roots in colonialism to the present. Through first-hand accounts, improvised interventions, collective debate and archival collage, *The Globalisation Tapes* details the role of militarism and repression in building the 'global economy', and explores the relationships between trade, third-world debt, and international institutions like the IMF and the World Trade Organization. The film is an account of how these institutions shape and enforce the corporate world order (and its 'systems of chaos').

The Globalisation Tapes grew out of three surprisingly diverse and separate agendas: ours as filmmakers, an international agricultural workers' union's, and Serbuk's.

I rehearse here our own ambition as filmmakers to contextualize the collaboration and the practice as a whole. From 1998 to 2000, Christine Cynn and I had been developing a practice as fiction filmmakers seeking to combine documentary and fiction to explore the relationship between a mythic notion of progress and the constitutive violence excluded by those myths. With both modest commissions and working "on spec", Cynn and I wrote several screenplays that sought to trouble narratives of mythic social success by inter-

cutting them with documentary material that would gesture to the violence and disaster constitutive of the myth in the first place. This effort culminated in a screenplay for a musical, *The Secret of Eternal Youth,* tracing the meteoric rise of a child star who, lured by power and glamour, runs off with the commander of a mercenary army and proceeds to destroy herself, her family, and ultimately much of the world. By this point, we had written several other screenplays, and we were particularly interested in the relationships between the violence of colonialism, economic and military exploitation, on the one hand, and commodity fetishism, consumerism and the lure of fame, on the other. *The Secret of Eternal Youth* sought to weave fictional characters with non-actors, documentary vignettes and archival footage to locate its central narrative in a mythic space, beyond the status of either fiction or non-fiction. The work owed much to films like Godard's *Weekend* (1967) and *Pierrot le Fou* (1965), Lindsay Anderson's *O Lucky Man* (1973), and Dusan Makavejev's *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971), *Sweet Movie* (1974), *Innocence Unprotected* (1968). (Makavejev had been both teacher and mentor when we were undergraduate film students in the United States.)

The script was ambitious and, probably, completely at odds with the original commission of a family drama in the British realist genre. The commissioner asked us, essentially, how we proposed to produce, on a low budget, a script that calls for numerous tap dance numbers, a musical scene following a plane crash in the middle of the ocean, a pop concert, and a nuclear explosion on the Arctic ice cap. Naturally, if somewhat belatedly, this question led us to *imagine* the production process, with actors faithfully following our script, and we realized the many methods that may loosely be classified as "fiction film production" were ill-suited to a project seeking to locate the fictional *within* the weave of social reality, and thereby indict reality itself as formed by the operative performance of the fictive. We thus decided to abandon traditional fiction film production, and develop a production method that would actually *fuse* fiction and documentary. This method would involve collaborating with non-actors in a collaborative workshop to stage and produce filmed infiltrations into social space. That is, we would *stage and enact* fictions in real-life situations, infiltrating social reality in an attempt to catalyse new and revealing interactions,

and even to *make fictional narratives actually happen.* The final film would be a document of such infiltrations, and often, surely, a catalogue of failures generated as part and parcel of the "making of". For *The Secret of Eternal Youth,* we thus would look for an actual child who, understanding the improbability of the endeavour, would work with us to become an actual star.

The idea was to insert the fictive within the horizon of "reality", eschewing fiction narrative as the expressive vehicle of the writer-director, but rather exploring the ways in which people conspire with the apparatus of filmmaking to *enact* their own stories and desires within social reality. The method would share much, epistemologically, with films like Jean Rouch's *Jaguar* (1967), *La Pyramide Humaine* (1960), *Moi Un Noir* (1958), *Petit à Petit* (1971) and *Les Maîtres Fous* (1955), Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Mysterious Object at Noon* (2002), Abbas Kiarostami's *Close Up* (1990), SArsana Makhmalbaf's *The Apple* (1998), Mohsen Makhmalbaf's *Salam Cinema* (1995) – and, of course, reality TV.[47]

We realized that the method would take several projects to develop. We would have to explore in its complex actuality the actual formations of social violence the project seeks to excavate; and, as difficult, we would have to develop a collective production method based on good collaborations, trust, solidarity, and a process of wild collective imagination. It was at this point that we abandoned the film industry as such, and began a series of experiments with a film group in the East End (called Saltfish), producing several sketches, both short and long, including *Disaster Recovery Plan* (25 mins, 2002), *The Decline of Industry* (60 mins, 1998-present), and *Several Consequences of the Decline of Industry in the Industrialised World* (70 mins, 2005).

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[47] It is with the latter in mind that we set up the phantom television empire, an internet based reality TV station, www.generalbroadcasting.tv. General Broadcasting has simultaneously been a facade, an identity, and a vehicle for certain infiltrative productions, such as luring CIA officers to adapt their lives into a "reality soap opera", or to pitch a reality TV show celebrating the life of Ronald Reagan, made with the Young Americans for Freedom at the Ronald Reagan Ranch, in collaboration with the Ronald Reagan Heritage Society.

Working with Saltfish, we started to doubt the relevance of the independent cinema, "art house", and gallery circuit as distribution platform. We began to consider new methods of distribution that would actually *matter* to our collaborators. We began to consider the video-on-demand potential of the internet. As we learned about other activist film and video projects that had used collective production methods, we discovered models in activist film and video distribution networks (especially George Stoney's Challenge for Change project, but also the Independent Media Centres that sprung up around the world since 1999).

The Globalisation Tapes was born shortly after we had started Saltfish and were conducting experiments in our new production method. We were called by a friend working as a labour educator at the International Union of Food and Agricultural Workers (IUF). She was interested in the methods we were developing, and wondered if they might be useful producing a film for an IUF labour education programme designed to educate rank-and-file food and agricultural workers around the world about the nature of corporate-driven globalisation. The hope was that workers would study globalisation together, and then, working with other unions in their economic supply chain, research the impact of globalisation on their own workplace and economic sector, empowering them to design strategies for collective action that would begin to help workers take control of the globalisation process, initially within their respective supply chain.[48] If the project sounds strikingly ambitious, the IUF's scope seemed strikingly large, with 125 million members in food and agricultural workers' unions around the world. We were told that the education program would reach 25 million workers, with the film translated into ten languages.

The idea for the film was to work collaboratively with a core group of between 10-15 members of a local union whose history was, in some basic way, shaped

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[48] For relevant work on globalisation that inspired the content of the labour education program, see Steiglitz (2002), Brecher, Costello and Smith (2002), Klein (2001) and Chossudovsky (1997). The most relevant historical ethnography of economic globalisation and colonialism in the Indonesian plantation belt is surely Ann Laura Stoler (1985) *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870-1979.* It cannot be overemphasised the degree to which Stoler's account influenced the perspectives and possibilities of our project.

by dynamics of colonialism and neo-colonial violence in an export-oriented economy at the heart of corporate globalisation. We would travel from England to a union community, where we would train people in the basics of film production. Then, together, we would study the economics of globalisation, and use film as a research tool for investigating the workings of globalisation in their community, work place, and industry. I say "together" because we, too, knew little about globalisation, nothing about the economics and history of the industry in question. The film would be a document of this learning process, incorporating discussion, as well as early experiments in infiltration and fictive interventions into reality as a means of researching and enacting core dynamics of the globalisation process. As such, the film would serve as an example of a model to be repeated by similar unions around the world, activating hundreds of unions to begin a research process that would be coordinated by IUF and local union infrastructure and, ultimately, harmonised into a coherent activist strategy to claim some of the power seized by corporations through the globalising process.[49] The film, broken into three parts, was to be shown over the course of a three day labour education workshop, with screenings followed by discussion relating the content of the film back to the lives and workplaces of the film's audience.

The project seemed like a remarkable opportunity to develop a collective production method that might spawn a long-term collaboration with a community defined by precisely the issues of global violence that had captured our imaginations during the writing of *The Secret of Eternal Youth.* Moreover, it was an opportunity to research these issues in collaboration with those who had directly experienced them, and thus to begin to trace their inevitable *specificity*, albeit within a global pattern. Finally, it allowed us to research alternative forms of distribution, and discover how this might yield new contexts for making meaning with moving image, and therefore new forms of cinema.

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[49] Particular emphasis would be on lobbying for capital controls and tariffs that would halt to so-called "race to the bottom", predicated as it is on global competition and capital mobility which encourages "capital flight". See especially Winters (1996).

Obviously, the promised audience of 25 million people was far larger than we could ever hope for in art houses and galleries, and even larger than we could hope for from a blockbuster. While we were not immune to the vanity of having our work seen and *discussed* by such an enormous audience, we were most excited by the promise that our work might *do* work – that is, generate *effects.* We were less concerned with audience's size than its demographic, the experiment of taking our project beyond the art institutions and into a context where its social *commitments* might generate commensurate social effects. Surely, there remains here the filmmaker's desire for *influence,* but the form of the labour education program – discussion leading to further research and then to collective action – ensures that our film would serve not so much as influence but as catalyst.

Of all the regional and national branches of IUF, it was IUF Indonesia that was most enthusiastic about hosting our project. They suggested we make the film with Serbuk, in the plantation villages of Deli-Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. Serbuk, for its part, sought to use film as a way of building an international solidarity network, educating its members, producing educational materials that might be effective in communities with low literacy levels, and exploring and exposing the historical circumstances that have made their struggle to build a trade union so very difficult.

Serbuk was founded in 1999, when, following Suharto's resignation, independent trade unions were once again legalised in Indonesia. Still, their organising effort was an uphill battle, not least because all workers were already and automatically members of SPSI, the "yellow union" formed by plantation management and the military. More profoundly, workers tended to be frightened of joining a union, since the fate of the last union to struggle for workers' rights in the region still lurked terrifyingly in the wings. The paralysing hold of state terror on the plantation workers was something Serbuk sought to address through the film, providing a model of activist bravery in confronting the spectre of the past, and, by launching an explicit discussion about the reasons plantation workers are too afraid to unionise, hopefully creating a space for overcoming these obstacles.

We were aware, from the beginning, that we would be guests in another community for half a year, and that the project would be fraught with issues inseparable from our coming from far away, from elsewhere, to catalyse the production of a film. Moreover, the production would have effects not just globally, but, above all, in the community where the film was made, a community about which we knew very little before we began. It was for this reason that, from the beginning, the discussion, argument and analysis about globalisation was tied into a discussion and argument about how to produce a film that was only thinkable as a product of global structures and, by making use of the IUF's distribution infrastructure, attempted a modest infiltration into these structures, in a gesture of what Brecher, Costello and Smith (2002) have called "globalization from below".

The production process was thus conceived as an exchange, as we brought dozens of books, articles and films from England and had them translated into Bahasa Indonesia. We worked with activists affiliated to the IUF who brought what limited material was available from Java regarding the excavation of Suharto's crimes following his 1998 resignation. We brought a computer so the film might be edited, and worked with a Jakarta-based activist film cooperative called Offstream to bring Indonesian-speaking editors who could train Serbuk members both in editing and computer literacy.

Essential to the process was a dialogue, through filmmaking, with other films that explored similar issues. Partly this was an attempt to expose the Serbuk filmmakers to various forms of documentary and essay filmmaking, to look at shots, framing, editing, rhythms, production techniques and economies. In other words, it was a way of engaging critical issues about *how* our film was made and, inseparable from this, how it would *work*, in relation to the process of producing moving images, collectively discussing their differential resonances, devising the next shoot on the basis of the previous, and bringing together resulting footage to produce meanings and open new discursive spaces. The following description of the films we screened, their relevance, and the Indonesian filmmakers' response

constitutes in a very literal sense the critical context in which *The Globalisation Tapes* was produced.

To problematise our own project, we screened Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville's *Ici et Ailleurs* (1976), a meditation about coming from one place and making a film in another, in another language, for – or even on behalf of – another's political struggle, and the limits and possibilities that holds for politics, language, the production of meaning and, thus, understanding and solidarity. Originally filmed in Palestine in 1970, and then in Paris in the early 1970s, *Ici et Ailleurs* is both retrospective and critique of the Dziga Vertov group's abandoned 1970 documentary made for the PLO, *Jusque à la Victoire: Méthode de Pensée et Travail de la Révolution Palestinienne. Ici et Ailleurs* was translated and provided both a context and material for a debate for discussing the political and epistemological limits of international collaborative activist filmmaking. Discussions about its rich and evocative voice over led to the writing of a poetic meditation on palm oil, money, energy, calories, the value of human life, and the 1965 massacres. Entitled *Bodies and Somebodies* in English, and *Tubuh dan Penubuhan* in Indonesian, the text is the product of a collaboration between Eddraman Siregar and myself, written over three months, and is a meditation on filmmaking and its apparatus, images of genocide and the role they play, the lack of images, the impossibility of such images, plantation work, and the unspoken violence of state terror.

We watched Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's *Hour of the Furnaces – Neo-colonialism and Violence* (1968). This powerful, rhetorical essay about colonial and neocolonial violence in Argentina articulates through bitterly ironic and often shockingly beautiful montage the very same issues of global violence, colonialism and resistance that *The Globalisation Tapes* sought to put forward with similar techniques. But *Hour of the Furnaces* was also screened as a film made, like *The Globalisation Tapes,* during a moment of danger, under the arbitrary conditions of state terror. As with Alvarez's reels, our tapes had to be hidden, smuggled from house to house whenever the police threatened to visit. And just as the reels of *Hour of the Furnaces* were smuggled to secret screenings at land reform and trade union meetings, occasionally provoking spontaneous

protests, so too has *The Globalisation Tapes* had its most profound life within the Sumatran plantation belt. Serbuk has taken the film from village to village as they struggle to expand their union, screening it to thousands of plantation workers in late night gatherings behind closed doors, as a tool both to provoke discussion and give courage to workers who might otherwise be afraid to join a union.

Patricio Guzman's *The Battle of Chile* (1976), a compilation of footage tracing the Allende regime, the subsequent right-wing backlash, and the Pinochet coup, was also an artefact of a terrible moment in history, so much so that its first part ends with the cameraman being shot and the camera falling to the ground. As importantly, *The Battle of Chile* provides an encyclopaedic analysis of Allende's policies as an implementation of a vision of social and economic justice that serves as an inspiring alternative to the terrible regime that replaced it. Moreover, the film's blow-by-blow account of the Pinochet coup is, ironically, the very best record available of the *Suharto coup*: since no account exists of the latter, and since even the CIA alluded to similarities with 1965 Jakarta when they worked with the Chilean generals to mastermind the Pinochet coup, we may use the Pinochet coup as a veritable record of what might have happened in the far more watertight – and bloody – Suharto putsch.

Finally, Kidlat Tahimik's *Perfumed Nightmare* (1983) was screened several times as an example of a film that, like Rouch's *Petit-a-Petit* (1971), was made for very little money and managed to knit a very local village economy in the Philippines into a phantasmagoric story tracing the rhizomic reach of American culture and politics, centring on a Filipino villager, Kidlat Tahimik himself, who starts his own chapter of the Werner Von Braun fan club, and is ultimately taken away to Paris by an American entrepreneur to help run his bubble gum business. The film's euphoric and wild imaginary embraces everything from the lunar landing to Kissinger speeches to the myth of a white buffalo to the American colonisation of the Philippines. The film is, essentially, the artefact of a radical and anarchic imagination, endowed with what Gilles Deleuze terms in his writings on Rouch as "the power of the false" (Deleuze 2000:126-155). In its appropriation of Kissinger speeches, Voice of America broadcasts, archivals of

dead presidents, the film is a testament to imagination *as force*, bearing a force of resistance by re-framing images of power to produce counter-images, playful and often wild conjurations capable of forging a solidarity (if only that of Kidlat Tahimik, his cast and the audience) that does not simply challenge power, but also reveals the absurdity and vanity of existing regimes of power – a prerequisite for summoning the courage to resist. And perhaps this was its primary attraction, because the film was the favourite of all the films we screened: after all, in North Sumatra, the problem was precisely a problem of imagination fettered by terror, haunted to the point of paralysis, and Kidlat Tahimik's funny, irreverent and magical film was somehow a counter-performance, a counter-conjuration.

That, and the fact that Kidlat Tahimik's Philippines so resembled North Sumatra. Thus could audiences imagine his film as *their* film, just as they hope their audience to imagined *The Globalisation Tapes.* In a sense, then, the very fact that we brought *Perfumed Nightmare* to the village of Rambutan demonstrated and allegorised the closing of a circuit that they hoped their own film might make, thus making the whole impossible process seem, somehow, achievable.

I say "impossible" because the critical issues and potential raised by the methods sketched above should have demanded years of attention, just as each of the films we screened took years to produce and edit. The discussions were beyond challenges of translation: we sought to teach filmmaking, learn about globalisation, make a film, excavate a forbidden past, analyse and critique a terrifying set of historical narratives, create a space for a wildly creative and imaginative collaboration inspired by work like *Perfumed Nightmare*, and launch serious debates about the context of our project as a cultural and political intervention. We attempted to do this *in translation,* between English, Indonesian and Javanese – and we had three months. From the time we began shooting to the date the IUF demanded a rough cut, we had three months, and the project is, simply, what it is, as a result. But the film is one that begets other films, inaugurating a cinematic excavation of a history that continues today, and that forms the subject not just of *The Globalisation Tapes* and this thesis, but of a whole series of films still in production.

§ 2.3 *The Globalisation Tapes* and the 1965-66 Massacres

As the plantation workers' sought to understand their own history, they were continuously drawn back to the gravity of that black hole at the heart of Indonesian political and cultural life – the extermination of the entire Indonesian left in 1965-66. And more specifically, in the case of Bangun Bandar, and the Sumatran plantation belt in general, the extermination of SARBUPRI, the PKI-affiliated plantation workers' union that had built a strong movement to reform the feudal conditions on the plantations, to nationalise Dutch held colonial estates, and to improve salaries, provisions, education and cultural opportunities on the plantations. (SARBUPRI had successfully struggled to have cinemas built on all the plantations, for example.)

Tens of thousands of SARBUPRI members were slaughtered at the Sungai Ular and other Sumatran rivers. A few months after the slaughter abated, the chief executioner at Bangun Bandar, Arsan Lubis, founded the local branch of SOKSI (Central Organization of Indonesian Socialist Employees), the national "trade union" custom-built by the CIA and Indonesian army to replace SARBUPRI (Nasution 1997:30; Scott 1985:251).[50]

SOKSI, now called SPSI, remains a military- and management-dominated organization, built on the vertical, precisely fascist, model, and it continues to demobilise, confuse, and repress Bangun Bandar plantation workers, 35 years after it was founded by the local death squad leader. It is in the shadow of this terror that Serbuk struggles to pick up the pieces 35 years later. *The Globalisation Tapes* was a vehicle to explore this history, and re-imagine the hopes that had been so violently dashed.

The film production occasioned a series of discussions and screenings that included literally the very first public discussions and debates about the history

[50] Following the production of *The Globalisation Tapes,* the excavation and re-staging of Arsan's life and memories has become a principle focus of the project. Moreover, he is the "star" of the filmed re-enactments that constitute an important part of this project's practical submission. See, for instance, the section entitled "Dramatis Personae" below.

of plantation communities and, above all, the genocide. To stimulate these discussions, Goeng Wijayanto from the Offstream Media Collective in Jakarta brought several brave and tough documentaries typical of post-Suharto Jakarta's scrappy independent documentary scene. Of particular importance was *Indonesia Mass Grave.* Essentially a 30-minute document of an excavation of a mass grave of genocide victims in Central Java by the organisation YPKP (*Yayasan Penelitian Korban Pembantaian 1965*, or Organisation for the Investigation of Victims of the 1965 Massacres), the film provided a stimulus for the Serbuk filmmakers to discuss their own history and their relation to it as union activists and filmmakers.[51]

Filmed on 2 December 2001 by Astaman, *The Globalisation Tapes* (Vision Machine 2003:Part II) introduces this discussion with archive images of Suharto presiding over a military parade. Intertitles announce:

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[51] The degree to which this history is still "forbidden" and the massacres and PKI conjured again and again as spectral threats, albeit in different ways, is evident from Katherine McGregor's summary of the community's response to YPKP's attempt to rebury unclaimed bodies, documented in Chris Hilton's 2002 documentary about the 1965 killings, *Shadow Play,* a film that incorporates much footage from *Indonesia Mass Grave:*

> When, however, YPKP attempted to rebury those corpses from the Wonosobo grave not claimed by family members in the town of Kaloran, their efforts met with extraordinary resistance. On 24 March 2001, the day before the scheduled reburial, a mob of young men from the organisation *Forum Ukuwah Islamiya Kaloran* (Kaloran Islamic Fraternity) blockaded the road leading to the house of Irawan Mangunkusuma, an ex-political prisoner who had donated land for the reburial. They erected banners reading "The Islamic Community rejects the reburial of ex-PKI", "There is no place here for PKI skulls" and "Burn the PKI skulls" and "Stop this" near the house. When members of the organising committee tried to flee the area in two vehicles together with the remains of seven corpses in small coffins, a group of around fifty protestors from FUIK stopped the second vehicle. They assaulted the driver, and a member of the organising committee, and dragged the coffins out of the vehicles and strew the remains on the ground. The skeletons were rescued for later reburial, but the mob burnt the remaining coffins and destroyed Irawan's house.
>
> Why did these reburials spark so much ire so long after the killings? One man from the local area of Kaloran (Central Java) made the comment to journalists who recorded this event that "this is not a PKI area, it is not a suitable place for the reburial of these bones" (Shadow Play documentary 2002). Another spokesperson for FUIK, stated that he feared the reburial site could become a pilgrimage site and that from this the PKI might rebuild itself. These comments replicate New Order discourse about the PKI being a contaminant that would somehow stain the good name of the Kaloran community and of the ever-present threat of a PKI revival. (McGregor 2002)

Until 1999, Indonesian workers were forbidden from forming unions by General Suharto's New Order military dictatorship.

All workers were automatically members of the national "yellow union" created by management and the military

Founded in 1999, Serbuk still struggles to show Indonesian workers what a real union can be.

We then see some of the very few archive images that exist of political prisoners being rounded up and loaded onto trucks to be killed. We do not see the killings, as no such images exist. The voice of Sukirman, president of Serbuk and narrator of the film, speaks a voice over written collaboratively by the ten-member core group of filmmakers:[52]

In the months after the coup, the new regime murdered up to two million union activists, peasant activists, intellectuals, and reformers. Millions more were imprisoned. Unlike the profits reaped by the victors, the dead were never counted, their names never recorded, their voices silenced, their memory erased, and what they had fought for forgotten, leaving an open wound at the heart of Indonesian society.

We see shots of PKI prisoners waiting to be executed, hands tied behind their necks. Three rapid-fire intertitles:

Even today, Serbuk must negotiate at gunpoint.

When the union brings demands to the boss's office...

The boss sits behind his desk, flanked by soldiers with machine guns.

We then cut to a discussion, held late at night when the filmmakers felt safe holding such a forum. Whole families participate, with Eddraman's daughter, Nopi, sleeping in her mother's lap. The discussion proceeds thus:[53]

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[52] Voice over translated by Ari Adipurwawidjana. During *The Globalisation Tapes,* Vision Machine's core group was slightly different than it is today. Andrea Zimmerman did not participate in the production of *The Globalisation Tapes*, but did help with its final editing. Christine Cynn and I were the principle filmmakers from London, collaborating with a core group of plantation workers from Serbuk. Principle filmmakers who shot and edited *The Globalisation Tapes* include Serbuk members Sukirman, Eddraman, Astaman, Ati, R. Siahaan, Rachmadi, Basir, Boinem, Mirza, Sugiman, Jumniati and Hayati.

[53] There was no simultaneous direct interpretation during this shoot because it was shot entirely by members of Serbuk, with Astaman operating the camera. Post-production translation by Ari Adipurwawidjana.

Kirman: President Sukarno's withdrawal from the World Bank and IMF, and the nationalisation of foreign-owned companies... That was why all those people were massacred. There were big interests at stake...

Rahmadi: (voice) Private interests?

Kirman: (continuing) Multinational interests... And the banks that finance them, and the governments that serve them. Don't you see their objective? To plunder Indonesia with no interference from the people.

Cut to: Wide shot of Surya's daughter sleeping Ibu Ana's lap.

Surya: (voice) We can't prove that, though, because there's nobody brave enough to talk about what happened.

Cut to: Close up of R. Siahaan listening intently.

Rahmadi: (off camera) What do you mean?

Cut to: Eddraman, responding.

Surya: There are no survivors brave enough to talk about what the PKI's struggle was really about. But what's the use if we're not willing to talk about our own history?

Cut to: Medium shot of R. Siahaan

Siahaan: Honestly if you compare the official story to the film [*Indonesia Mass Grave*] we just saw, the official story never made sense. What I heard tonight confirms what I actually experienced, because in our village, the mayor wasn't communist but he was killed anyway, killed in the sewer...

Kirman: (off camera) Just like what that old man said in the interview...

Siahaan: (ignores Kirman) His wife tried to save him, but they cut off her hand with a machete. (His voice rises as he speaks more urgently.) I saw it with my own eyes. I was coming home from school, herding our buffalo, at the Socfin plantation at Bangun Bandar1. His name was Mus.

Surya: (sitting next to Siahaan, remembering who he is) Mus Mujiono?

Siahaan: Actually, he wasn't a member of the communist party, so why was he killed?

Cut to: Close up of R. Siahaan.

Siahaan: (continuing) Because the state apparatus breaks into peoples home.

Rahmadi: (joking off screen) There are many state apparatus. There's pistols, machetes...

(Laughter, but R. Siahaan ignores it, in the midst of remembering something else.)

Siahaan: (continues) Especially machine guns. They'd come after dark. They'd call it a youth rally. At 4 am they knocked and burned down his house right next to ours. They took her husband away. To where? I never knew. Near my school was a river, the Ama Tebing river. Every morning we saw corpses wash up on the banks. Like that old man said [in *Indonesia Mass Grave*]! If we swam in the river we saw milk cans, Nona [auntie] brand condensed milk. The can had been opened, but shut again. Inside we'd always find men's genitals. We were just kids, we'd open the cans and find genitals. It's not right.
Kirman: (voice) But the people responsible don't show their faces....

As R. Siahaan remembers the massacres, the urgency of his voice, the way he continues speaking over various interruptions or questions, and the way one memory leads to another reveal that he is remembering something *explicitly* for the very first time. Nor is this merely a private recollection, rather *he speaks it to the group*. For, in an important sense, these memories are not merely personal. Genocide is precisely the systematic destruction of a group, not an aggregate of individuals. Prohibiting the articulation of memories of collective destruction is a perpetuation of that same violence, it is another moment of a collective disarticulation that prevents the memory of what happened to one constellating into the understanding of what happened to the community. This is an aim of genocide, to shatter solidarity as well as the means through which solidarities might again be recognised. It is to dissolve the named ghosts of those lost into a spectral miasma that obscures the recollection of a collective loss – precisely the loss of a collectivity.

One has the feeling not that he is recovering some sort of lost or repressed memory, but rather that by never *speaking* them before, his memories had been, until this transformative discussion, only half-present to himself because not fully present to the collective – and therefore spectral, both haunting and structuring his perceptions and recollections, dislocating himself to himself.

I am here deliberately attempting to avoid a more individuating register of describing R. Siahaan as a "haunted individual", with a shadow cast over his personal and private thoughts, opposing his psyche to the broader socius.

Here, I gesture toward Judith Butler's recent essay, "Violence, Mourning, Politics", on the ways individual subjectivity may be destructured by unmournable loss and ungrievable violence, rendering us out of sorts to ourselves (Butler 2004:19-49). She writes,

> When we lose certain people, or when we are dispossessed from a place, or a community [...] something about who we are is revealed, something that delineates the ties we have to others, that shows us that these ties constitute what we are, ties or bonds that compose us. It is not as if an "I" exists independently over here and then simply loses a "you" over there, especially if the attachment to "you" is part of what composes who "I" am. If I lose you [...] then I not only mourn the loss, but I become inscrutable to myself. (Butler 2004:22)

Then, by emphasising the collectivity of ties that constitute us as individuals, and thus render any "individual" loss precisely social, she moves on to consider social trauma and violence:

> We are something other than "autonomous" in such a condition [of social trauma and violence...] we cannot represent ourselves as merely bounded beings, for [the dead] not only live on in the fiber of the boundary that contains me [...], but they also haunt the way I am, as it were, periodically undone and open to becoming unbounded. (Butler 2004:30)

This language suggests a connection *stronger than analogy* between the ways subjects may be haunted by unspoken memories and the ways those same unspoken memories, as the obscene to public discourse, haunt the interactions of everyday life in rural Sumatra. By *unbounding* subjects like R. Siahaan, we may suggest an indistinguishability between R. Siahaan and the social weave at precisely the moment of haunting, as R. Siahaan himself is de-structured, or re-structured by the force of his spectral memories of violence. Thus may we say that his unspoken memories circulate terrifyingly, passing between and, indeed, de-stabilising the boundaries between the "individual" subject and the broader socius. We may suggest that such memories make this passage and, in the movement, disrupt the boundaries between self and other that define this

passage, in the register of whispers and insinuations, not to mention such memories' indirect effects on behaviour and social interaction, haunting everyday experience in so many ways as to defy summarisation.

The footage of R. Siahaan's late-night discussion about 1965 is a document of a social transformation insofar as it records the moment at which memories are located and spoken, shared and acknowledged as part of a collective past, admitted into history where previously they had been denied. The footage records the *exchanges* in which memories previously obscene are located and spoken, shared and acknowledged as part of a collective past, admitted into history where previously they had been denied.

There is a moment in Dusan Makavejev's *Sweet Movie* (1974), after archive footage showing the exhumation of a mass grave from Russia's Katan Woods massacre, where an intertitle appears and demands: "Let us think of these things always, and speak of them never." R. Siahaan's remembrance of a massacre from which, tellingly, *there is no archive footage* begs the question of whether we can remember if we do not speak. And also, what is the status of memories that go unspoken and unshared? Memories that, more often than not, are transmitted only as the subtext, insinuation or veiled threat behind the public pronouncement – how do such memories circulate differently from publicly articulated ones? How does precisely their spectrality endow them with a power to haunt, to insinuate themselves into everyday life *until located through public speech, through collective remembrance and discussion?*[54] The scene documenting R. Siahaan's remembrance reveals that the process of making explicit that which has been implicit, naming those who have gone unnamed, speaking that which has, until now, gone unspoken, begins the transformation from miasma to specificity, from spectre to ghost.

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[54] Surely, too, by locating and identifying a memory previously unspoken, the memory is also changed, for every act of remembrance is always also a confabulation, a *making up*, as previously forgotten details are filled in, stories changed, and so forth.

This section of *The Globalisation Tapes* begins the process of naming names – Mus Mujiono, for instance, who was not in the PKI but was killed all the same. Or his wife, whose hand was cut off. And, tellingly, if not the nameless victims whose genitals were rigged to terrify small children, then at least the specificity of this act of terrorism, identifiable in the *name* of the brand of milk, *Nona*, Auntie's Sweetened Condensed Milk.

It was in search of these people who, as Kirman notes at the end of the scene, "do not show their faces", and therefore remain spectral, that I asked my Indonesian collaborators if, as part of our collaboration, I could try to find people who might talk about the killings. I had heard about Saman Siregar, a notorious death squad leader who had worked as a manager for London-Sumatra Corporation's nearby Rambung-Sialang estate. I had heard his name mentioned along with the silent gesture of passing an index finger across the throat to indicate the massacres. I knew he was Kirman's neighbour in the village of Rambutan, and I knew he was mostly deaf, but that is all. Although I had hoped to meet Saman Siregar, when I actually did, it was because I stumbled upon him. One afternoon, while collaborator Valentin Manz and I were wandering around Rambutan with a video camera, looking for shots of children playing in the village just before dusk, an elderly couple invited us in. We noticed the man was deaf, and realised who he was. Improvising, I asked about the communists. At this point, our Indonesian was not good enough to develop an elaborate cover, much less to understand everything he said. We did manage to say we were students from London interested in the struggle against communism. We tried to smile and act very enthusiastic, pointing the camera at him and recording everything he said.

And so, from the end of the discussion with R. Siahaan (Vision Machine 2003:Part II), from Kirman's comment that "The people responsible don't show our faces. They use other people. Our people", we cut to an intertitle:

> *Pak [Mr] Siregar*
> *Death Squad Leader*
> *1965-1966*

The scene opens with a shot of Mrs Siregar, the camera eagerly trying to fNgatiem her as she draws her index finger across her throat, laughs and explains for her husband, "Tell him how you killed the communists..."[55] Because Siregar is hard of hearing, Mrs Siregar has somehow learned to speak in a way her husband can understand. Thus, she repeats all the questions in a loud and cheerful voice, often laughing, producing an odd allegory for the lack of gravity with which the killings are spoken by so many Sumatran perpetrators.

And so the film launches into a chilling scene in which Mrs Siregar interprets and laughs for Saman, while a small girl, Intan Siregar, looks on bored as her grandfather demonstrates for the camera the way to hold a man upside down and crush his face into the mud until he drowns. Siregar mimics the absent victim's gargles as he chokes in the mud. He could hold down two or three at a time he boasts; he seems faintly nostalgic in the dim light and the smoke; his only regret is that his arms and knees are not what they used to be.

§ 2.4 History and Histrionics: historical narrative as instrument of terror

This first interview with Saman Siregar and his family in *The Globalisation Tapes* would lead us to infiltrate, to identify faces, to find as many people as possible who would speak about what they had done, who would remember, who would substantiate the rumours that have been allowed to circulate threateningly for decades, who would give substance to something previously spectral. Inevitably, this is an impossible project, too vast for many lifetimes' work, because, after all, it was a *mass* killing, with hundreds of thousands of lives destroyed, and, perhaps, equally as many involved in their destruction. For each perpetrator we identify, there are thousands more we will never identify, and more still already dead. No matter how many rumours we could substantiate, the totality of the thing would always remain miasmic, spectral. And this tension between substance and spectre would therefore haunt the entire process.

[55] No translator participated in the production. Post-production translation by Iskandar Zulkarnain.

Still, each story exerted a hold, a claim, and seemed worth investigating, each death worth documenting, and we would forget temporarily the impossibility of it all – the fact that every neighbourhood in every village on every island in the archipelago of 13,000 islands has yet another unmarked grave, yet another story as terrible as the very few we could ever hope to identify. Even in the few communities in which we would work, there would always be dozens of stories unaccounted for.

These stories will never be told.

Such a project – the basis for a series of films, still in production – of course, has only been possible after Suharto's 1998 resignation. Since then, an ambiguous political space has opened up. Certainly, with Suharto's military apparatus remaining largely intact and on-watch, many people are still afraid, while others are eager to speak out and test their new sense of freedom. With each change in administration, we wonder whether this work will still be possible.[56]

In stark contrast to our collaborative work with plantation workers and, now, survivors of the genocide, it still necessary to *infiltrate* in order to win the confidence of most people who participated in the killings. In contrast, too, to Rithy Panh's 2003 documentary excavation of the Khmer Rouge killing

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[56] Ironically, Abdurrahman Wahid's administration proved the most liberal, introducing numerous reforms to grant equal rights to former political prisoners, while Sukarno's daughter, Megawati Sukarnoputri, increased the power of the military. Ironic, because Wahid, or Gus Dur, is the leader of Nadhlatul Ulama, the Muslim organisation whose Pemuda Ansor youth group constituted some of North Sumatra's most vicious death squads. Gus Dur turned out to be a liberal who tried to curb the power of the army. This led the army to join forces with Suharto's party, Golkar, and have him removed on the basis of unsubstantiated allegations of corruption. He was replaced in July 2001 by Sukarno's daughter, Megawati Sukarnoputri, who has been pliant and, owing her power to the army and Golkar, willing to restore the prestige of the military to some degree. (For instance, on 19 May 2003, she allowed the army to declare a brutal martial law in the Indonesian province of Aceh.) Megawati has recently been replaced by an army general in Indonesia's first direct presidential elections. Considered a liberal by some human rights activists but, being a general, capable of dealing with the army, General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono strikes fear into the heart of most survivors of 1965-66. He is, after all, the son-in-law of Sarwo Edhie, the executor of the massacres and hero of the Komando Aksi death squads. Ultimately, there is probably much truth in the words of noted Acehnese activist for the Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Torture (Kontras), Aguswandi: "It's possible to *say* what you like in Indonesia these days, you just can't get anything done" (discussion with author). Judging from the violent response to the excavation of the Wonosobo mass grave described in the footnote above, this may well be the case.

machine, *S21*, where perpetrators tell their stories and re-enact what they did in the sober context of a reconciliation process for an acknowledged crime, here perpetrators often demand flattery. Sometimes – and probably as a way of masking their suspicion of our motives – they claim their stories are "national secrets"; sometimes, as in the case with all the upper-class perpetrators I have met from Medan, as well as Arsan Lubis and, to some degree, Saman Siregar, they express pride over participating in the extermination of the PKI.[57]

With more fluent Indonesian than I used in my first interview with Saman Siregar, I therefore claim to be a PhD student making a film about Indonesia's exemplary struggle against communism, seeking to identify tactics that might be useful in the struggle against communism and terrorism elsewhere in the world. Sometimes, we claim to be in search of "unsung heroes" of the global struggle against communism. We (quite rightly) explain that while most scholars focus on the events in Jakarta, the real struggle took place in rural areas, and the real "heroes" are those ordinary villagers who were willing to fight. It is true that such an introduction may bias the response of the perpetrators, but generally we spend enough time with perpetrators, listening to enough stories, giving enough space for remembrance, that the initial interaction hardly defines the whole experience, but rather opens the door. As is clear in the in-progress compilation of re-enactments and interviews with genocide perpetrators, *Snake River,* I tend to give people a great deal of space to talk, and once the initial introduction is made, it is generally not necessary continually to rehearse where our sympathies lie. In any case, the ruse is certainly the only safe way for us to ask for these stories. We say as little as possible, but if we seemed at all critical of the killings, the police would almost certainly be called.

Thus, haunted by the rumours of massacre that circulated around the production of *The Globalisation Tapes,* we sought to substantiate these rumours, locate people who could give body to them, situate them, fNgatiem them with a

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[57] I say, here, "express pride" rather than "feel pride" because, from the dozens of Komando Aksi veterans whom we have met, there appears to be a range of other feelings beyond the almost requisite *display* of pride. That is, at times they may feel compelled to express pride as part of the *genre* of their testimony as Komando Aksi members.

coherent testimonial account. However, rather than generate a wealth of testimony that lends itself to constructing a coherent account adequate to discrete and definite events, we found a series of performances that inevitably conjured other spectres, more rumours, new spectralities that continued to *lure* us to find their substance. I say "lure" because what compelled us forward was the *attraction* of the spectral, even if we sought precisely to pierce its mysterious hold by giving it body, substance, and definition.

But each step we took, each successive interview or re-enactment, generated histrionic performance after histrionic performance that were ill-suited to a historiography that strives to representational adequacy and coherence. Interviewees would say their lines, rehearse a script, plot out a carefully staged mise-en-scène, re-staged for the camera in a mode not of remembrance but of *performing ideology,* for Althusser (2001:112) claimed that the realm of the ideological is not so much that of theory, but of practice, that is to say, of performance: ritual reproduction, an endless going through the motions, rehearsing the gestures – giving salutes, bowing in deference, genuflecting, drawing machetes, tying up bodies, shaping words.

Such histrionics are not concerned with adequacy. Instead, like the official history of the massacre, these performances aim to conjure the actual violence of the past as a spectral power to be used by the performer. That is, the actual violence of the past is invoked only insofar as it serves as an instrument in the present, claiming a spectral power for the teller.

Of the actual massacres themselves, accounts are invariably victors' accounts, because by definition the victims have been destroyed. Jean-François Lyotard signals this dilemma thus:

> The plaintiff complains that he has been fooled about the existence of gas chambers, fooled that is, about the so-called Final Solution. His argument is: in order for a place to be identified as a gas chamber, the only eyewitness I will accept would be a victim of this gas chamber; now [...] there is no victim that is not dead. [...] There is, therefore, no gas chamber. (Lyotard 1988)

But what if the eyewitnesses are not victims but gas chamber operators, and rather than deny, what if they gloat? What is the evidential value of such gloating? And suppose their gloating veers into bragging, and even embellishment? Such accounts, like the official history they rehearse and exceed, are not concerned with adequacy to the past, but rather with a *performative* conjuring of the violence as a spectral power of terror to be used in the present. We use "performative" in the sense articulated in Judith Butler's expansion of J.L. Austin's speech-act theory (Butler 1990, 1993; Austin 1975), as a discourse whose performance or iteration actually *effects* something – in this case a conjuring of spectral power to be wielded by the performer (or speaker).[58]

If the victors do not adequately represent the past, they do conjure a spectre of its actual violence through the *obscene* of their performances – that which is conjured but remains irrecoverable, present but *also absent*, spectral. (Even the performances which appear most graphic are not rendered as singular explications of singular events, but rather as rehearsals of a genre whose register is the graphic. Therefore, while admitting to the actual events of the massacre,

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[58] Austin (1975) argues that performative speech consists of utterances that actually *effect* something, with prime examples being wedding vows and other promises, such as bets. Butler (1990, 1993) expands this theory, arguing that "reality" is always already constituted by the performative effects of discourse. Here, she builds on Foucault's understanding of discourse as constituting the objects it names and describes. Butler argues that reality is not a given but is continually created "through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social sign" (1990:270). As Butler (1993) explains, "Within [Austin's] speech act theory, a performative is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names" (1993:13). A speech act can produce that which it names, however, only by *iterating* a previously established discourse. Any speech act is therefore always a citation of a previous discursive formation. Cited in Butler (1993), Derrida (1988) indicates performative utterances' dependence on the iterability of discourse:

> Could a performative utterance succeed if its formulation did not repeat a 'coded' or iterable utterance, or in other words, if the formula I pronounce in order to open a meeting, launch a ship or a marriage were not identifiable as conforming with an iterable model, if it were not then identifiable in some way as a 'citation'? (1988:18)

Butler expands both speech act theory and Foucauldian accounts of discourse by tracing the ways in which discourses *perform* social reality in precisely the same way as speech acts. By continually *rehearsing* the conventions and ideologies of the social world around us, we enact – or manifest and conjure – that reality. Thus does Butler (1993) argue that "performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate 'act,' but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (1993:2). Butler goes on to suggest how performative citations of existing discourses can either, on the one hand, reinscribe and reify existing discursive formations, or else trouble them by citing them out of context, constituting a de-naturalisation, an interruption which she terms "subversive resignification"(1993:226-7).

they nonetheless conjure as obscene the past itself, the irrecoverable historical real, endowing their performances with a spectral force that they seek to claim as their own.)

And this spectre exerts a hold on us, as filmmakers, compelling us, at the very least, *to believe* (for the most part in good faith) that we are chasing shadows in search of substance. Again, this chase only begets further encounters with victors, who invariably perform new histories, giving substance to certain spectres while conjuring others. And even when victors give substance to the spectral, the register of substantiation is almost always a generic one, conditioned by imperatives of genre rather than adequacy. This inevitably leaves the actual in limbo, in doubt, hovering just beyond the edge of the fNgatiem, remaining spectral, and, usually, conjuring new spectres (often in the form of rumours) whose fascination compels us to chase them, to seek out their substance.

Being lured by the fascination of a spectral violence may or may not betray a humanist nostalgia for the abject. The latter is predicated on a notion of "authenticity" (which was always already nostalgic), and requires speaking of "truth", rather than issues of fact. That is to say, a humanist desire to substantiate spectres of violence would necessarily involve *recounting,* rather than counting. For instance, the performativity of the victors' accounts may make the viewer concerned about their *truth,* without giving basis for any suspicion about the factuality of the overall claims. Or more precisely, a humanist desire to substantiate the spectral may involve a longing for confession, for *abject remembrance,* because it is in the abject that conscience can appear grounded in the real, and provide a ground upon which retributive justice can be built. Here, there is nothing startling: the desire for the real *is* desire, as such. One can say again and again that the real resists all representation, but it is precisely around its absence that all systems of representation revolve. It is this desire that makes the footage of victors' performances so compelling, precisely because it makes threateningly clear the irrecoverability of the historical real, while at the same time resisting its erasure.

The "authentic" is no more interesting than the "generic" or, to use a humanist register, the "alienated". Clearly it is of import if the re-enactment of a killing is merely an invented brag; but that someone would brag so is also of import; moreover, if it is established to be both a brag and a fact (that is to say, *factual* but not *true*), it is of more import still. (Some spectres were begot by bodies, and others by shadows, but there can be no talk of spectres without talk of bodies. And perhaps for this reason more than any other, in this project on spectres, spectrality, and ghosts, does there remain a need to name names and count the dead, even if our sums are meaningless in the face of thousands of other villages with thousands of other massacres that will never be excavated.)

The lure of the spectral, then, its fascination, its hold, surely varies for all of us involved with making these films, and depends too on the spectres we confront – that is, which perpetrators and which stories. At times there is a nostalgia, surely, for the abject and singular confession, a confession that saturates the confessor in the singularity of the historical real thus being remembered. Such an instance may include approaching a killer *on behalf of a victim's family* to ask him to re-enact the murder of their relative. Here, we are surely lured by a humanist hope that the killer might struggle to remember, with all the pain and heartache and abject of confession that this entails.

At other times, though, I am compelled to continue my infiltrations, *to penetrate ever deeper,* pulled simply by the fascination of spectres. Here, I would suggest that the re-enactments and performances – even the most graphic and, perhaps, factually correct ones – conjure the historical real as their obscene, and this endows the performance with its spectral force. At such times, I fall under the spell of this spectrality, and do not wish to *encounter* the real at a moment of abject confession. Rather, like the desire for a fetish, I am aware that the moment of such confession, as an unmasking or revelation, would ultimately disappoint, dissipating the performance's spectral force without manifesting the historical real, which always resists representation. (I am not sure that my collaborators feel the same way. They may be less comfortable with infiltration than I, and find themselves angry at those whom we must deceive, longing for the opportunity to challenge them, to express their *true* feelings – perhaps in an

attempt to provoke a scene of confession. The fact that abject confession would inevitably *be a scene* indicates the ways in which it would ultimately fail to deliver its promise of the historical real.)

If, then, the past lays a claim on our project, compelling us to continue our investigation, it is often not a direct moral claim, answerable only with confession and justice, but rather one laid through the mystical hold of the past's spectrality as conjured in the rumours told by survivors and histrionic performances of the victors. That is, we find ourselves and our films fascinated by spectres – conjured first in the official histories, and in particular the way these histories have circulated as terrifying rumours, and later in the layers of histrionic performance we provoked when we approached killers. Thus we are chasing shadows, but not necessarily in search of substance; equally, we may simply be fascinated by the play of shadows, by the *pleasures of frustrated desire,* of attempting to grasp something that inexorably slips through the fingers, its spectrality always re-emerging elsewhere at the moment of its transformation into spectacle.

And so we will speak at the same time of events and their impossibility to history – we will gather evidence, documents, testimony, research, analyse, count bodies, and name names: in short, we will proceed *as if* a coherent and exclusive account could be given of the terror and the violence, of its operation and effects; at the same time we will talk of how this terror does such violence to history that history becomes a certain instrument of this violence – not so much the history of terror, or even, "the terror of history", rather history *as* terror. History is rendered incoherent, shattered, or torn. Its fragments cannot be pieced together or stitched into an unbroken sheet, all its holes and gaps patched, for it is, after all, a history of holes itself.

Through this frustrated and possibly always already bad-faith search for substance emerged a recognition that the rumours and spectres of terror are neither veils that can be pierced, nor signifiers to be given presence through a definite reference to actual events. In a context where it is impossible to present history as a coherent chronicle representing a series of events, where instead the

chronicle is marked precisely by a series of absences, the spectres are themselves characters in a performance of history that occurs *in the present*, and that, moreover, history itself is thus constituted as layers of such histrionics, or performances.[59] As for the historical real, it can be neither recovered nor erased; but it can be traced in the repeated gestures, the compulsive repetitions, of the present.

Thus, the historical fragments that are recovered are in fact artefacts of the present, as the past reaches us only as contemporary performances that seek to conjure spectral powers and claim them for the performer *in the present.*

The contemporaneity of this historical project is important to stress. The profound violence of 1965-66 still haunts national life; it is neither spoken, nor unspoken, rather, it is whispered, threatened, insinuated into the subtext of daily discourse. Indeed, this spectral terror continues to operate as an instrument of policy. It is still exploited and manipulated by many of the same interests, national and international, that initially incited it.

All of the perpetrators with whom we have worked invoke a latent PKI threat. The end of Arsan's own memoir of the killing, *Embun Berdarah (*Bloody Dew) invokes the threat of a latent PKI threat, or *ancaman PKI laten* as a justification for continued repression against anybody who might be considered PKI, including NGO's and human rights activists. These same invocations of the PKI

[59] Of course, history in normal usage has several simultaneous meaning, referring to past events, to the narratives that claim representational adequacy to those events, and to a discipline that seeks to narrate and interpret the past and define protocols for that process. For the purpose of this essay, we will refer to the past not as history but as the past, or events, or, occasionally, the historical real, a term used to explicitly contrast with historical narrative the ungraspable and therefore also spectral actuality of the past itself. This project does not seek to take events and create new histories, but rather to talk about history making, and to intervene in the spectral fields of power that are both constituted and claimed during the process of history making. As Jill Godmilow (1998) comments on Harun Farocki's *Videogrammes of a Revolution,* "When Farocki takes up Romania and television (about which he is no expert), he knows precisely what potential there is in aligning those clips to articulate an idea that's going to be bigger than just what was happening to the Romanians . . . an idea about history-making and media." Similarly, our concept of history as a series of narratives and performances of these narratives that performatively conjure spectral fields of power that are coextensive with and actual implements of power, we attain to a concept of history that acknowledges the motives and commitments of the authors and opens the question of uses (and abuses) of the past.

threat may be found in the mainstream media. Powerful military and Komando Aksi veterans in the city of Medan and, probably, across Indonesia still manage to get these views published in the daily newspapers, particularly Medan's *Waspada* (or "Vigilance"), six years after Suharto's fall.

Indeed, for 35 years, managing this threat was the basis for Suharto's mandate. The spectral PKI was figured to haunt and threaten everybody with a tremendous power of terror. An array of other juridical, regulatory, educational and other discourses have, since 1965, continued to *perform* the PKI as latent threat. Throughout the 35 years of Suharto's regime, children of PKI were not allowed to vote, become government employees, or seek higher education. PKI members were assigned black ID cards, all part of a campaign of "continued vigilance" against the latent PKI threat (often represented as the threat of PKI vengeance.) Many were stripped of their land by local plantation companies, condemning whole families to generations of desperate poverty.[60] Indeed, since the PKI were unarmed, did not resist their extermination, and were completely destroyed, the myriad restrictions on children of PKI, political prisoners and so forth can only be understood as discursive formations designed to perform (or conjure) again and again the PKI as latent threat – the threat must be real, or else there would be no need for the restrictions.

Thus did the *living PKI* also become spectral: people languishing as slaves in prison camps became living ghosts. Without any official charge or trial, many thought they would die there. When they were released they faced a life as *persona non grata* – "ex-tapol" (ex-political prisoners). Like the massacres themselves, these forms of terror, the presence of ex-tapol living lives of enforced isolation, poverty and degradation also exerted spectral powers over the lives of their neighbours. Together, the threat of death or exile within the community, form a terrible and effective demonstration of the total power of the military state. This threat also lies at the bottom of that peculiar style of New

[60] In the 1970s, London-Sumatra's Rambung-Sialang Estate, with the help of the military, seized hundreds of hectares of land from villagers in "Block 30" of Firdaus village, simply because they were "ex-PKI".

Order officialdom, an opportunism that lurks under the cover of conformity, and optimism under threat of extinction.

Moreover, in various generic guises – from propaganda films to monuments honouring the killers who participated in the 1965-66 massacres to the patriotic rhetoric around Indonesian president-elect Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as son-in-law of genocide-commander Sarwo Edhie – the terror of 1965-66 is still rehearsed and repeated on many stages of the Indonesian national scene.

Perhaps the most important example of such a performance is another film, the 1984, four-hour propaganda film, *Pengkhianatan Gerakan 30 September PKI* (Noer 1984, "The Treachery of the September 30th Movement of the Indonesian Communist Party"). *G30S* was conceived to conjure afresh the threat of PKI treason, nearly 20 years after the genocide, for a younger generation of Indonesians with no direct experience of the events of 1965-66. The film was mandatory viewing every year for 24 years on Indonesian television and in all cinemas until Suharto resigned in 1998. Schools would visit the cinema, and families were compelled to watch the film on TV. These thousands of screenings surely constitute the most potent performance of the *official history* of 1965-66. The film rehearses the government's version of the events of September 30, 1965. In the film, 6 generals are murdered by a communist mob at the Lubang Buaya. The generals' genitals are mutilated in a sadomasochistic orgy perpetrated by members of the PKI-affiliated Gerwani. Platoons of PKI cadres accompany the killers to each of the generals' homes, performing the PKI as a sadistic and spectral threat – spectral because, by the time of the film's production, the PKI had been exterminated.[61]

[61] It would be interesting to examine the difference between the Suharto regime's earlier and later spectral mandates. One can probably identify two different yet co-existing spectral economies of terror in operation throughout the latter half of the New Order period: one for older Indonesians who remember the genocide and for whom its spectre remained sufficient to deter any dissent; another for younger Indonesians who were indoctrinated to accept military rule through myriad spectral threats, the most important being the PKI threat conjured by propaganda such as *G30S*. Investigating this hypothesis is beyond the scope of this thesis, principally because we have worked almost exclusively with older Indonesians who have direct experience of the genocide.

The film is so potent, however, because it serves to justify a massacre that remains *obscene, or inadmissible,* within the fNgatiemwork of the narrative. The film *generically rehearses* the killing of 6 generals, Nasution's daughter, and one captain. The real massacre – that of up to 2 million people – goes unmentioned. But the actual massacre hardly fails to haunt the film, because the film exists almost wholly to *justify* that massacre and the regime founded upon it. Thus the film conjures a violence as *spectre* – the extermination of the entire PKI in just a few months – by not mentioning it explicitly. It is in this way that *G30S* is a performative instrument of terror, the most potent conjuration of spectral violence available to the Indonesian state, a powerful *pesona* (magic spell) in the *ilmu sihir* (black magic) of Indonesian state terror. *G30S* was, perhaps more than any other piece of propaganda, the basis for the second half of Suharto's ghostly rule.[62]

G30S exists to justify a massacre it does not name, and thereby conjures as spectral. Lured by the spectre, we sought out killers who could name the massacre and give it substance. They too produced a series of performances – interviews, enactments and dramatisations of the massacres – conditioned more by genre than by the demands of historical adequacy and coherence.

If we cannot construct a coherent history, what can we do with these performative shards? For one thing, their *obscenity* – i.e., their constitutive silences – can be marked, so that the spectres they produce can enter the scene in a way that allows them to be addressed, and even countered. By marking the *obscene* of historical performance may we intervene (rather than expose) to challenge or trouble the ways in which this history operates as an instrument of power.

Our footage of perpetrators comprises nearly endless layers of performance which constitute and conjure terror as a threat, as an instrument of power. The

[62] If the spectral is miasmic by virtue of being explicitly barred from iteration and discourse, and if ghosts are condensations of the spectral onto specific identities and events, there is the potential for ghosts to become subversive, to counter the spectral force of the state (the focus of chapters 5 and 6), but they can also intensify and reinforce the spectrality of the state. Suharto, for instance, can rule as a "living ghost". It depends on how spectres perform, and in whose interests.

project is concerned with excavating these layers, and to do so, we have developed a research and production method that is perhaps best thought of as an "*archaeological performance*". Between a buried historical event, and its restaging with historical actors, this method opens a process of simultaneous *historical excavation* (working down through strata), and *histrionic reconstruction* (adding layers of stylised performance and recounting).

An "archaeological performance" entails successively working with, and working through, the gestures, routines, and rituals that were the motor of the massacres. The successive performances aim both to tap an embodied memory of singular gestures, and to reveal the body's singular movements as moments of the minutely geared motions of a killing machine that mobilised well rehearsed genres. That is to say, the method seeks to reveal what was at once *singular*, and *scripted*, and to do so by *going through the motions* of historical events.

By giving perpetrators free reign to declaim their pasts in precisely generic terms, the method seeks to deconstruct the manifold ways in which generic and political imperatives always already shaped not only the victor's history declaimed by the perpetrators in their interviews and re-enactments, but also the violence of the genocide itself. By making these codes, conventions and *scripts* manifest, the method marks the fact that historical account and enactment is itself always performative – this performativity being part of the apparatus of state terror.

Archaeological performance typically moves from interview, via narration and re-narration, through increasingly elaborate restagings. The result is a densely layered artefact, in which each layer is at once rehearsal and performance, re-enactment and response.

Thus does Siregar's brief and brutal interview in *The Globalisation Tapes* constitute a first layer in the archaeological performance. It is for the most part a conventional interview. However, even here, Saman is encouraged not merely to *tell*, but to *show*. The interview moves already beyond recounting, toward re-enactment; it seeks out what might be lodged in embodied memory, asks

questions of the position of the body in the motions of history. The interview is neither relegated to a merely informational source, nor are its words privileged as a source of truth (or of untruth from which truth is somehow extracted). Rather, it is one layer in a densely layered series of performances.

As a result of the interview's disclosures, Vision Machine invited Saman Siregar to reconstruct his nightly routine on the banks of the Sungai Ular, where he dispatched perhaps many hundreds of people.[63] The words and gestures of his interview continue to haunt this scene. This re-enactment is the second histrionic layer, a layer constituted by a field of action that directly overlays the site of the historical event.

His demonstration veers between chilling pantomime and forensic reconstruction. On the one hand, he details most precisely the modes and methods of decapitation, illustrates angles of approach and attack, explains the organisational and operational structure of the killing machine. On the other hand, he plays to the camera, staging himself for an imagined movie audience. His rehearsal of the recursive motions of massacre ends with a performance of disturbing improvisational flourish – after *speaking the script* of the purity of the heroic national struggle against "atheist communism", he displays his own ferocious machismo by breaking into a kung-fu movie-style sequence.

His projected self-image is clearly inflected by the imagery of genre (he imagines himself a "kung-fu movie star"); equally apparent is that this self-image is projected and refracted through a symbolic universe of ideological tropes (those of the "heroic and pure national struggle"). Yet there are gestures that appear to break out by reflex, that appear to motion from a still vivid and singular scene. There is a tension here between "remembrance" (an attempt to recall an event in its singularity), and "performance" (the acting out of a role and speaking of a script that is generic). His performance, then, begs questions not just of what happened at Snake River, but also of the relationship between

[63] See the DVDs accompanying this thesis, particularly *Snake River* (11-minute reel, chapter 3) and "Saman Siregar Presents Saman Siregar" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1]. Production translation by Taufiq Hanafi. Post-production translation by Rama Astraatmadja.

trauma, memory, history and the politics of genre. For this method begins to suggest the ways in which what happened was itself already *staged and scripted*, the ways in which the massacre mobilised well-rehearsed ideological roles and relations, and the ways in which genre inflects the memories and imaginaries of those who were its historical actors.

The contours of this performative layer are defined from underneath, as it were, by the now buried events that passed at this site, as well as by downward pressures from the sedimented layers of historical revision that have buried them. His words and re-enactment stretch a spectral screen between these strata. So staged, Saman's performance becomes a kind of ghosting, or shadow play – it both accentuates the terrible absence of the victims, and conjures their spectres.

Soon after this shoot, footage of Saman Siregar demonstrating what happened at the Sungai Ular is screened back to Saman for him to narrate.[64] This renarration is the third stage of the process. (Our first experiment with this process may be seen at the end of Part I of *The Globalisation Tapes* (Vision Machine 2003:Part I), when Ibu Ati narrates footage of herself spraying the pesticide gramoxone.)

Not only does his narration create a three dimensionality to the footage – there is the space and time of the original footage, and then the overlaid time of the renarration – but the footage is suddenly transformed from a chronicle of events at the riverside clearing into a *reflexive* document of how Siregar sees himself, and how he would like to be seen by others. It becomes his own reflection on his own representation of himself as hero to the audience. Saman sees himself as other, and thus reflects upon himself, reflecting across the gap opened up by the space between the time of the viewing and the time of the original shoot, flickering on the screen, the gap between self and self that constitutes for Bergson the very location of both memory and subjectivity. Thus does a space for self-reflection emerge that perhaps comes to approximate the self-conscious voice (in the literary sense) that we can readily discern in an interview transcript,

[64] Again, see the DVDs: *Snake River* (11-minute reel, chapter 3) and "Saman Siregar Presents Saman Siregar" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1]. Production translation by Taufiq Hanafi. Post-production translation by Rama Astraatmadja.

but that remains elusive when voice and image are fused into an image of a person talking, as in a filmed interview with sync sound, or the original, un-narrated footage of Saman at the river. Perhaps with sync sound, the charisma of the speaker (including facial expressions, tics, alterations in tone) contextualizes the flow of thoughts, the choice of words, naturalising them so that we are no longer conscious of the patterns of speech, turns of phrase, rhythms and repetitions that constitute a discernible "voice". On the contrary, when we read a transcript, by virtue of its disembodiment as transcribed text, the voice is somehow *made strange,* and is sufficiently denatured to make discernible a literary voice. But asking Saman to narrate his own footage produces a self-consciousness (as he reflects on himself) that allows for something whose effect seems analogous to literary voice: a making strange of self to self, so that one becomes aware of the texture of Saman's thoughts in just the same way as one becomes aware of the rhythms and patterns of speech when reading an interview transcript. This second encounter with oneself as other is obvious if the footage is of one playing a role, acting a part, already *other* to oneself. (As in Jean Rouch's films *Moi Un Noir* (1958) and *Jaguar* (1967).) But it is true enough, even more true, perhaps, if the footage is documentary, i.e., not of a performance explicitly marked as such. Saman Siregar's narration of himself as he demonstrates various ways of decapitating people, performs kung fu, and eats a luxurious lunch creates a layered multidimensionality that makes him strange, even to himself. The renarrated image – Siregar's encounter with Siregar – layers in a single image the time of the shoot with the time of narration, the time of the memories that surface as Siregar narrates himself, not to mention the time referred to in the original footage itself, when the absent victims were disappearing, passing from presence to absence, from the present to the past.[65]

From this staging emerges a complex artefact that gestures not only to the past, but the operations that continue to bury the past. This process of layered

[65] The layered composite of Saman at the river with his own reflective narration becomes an allegory for Deleuze's *time-image* in which, building on Bergson's analysis of the relationship between images and remembrance in *Matter and Memory*, the cinematic image (including, of course, sound) embodies what Bergson describes as a coming together (or *presenting*) in a single image, of many layers, or sheets, of past, representing themselves as they pass from present to past, in layered (or multidimensional) simultaneity. See Deleuze (2000) and Bergson (1991).

performance and response simultaneously reiterates the irrecoverability of the historical real, and resists its erasure.

This material is then taken to the village of Firdaus, a hamlet surrounded by London-Sumatra's Rambung-Sialang plantation where Siregar worked as manager.[66] The content is described to survivors of Siregar's reign of terror, and they are invited to review it.[67] Immediately, they mention the names of two victims who were killed not at the Sungai Ular, but nearby, in the plantation – Misbach, leader of Pemuda Rakyat, and Asilum, leader of SARBUPRI.[68] The audience consists of friends of Misbach, and afterwards they introduce me to Misbach's brother, who wanted to know the circumstance surrounding his death.[69] Adding yet another layer, I return to Siregar and confront him with the names "Misbach" and "Asilum". "How did you know about that?" he asked suspiciously. I lied, and told him that I had found a list of names in an Indonesian army report deposited in the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C. I explained, "you may as well tell me everything, because I have access to classified data, so I would know if you were keeping something from me." His demeanour promptly became more respectful and, interestingly, *relaxed*. I had, apparently, successfully convinced him that I was on his side.

I asked again about Misbach. As in *The Globalisation Tapes*, he demonstrated holding a man upside down, crushing his face into the mud until he was drowned. Siregar performed precisely the same gestures we had filmed before; his tongue and throat moving to form the same gargling sounds. This exact

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[66] See the accompanying DVDs, particularly *Snake River* (37-minute reel, chapter 2). Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

[67] As many of those who were slaughtered have gone unnamed and unaccounted, much of what passed remains a terrible mystery to the families of victims, and many of the survivors have been forced into silence. There exists no "witness" culture, as has developed around the Jewish Holocaust. They have no status as "survivors", as such. Rather, they remain stigmatised. Here, issues of memory, history, legacy, and testimony are deeply complex and sensitive.

[68] The mentions of Misbach and Asilum's deaths by their surviving friends are available to be viewed upon request (Vision Machine video cassette numbers I2-08, I2-09, and I3-34).

[69] The discussion with Misbach's brother Warji was filmed on 3 February 2004, and is available for review upon request (video cassette I2-07).

match revealed that the man whose murder he demonstrated for *The Globalisation Tapes* is indeed Misbach.[70]

Apparently, Misbach had to be drowned in the mud because he was "invincible", invulnerable to machetes. I had the sense that he has boasted about this murder many times, and by now his performance is standardised and scripted. But boasted to whom? He is emphatic that it is a secret. There is other footage of him demonstrating on his giggling wife how he killed women. The motions are equally precise: with each successive encounter, I can always recognise if I have heard an anecdote before simply by recognising his body language. These motions, as performances, constitute a sort of embodied knowledge not recorded in official training manuals or detailed in written communications, but lodged instead in his weakening body. Thus it is through this process of *layering* – layering successive encounters of interview, re-enactment, screening, narration, and further re-enactment – that we are able to *excavate* these motions, recuperating a form of embodied knowledge that constituted an essential part of the machinery of massacre.

These insights may be more significant than at first they might appear. Understanding the machinery of massacre may not be separable from understanding why the massacre took place. The conventional distinction between how a machine works and in whose interests it work may be untenable when the machine's mechanisms, from the commanders at the very top to the killers at the very bottom, are all human beings with vested interests. Althusser (2001:114) further troubles this distinction when he describes ideological belief as inscribed through the process of performance: "Pascal says more or less: 'Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe'". Thus may our excavations of *how* the massacres were performed be essential to addressing the seemingly separate question of *why* they were performed.

[70] See the "Saman Siregar kills Misbach Twice" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1]. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

Misbach's death thus documented, the material will be screened for Misbach's friends and surviving family members during our next trip to Sumatra, and another layer of response and re-narration will be recorded. Each screening, and each response, is a mnemonic trigger, spawning further narrations and re-narrations, stories, and stories about the stories, memories and memories of the process of remembrance, constructing in real time a crystalline constellation of voices that speak of the relationships between history and trauma, recounting and remembering.

As they watch and speak, they not only recount their own experiences, but also imagine and attempt to determine the motives and methods of the killers. This cinematically mediated exchange between perpetrators and survivors opens a historical process that is not merely recuperative, but *transformative* – as well as the encounter with the screen being a moment of remembrance, it is also an encounter through which the survivors imaginatively infiltrate the history from which they have been excluded; the process offers a medium through which they can respond to events which they are unable to forget, but have been forbidden to remember.

Recording their responses to the contemporary performance of a history of terror allows them to speak, and to speak into, their own history. It is a form of memorialisation, mourning, and a moment of healing. Perhaps it is a first step towards justice (in a context where no effective judicial fNgatiemwork has been established, or is likely to be established soon). This is important, not in an abstract sense, but specifically to the survivors who collaborate on the project, and for whom we screen the footage.

Indeed, the survivors who regularly gather to view footage, particularly the families in Firdaus, as well as the families of Arsan Lubis's victims in Galang district, increasingly view this as *their project,* their instrument of remembrance, their tool for asking questions of their own history.[71] They thus organise and

[71] For film material included in the accompanying DVDs, see Chapter 2 of the 37-minute reel on the *Snake River* DVD, as well as "Lukman's Family Re-enacts Arrest" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2] (production and post-production translation by Erika Suwarno).

collaborate on shoots, and when this is not possible for reasons of safety – as when we film with killers – the shoots are often discussed in advance and prepared collaboratively. Sometimes, we are sent out on specific "errands". And so it was with Misbach's brother, Warji. After viewing Siregar's demonstration of his brother's murder, Warji asked that we invite Rahmat Shah, Siregar's subordinate and Warji's neighbour, to the location where Misbach was killed to provide an on-site re-enactment of the killing. Thus did we take Rahmat and his wife to the site of Misbach's murder in the Rambung-Sialang Plantation to explain and demonstrate how his Komando Aksi cell killed Misbach and, at the same spot though on a different night, Asilum.[72]

Creating a vehicle for remembrance, one capable of answering specific questions and fulfilling specific requests, is inevitably a collaborative process – and *friendship* is its condition of possibility. As a project that emerges out of friendship, it is a process of communication, contest, occasional misunderstandings, coming to terms and, most importantly, a shared desire to make films and to investigate a history. This process of asking questions of the past, in friendship and collaboration with those people who, for 35 years, had been forbidden, on pain of extinction, from asking such questions, is hopefully a work of historical redemption, or rather a redemption of history.

Yet another histrionic layer is then added, as the footage of Siregar – interview overlaid by re-enactment overlaid by renarration overlaid by response – is used as source material for a performance by a local ludruk troupe (Javanese improvisational popular village theatre). Ludruk incorporates dance-like martial movements from a system of indigenous self-defence, *Pencak Silat*, and borrows promiscuously from a host of sources, high and low. Decidedly carnivalesque, its subversive mocking of established orders has at times been met with severe official response. Durasim, widely considered one of the form's greatest talents,

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Additional relevant material available to be reviewed on request includes Vision Machine video cassettes I3-05; I3-45 through 49; and I3-114 through 116. All of these document Arsan's victims as they respond to his filmed interviews and re-enactments. From Firdaus, we have video cassettes I2-07 through 09.

[72] Footage available upon request, Vision Machine video cassette numbers I3-111 through 112.

was tortured to death by the Japanese military administration in the early forties (See *Ludruk* 2003). During the early years of the Suharto regime, ludruk was banned entirely, and even after its re-legalization, the name was officially changed from ludruk to the generic *sandiwara*, meaning nothing more than "theatre".

This March 2003 performance was based on the layered film material that both excavates and performs the history of Saman Siregar's massacres. Here, however, all names are changed, including, even, "Indonesia" and "PKI", for it was considered too dangerous to perform the play using original names. The play was performed in the village of Rambutan, where Saman lives in retirement, and in the audience was Saman himself. This show, and its reception, are also filmed, performance and response together become another stage, another layer.[73]

The fact that Saman Siregar was in the audience was remarkable for being so unremarkable. Naively, we did not expect him to come, and at first we were worried. One can hear Christine Cynn's worried voice in the soundtrack announcing his arrival. Siregar saw on stage a performance of his own narrative, accurate down to many details. He and his wife watched as the performers sang scenes where an executioner accepts death lists from plantation managers, as described in Saman's interview. Some of the performers wore army camouflage as costumes. In an audience of over 100, Saman was the only one in camouflage. Saman did not react. For him, seeing his story on stage was a non-event. For the audience, too, his presence was a non-event. After all, he is a neighbour and, like the violence he committed, his presence is a regular spectre haunting their lives.

Hamlet uses the device of shadow play to confront his mother with the truth of her treachery. In Shakespeare's tragedy, there remains a moral compass in which guilt and innocence are socially legible, no matter how corrupt are those in power. Hamlet's mother goes to great lengths to hide her crime, and is terrified to discover that her son realises her guilt. In Rambutan, the ludruk performance,

[73] See "Saman Siregar at Ludruk Performance" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1]. Other footage available upon request, Vision Machine video cassette numbers I-46 through 46. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

as performative layer, was an actual shadow play, with the actual killer in the audience, and nobody dares confront Siregar during or after the performance because there remains a silence borne of terror, a paralysis around discussing the crimes of those in power. The killers have won, and so Siregar can recognize himself in the play, and he can almost like what he sees.

Whereas the staging of Siregar's performance at the Sungai Ular invites a consideration of the connections between history, memory, trauma and the politics of genre through a performative investigation of the ways in which the televisual and cinematic imaginary has shaped historical imagination, this staging issues into the subversive possibilities offered by popular genre forms in the public recovery, recounting, and working through, of memories and histories (notwithstanding the changing of names) that are otherwise unspeakable in a public forum. And the lack of response to Siregar's presence in the audience indexes the vast work still to be done.

If Saman Siregar demonstrates one mode of revisionism, then the ludruk appropriation of his performance instances another form of historical re-visioning. These experiments with genre are one passage, one path toward transformation, to becoming other. The aim is to both *reveal* and *resist* what the method makes manifest, to imagine oneself as other in the act of remembering, to make ones history ones own at the moment of transforming the self.

This process of becoming other was dramatically illustrated by the sudden possession of one of the ludruk players by the spirit of William Colby, one time director of the CIA, executor of the CIA's shadowy role in Indonesia's genocide, and architect and administrator of the Phoenix civilian extermination programme in Vietnam.[74] Here, a spectral figure that haunts the history of the region is suddenly given body and voice; a figure that lurked in the wings literally steps onto the stage.

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[74] See "Gunawan Possessed by William Colby" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1] (production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi). See Valentine (1990) for a masterly account of The Phoenix Program, and Prados (2003:144-57) for Colby's role in the Indonesian genocide.

But this is not simply a case of a performance making explicit a shadowy aspect of this history (here, the involvement of the CIA); the "message" and significance of Colby's convulsive cameo resist résumé. The aim of the project is not *exposé* – that is, not an attempt to render a coherent summary of a violence that defies summary – but rather to gain an insight into the singular and generic operations of a history, at once spectacular and spectral, that continues to be performed as an instrument of terror.

§ 2.5 Dramatis Personae

§ 2.5.1 The Globalisation Tapes

Sukirman, **Eddraman, G Siahaan, Astaman** and **Ibu Ati** are all plantation workers, and the principle filmmakers who worked with us to make *The Globalisation Tapes.* Sukirman is the President of Serbuk, the plantation workers' union that made the film. G Siahaan and Eddraman did much of the primary research for the film, and especially took a lead role researching the local history of 1965-66 massacres as we moved into the next project. Astaman was the principle cameraman for the film. Ibu Ati is the woman who we see spraying gramoxone, or paraquat in *The Globalisation Tapes.* It was she who did the first experiments with self-narration.

§ 2.5.2 The 1965-66 Project – the massacres at Bangun Bandar

Arsan Lubis was commander of the Komando Aksi death squads for the Galang district, where they killed 32 people. He lives at Bangun Bandar, the market next to Societé Financière's Bangun Bandar oil palm plantation where we filmed *The Globalisation Tapes.* Eddraman found him because he was well known as the commander of the death squads that terrorized the parents of the makers of *The Globalisation Tapes'* on the Bangun Bandar plantation. After the killings, he was asked by the plantation management to found the management-and-military-dominated union that replaced the progressive union that he exterminated. Because this "yellow union", SPSI, is perhaps the biggest obstacle to Serbuk's

organizing efforts, Arsan was a figure of almost mythic interest to the makers of *The Globalisation Tapes.* He is a leader in his community because, during the killings, he was art teacher and principle at the local elementary school. (Several of the killers in his group were teachers in his school.) He was later promoted to school inspector, and then regional head of the government's Department of Education and Culture.

After retiring, he was appointed head of the Galang district's KPU (*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*, or Public Election Commission). His duties are to ensure the 2004 general elections are fair and clean – an ironic reward for a man who was earlier responsible for exterminating the largest political party in the same district.

We have conducted extensive interviews with him. We filmed him and Rahmat Shah (see below) walk to the Sungai Ular to re-enact how the killings took place. An avid writer and painter, he has written *Embun Berdarah* (Bloody Dew) dramatizing and fictionalizing his role in the killings *from the perspective of the ghosts of his victims*. He is working with us to transform this book into a romantic, heroic musical. To this end, we have taken a boat to the mouth of the Sungai Ular looking for ghosts, conducted a series of script and storyboard workshops with him and other members of his death squad, and conducted auditions in the nearby metropolis of Medan. Our first shoot for the actual film (as opposed to its "making of") occurred on beautiful Samosir Island in Lake Toba, where Arsan presented the film's synopsis and an introductory speech to his epic tale.

Buyung Berlan was head of Komando Aksi in the Sei Buluh district, and technically presided over Saman Siregar's Komando Aksi cell. Buyung Berlan seems unaware of Saman's activities, indicating that Saman may have acted autonomously – probably because Saman forged a direct relationship with the military authorities that managed the plantation where Saman operated, allowing him to bypass the district-level Komando Aksi command. I include Buyung Berlan in this section because he is named by Arsan as the one who fished Lukman out of the Sungai Mesjid creek at Sei Buluh, presided over the castration

that supposedly finally killed him, and buried him in the Bangun Bandar plantation. Today, Buyung runs the Malay cultural association in Sei Buluh.

Ghosts: Arsan's Victims

Lukman is Arsan's most notorious victim. He managed to escape from the truck bringing him to the Sungai Ular and to return home to his parents' house. There, he was re-captured by Arsan's men. Just before dawn, he was left for dead in the Sungai Mesjid creek in the neighbouring district of Sungai Buluh. However, he was not dead, and begged for help until midday. Passers-by threw rocks at him, demonstrating their anti-PKI mettle. Eventually, he was fished out by **Buyung Berlan** (district-level Komando Aksi commander in Sungai Buluh district, the same district where Saman Siregar operated). Buyung's men claim to have killed Lukman by cutting off his penis, and burying him in a shallow grave in the Bangun Bandar oil palm plantation near the village of Rambutan.

Widely believed to have magic powers, we discovered Lukman to be something of a legend while producing *The Globalisation Tapes.* People continue to visit Lukman's grave to ask his ghost to tell them what numbers will come up in the lottery.

Lukman is the basis for the character of Moncot in Arsan's script. Moncot is Arsan's arch-rival and nemesis. After being killed, Moncot's ghost continues to antagonize Arsan, producing conflict by possessing Arsan in an attempt to destroy his efforts against the PKI.

During the shoot at the Sungai Ular, Arsan re-enacted in detail how Lukman was killed at the Sungai Mesjid creek, telling the complete story. He also directed actors auditioning for his film to re-enact the murder, including the abduction of Lukman from his parents' home.

We also filmed re-enactments and interviews with Lukman's family (see below).

Other victims of Arsan

Turib, Edikman, Wipat, Rege. Turib and **Edikman** are two other men who tried to escape with Lukman en route to the Sungai Ular. Both were caught.

Edikman was executed on the spot by being run over, again and again, by Arsan's truck.

Turib was considered invincible, and so locked in a railway shed, forced to eat and then defecate to destroy his invincibility, and then murdered in the Bangun Bandar plantation. We filmed Arsan and three of his men explaining the circumstances of Turib's death at his grave in the Bangun Bandar plantation.

Rege and **Wipat** were murdered along with three other men in the Old Well, a dried up well in Setrak, an agricultural hamlet behind Bangun Bandar. The murder of these five men marked the beginning of the killings in Galang district. The conflict in Arsan's novel is generated when the ghosts of these five men haunt Arsan's Komando Aksi group. The book is, in fact, written in the first person from the perspective of these five ghosts. We filmed Arsan and three of his men visiting the "old well", explaining what, precisely, happened there.

We have met with the siblings of **Edikman, Wipat** and **Rege**, and filmed with them as they read Arsan's "novel", *Embun Berdarah*, in which they discovered older brothers.

Arsan's Survivors

Lukman's family. Surviving members of Lukman's family includes two of his younger brothers, three older sisters, and his parents. With them, we have conducted both group and individual interviews, allowed them to narrate the footage of Arsan at the Sungai Ular, and invited them to re-enact how Arsan and his men abducted Lukman from the house to be killed. The scene is precisely the one described, dramatized, and illustrated with paintings in Arsan's book. It forms the climax of Arsan's film, and *is virtually the same as the one Arsan directs the actors to improvise during the auditions in Medan.*

Ibu Ngatiem is Rege's younger sister. She came to Lukman's parents house for an interview, and to read Arsan's book.

Wipat's sister did the same, but asked that her name not be used.

§ 2.5.3 The 1965-66 Project – the massacres at Rambung-Sialang & Firdaus

Saman Siregar is the death squad leader we see in *The Globalisation Tapes.* He was commander of the Rambung-Sialang cell of Komando Aksi, the paramilitary death squads charged with exterminating communists. His cell was perhaps the most lethal in the Sungai Buluh district. *Saman Siregar personally killed perhaps hundreds of people given to him by the military on the banks of the Sungai Ular.* He now lives in Rambutan, in the same village where we produced the film. In his retirement, he works as a *dukun,* or shaman, using magic to help people find a spouse, or locate missing property, or cure minor illnesses. Indeed, he was our neighbour while making the film. Before he retired, he worked as first supervisor on the London-Sumatra Rambung-Sialang oil palm and rubber plantation, about a one-hour's drive from Rambutan. With him, we filmed perhaps 15 hours of interview, and then took him to the banks of the Sungai Ular, where he demonstrated how he massacred people in 1965. He then narrated this footage of himself. Saman Siregar is the basis for the character Zigana in Arsan's romantic film adaptation of his role in the killings.

Saman Siregar's Survivors

Sudarmin, Kemis, Wagiran, Jumiran, Ibu Arbahiyah, Sugiono, Rahmat, Senen, Warji and **Bandi** are all survivors of Saman Siregar's terror who still live in the village of Firdaus, a hamlet surrounded by the London-Sumatra estate. They were all plantation workers imprisoned for their membership in SARBUPRI. We conducted extended interviews with each of them. Then, they were given the opportunity to narrate the footage of Saman Siregar.

They took us to the grave of two of their friends, **Misbach** and **Asilum**, killed by Saman in the plantation rather than at the Sungai Ular. They identified **Rahmat**

Shah as the only other surviving member of Saman's death squad, a man who still resides as their neighbour in Firdaus.

Saman Siregar's Victims

Misbach was the local leader of Pemuda Rakyat, the PKI-affiliated youth organization. He was from Sukasari village. Invulnerable to knives, he was killed in the mud by Saman Siregar's death squad in a ditch on the Rambung-Sialang plantation. Later he was buried nearby. His younger brother, **Warji**, along with other friends from Firdaus took us to film a discussion about his life at his grave.

Asilum was the head of SARBUPRI, the plantation worker's union on London-Sumatra's Rambung-Sialang Estate. He was killed at the same site as Misbach, several days later. He was swung against rubber trees until he was dead, and later buried by family in a grave next to Misbach's. He is the basis for the character of Asilum in the action-adventure musical written and directed by **Arsan Lubis** (see below).

Saman Siregar's Men

Rahmat Shah is the sole surviving member of Saman Siregar's Komando Aksi cell. The youngest member in a group of nine, he directly participated in the murder of Misbach and Asilum, and also perhaps Berok. At the Sungai Ular, his role was probably confined to bringing victims to the river and dragging them to be killed. It is probable that Saman Siregar did all of the actual killing.

We filmed extensive interviews with Rahmat, and brought him with Arsan Lubis to walk to the Sungai Ular and re-enact how people were killed there in 1965-66. Answering a request from Misbach's brother Warji, we also took Rahmat to demonstrate and explain how he killed Misbach and Asilum in the Rambung-Sialang plantation. Finally, we took him to the Titi Besi (Iron Bridge) upriver at the Sungai Ular – site of perhaps the largest massacres – to explain what he witnessed there. Finally, he, along with other members of Arsan Lubis's Komando Aksi cells, participated in one day's script workshop with Arsan to develop the scenario for the romantic dramatization of Arsan's role in the killings.

§ 2.5.4 The 1965-66 Project – shamans and artists

Gunawan lives in the village of Rambutan, and began working with us during the filming of *The Globalisation Tapes.* He survives by searching for kindling in the shrinking rubber plantations, which he then sells as firewood. He is a ludruk theatre artist, musician, and *kuda kepang* performer (a dance during which the performers are possessed and perform feats such as eating glass and breaking coconuts on their head). Gunawan also has a remarkable ability to call ghosts (*panggil roh).* Gunawan has developed a series of remarkable stories by narrating the footage with Arsan, Rahmat, and Saman Siregar, as well as archival footage of CIA director William Colby. These narrations led Gunawan to dream about the characters whom he narrated, and then to call their ghosts. He has called the ghosts of numerous victims, especially Lukman, as well as army generals such as Suharto, and others up the chain of command like plantation administrators and CIA director William Colby. With him, we have filmed a series of remarkable spirit possessions. His dreams about perpetrators and victims have formed the basis for a *wayang* opera[75], that we are filming with:

The Opera Troupe

Wagiran is a *dukun* (shaman) who's *prewangan* (inner ghost), like Gunawan's, can call ghosts in his dreams. He is also a *wayang kulit* (Javanese shadow puppetry) *dhalang* (puppet master) and composer of original wayang scenarios and songs. A former political prisoner from Firdaus, he is composing the music along with...

Turas, a ludruk performer and writer who drives a motor rickshaw in the nearby city of Tebing Tinggi. He is writing the libretto for the opera. His parents were political prisoners. Orphaned, he was raised by an uncle who was a member of Komando Aksi.

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[75] A form of Javanese opera often performed with shadow puppets, but in this instance performed with actors.

Sunardi, a member of Turas's ludruk troupe and extraordinary improviser, Sunardi is a ludruk singer and *pemandu* (a guide who watches over other performers who are possessed, ensuring their safety and "sending home" the spirits when the performance is over). In 2003, he produced a series of remarkable improvised songs about the massacre during a first experiment with ludruk improvisational theatre as a genre suitable for exploring the local history of the massacres.

Turia, a dancer and performer in Sunardi and Turas's ludruk troupe.

§ 2.5.5 The 1965-66 Project – Komando Aksi veterans in Medan

Soedirman, head of Komando Aksi in Medan during 1965-66. Soedirman now is North Sumatra head of Forum Eksponen 66, the organisation of Komando Aksi veterans that continues to lobby for renewed legal restrictions on massacre survivors and their children.

In 1965-66, **Amran YS** was Medan head of Pemuda Pancasila, perhaps the largest youth group to participate in the killings. A current member of the North Sumatra legislature, Amran YS is also a member of Forum Eksponen 66, as well as godfather of Pemuda Pancasila across North Sumatra. Currently, Pemuda Pancasila functions as a gang of extortionists, or *preman*, while pretending to a patriotic and civil service mission like the Boy Scouts. Identifiable by their orange and black camouflage uniforms, "PP" posts are visible on almost every street corner in North Sumatra, extorting money and intimidating people to this day.

Jamal Hasibuan was head of Komando Aksi in Labuhan Batu regency during 1965-66, where he coordinated what were perhaps North Sumatra's biggest massacres – the slaughter of members of the plantation workers' union at the Sungai Bila river near Rantauprapat, at the heart of the isolated Labuhan Batu plantation area. Now a wealthy public health advisor in Medan, he is also a philanthropist – head of the North Sumatra branch of the Indonesian Cancer

Society. Jamal currently sits as head of the Medan chapter of Forum Eksponen 66.

§ 2.5.6 The 1965-66 Project – chains of command

Joe Lazarsky was deputy station chief of the CIA in Jakarta between 1964 and 1966. This is the first time American foreknowledge has ever been acknowledged, and indicates a conspiracy with Suharto. We have conducted extended interviews with Joe Lazarsky, in which he describes knowing about the 1965 coup 6 months in advance, but, remarkably, he did not warn General Haris Nasution, the targeted head of the armed forces[76]. Instead, he claims to have passed the information on to Ali Murtopo, General Suharto's intelligence chief. Suharto, a lower-level general, was certainly not the "appropriate" person for the CIA to give this sensitive information.

Robert Martens was political analyst for the State Department at the American Embassy in Jakarta between 1964 and 1967. His job was to compile lists of names of PKI leadership. He admits passing on thousands of names to Suharto to make sure they got the right people. Lazarsky describes checking names off lists. We have interviewed Martens.[77]

General Kemal Idris was one of Suharto's most zealous commanders in the extermination of the PKI. We interviewed him on 20 July 2004.[78] As commander of the Indonesian Army's strategic reserve (KOSTRAD) in North Sumatra until November 1965, he describes receiving lists of people to arrest from the plantation management, and moving against them swiftly. He was then promoted to supreme commander of KOSTRAD nationally. Rather than deny that hundreds of thousands of people were killed, he blurs the issue by saying the killings happened on both sides, were not perpetrated by the army, and did not

[76] Christine Cynn's videotaped interview with Joe Lazarsky is available upon request, as is my telephone interview with the same.

[77] Recorded telephone interview available upon request.

[78] Vision Machine cassettes I3-17 through 20.

particularly occur in 1965, but rather continuously since the Madiun affair of 1948, and that the PKI killed at least as many Muslims as the Muslims killed PKI. On the other hand, Kemal, who fell out of favour with Suharto in the 1980s, describes realizing that Suharto was actually behind the September 30th coup, and thus a traitor. Along with the implications of Lazarsky's comments, these form the highest level admissions of Suharto's involvement in the conspiracy on record to date.

During 1965-66, **William Egan Colby** was East Asia director of the CIA, and based largely in Saigon where he oversaw the civilian assassination component of the Vietnam war. The success of the Indonesian extermination campaign is understood to be the prototype for the Vietnamese equivalents, which he acknowledged to the U.S. Senate to have claimed 40,000 lives. According to journalist Kathy Kadane, Colby admitted visiting Jakarta at the height of the killings to monitor the massacres' progress. He is said to have stayed up all night in U.S. Ambassador **Marshall Green's** office, listening in on the Indonesian army's radio system, provided by the CIA to help the army coordinate the massacres, checking names off death lists provided by American analysts such as Robert Martens. Kathy Kadane has declined to release the tapes of her interview with the now deceased Colby, but Colby's esteemed biographer John Prados called Kadane's report "credible" in a private telephone call to me in June 2004. Colby was later promoted to Director of the CIA by President Nixon.

§ 2.6 A Description of the Shoot

From the many hours of footage with the above characters, many of the project's critical concerns were distilled in a single shoot with Rahmat Shah and Arsan Lubis.[79] On 21 February 2004, I filmed Rahmat Shah from the village of Firdaus being introduced to Arsan Lubis outside Arsan's house in Bangun Bandar market.

[79] A compilation of material from this shoot constitutes the bulk of the work-in-progress *Snake River* (37-minute reel, chapters 3 and 8-10). The unedited footage is available on request (Vision Machine video cassettes I2-31 through 33). Production translation by Taufiq Hanafi, post-production translation by Erika Suwarno and Rama Astraatmadja.

It is the first time they have met, and what begins as a discussion of their backgrounds – where they come from, and how their relatives may know each other – suddenly veers into a session of boasting about their role in the massacres. Uninterrupted and in virtually a single take, they brag about different ways of killing people, cutting off ears, terrorizing neighbours with severed hands, as well as their own sense of religious and patriotic duty that they now claim led them to kill. We then follow them as they reach the Sungai Ular, some 15 miles away. The footage is basically a document of an extraordinary *walk* that they take from the trans-Sumatra highway along a 300 meter dirt track, down an embankment and through a banana grove to a small wooden platform on the banks of the river where, between them, they claim to have personally slaughtered 80 alleged plantation workers between October 1965 and April 1966.

Along the way, and in very long takes, they talk to the camera, describing what they did, telling stories about specific victims as well as their relationship to their commanders in the military. They take turns demonstrating on each other how they beat their victims, dragged them along the track, organised a staff of guards and designated executioners, and, ultimately, how they killed people, drank their blood, and overcame the magic powers of those victims who were "invincible" . Arsan, being wealthier, more educated, and a higher rank in Komando Aksi, does most of the talking, and tends to take the role of executioner, demonstrating on Rahmat how he would kill; but Rahmat chirps along, repeating much of what Arsan has to say, and adding his own graphic and boastful stories whenever he has the chance. The session ends when they nostalgically take snapshots at the river to record their "day out".

So many issues about history, terror, genre, performance and spectrality come together in this material that it constitutes an *exemplary moment* in a much larger practice, and one whose analysis occupies us for much of the writing that follows.

Chapter 3
The Spectral Operation of Spectacular Violence

§ 3.1 Massacre as Conjuration

Before examining the performative function of the footage of Arsan and Rahmat's walk to the Sungai Ular, I want to consider this remarkable series of passages, re-enactments, and reminiscences between two genocidaires as a starting point for analysing the spectral operation of 1965's spectacular violence, and specifically the events in the North Sumatran plantation belt. This means proceeding *as if* their statements can be taken as evidentiary, even though we also understand them to be performative in ways already discussed, acknowledging too that the historical real can never be grasped by any attempt to inscribe it. That, and the fact that Arsan and Rahmat prove to be unreliable narrators, in ways discussed below.

Caveats aside, the footage of Rahmat, Arsan and Saman Siregar, as well as the dozens of hours of interviews with them and other perpetrators, both from the city of Medan and the plantation villages, constitutes the largest available archive of material about the North Sumatran genocide and how it was perpetrated. Precisely what the epistemological status of this material is remains in doubt, and very much the subject of this research.

Rahmat and Arsan perform for the camera the lethal *routine* in which prisoners were led from the highway to the spot where 10,500 people were executed. The fact that the performance makes the process *seem routine* has two somewhat contradictory effects. On the one hand, it allows us to understand the killings *as routine,* as *mass* killings, as systematic and thus scripted, rehearsed and generic. On the other hand, this scripted quality leads one to doubt the footage's evidentiary value for any *particular* killing. Moreover, the performance itself is terrifying precisely because it makes the killing seem routine, conjuring thousands of deaths and conferring upon the performers the power of a spectral yet official killing machine. This may sow doubt as to whether they are in fact

telling "the truth", or even *remembering,* or whether, instead, they are performing for the camera in a personal bid for this spectral power.[80]

Still, the purpose of this exercise is not, ultimately, to chronicle what happened, or to recover a historical real that hitherto has remained spectral; rather, the task is *to analyse, through Arsan and Rahmat's film performance, the ways in which the events of the massacres are themselves performatives*, to trace the spectres conjured by the operation of the massacre, to analyse how these spectres haunt, terrorise and *paralyse,* rendering incoherent subsequent attempts to remember – that is to recount the past and hold to account individuals, institutions, and vested interests that were implicated in Sumatra's massacres. Indeed, the apparent contradiction is an actual one, because what *are* "the events of the massacres themselves"? If our only record comes from perpetrators' performances, performances that seek to use the events (whose status remains liminal) to underwrite their economy of spectral charge, performances that seek not to recount the past with adequacy, but rather to performatively conjure spectral powers for the performer, what can we actually know about the past? Conditioned by genre, distorted by boasting, riddled with omissions – can we claim with any certainty that these perpetrators' performances mark "the events themselves"? Uncertain and hesitant in the face of what is, indeed, an epistemological limit, we press on, and speak of events not merely as occurrences, but specifically in terms of their performativity, as a conjuring of spectres that continue to haunt, within the context of a veritable séance of power and violence.

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[80] James Siegel, whose research on state terror and spectrality in Indonesia forms an essential theoretical context for this project, raised exactly this question of the epistemology of Rahmat and Arsan's performance in an 8 June 2004 email to the author:

> The question that struck me, as I watched, was how it was possible for you to get such extensive responses. I have myself spent some time with several murderers who told me their stories -- either about 65 or about [the 1999-2000 witch killings] more recently. But none of [the murderers] went on [for] so long. It was that which made me think it would be worthwhile to put in question exactly what you were getting. I don't have the impression that this is exactly memory, bodily or otherwise. But beyond that, I had the impression that they were all talking for the camera, which means using the language of the other rather than re-experiencing the events in ways that would elicit memories that feel un-coded and that need some struggle to become expressed.

Jean-Luc Godard gestures at the inseparability of violence and its symbolic performance as history when he says, in Histoire(s) du Cinema, "Forgetting extermination is part of extermination." This unity of violence and its performance could not be more stark: from their first meeting, Rahmat and Arsan's dialogue is full of anecdotes and details of techniques that suggest ways the killings themselves were spectral and spectacular acts of public address, spectacles whose function exceeded mass murder, but rather also produced a spectral power of terror. In Indonesian this is often referred to as *trauma,* whose use in Indonesian demands a moment's attention.

James Siegel's study of the spectacle of spectral political violence in New Order Indonesia, *A New Criminal Type in Jakarta* (1998), provides essential elements for the theoretical fNgatiemwork of this thesis, and describes in some detail the use of the Indonesian word "trauma". Victims of mysterious and violent crimes will often claim to be traumatised, using an Indonesian appropriation of the English word. In his analysis of Indonesian tabloid crime reporting, Siegel describes a witness who tried to save a man from being burned alive:

> It is not his effort or the effects of fire that made him ill, it is the "very disturbing event." His illness is not fully described by its physical symptoms. It is trauma, the western word, that he uses. Here the word seems to mean that the symptoms cannot be accounted for by physical causes and the effects are more than physiological. Trauma in that sense is similar to ghostly possession. But it is made explicit that the illness is not caused by ghosts. It is caused by something having to do with this new sort of criminal. (Siegel 1998:94)

Siegel goes on to suggest that in the foreignness of the word trauma inheres something untranslatable, mysterious, even spectral that indexes not only that which is unexplainable about trauma's symptoms, but also that which is unexplainable about the crime itself: the mysteriousness of the crime and its criminal, and the spectrality *conjured* by this mystery. In the case of the 1965-66 massacres, which is described as "trauma" almost to the point of cliché, what Siegel describes as the *untranslatable force* of "trauma's" foreign etymology indexes the spectrality of both the crime and the killing machine.[81] And from my

[81] Describing the role "trauma" plays in the state's appropriation of spectral power, Siegel (1998) writes:

experience talking to survivors in North Sumatra, "trauma" is not merely a psychic condition borne of mysterious circumstance, but also an index of fear and prohibition, since the word is very often always used to close a conversation, to say, "Let's not dredge up the past, *kami masih trauma"* [we still feel trauma]. Again, from my experience in Sumatra, this is not merely what it would mean in English – i.e. a fear of personal psychological strain from remembering something traumatic that still has not been worked through; such strain usually expresses itself in some other gesture that betrays some emotion besides fear. No, trauma is used to refer to the fear of reprisal, an index of prohibition. It is a fear of the massacre's return, *but a return precipitated as revenge for the process of remembrance.* Trauma, then, indicates the spectral threat of recurrence – not just an internal psychic fear, but a threat made by a spectral perpetrator against all those who might have a psychic investment in *remembrance.* And it is a spectral threat in part because it is neither explicit nor comes from a single identifiable source; rather it is implied by and diffused throughout the manifold terrorizing performances of the official history of 1965, particularly the film *G30S,* which serves above all to arouse hatred for surviving members of the PKI. For these histories perform the entire massacre as *obscene,* excluded from view, spectral. In this sense, these histories constitute a powerful and threatening example of what *not to talk about* and, by extension, what must continue to remain spectral. By talking about the massacre, by remembering it, by discussing it, its miasmic spectrality might be compromised. Names might be named; victims identified; practices of murder and terror articulated. This undermining of the massacre's spectrality would constitute an actual attack on the state's power, a theft from the state's spectral armoury. As such, it is no wonder that throughout the Suharto dictatorship those who tried to raise the issue of 1965 were described as *pengacau* (trouble makers, insurgents), *penghianat* (traitors), and, most forcefully, were subject to the counter-accusation of *trying to bring the PKI back,* as if the real traumatic return would be that of the PKI itself, rather

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"Trauma" indicates a physical condition, a mark on the body, whose cause is unlocatable but is nevertheless, by the foreignness of the word, associated with things foreign.... "Trauma," "shock," kriminalitas indicate a foreign origin for something found domestically and the possibility also of control of that foreignness by the present political class. (Siegel 1998:134-5)

than that of the massacre. Again, the massacre itself remains inadmissible, its spectrality uncompromised by any public mention.

I suggest here that the state's claim to the spectral but very real power of trauma – in the Indonesian sense just outlined – was not merely a side effect of genocide, but *a motivating force*, an essential part of the military's strategy for acquiring what James Siegel calls "the power of terror" through 1965-66's spectacular séance of violence.

Rahmat and Arsan's performance suggests many ways that the *massacres themselves*, with this phrase subject to the epistemological caveats outlined above, were tactics for producing terror, a political strategy of representation, a force that defines a field of power and is produced through a violence that incorporates its own strategy of symbolic performance.

There are numerous examples of how the massacres were conducted to terrify both bystanders and victims. Rahmat Shah again and again tells the same story in which, on his way home from the Sungai Ular, he and the rest of Saman Siregar's Komando Aksi death squad stopped at the Sudi Mampir (Pleasant Visit) restaurant in Perbaungan. They did not have enough money to pay for the food, so Rahmat presented the restaurant owner with a small bundle as a "sign that they'd come back". When the restaurant owner opened the bundle, he discovered two human ears. Terrified, he offered the food and cigarettes for free. Rahmat always explains that they did not want the food for free, and that the next day Saman Siregar returned to pay; it was merely an instance of using the power of terror as an actual power to obtain credit. Arsan responds with a story of his own: how he delivered a victim's severed hands to the manager of the Bangun Bandar oil palm plantation because he had been "stingy" (*pelit*) and "arrogant" (*sombong*). Arsan cannot contain his high-pitched laughter as he remembers how the plantation manager's wife fainted when she saw the hands. Over and over again, Rahmat and Arsan stress the perception of the massacres by bystanders: how the rivers flowed red with blood; how nobody would eat fish because they were rumoured to have human fingers in their stomachs.

Arsan describes tying bodies to banana stalks and floating them down the river with the PKI flags flying on both sides. This story caught our attention, because Pipit Rochijat (1985) describes the same technique in his memoir of the killings in East Java, suggesting perhaps that across Indonesia death squads were trained to terrorise downstream communities in this way. On a second visit with Arsan several months later, I asked him again about the rafts. He admitted that he never witnessed this personally; rather, he heard about such rafts being floated down the Sungai Ular from upstream, near Titi Besi [iron bridge], another major kill site. Whether or not the rafts actually existed, the rumour functions in the same way – to perform the killings not merely as expedient elimination of a dangerous political party, but as conjurations of terror. More on the performative power of rumour below.

§ 3.2 Haunted Communities – the nationalisation of death

Most importantly, the army and police delivered the condemned into the hands of Komando Aksi from the same villages as the victims' and their families. The victims were killed on instruction by the army, but only after their official release from the military's political prisons. *"Jangan sampai ke rumah"* (Don't let them make it home alive), Rahmat recalls being instructed by prison officials. Of course, once delivered to the political prisons, the army could have murdered prisoners without soliciting help from the local community. However, in the Deli-Serdang Regency, a daily quota (*jatah*) of victims was given to Komando Aksi to be murdered at the Sungai Ular and several other *tempat pembuangan* (dump sites). The army delivered its victims back into their own communities to be murdered. It is as if Argentina's disappeared reappeared, only to disappear again at the hands of their own neighbours.

The official release of victims from the prisons to be killed by members of their own communities locates the power of death in the community, in the villages, rather than solely with the government itself. As survivors live side-by-side with killers, neighbours, then, become agents of a terrifying power embraced by the government *yet also beyond it*. The government retains the power to summon this force that lies not in the government per se, and even the power to stop it, but

the power does not lie with the government, but in the thousands of hamlets that make up the Indonesian nation. The government becomes a kind of shaman, or *dukun*, capable of conjuring the spectral power of death (*panggil roh*, or "calling spectres") that is now located in the community, among ordinary Indonesians.

Siegel describes similar dynamics of spectral power in his analysis of the *petrus* killings of the early 1980s. Petrus is an acronym for *penembakan misterius* or *penembak misterius*, meaning "mysterious shootings" or, more evocatively, "mysterious killer", in which several thousand tattooed men were murdered by death squads in a campaign against criminals, and in an attempt to eliminate thugs hired by Suharto's Golkar party to help fix the 1982 election – perhaps because they knew too much of Golkar's corrupt tactics.[82]

In his analysis of petrus, Siegel identifies a core dynamic in New Order violence: the state, through propaganda, the media, and so forth, creates a phantom and lethal power, a spectral power, to which the state is attracted and claims for itself, all the while blaming that same power on others. In the context of petrus, this power is signified by the word *kriminalitas*, or "criminality", but structurally is identical to its prototype and ultimate model, "PKI" as performatively defined by New Order official histories.

Siegel writes that the Indonesian government kills

> those they see to be in their own image. [...] The targets of their murderous impulses have their own spectral histories, communists differing from criminals, for instance, but behind the faces of communists and criminals there is in common a sense of menace, the origins of which cannot be securely located in historical events.[...]It is the commonality of visage that made a notion of power accessible to the officials of the state, producing a new criminal type [the state itself]. To the state, the menace was an

[82] Interestingly, petrus marked the beginning of the end for Joe Lazarsky's contact and Suharto's loyal friend, Ali Murtopo. The Golkar thugs massacred by petrus were hired by, and loyal to, Murtopo; the massacre was engineered by Suharto in cahoots with Murtopo's former subordinate, Benny Murdani. Petrus was an attempt to curb Murtopo's meteoric rise in power while opening the way for Murdani's promotion to commander of the armed forces and, ultimately, defence minister (Astraatmadja 2004). In the years just before the 1965 coup, Murdani worked in Thailand for Murtopo as an intelligence operative. Undercover as a Garuda Indonesia airlines executive, Murdani's job was to build contacts with foreign governments friendly to the idea of destroying Sukarno and the PKI (Anderson 2000:10).

> attraction. It was the lethal power that the state wanted for its own. It is my thesis that the state itself took on the form of a criminal in order to obtain this power.[...]the state imitated the criminal, striving to become like him. In the process, a new understanding of "death" arose, one with a national rather than local or familial context. It is this that I call the nationalization of "death". (1988:9)

There is a tension here between the national and the local, because the army delivered victims into the hands of their *local* communities. The army, of course, is the national army, the one originally constituted through the national war for independence from the Dutch. Local people killed, by and large, on the orders of a national authority. The nation, as Benedict Anderson describes, is a community imagined by its members, who invariably lead lives in specific localities. The killings, perpetrated locally but in accordance with a national mandate, inevitably and permanently changed local relations, dividing local communities into perpetrators and victims, the living, the dead – and the traumatised, in the sense described above. That such a vast transformation at the level of the *local* could occur, across Indonesia, on a national authority surely affected and, in its perverse way, strengthened the hold of national authority on the local imagination, and this through a logic that Siegel describes as a nationalisation of death.

Of course, the outsourcing of murder is a way of enabling officials to deny responsibility for the worst massacres, keeping the government's hands clean, at least as far as some observers know, or claim to know. In the official history, to the extent that there is mention of *any* killing, the story goes that people rose up spontaneously against the PKI and their sympathizers. This is given a different pitch depending on the audience, but for the international community it is claimed that the people somehow went *amok* – originally a Malay-Indonesian word – slaughtering their neighbours until the rivers ran red with blood. For both the Indonesian government and those members of the international community complicit in the massacres – particularly the United Kingdom and the US – this has been a useful fiction. It masks the roles of both Indonesian and foreign governments, while at the same time allowing foreign governments to send further military aid because only the military can restore order and prevent further spontaneous bloodshed. In this way, at least internationally, the army has

been able to absolve itself of most responsibility for one of the worst massacres in human history.

But having civilians do the killing is certainly not only about denial of responsibility, at least not in the Indonesian context. First, the army's role was evident to survivors who witnessed military police guarding the trans-Sumatra highway near kill sites. Moreover, family members knew that their relatives were given to the death squads directly from the army's custody. After viewing footage of Saman Siregar, Kemis explicitly mentions that Siregar was given a quota.[83] Moreover, rumours of the killings and how they were perpetrated were whispered behind closed doors within the plantation villages. Our research suggests that most families of victims know the identity of the killers, even if they are too afraid to investigate. Misbach's brother, Warji, knew that Rahmat Shah and Saman Siregar were involved in the murders of Misbach and Asilum; indeed, when Rahmat invited us to the Rambung-Sialang plantation to show how he killed Misbach and Asilum, Asilum's younger brother, Kasihan, walked over from the rice field adjacent to the site where Asilum was killed. He approached Rahmat and asked what we were filming, and Rahmat was quite open about it. When I later asked Rahmat why he did not keep it a secret, Rahmat answered, "What could I tell him? He knew. What else would I be doing here with a film crew?"[84] Similarly, the relatives of Lukman, Wipat, Edikman, and others all knew their relatives were murdered by Barmawi, Jemarik, Maknuh and Puteh under Arsan's command. And almost everybody witnessed members of the military "backing up" Komando Aksi when they came to abduct PKI members from their homes. So the military's role was hardly a secret.

Indeed, as Joe Lazarsky explains, the military itself did a lot of killing.[85] Sometimes, this killing served as an example to encourage Komando Aksi

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[83] See Chapter 2 of the 37-minute reel on the *Snake River* DVD. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

[84] Footage of Rahmat at Misbach and Asilum's gravesite is available upon request (Vision Machine cassette numbers I3-111 through 112).

[85] The June 2004 interview with Lazarsky was filmed by Christine Cynn, and is available upon request.

members to take more initiative in the massacres. Low-ranking Komando Aksi member Basmi from Dolok Mesihul describes how, in his area, the massacres began in earnest after just such a *demonstration killing* by the army. According to Basmi, the army ordered Komando Aksi to bring its prisoners, then still held in a temporary detention centre in Dolok Mesihul, to Societé Financière's nearby Bangun Bandar1 plantation. There, soldiers in uniform forced six prisoners to dig a mass grave. Before an audience of Komando Aksi activists, the soldiers shot the prisoners, and ordered the other prisoners to fill in the grave.[86]

So survivors know something about Komando Aksi's relationship to the military and the quota system. The government's denial of responsibility, then, merely conjures further spectral power for the government by forcing people to live an Orwellian contradiction between lived experience and that which was publicly admissible throughout the 35 years of Suharto's rule. By denying responsibility for something everybody knows, the massacres are performed as obscene, inadmissible, unthinkable, and therefore spectral. The military's masterminding of a quota system is not exactly a secret, but it is not exactly publicly stated either. Rather, as argued above, it is neither known nor unknown, spoken nor unspoken, but rather whispered, insinuated into the subtext of daily discourse: precisely spectral – there and not there. This is a powerful conjuring in its own right.

Moreover, in these same communities, the very fact that the quotas were *official* is essential to the way executioners exonerate themselves for what they did. While strolling to the Sungai Ular, Arsan and Rahmat both explain that they were not murderers (*pembunuh*), even though they participated in the killing (*pembunuhan*). If this is a stretch in English, it is even more so in Indonesian, where the root for both killing and murder is the same (*bunuh*). They explain that because they only killed (*membunuh*) their quota, they were not pembunuh, even though they participated in the pembunuhan. Because they did not exceed their

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[86] So far as we know, this 28 August 2004 interview, recorded on Vision Machine cassette I3-111, is the first time that either this story or the grave's location have been documented. Footage available upon request.

quota, they are not guilty, and may even be heroes rather than murderers. Indeed, this distinction is the basis for a euphemising by which the words "victim" and "human being" disappear altogether: Arsan and Rahmat often speak of transporting and executing "quotas" rather than people. The fact that this euphemism – and many others – is *shared* evokes a telling historical precedent. Hannah Arendt (1994) describes the Nazis' codification of euphemisms into official "language rules", and suggests that these may have been essential to the execution of the Final Solution:

> [I]t is rare to find documents in which such bald words as "extermination," "liquidation," or "killing" occur. The prescribed code names for killing were "final solution," "evacuation" (*Aussiedlung*), and "special treatment" (*Sonderbehandlung*) [...] Moreover, the very term "language rule" (Sprachregelung) was itself a code name; it meant what in ordinary language would be called a lie. (Arendt 1994:85)

Language rules proved indispensable, she argues, in the "maintenance of order and sanity in the various widely diversified services whose cooperation was essential in this [the execution of the Final Solution]" (ibid). This worked as follows: "The net effect of this language system was not to keep these people ignorant of what they were doing, but to prevent them from equating it with their old, 'normal' knowledge of murder and lies." (Arendt 1994:86). Arendt describes perpetrators as being "subjects *of* language rules" (ibid, my emphasis), suggesting that participants in genocide both use *and are used by* the interlocking discourses and practices, including the language rules, that facilitate and constitute the apparatus of genocide. That is to say, language rules produce subjects willing to kill by positioning the killing *outside* the discourse of murder. Thus, language rules enable people to kill (membunuh) without becoming killers (pembunuh). Without official or unofficial language rules, states may, at the very least, find it more difficult to recruit and retain their volunteer killers.

By delivering victims into the hands of civilians who kill but are not killers, the Indonesian military drives a thin wedge between itself and the actual killings, suggesting that the army wanted to keep the killings unofficial – or, more likely, spectral. According to Rahmat's version, but not Arsan's, even the quotas were

encoded: prisoners were released, but Komando Aksi was forewarned, "*Jangan sampai ke rumah*" (Don't let them make it home...)[87]

Thus, from the top levels of national administration, responsibility is diffused outwards and downwards; while, from the local hamlet *algojo* (executioner), responsibility is deferred upwards and to the centre. This dynamic, serving to defer responsibility at once upwards and downwards, serves to generate legitimacy and force – the state locates the killings in the masses, while the masses cite an official state sanction.

The official story of the population spontaneously running amok, seeking bloody revenge for the crimes of Gestapu functions differently for different audiences. This is surely to the military's benefit. As mentioned, some in the international community may believe the official story, and thus not investigate what actually happened, or even send aid to the military to help "restore order"; nations complicit in the massacres can themselves take cover under the official story, and also use it as an excuse to send further military aid; middle and upper class urban Indonesians with little knowledge of what happened in the countryside, and who might naturally rally around Suharto's anti-communist regime, may believe the official accounts.

But the official story may function most powerfully for those who know better, for survivors or those likely to be targeted in the future, for those living in the (formerly) restive communities of the plantation belt. For here is where the official history functions as an Orwellian lie, and thus as an instrument of terror in its own right. Here, in a strategy that can only produce more terror, people must live *as if* the story were true. Thus, the official denial delivered with a poker face to the urban middle classes and the international community is accompanied by a sly wink when repeated in the plantation belt, a terrifying sign of the powerlessness of the victims and survivors.

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[87] *Jangan sampai ke rumah* is repeated several times by Rahmat, including in interviews (Vision Machine video cassettes I3-43 through 44) and when he first meets Arsan (video cassette I2-31).

The government, the military, performs its heroic return to the scene as the restorer of order, as the protector not only of the killers but of the victims, calming communities that exploded in a "spontaneous orgy of violence". Survivors are forced to play their part in this well-rehearsed scenario, turning to the military in gratitude, asking their own killers for protection. Being forced to perform this script is surely part of what's terrifying for survivors. Ibu Ngatiem burst into tears not when describing how her brother was killed, but when remembering the grim ritual of reporting every week to the military "for protection".[88] It is a strategy of power and terror, forcing people not just to believe in a lie, but also to act as if it were true, and even to depend on it for actual protection from further raids by Komando Aksi. (Rahmat and Arsan explain, "We asked for more victims, but there was a limit; we weren't allowed to take more than our quota.")[89] Survivors played their part in the official script as a matter of survival, but these performances may or may not, as Pascal suggests, ultimately lead to survivors actually believing the official story. After all, behind the official and public charade, circulating in whispered rumours, are other accounts, other stories about what *really* happened, spectral because publicly unspeakable – not quite present, but not absent either.

In the North Sumatran plantation belt, the aim of the official military-as-protector story, then, is not that it should be believed by the villagers, but rather that it should be *performed*, and this performance holds the power to terrify – a grim example of historical narrative as instrument of terror.[90]

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[88] Footage available upon request (video cassettes I3-114 through 116).

[89] See Chapter 8, 37-minute reel, *Snake River* DVD. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

[90] The state's posturing as protector is somewhat analogous to protection rackets and organised crime, particularly the way survivors were forced to report for continued protection, paying money and bribes each time. However, in a protection racket, those who pay for protection can expect to live and make a profit. Here, those marked for extermination cannot hope to live. (Lukman's family describes desperate but hopeless attempts to bribe army officials to get Lukman released.) Indeed, unlike in a protection racket, the state assumes the *mystique* of protector not because it is terribly interested in protecting people, even for profit, but rather because this mystique enhances the state's power of terror, further rendering obscene (and thus spectral) its power of death, and further terrorising those who must rely on the state as protector in order to steal a few more days of life, even as they know it is only a grim charade that ultimately serves to conjure a terrifying spectrality for the state.

In some ways, however, by coming to the villages to restore security (*pengamanan*) and forcing PKI suspects to seek protection from the army, the army also, in some ways, *makes it true,* in a stark demonstration of the coextension of power and discourse. And so, occasionally, the army did in fact develop a grim split personality between murderer and protector, with army concentration camps actually offering temporary sanctuary from Komando Aksi, even as the very same camps handed out quotas every night. Jasimin, a surviving friend of Misbach's, describes Asilum being released from the prison only to be picked up on his way home by Saman Siregar and his Komando Aksi cell. Jasimin explains that Misbach was warned this would happen to him if he allowed himself to be released, but refused to heed his friends' advice that he should stay in jail. After Misbach was killed, Jasimin checked himself back into prison, seeking sanctuary among his own would-be murderers.[91] Probably, Jasimin was not killed because he returned to prison, but rather because his name was never on the list of those to be killed. On the other hand, the army's public announcements of "restoring order" were often veiled calls for wiping out the remaining PKI suspects, for only once the PKI threat was destroyed would there be lasting security.

This precise dynamic may have played a central role in catalysing the North Sumatran massacres. Even Sukarno, when still president in 1965 and 1966, was held in the grip of this terrifying performance of the official story. On the verge of being placed under house arrest, he did not have the power to publicly challenge the official story that the killing was a spontaneous popular uprising against PKI treachery. Indeed, as an index of his own powerlessness in the face of terror, Sukarno was forced to speak the army's language when he requested that the "TNI [*Tentara Negara Indonesia,* or Indonesian National Army] protect the PKI". He could not order the army to stop slaughtering people, because the fact that the army was slaughtering people was not publicly admissible. Presumably, Sukarno would have faced further sanction had he violated this taboo and mentioned the army's role in the killings themselves. But in asking the

[91] Jasimin's 27 July 2004 interview is available on request (Vision Machine video cassette I3-34).

TNI to protect the PKI, he played his part in what was really the army's show. For on the occasion of his visit to Pematangsiantar, North Sumatra, in November 1965, General Haris Nasution was able to use Sukarno's tongue-tied and hamstrung plea to catalyse further killing. Nasution transformed "protect the PKI" into "slaughter the PKI", by interpreting "protect" as "*mengamankan*" – to make safe, but also, in the performative and euphemising *language rules* of Komando Aksi, "to kill", as in *mengamankan jatah* – to pacify one's quota, or to kill one's quota.[92] Nasution's declaration that Sukarno asked the army to *mengamankan* the PKI was thus immediately understood as an order to step up the pace of the genocide by Komando Aksi and the military command responsible for issuing quotas to be pacified (*diamankan*). Several survivors from Firdaus told us that the most intense massacres in North Sumatra were precipitated by Nasution's visit to Siantar.[93]

First, Sukarno is terrorised into asking for an end to the killings – but within the military discourse (that the killings were spontaneous, perpetrated by civilians); then, having effectively (and, being president, performatively) validated the military's own discourse – which implies an entire ontology and version of the events – Sukarno's plea was easily twisted into a call for more killings and more terror. (The military's discourse includes, of course, the language rules by which "killing" [membunuh] and "exterminate" [menumpas] become "to make safe" [mengamankan].)

The outsourcing of killing to members of the local community while at the same time proceeding via official quotas – not to mention playing the role of "restorer of order" (and thus, in certain unusual cases, protector of the PKI) – all conspire to blur the killer's identity, performing it as mysterious yet implicitly identified with the state. Similar to the 1965-66 killings, the *penembak misterius*

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[92] Rahmat, Arsan and Jamal Hasibuan all refer to killing with this word, as in "*mengamankan jatah*", literally meaning "making the quota safe", but taken to mean "killing the quota". In subtitling Komando Aksi members' speech, I usually translate *mengamankan* as pacify – a recognisable euphemism in English, too, given the history of its usage by Americans in the Vietnamese War.

[93] Sudarmin, particularly, made this point. Footage available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I-54 through 56).

(mysterious killers) of *petrus* were also simultaneously mysterious yet acknowledged by the state – at the very least, they were an open secret. It is as if the motive of keeping the killers mysterious was only to produce the appropriate spectral effects. In fact, Suharto was all too ready to claim responsibility for petrus in his official autobiography, *Otobiographi: Pikiran, Ucapan, dan Tindakan Saya* [Authobiography: My Thoughts, Expressions, and Deeds]. Quoting the president extensively:

> The real problem is that these events [petrus] were preceded by fear and nervousness among the people. Threats from the criminals, robberies, murder and so on all happened. Stability was shaken. It was as though the country no longer had any stability. There was only fear. Criminals went beyond human limits. They not only broke the law, but they stepped beyond the limits of humanity. For instance, old people were robbed of whatever they had and then killed. Isn't that inhumane? If you are going to take something, sure, take it, but then don't murder. There were women whose wealth was stolen and other peoples' wives even raped by these criminals and in front of their husbands. Isn't that going too far? Doesn't that demand action?
> [...]
> Automatically, we had to give it the *treatment* [in English in original], strong measures. And what sort of measures? Sure, with real firmness. But that firmness did not mean shooting, bang! Bang! Just like that. But those who resisted, sure, like it or not, had to be shot.
> [...]
> Because they resisted, they were shot. So the corpses were left where they were, just like that. This was for *shock therapy* [in English], so the crowds would understand that faced with criminals there were still some who would act and would control them. (cited in Siegel 1998:106-108)

There is a series of simultaneous movements at work in this extraordinary passage. The government itself becomes the criminal, while at the same time retroactively conjuring a spectral criminal, or kriminalitas. It is as if the government first envisions, imagines, or conjures a spectral and sadistic (*sadis*[94]) kriminalitas, and then claims its power by becoming the most sadis of all criminals. However, as with Suharto's explanation, the conjuring may come after, before, or contemporaneously with the appropriation or magical transformation of state into spectre. That is to say, the process of state

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[94] "Sadis" (from sadistic), like "trauma", is another Indonesian word that Siegel argues derives its spectral power of terror from its untranslatable foreignness.

transforming into spectre adheres to a spectral rather than chronological temporal logic.[95]

So, applying this analysis to 1965-66, the state conjures a spectral foe endowed with a terrible power of death. Then, jealous of the powers with which it has endowed its own conjuration, it seeks to appropriate them by *becoming* its own

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[95] What I mean to indicate here is a basic dynamic most easily expressed as follows: first the state conjures an imaginary enemy, and *then*, lured by its own conjuration, jealous of the power it has somehow unleashed, the state seeks to claim that power by *becoming* its spectral foe, defeating its spectral foe and claiming its power all in the same gesture by acting as its conjured foe would act. But this chronology of conjure first, appropriate second, is too simple. For it may be that, following the logic of "shoot first, ask questions later", these two things happen in reverse order. The government may shoot criminals *first*, and *then* conjure (i.e., invent through propaganda) a spectral, sadistic and terrifying kriminalitas that may never have existed while the actual criminals were alive and committing crimes. This post-facto spectrality may serve simultaneously to justify the killings, and to claim, through the killings that have already happened, the spectral power of the kriminalitas thus conjured *after the fact*. Here, the shootings complete the circuit whereby the spectral power of kriminalitas is appropriated, *even though the shooting happened before kriminalitas was conjured.* This odd, seemingly backwards chronology is a reversal of normal notions of cause and effect. But rather than call it backwards, I am suggesting it is a spectral chronology, a temporal structure of anticipation appropriate to thinking about spectrality.

This has implications for how we think about history, for it suggests a model of backward looking or retrospective anticipation congruent with Benjamin's logic of redemption and weak messianism. More on the relationship between spectrality and Benjamin's theories of weak messianism in chapter 6, but for now suffice to say that catastrophes of the past may simultaneously anticipate *and be anticipated by* a future that hasn't happened yet, but that, when it does, will try to "awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed" (Benjamin 1988:258). Within a spectral temporality, remembrance and anticipation are one and the same movements, from past to future and from future to past; that is, we can move in both directions. The future can redeem the past, and in the same gesture, the events of the past can close circuits of redemption in the future. This spectral conception of history would hold that the past is very much still alive, or, at least, is capable of being re-activated, brought back to life, *reignited.* And this means even the past is never fixed, and thus can't be *represented* in a historiography of adequacy, presenting it as a fixed and understandable whole. This is one way interpreting Benjamin's observation that "[t]o articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it "the way it really was"... It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger." For when the memory is seized, the past is changed, old circuits are completed and new ones opened up.

But this use of the past may not always be redemptive in Benjamin's sense. Official histories – that is, those that seek to use the past as an instrument of terror by conjuring spectres through the telling of history – surely understand these same processes. They pretend to a chronological consistency and representational adequacy while in fact performing the past as an instrument of terror, conjuring spectres in the process. What this means is precisely that they re-activate the past as an instrument of power in the present. That is, they strategically make use of the past's spectral temporality by conjuring spectres in the present that they retroject into the past (be they "PKI" – as signified in the New Order propaganda – or "the Red Indians" in the US or "Al Qaeda" in Iraq). They claim, for instance, that when all those human beings were killed, they were actually killing off this spectral monster (*conjured often enough in the present, after the fact*), and that is what justified the extreme methods of the massacre. It is through the killings of the past that the power of recently conjured (and retrojected) spectres may be acquired by the conjurer. This is, in many ways, an articulation of the dynamics of revisionism.

spectral enemy – now its double. The state thus unleashes a terrible massacre in the image of the massacre threatened by the spectral "PKI", inhering in every community a spectral power of death. Then, when enough have been slaughtered, the state further enhances its spectrality by rendering *obscene* its lead role in the massacre, posturing as the restorer of order in communities where the locals are said to have run amok. But the testimony of perpetrators suggests that there was nothing amok about the killings, except the deliberate attempt to establish state power as something always capable of itself running amok, always capable of unleashing an awesome power of death which, when dormant, traumatises by forever threatening to reappear.

Investing ordinary Indonesians in virtually every village with the spectral power of death becomes an important alibi for everybody, as responsibility can shift and flow, destabilising any attempt to explain the event by assigning responsibility. This, in turn, constitutes the spectral power of the massacre by rendering it not quite explicable, and its possible return not quite predictable.

The state, in its double role as murderer and protector forces everybody to simultaneously fear and rely upon the state, producing a kind of paralysis, a tense waiting for something both inexplicable and unpredictable, in which the process of letting go and working through essential to the work of mourning is blocked by the perpetual terror that the state will inevitably and unexpectedly conjure death once again.

After 35 years of military dictatorship, this tense paralysis attained a remarkable banality in Indonesia, but nevertheless it is surely what Indonesians refer to as "trauma".

§ 3.3 Banning Ghosts: Trauma, Spectrality and Modernity

Siegel suggests that trauma *as spectre* (applied by "shock therapy") now occupies the traditional position of ghosts in Indonesian society, but at a national level. He argues (1998:98-99) that people no longer expect ghosts, while they normally would because they are an integral part of the social weave. He argues

that they have been banished by a miasmic, mobile spectral force – trauma, or the Indonesian state itself. This is, of course, an index of how the social fabric has been torn, precisely because the spectral, unlike a ghost, is marked by an absence of relational points. Siegel writes, "Not to expect ghosts is the first step on the path that leads to re-finding an equivalent in the state itself" (1998:117). I would argue that the state as spectre, and trauma as index of this spectrality, on the one hand, and ghosts, on the other, cannot be called equivalents, precisely because ghosts *have* relational points; they can be pinned down. Ghosts haunt locally – for example, Lukman's ghost is described by Gunawan as a *penunggu Sungai Ular* (a ghost that haunts the Sungai Ular).[96] Lukman is also somebody's friend, child, older brother, and uncle. Trauma, by contrast, may be ghostly, but it is also diffuse, a product of what Siegel describes as the nationalisation of death. Speaking of the trauma produced both by the petrus campaign, Siegel writes,

> Ghosts always want one thing, whatever else they might demand. They want to show up, to appear or to be present, restoring themselves in an impossible way to their condition in life. Which is to say that they remain ghosts because they can never be fully present again. They are always both there and not there at the same time. For ghosts, living persons are the means they need to register their appearance.[...]
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> The criminals[...]are unlike ghosts because, among other things, they are mobile, travelling between places rather than haunting particular sites in the manner of specters. But there are enough resemblances that it would be natural to think of ghosts, and natural enough for a villager, reportedly, to have spontaneously denied that ghosts are involved. [...] The implication is that these villagers would be grateful if they could believe in ghosts again. Then they would not have to be so afraid; they would know what to do about ghosts.[...]There is a conflation of criminal menace and state power, as though they are a single metaphysical entity. [...] Rather than asking why it is that ghosts are expected not to appear, it might be better to point out that the police and criminals both arise precisely where ghosts were expected before. There would be no "trauma," no inexplicable effects, if full belief in ghosts still existed. (Siegel 1998:98-9)

[96] Audiotapes of Gunawan's dreams about Lukman's ghost are available upon request, especially Vision Machine audio cassettes I2-39 and I2-40. More about the figure of "penunggu" in chapter 6.

I would argue that it is not a matter of "belief in ghosts", unless, like Althusser, we adopt Pascal's formula conflating practice with belief. For in my experience in North Sumatra, people certainly still believe in ghosts. Rather, trauma, as spectral force whose foreign etymology is an index of its mystery, paralyses survivors so that they may no longer *practice those forms of shamanism that constitute a continued exchange, dialogue and remembrance with the dead.* It is a matter of fear, in a very direct way: dukuns, or shamans, are afraid of communicating with ghosts from the 1965 era, except, occasionally, to ask them to predict lottery numbers and so forth. The dukuns' reluctance stems from a fear that it might be illegal or get them into trouble.[97] The dead from 1965 are proscribed by the spectral state from assuming identity and form, at least in the semi-public exchange between dukun and patient or client. That is, the state has terrorised the survivors into not working through their trauma using the diverse *practices* (as opposed, for the moment, to belief) that conjure ghosts. It is therefore a supernatural struggle between a spectral state whose terrifying hold might be challenged if the survivors could marshal the resources of the dead, naming them, giving them voice, and allowing them to form the centre of a cultural – and supernatural – project of commemoration. And so I would argue that the state has not depleted peoples' belief in ghosts, but rather prevented them from using those shamanic practices that would allow survivors to give body and identity to the dead, preventing them from condensing the terrifying spectrality of the dead – and the massacres themselves – into specific ghosts and a living

[97] To a European or North American reader, it may seem surprising that a modern state apparatus would concern itself with something as "pre-modern" as shamans, or that shamans would be so easily intimidated into not dealing with certain taboo topics. An index of consequences of shamans violating certain taboos may be the 1998-2001 "witch killings", in which hundreds of East Javanese were murdered for being witches. The witch killings may well have been attempts by the military to consolidate local authority in the aftermath of Suharto's resignation, but that they were fNgatiemd as the extermination of dangerous dukuns reveals the scale of consequences dukuns face should they overstep certain boundaries. We might also note a long history of attacks against false shamans, or *dukun palsu.* Siegel (1998:52-65) has documented the cases of dukun palsu, and has recently written about the witch killings (Siegel 2001 and forthcoming). The fact that the state does care about the work of shamans is a sign, of course, that spectral power is regarded as an actual power by the Indonesian state. (Thus does Pemberton [1994] describe the remarkable role of shamanic spirituality in the administration of the New Order military dictatorship, to the extent that President and Madame Suharto themselves are well known to use a dukun to help them become possessed by the Hindu gods, Rama and Sita, respectively, whom the dukun then quizzes about matters of policy. In a similar vein, I have learned from a personal conversation with Benedict Anderson that Suharto is rumoured to have a "susuk", or magical amulet inserted in his body to prevent him from dying; apparently, only the dukun who put it in can take it out, but the dukun is already dead. This means that while the unfortunate Suharto is guaranteed an extremely long life, it promises to end in a very nasty death.)

history. In a spirit of *intercultural translation* rather than hermeneutic interpretation, I would suggest that this tactic in the *ilmu* (magical powers) of state terror may be understood as preventing people from *mourning* the dead, from working through, so that what remains is only trauma, a paralysing fear produced through the proscription of the *project and practice* of conjuring and working with ghosts. In other words, in the absence of the dead (forbidden to be present as ghosts), there remains only death. Trauma is an effect of a proscription, but it is a second-order effect, and thus is trauma mysterious, without obvious origin, and this mystery is indexed in Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) by what Siegel has identified as the *untranslatable force* of its foreign etymology as word.

Instead, the specificity and relationality of ghosts are replaced with a miasmic and traumatising spectrality. This process may be thought as part of modernity, an element in the modernising project as well as a perversion of Indonesian nationalism. What Siegel calls the replacement of ghosts with trauma is not a deliberate and "modernising" campaign against superstition, but rather a tearing of the social fabric, a rupturing of local relations as a strategy of cohering the nation as imagined community (Anderson 1991) around spectral forces (what Siegel calls the "nationalisation of death"). The paralysing (or binding) omnipresence of trauma is the index of this process. By rendering local relations incoherent, state terror forces people to fall back on the only coherence imaginable – the state. The nation coheres by replacing the now-incoherent local relations with a spectrality that inheres in everyday life as "trauma". Trauma's effect is to silence, paralyse and proscribe certain forms of remembrance and working through (including ghosts) which might otherwise dissipate this trauma.

It is as if, in destroying once and for all Indonesia's revolutionary anti-colonial nationalism, the principle task facing Suharto's faction of the military was to traumatise the nation by destroying old bonds and recohering it around a terrible power of death, introjected at the very heart of Indonesian society, at the most local possible level, ensuring that every village be haunted by agents of the unspeakable power of death whose ultimate source must remain forever unseen. This is surely what Suharto means by a "shock therapy" that includes – as state

policy – leaving as public markers or signs the corpses of those dispatched in extrajudicial executions.

I am describing here a nation that coheres through the state's own terrifying spectrality: a spectral state power, or its corollary, state as spectre. The state performatively conjures itself to occupy an ambiguous and powerful position: a killer, but a spectral one, a *petrus* – not self-identified or openly marked, but also not unknown, not wholly secret, occupying by mimesis the same position as the sadistic, shadowy and probably non-existent killers evoked in the first paragraph of Suharto's quotation above: "beyond the limits of humanity". In this capacity, the state as killer must keep its face hidden, must deny responsibility, while also ensuring that people know that the state is ultimately responsible.

Veiling yet hinting, producing state terror as an open secret, performatively conjures the state as spectral. In the US, covert operations are similarly veiled yet alluded to – the official line being, "We can neither confirm nor deny the existence of the operation". The fact of the covert is rendered spectacular, constitutive of a certain *mystique of power*, which is convertible into actual power in many different ways, perhaps the most obvious example being that it deters dissent or insurgency. The fact that the state effects spectral power through its actions is itself turned into a spectacle, but this power can only condense as spectral if the operations themselves remain veiled. Thus, Suharto can openly claim the *fact* of "shock therapy", the *mysteriousness* of the mysterious killer, so long as the actual procedures, when implemented, are at once covert, disavowed and unexpected.

Siegel's concept of trauma as national spectre is inseparable from the state itself, which in the same movement emerges as the national ghost.[98] Thus does the state assume illegitimate forms – ghostly forms – to foment terror and to combat

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[98] This is perhaps the matrix, or underlying logic, for a series of filmed possessions by Gunawan, when in dreams and waking life he is possessed by the ghosts of national figures identified with the New Order regime. Because the state is already positioned as a national ghost may Gunawan be possessed by national figures, even those who are still alive. These include Suharto, Suharto's wife, General Nasution, and Nasution's daughter – the favourite martyr of Gestapu, Ade Irma.

ghosts – that is, the phantasmatic, conjured ghosts of the PKI or criminals. Siegel writes,

> Through the adoption of terms such as "trauma" and "shock", this modern haunting shows that, really, the underclass belongs to the same symbolic world as its rulers. It is precisely out of fear that it does not, that it remains outside their ken, that the underclass is in turn positioned to haunt its rulers. (Siegel 1998:133)

And in New Order Indonesia, after the real PKI has been exterminated, the underclass is said (or positioned) to haunt the rulers through one particularly prominent spectre: the phantasmatic vengeful and, indeed, imaginary PKI conjured in Suharto propaganda.

On the other hand, these processes also effect the state as protector and restorer of order, restraining both the spectral PKI and the spectral killers who massacre on behalf of the state. In its role as restorer of order, the state is positioned as the one who can assuage trauma. In this capacity, the state must claim responsibility, show its face as the one who took "strong measures". As Siegel writes, "It is particularly effective because it links [both] the production of fear and its assuagement to the state" (Siegel 1998:117). State as agent of terror becomes spectral in part because it is further effaced by state as protector.[99]

§ 3.4 Becoming Spectre

The irony that an official government programme may be called "Mysterious Killer" is a perfect allegory for the deliberately ambiguous relationship between the state and the massacres of 1965-66.

As with petrus, 1965's killers boast of the very same acts of violence of which the PKI was accused. As with Suharto's conjuring and appropriation of

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[99] In his 20 July 2004 interview, Kemal Idris, a well-known executor of the massacres, describes his work during the genocide wholly in the idiom of restoring order. His troops, he claims, were tasked with restraining frenzied villagers on both sides of the political spectrum. He has rendered obscene the idea that hundreds of thousands unarmed PKI members were kidnapped from their homes at night, herded to prisons, and then delivered into the hands of execution squads.

kriminalitas in petrus, the imaginary violence of the PKI was, in each of its specific forms, ultimately appropriated and actualized by the very people who claim to have fought the PKI. The spectral threats assigned to the PKI – cutting off genitals, gouging eyes, drinking blood, death lists (or *jatah* – literally, "quotas"), and, finally murder – were considered serious enough to justify the PKI's extermination. However, it is the exterminators who actually and openly claim each of these acts. Spectral threats are performatively appropriated and transformed into actualities by Komando Aksi members who killed at the instigation of the state, including Rahmat, Arsan and Saman Siregar.

In his writings on terror in the Amazonian rubber boom of the late 19th Century, Michael Taussig describes a homologous process of conjuring spectres and then appropriating their powers. Describing colonials' fantasies of "Indian cannibalism", Taussig writes,

> Cannibalism summed up all that was perceived as grotesquely different about the Indian as well as providing for the colonists the allegory of colonization itself. In condemning cannibalism, the colonists were in deep complicity with it. Otherness was not dealt with here by simple negation, a quick finishing off. (Taussig 1987:105)

Indeed, rather than finished-off, otherness is appropriated, imbibed, consumed and incorporated. An allegory for colonialism indeed. But also, in part, analogous to Indonesians' encounters with other Indonesians in the massacres of 1965-66. In the Sumatran case, an armed apparatus in control of a plantation economy appropriates the PKI's spectral power: the PKI simultaneously is conjured as an enemy to be destroyed and as a model to be emulated by the new regime, its spectral power to be incorporated *through the very process of its destruction.*

Of course, the spectre was, in the first instance, conjured by the victors, and Taussig describes similar dynamics at work in the colonials' encounter with "cannibalism", including how colonists obsessively *invented* stories of cannibalism, conjuring cannibals without clear basis in reality. Describing an account of Captain Whiffen, who visited the Amazon and came back with stories of cannibalism in the rubber belt, Taussig writes:

> [H]e describes[...]the gloomy rolling of drums, breaking off every now and again from the dance to stir great troughs of liquor with the forearms of dead enemies. With intoxication, the captain tells us, their songs become shrieks, demoniacal and hellish. "But the scene defies description," he notes with humility, and with wisdom, too. For tucked eighty pages away in the quiet eddy of a footnote he mentions that "I never was present at a cannibal feast. The information comes from Robuchon's account, checked by cross-questioning the Indians with whom I came in contact." (Taussig 1987:123)

Whiffen then proceeds into a detailed description of the scene that defies description, and that he has never witnessed. Taussig describes other colonials' conjuring of cannibalism:

> The interests the whites display is obsessive; again and again Rocha senses cannibalism in the murk around him. He is frightened in the forest, not of animals but of Indians, and it is always with what becomes in effect the insufferably comic image of the person-eating Indian that he chooses to represent that fear of being consumed by a wild, unknown, half-sensed uncertainty. Among the whites, to stamp out cannibalism is an article of faith like a crusade, he says. Cannibalism is an addictive drug[...]whenever the Huitotos think they can deceive the whites, "they succumb to their beastly appetites." The whites have therefore to be more like beasts, as in the story retold by Rocha concerning Crisostomo Hernandez killing all the Indians of a communal house down to the children at the breast for succumbing to that addiction. (Taussig 1987:105)

Taussig describes, too, how this obsession justifies a reaction in its own image:

> Ascribed to Indians, cannibalism was taken from them as a cherished dream image of the fears of being consumed by difference, as we see in the case of Joaquin Rocha, who depicts the jungle and the Indians as devouring forces. *Just as important was the erotic passion this gave to the countermove of devouring the devourer.* Allegations of cannibalism served not only to justify enslavement of Indians by the Spanish and the Portuguese from the sixteenth century onwards; such allegations also served to flesh out the repertoire of violence in the colonial imagination. (ibid, my italics)

Taussig notes that the whites were "assuming the character of the cannibals who pursued them, as much if not more in their fantasies than when they were pursuing Indians to gather rubber" (1987:126). And finally, Taussig cites a literal case of European colonist becoming cannibal: "Joaquin Rocha had this story to tell of civilization seduced by the sorcery of savagery, too. Not only had the

Huitotos persisted with cannibalism despite the presence of the rubber traders, but there were whites, Christian and civilized, who had partaken of human flesh also" (1987:82).

Without elaborating, Taussig goes on to suggest an analogy between the colonist's use of cannibalism-as-spectre and modern forms of state terror, writing "If the torture practiced by modern states, as in Latin America today, is any guide, these motives [i.e., the appropriation of spectral power whilst simultaneously degrading the victim] by no means preclude one another" (1987:123).

Certainly, the similarities with state terror in Indonesia are striking. The government conjures the PKI as spectral threat, attributing to *its* PKI (i.e., the PKI it conjures, as opposed to the actual PKI) a host of terrifying traits – mutilating genitals, drinking blood, cold-blooded murder, death lists. And then the government proceeds to activate a spectral apparatus of death to appropriate this very force, *becoming PKI.*

And it is precisely the government's resorting to the spectral PKI's worst excesses that somehow confirms that the PKI was really a national threat. The act of violence itself conjures the spectre, all in a single gesture. As Siegel writes about petrus, we can write about the PKI, substituting the word "PKI" for the criminals targeted in Petrus:

> It is the government's own resort to extralegal violence that gave [the PKI status as national menace]. This is not a moral or legal question. It is rather that when the government explicitly abandoned legality in its actions, it did so by claiming the necessity of acting against a force that it posited was otherwise uncontrollable. It acted against a strength that was inhuman. By acting as [they claimed the PKI] they opposed acted, the government claimed to capture this strength for itself. One might say that it tore it out of the grasp of the [PKI], as though this power were transferable. (Siegel 1998:109)

There is something similar here to the spectral logic that inheres in the "war on terror": governments – and not only the American government, but governments around the world – use the war to justify a sudden appropriation of spectral

power founded through the official abandonment of legality and the mimicking of the spectral enemy. The US's treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, the Indonesian government's declaration of martial law in the province of Aceh, the Russian government's conduct in Chechnya, the Colombian government's offensive against its insurgency are all examples. The logic goes: because the war on terror is, by definition, an unconventional war, we must fight it *on their terms*, with unconventional means. In brief, we must act as our spectral foe acts and, in the process, appropriate its mystique, its spectral power of terror. The war on terror thus becomes a war for the power of spectres conjured by the governments that participate – that is, literally, a war *for* terror.

Suharto's appropriation of the phantasmatic power of terror he claimed to fight (the spectral PKI conjured by his own military) has formed the matrix within which his own regime of state terror has emerged. The state, having conjured a spectral power, claimed it for itself, creating trauma at the very heart of the Indonesian nation, in every village, in every neighbourhood. The government established itself both as killer and protector, the shaman with the power to summon the power of death, and with the power to stop it.

§ 3.5 Spectrality, Trauma and Recurrence

The spectrality of both state and massacre is inextricably linked to a logic of the massacre's threatened return. As killer, the government always has the power to conjure again the force of massacre. As protector, the government is poised to prevent massacre's return. This latter role is invariably performed by vigilantly protecting the people from the latent threat of the PKI's return. This performance conjures the eternal possibility of the PKI's return, which in turn threatens to activate the government's other role – that of mysterious killer (*penembak misterius*, or *petrus*) poised to unleash another massacre. The continually reproduced spectres of PKI vengeance and further massacres perpetrated by the state are thus like conjoined twins, each provoking the return of the other. And in this way does the threat of PKI vengeance provide a continually reproduced mandate for state terror.

Or, put another way, the state's spectrality derives from the perpetual threat of another massacre – a threat often displaced[100] onto the conjured threat of PKI vengeance. Since 1965, the phantasmatic spectral power of the victims has been performed again and again, through propaganda conjuring their sadism (such as the film, *Pengkhianatan G30S PKI*), and through policy designed to conjure a "latent PKI threat". By resurrecting the spectre of that which was exterminated in the first place, these post-massacre conjurations replenish the spectral power appropriated by the state at the moment of massacre. And, as with the petrus killings, the appropriation occurs precisely when the lawless state kills in the lawless image of its spectral foe. Then, the state renders obscene – and therefore spectral – this appropriated power of death by conjuring in its place a "latent PKI threat". It thereby simultaneously re-legitimates itself *qua* state (i.e., as restorer of order), while retaining and renewing its spectral power – largely by displacing its power to manifest massacre onto the concrete *ghost* of the now-extinct PKI. After all, in the official histories, the PKI provoked the massacre in the first place; why should its ghost not do so again? And so the ghost of a "latent PKI threat" renders spectral the state's power of death precisely by further excluding it from view – eclipsing it with *another* spectre, the bogeyman of the PKI's posthumous existence.

And so the latent PKI threat (*ancaman PKI laten*) is conjured again and again, conjuring at the same time the threat of retaliation – or further massacre – but always in the name of fighting the threat. The similarities with the war on terror are obvious, and in both cases the logic is one of eternal return: never ending vigilance and perpetual emergency punctuated by the inevitability of another spectacular episode of violence unleashed in the name of countering a spectral threat, but ultimately serving to appropriate the threat's spectral powers.

Thus does a logic of recurrence inhere in the regime's acquisition and replenishment of its spectral powers. Siegel suggests that the spectacle of death always exerts a power beyond that which is immediately claimed, is always defined by a certain excess:

[100] Tellingly, this description of the performative conjurings of state terror utilises a word germane to Freud's analysis of dreams.

> Each corpse came to indicate not the person[...]killed but a power associated with death in general and therefore beyond itself. The dead bodies[...]may have demonstrated that the government can control this power but only on the contradictory assumption that leaves this force in a form that is always elsewhere and therefore beyond its control. Had the government full control of its putative force, the power would evaporate or be routinized into the merely human power of government as we know it. The reference of the force of kriminalitas [or the PKI] is never exhausted. However many [...] the government killed they could not be sure that they had subdued this supernatural power and taken it for their own. They killed more. *The massacre founded itself on a logic in which each murder demanded another.* Only in that way could the source of power beyond the state at once be said to exist and to be controlled by it. (Siegel 1998:114-5, my italics)

Linking all of this back to the originary genocide of 1965, Siegel concludes: "The New Order was initiated with a grand massacre; *it repeats this lethal gesture*, giving evidence of its autonomy from anything before it" (Siegel 1998:115, my emphasis). And finally, "The nationalization of death is a result of this terrible passage between the state and its citizens" (ibid). By turning victims over to the local killers, the government inheres the power of death at the heart of the nation, haunting every community with killers and potential killers inserted in their midst. The government thus acquires the power to control death, a force that lies both with the government and beyond it. Implicit in this command over death is the threat that the government will unleash further killings – invariably performed as a response to the threat posed by the now-extinct PKI. The government thus conjures terror in an eternal séance of violence and threatened violence.

This threat of return is inseparable from the above discussion of "trauma". Families of victims (particularly Ibu Ngatiem, Rege's younger sister, the children of Ibu Arbahiyah and Pak Kemis) often say, "Kami masih trauma. Jangan sampai terulang lagi" (We still feel trauma. Let's hope it doesn't happen again.) This feared return may be related to the proscription on remembrance described above. That is, a new massacre may come as a reprisal for remembering, for talking about the massacre in public or in a film. Remembrance here is figured as a veritable bringing back, a summoning of the PKI, fulfilling the "latent PKI threat" of return. Unlike in psychological discourses of "trauma", Indonesian

trauma is a social phenomenon, a euphemism for the threat of the massacre's return.

Something might happen again, but what it is cannot quite be expressed, or even imagined, precisely because it is spectral, obscene to the public discourses claiming adequacy to both local and national events. Something unclear might happen again, but when, likewise, cannot be predicted. And should it happen, there certainly will not be a clear explanation. This is the logic that inheres in "trauma" as fear that the spectral violence will always recur.

And it is here that the relationship between the spectral and anticipation reveals itself. The spectral becomes, to use a phrase from Siegel, that which one "knows in advance not to expect" (1998:35). Another formulation of the same might be that which waits in the wings. Or, if we look at the official history as performed in the film *Pengkhianatan G30S PKI,* the spectral – in this case the genocide – lurks just beyond the edge of the fNgatiem, or even between the fNgatiems. It is both well-rehearsed and scripted, on the one hand, and written out of the scripts of official history, on the other (whether the script of *G30S* or of the *latent PKI threat*). This *exclusion* is one of the generic imperatives that structure these official histories, and so when these histories are performed to create spectacle, the massacres remain precisely the obscene, the spectral – auguring a terrible moment when they burst forth in a spectacular display of violence. One does not expect it, but one knows it is there, and one knows, too, that it is precisely what one is not supposed to expect. Does this mean one expects it? Not quite. Rather, like the events in a good suspense movie, it becomes, as it were, the expected unexpected.

This is different from the truly surprising, because it is already scripted as a threat – partly by its exclusion, partly by its systematicity – and so it haunts and exerts a terrifying power. In *A New Criminal Type in Jakarta*, Siegel describes a similar process in Indonesian crime reporting in the Jakarta tabloid, *Pos Kota.* Siegel discusses how murders are rarely narrated in terms of what actually went on in the criminal's mind to produce the crime. Nor is psychosis appealed to as a catch-all explanation when no other motive commensurate to the crime may be

found. Rather, Siegel suggests, there is an attempt to conjure each criminal as *just like everybody else,* responding to ordinary misfortune (such as unemployment, marital failure) in spectacular but ultimately inexplicable ways, so that spectacular violence becomes the spectral force that the reader expects not to expect from every other Indonesian, but whose latency exerts a hold that coheres Indonesia as a modern nation.

According to Siegel's logic, normalcy thus coheres because in it inheres the unmarked and unknowable spectral source of that which is "extraordinary", "sensational" or "spectacular". A murder or massacre may occur, but the cause is unidentifiable as such, except insofar as there is always already a terrifying spectral force that inheres in the normal, and thus coheres the normal *as* normal. And, indeed, consistent with the description of spectral temporality described above, the murder or massacre *itself* is what retroactively injects (retrojects) this spectral force into daily life, cohering and constituting "the normal" at the very moment normality is exceeded by a not-quite-unexpected violence. It is through the killing that the spectral force inheres in – and thus coheres and constitutes – the normal, even though the killing happened afterwards, and as a *flaring up* of this same spectral force which was incomplete before the killing made it manifest. Thus does the killing, after the fact, close the circuit, injecting and encrypting its source or cause as a spectre at the heart of everyday life, and one that gives the appearance of having been there *before the act of killing put it there.* (Perhaps this is why, in so many of our interviews, do perpetrators describe after the fact a sense of heightened tension before September 30th, a sense that the country was poised to explode into spectacular violence.) This retrojection, through inexplicable violence, of the spectral into everyday life renders incoherent old definitions of normality, recohering the normal around this inhering spectrality. Thus are "the everyday" and "the normal" themselves constituted, and constituted as *haunted domains.* The normal, then, is constituted by the abnormal, whose cause and systematicity are excluded from representation. And it is this obscenity of explanation that renders the source of violence a spectral force – call it terror, trauma, a vague fear about death's uncertain and arbitrary return – that inheres in and coheres the normal thus constituted. Siegel's argument, then, is that what the tabloids represent as "what

not to expect" is precisely the omnipresent threat that this spectral force will inexplicably flare up into spectacular violence.

The army deployed a strategy of transforming Indonesian villages into places where neighbours are always possibly about to murder neighbours, where whole villages are always possibly about to erupt into violence, even self-immolation, a place of imminent death. Siegel suggests that this is a strategy of placing death at the very heart of Indonesian nationalism, of dissolving old affinities and recohering the nation with the spectral power of terror, the persistent invocation (or conjuring) of the terrifying spectre of death. "Death is nationalized, but inherent in the narrative structure of repression and by the terms of the massacre it remains always out of reach. It is the misfortune of contemporary Indonesia that 'death' has become a lure for those eager to establish their power and their position" (Siegel 1998:116).

§ 3.6 A Global Séance of Power and Violence

Although Siegel writes exclusively about Indonesia, our analysis of the relationships between state terror, trauma and spectrality (indebted to Siegel) may provide a fertile theoretical model for thinking through the spectrality of violence or the *hauntology*[101] of all regimes that justify terror in terms of what they counter, whether it is terrorism or insurgency. Counterterrorist or counterinsurgency regimes always appeal to a spectral enemy, conjured as powerful and vicious through propaganda, the media and other in-house or outsourced hauntologists working for the state. Siegel's model may be a useful way of considering the mystical hold of terror on both perpetrators and victims:

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[101] A perfect homonym in French to "ontologie", "hauntologie" or "hauntology", in English, is a term borrowed from Derrida's writings on post-Cold War neoliberal historical triumphalism, *Spectres of Marx* (1994). Hauntology, in Derrida's writing, works as a figure for any reading that marks the ways in which historical narratives performatively conjure spectres. In this sense, hauntology may be described as a critical science, but also an applied science. In the critical sense, we could say, Siegel offers a hauntology of the Indonesian New Order. In the applied sense, we could say, the MI-6 employed in-house hauntologists to conjure a spectral PKI. Or even, the director of *Pengkhianatan G30S PKI* was hired as a hauntologist for the Suharto regime, tasked with rendering the massacre spectral by creating an official history in which it would remain obscene.

lured by the expressive power of its own imagined enemy, the state seeks to claim this power by appropriating it, by becoming it.

Ralph Johnson, an architect of Vietnam's Phoenix Program, identified the necessity of fighting insurgency with techniques that he defined as *contre-coup* (Valentine 1990:89). The idea is to use the enemy's methods against the enemy. The extreme example of contre-coup is "black operations", when the state commits atrocities disguised as the enemy, in order the blacken the enemy's name. Gestapu is the most significant black operation in Indonesian history, but by no means the only one. The "black letter" and "black radio" operations referred to by the de-classified documents quoted above would consist of forging and then leaking fake PKI documents, or producing radio programs and falsely attributing them to the PKI.[102] Black operations – and other strategies that may be termed "contre-coup" – are usually considered cynical techniques for discrediting an enemy, but perhaps they deserve further thought, because their *spectral* effects long outlast the enemy's destruction. Their long-term effects include constituting (conjuring) the state itself as a terrifying and spectral agent, endowing it with the spectral power necessary to render its own history incoherent. Perhaps, then, we should think of black operations, contre-coup, counterterrorism and counterinsurgency as strategies of acquiring spectral power. As such, they emerge within an economy of desire in which the state conjures its own phantom enemy and then, jealous of the power of its own conjuration, seeks to claim that power by becoming the phantom, by acting in its image and, in the extreme example of black operations, by acting in its *name*.

[102] Taufan Damanik, Indonesian political analyst who specialises in the Indonesian government's counterinsurgency operation in the province of Aceh, has called the entire war against the Acehnese Liberation Front (Garekan Aceh Merdeka, or GAM) a black operation, suggesting that GAM consists largely of infiltrators from the TNI whose actions are designed to justify the ceaseless military emergency in the province. This, in turn, allows the military to reap huge profits in favourable natural gas deals with Exxon-Mobil, as well as claim a virtual monopoly on the oil palm plantations that are swiftly replacing Aceh's rainforests. Although technically profits from resource exploitation are supposed to be remitted to the provincial and national governments, military emergency in the resource-rich province ensures there is no oversight or transparency.

What Siegel identifies in Indonesia may thus be a feature of all counterinsurgency regimes, and for this reason does our project deal both with the singular and what emerges as a pattern, an international script.[103]

Judith Butler (2004) has located a similar process in George Bush's counterterrorist regime. In an analysis of Foucault's notion of governmentality as distinct from sovereignty, Butler identifies a process that equally well could apply to Suharto's petrus or the 1965-66 massacre:

> In the present instance, sovereignty denotes a form of power that is fundamentally lawless, and whose lawlessness can be found in the way in which law itself is fabricated or suspended at the will of a designated subject. The new war prison literally manages populations, and thus functions as an operation of governmentality. At he same time, however, it exploits the extra-legal dimension of governmentality to assert a lawless sovereign power over life and death. (Butler 2004:95)

And she continues, asking, "how does the production of a space for unaccountable prerogatory power function as part of the general tactics of governmentality? In other words, under what conditions does governmentality produce a lawless sovereignty as part of its own operation of power" (2004:96).

Siegel makes a similar argument about law under the New Order being founded in lawlessness. Noting that both PKI and petrus victims were killed rather than accused of any crime and put on trial, he writes, "That there were massacres instead of legal procedure" is a consequence of the fact that "the Indonesian nation may be the source of law, but only through a process that initially must be itself illegal.[...]The New Order regime's control rests on showing not that it is subject to the law and acts in legally prescribed way, but on demonstrating that it itself is the source of the law" (1998:115).

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[103] These scripts are literal scripts, and there is even a canon of texts: Ralph Johnson's thesis on contre-coup (see Valentine 1990:89); the notorious (because leaked) CIA training manual for the Nicaraguan contras, "Psychological Operations in Guerrilla Warfare", ascribed to the anonymous Tacayan, with its chilling companion piece, "A Study of Assassination"; Donald Wilber's blow-by-blow account of the "Overthrow of Premier Mossadeq of Iran" (1954); and the rumoured manual for the humiliation of Muslim men circulated to guards at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison, based upon Raphael Patai's *The Arab Mind* (2002).

Suharto's admirer, Guy Pauker, makes this very same point when he enthuses in a RAND Corporation report that:

> No legalistic constraints interfered with their summary execution or with the extermination of countless Communist families throughout the Indonesian archipelago.
>
> In striking contrast to this [...] the military are obviously concerned with matters of political legitimacy and Constitutional legality in dealing with the President.[...]
>
> Coups are staged in the Third World so frequently and apparently with so few misgivings that the most interesting question concerning Indonesian politics in 1966 is why President Sukarno was *not* ousted during that period. The rational argument given by those close to General Suharto is that[...]the Army leaders are anxious to create a new order, based on constitutional legality. (Pauker 1967:9)

From a perspective of admiration, Pauker describes this same dynamic of a government acquiring its force by extralegal means, lawlessly extending its sovereignty, but then performatively effecting its own legality.[104] Siegel and I both argue that the very force of the government's extralegal appropriation of power lies in the way it conjures terror and traumatises the population, so we can read Pauker's sentence – another explanation for the government's delicacy in handling Sukarno – only as cynical dissimulation: "[Suharto and his associates] also claim to hesitate to inflict on the Indonesian people the psychological shock they think would result from destroying the national father-image that Sukarno allegedly embodies" (Pauker 1967:9).

Butler argues that a lawless sovereignty acts upon populations – be they terrorist suspects at Guantanamo Bay or alleged PKI – and these acts produce the populations as spectral subjects, just as Siegel argues (quoted above) that "It is

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[104] Indeed, this dissimulation of the New Order regime's lawlessness has become something of a cliché in Indonesia. Whenever one is arbitrarily prohibited from doing something perfectly legal, one hears the well-worn performative, "Ini negara hukum", or "After all, this is a nation of law". Performative, because the cliché serves to remind us of Siegel's point that the New Order is not "subject to the law", but is itself "the source of the law" (Siegel 1998:115). "Ini negara hukum" performatively establishes by fiat the "fact" that Indonesia enjoys the rule of law, in flagrant disregard for the actual record of an arbitrary, uneven and wholly cynical application of law. Indeed, the statement is performative in another sense, too, because this flagrance is itself a performance of the speaker's own arbitrary power.

the government's own resort to extralegal violence that gave [the PKI status as spectral national menace]." Writing of Guantanamo Bay detainees, Butler writes,

> One way of "managing" a population is to constitute them as the less than human without entitlement to rights, as the humanly unrecognizable. This is different from producing a subject who is compliant with the law; and it is different from the production of the subject who takes the norm of humanness to be its constitutive principle. *The subject who is no subject is neither alive nor dead, neither fully constituted as a subject nor fully deconstituted in death.* "Managing" a population is thus not only a process through which regulatory power produces a set of subjects. It is also the process of their de-subjectification, one with enormous political and legal consequences. (Butler 2004:98, my italics)

Siegel describes precisely this process of the de-subjectification of subjects of lawless sovereignty when he describes the Suharto regime's resignification of the word "PKI":

> PKI was a name that was followed by the extinction of its referents. In that sense, this word "disarticulated," separating as it did the name from the living person. In view of the elimination of the communist contribution to Indonesian history it is also antifigural, aiming at the elimination not only of the referent but of its memory, the figures that might endure despite the death of persons. When PKI is mentioned today it evokes an amorphous demon rather than a determined figure. PKI lacks the stereotypes of racism or antisemitism. It is not the form, the shape, the image in the strong sense of that term, or the metaphorical representation that the term designates. It is the separation of its elements that leaves one of them absent, the effect of disarticulation.
>
> But PKI is not a verbal memorial, the survival of the name after the death of the person. There is still a force in the word. (Siegel 1998:50-51)

The force of the spectral lies precisely in this antifigural disarticulation. Indeed, antifigural disarticulation describes perfectly the operation of the obscene that underpins all spectrality.

In "managing" these subjects who are "neither alive nor dead", Butler identifies the state's compulsion to repeat acts of violence analogous to the "logic in which each [petrus] murder demanded another" (Siegel 1998:114-5). Butler notes:

> If violence is done against those who are unreal, then, from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated. But they have a strange way of remaining

> animated and so must be negated again (and again). They cannot be mourned because they are already lost or, rather, never "were," and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness. Violence renews itself in the face of the apparent inexhaustibility of its object. The derealization of the "Other" means that it is neither alive nor dead, but interminably spectral. The infinite paranoia that imagines the war against terrorism as a war without end will be the one that justifies itself endlessly in relation to the spectral infinity of its enemy, regardless of whether or not there are established grounds to suspect the continuing operation of terror cells with violent aims. (Butler 2004:33-4)

Or, perhaps, as Siegel argues, only through infinite repetition of violence "could the source of power beyond the state at once be said to exist and to be controlled by it" (Siegel 1998:115).

The spectres conjured during incidents of spectacular violence, the state's subsequent acquisition of spectral power – the power to conjure spectres and, most radically, become one – the trauma of being forced to seek protection from the very force that always threatens to kill, the state's compulsive repetition of such violence in perpetual pursuit of a power that remains always elusive because it is precisely spectral, these may be common features of many counterinsurgency regimes, including many U.S. client states of the Cold War, including South Vietnam in the 1960s, Indonesia, South Africa, Israel, and many Latin American dictatorships. Perhaps it is a common feature of state terror in general, one that is achieved through a tangle of contradictions and Orwellian disavowals.

It may be, for instance, that the trauma of seeking sanctuary with a power that always threatens to unleash one's destruction is the principle subject of magical realism. That is, magical realism may be thought as a realistic reckoning with the magical dimensions of state power. More specifically, it may be a response to the terror of being dependent on systems of power capable of one's murder or torture: being forced to live *as if* the paternalistic reassurances of the junta are in fact reliable, being forced to *take comfort* in such reassurances, while *also* knowing that their ultimate aim is wield power through a spectral terror that kills, tortures, and annihilates, and only augments its spectral hold by dissimulating itself as a paternalistic protector. Living within this Orwellian paradox forces

one to accept the magical power of words. Stanley Cohen (2001) thus identifies magical realism with the denials of Argentine *generalissimos.* He quotes the prosecuting council in a trial of junta members: "General Videla's empty references affirming that he takes full responsibility but that nothing happened expose a primary thought process which, giving magical power to words, tries through them to make reality disappear because one wishes to deny it" (Cohen 2001:84). Cohen (ibid) further notes Michael Taussig's similar conclusions, citing his analysis of Garcia Marquez' *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* as a paradigm of state terror in Colombia.

There is a connection, I think, between magical realism and the calling of ghosts. The magic of magic realism is homologous to the realm of spectres, and particularly to ghosts and spirits as a real part of social life in the Sumatran villages where this project is performed. After all, the spectral is that which occupies the contradictory position of being both known and unknown, said and unsaid, speakable and unspeakable. Both are borne of the doublespeak of power, and, in particular, of the way power uses this doublespeak itself as instrument of terror. I would stop short of saying that we are making a magical realist documentary, since magical realism is a specifically Latin American formation. Nevertheless, the same double binds that produce magical realism constitute a context in which our collaborators in North Sumatra have called ghosts (*panggil roh*) and made films through a series of possessions (*kemasukkan*). Perhaps most importantly, both magical realism and the film practice described here accept the state's spectral, magical and hauntological powers as actual powers, and seek to reckon with the ways these powers are wielded in order to condition the possible functions and forms of remembrance, narration and historical account.

And if we may indicate homologous formations in both Indonesia and Latin America, a broader pattern of spectral violence may surely be traced – a global séance of power and violence may be an apt description for this phenomenon, as regimes raise the spectre of terrorist, insurgent, or subversive and then fashion themselves in its image, transforming themselves into spectral powers that terrorise and haunt.

Chapter 4 – Killers' Performances as Show of Force

§ 4.1 From national histories to individual historical performances

Condensing many of the critical issues articulated above, the footage documenting Arsan and Rahmat Shah's walk to the Sungai Ular constitutes an exemplary moment in the practice, allowing us to move from a discussion of how spectrality works in a macro-economy of power and violence to the many ways in which those dynamics condition the performances of individual perpetrators. At the same time, we open a discussion of the status of the footage itself. In front of the camera, Rahmat and Arsan veer between chilling pantomime and forensic reconstruction, producing a performative artefact whose own epistemology deserves serious consideration.

Marking a similar movement between macro-dynamics and personal account, or between what Deleuze and Guattari (1983) describe as the molar and the molecular, Michael Taussig describes how the colonists' appropriation of the spectral power of terror invested in the phantasm of Indian cannibalism played a critical role in the rubber belt's colonial economy of power and terror, *while not being a mere tool of economic exploitation.* The following dense passage rehearses the ways in which a power of terror is first conjured in the figure of cannibalism and then, once imagined, constitutes a source of desire and even envy for the colonists who have conjured it, leading them to mime the very phantasm they have conjured, chasing their own shadows, responding to their fantasy of Indian barbarism with an even greater barbarism of their own. Taussig explains how this movement is inconsistent with the labour market imperatives of the rubber boom, and thus cannot be understood as an instrument of economic domination, but instead constitutes a broader field of power whose spectral dynamics may have been essential to the continued operation of the broader colonial enterprise:

> It was in this way that in 1896 the Colombian Crisostomo Hernandez conquered the Huitotos of the Igaraparana and Caraparana rivers, affluents of the Putumayo forcibly appropriated by [Arana's rubber

> company] a few years later.[...] Don Crisostomo[...]reigned over whites and Indians with great cruelty. Rebellion *and cannibalism*, [emphasis in original] so Rocha was told, he countered with death. The crime of one was paid for by all. On hearing of a group of Huitotos whose women and children as well as the men were said to be practicing cannibalism, Don Crisostomo decided to kill them for this crime, decapitating them all, including babies sucking at the breast. The white man who told Rocha this baulked at killing little babies but had to because Don Crisostomo stood behind him with a machete. *It is a strange story, given how much stress is elsewhere put on the desperate need for Indian labour* [my emphasis]. Here we have the tale of a man killing off that labor down to children at the breast because of their alleged cannibalism – mirroring, at least in fiction, the spectacular show of carving up human bodies that, again through fiction, occasioned the white man's furious "reprisal."
>
> But perhaps it was neither the political economy of rubber nor that of labour that was paramount here in the horrific "excesses" of the rubber boom. Perhaps, as in the manner strenuously theorized by Michel Foucault in his work on discipline, what was paramount here was the inscription of a mythology in the Indian body, an engraving of civilization locked in struggle with wildness whose model was taken from the colonists' fantasies about Indian cannibalism. "In the 'excesses' of torture," Foucault gnomically writes, "a whole economy of power is invested." There is no excess. (26-27)

Essential to the entire colonial project was performatively inscribing and reinscribing the identity of the colonising "civilization". On the one hand, we can see torture and excess as instruments in constituting civilisation in opposition to the savage, and Foucault does so. But the instrumentality of Foucault's language – constituted through his own critical detachment – is misleading. If we imagine the first-person accounts of Don Crisostomo, and imagine how they would perform their own narrative, a discourse of desire would replace instrumentality. Surely, he would not say, "I have to balance my need to control and cultivate disciplined labour on the one hand with my need to inscribe a notion of civilisation on the other." Rather, a discussion of anger, revenge, anguish, fear, and other sentiment – all perhaps betraying terror's *lure*, its mystical attraction – would more likely be the register of the individual perpetrator's account.

There is no embedded subject with such command over the process, wielding violence only as instrument yet immune to the spectral effects it has on subjectivity itself. Foucault's subject, as well as Taussig's, is itself constituted by the violence in which it participates; that is, a subject *of* terror and violence, rather than a Machiavellian subject with a magisterial strategic detachment.

Because our project fNgatiems and provokes first-hand accounts, we have a rare opportunity to excavate the layered performances of perpetrators themselves, and to search for the shifting and by no means impermeable boundaries between the performance of their own memories, the performance of generic histories, and the performance of how they wish to be perceived. Our work precisely expands Taussig's research by excavating analogous forms of terror in another (post)colonial society and, more importantly, excavating the discourse of subjects constituted by and invested in an economy of terror similar to that traced by Taussig, revealing that, from the perspectives of subjects therein positioned, this is an economy of desire, of mystical attractions to spectral powers in which terror exerts a fascination, a pull, a lure.[105]

But before moving on to discuss the performances of specific perpetrators and the footage that stages them, it seems important to pause for a moment to acknowledge and interrogate the epistemological limits of translating (if not interpreting) the microdynamics of spectral power effected by these performances. For instance, before I speak of "spectral power's mystical hold" on, say, Arsan, or "lure of terror" on Rahmat, we ask first: what of this "lure"? Taussig's writing excavates the role of fantasy and misrecognition in encounters between colonist and Indian, and therefore signals an epistemological limit. Perhaps my own writings are subject to this same limit. As I write about terror's mystique, perhaps I am only writing about my own attraction to terror. Perhaps I have run aground on the ethnographic epistemological limit of not being able to interpret other systems of meaning, and thus failed to write about anything other than my *own* fantasy of terror, dissimulating its specificity as a universal account. Might not all this talk of the attraction of the spectral be symptomatic of my *own* attraction to a "heart of darkness" of state terror, a fantasy that, like the colonists' "cannibals" or Conrad's Congo, ultimately performs my own unacknowledged aims of constituting where I come from in opposition to the terrifying? And would not this have real bearing on the films we produce?

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[105] As such, spectacular violence cannot adequately be figured as an instument to be wielded in the service of an *interest*, whether economic or cultural (such as the domestication of a labor force or the inscribing of colonial power as "civilised" in contrast with the "savage cannibal"). Indeed, the subject of such interests is itself de-structured, surely, by the force and fascination of the violence that would constitute the means to achieving those interests.

These difficult questions raise at least four more questions. First, can we say the film is really *about* the dynamics of terror *there*, in Sumatra? Hopefully not. Our efforts to trace global chains of command, our excavation of the foreign media's involvement in the massacres, our interrogation of the plantation belt's export economy and the complicity of foreign multinational companies – all of this is designed to indict a global system of terror and violence. The intention is certainly not that UK audiences will leave the cinema or turn off the television feeling relief that luckily we do not do these terrible things to people here; instead, we hope that every tube of skin cream consisting of palm oil will be experienced as the *haunted* product that it always has been, that the structures of everyday coherence *here* might thus be revealed as inseparable from structures of terror and incoherence *there*. Certainly, that was an ambition in *The Globalisation Tapes,* and remains so.

Second is the question of how the film *practice* works, for it is also a social practice of participation and performance. It not only produces works, but actually does work in the communities where it works. Lives change through the process of making the films; friendships are built; networks of discussion and analysis emerge, as one film begets the next. As noted at the beginning of this thesis, I have adapted the language of spectres, ghosts and powers of attraction from the language with which my *collaborators* articulate the project's archaeological performance of their own history – and also *our* own history, because the "pacification" of Indonesia, both as such and as model for policies that have been applied to much of the "global south" – surely constitutes the economic system that, in turn, constitutes us. (And by collaborators, I mean those survivors who collaborate on this project, not the perpetrators whom this project infiltrates.)

Third is the question of how Indonesian audiences view these materials and, most importantly, the completed films? After watching the Snake River compilation attached to this doctoral submission, Sukirman, narrator of *The Globalisation Tapes,* said that the film digs up the monster lurking under Indonesian soil. Using the Indonesian appropriation of the English word,

"monster", and recalling Siegel's argument that the foreignness of appropriated words in Indonesian may index their untranslatable force, their mystery, Kirman's use of "monster" is an articulation that the massacres are indeed a spectrality that haunts Indonesia. Moreover, and indexed by the foreignness of the word "monster", Kirman suggests that the violence is neither simply "indigenous" to Indonesia, nor, by extension, a simple "other" to be conjured through ethnographic misrecognition.

And this presages an answer to the final question: is the spectral hold of terror simply an avatar of an older colonial fantasy of "the heart of darkness", wildness and the savage? Of course, where Taussig is concerned with colonists' encounters with Indians, we are dealing with Indonesian encounters with Indonesians, killers with victims and survivors with killers. We insert ourselves into these encounters as foreigners, facilitating them, too, because the perpetrators' performances could never be elicited by the survivors with whom we collaborate. Moreover, James Siegel stresses that the encounters of violence and terror rehearsed by the Indonesian state apparatus are ones in which Indonesians kill other Indonesians. Throughout the hundred hours of testimony gathered, the killers frequently and coyly gesture to the mystical powers of terror, not only through their literal discourses of *sadis* (sadism), *kebal* (invincibility), ghosts, and possession, all of which work to establish terror's *mystique*; there are other, more direct conjurations of terror's spectral power, for instance when Arsan giggles as he talks about playing with ears like basketballs, or when Pemuda Pancasila[106] chief Amran YS talks about "demonstrations killings", or smiles knowingly and says, "We'd strangle them and cut off their ears, because terrorising the communists was our strategy at the time", or the way Jamal Hasibuan's eyes brighten as he passes his index finger across his throat, or Rahmat's wink when he says "I drank more than enough blood..."[107]

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[106] Pemuda Pancasila is among the biggest of the paramilitary youth groups. Along with Pemuda Ansor, it is renowned for being most vicious is attacking the PKI. It remains enormous to this day, with branches in every village in North Sumatra. But now it functions mostly as a gang of extortionists and thugs (*preman*) pretending to a Boy Scout-like agenda of civil service and patriotism.

[107] Footage of Amran YS (video cassette I2-24) and Rahmat boasting about drinking blood (video cassette I2-32) is available upon request.

Through such recounting and demonstrating, these perpetrators – and in particular Rahmat and Arsan as they walk to the Sungai Ular – actually perform (enact, manifest, and conjure) whole fields of interaction between spectral and real powers. These interactions define a field of power articulated and actualised through performative iterations of already known historical narratives. Thus, like the official national history, the epistemology of Arsan and Rahmat's footage is not an interpretive or representational one, but rather a performative one: the question is not what historical actuality does their performance indicate or represent, but rather what do their performances conjure? What spectres are conjured as the obscene of their narrative? As above, the operative terms in this epistemology remain *performance*, *genre*, *demonstration*, and the conjuring and, indeed, manifestation of spectres.

Arsan and Rahmat's performance signal a relationship between the iterability of the performative and the legibility of the generic. It is as if, even though they are meeting each other for the first time, they are performing their history from a script that they both already know, and one related to the national official history rehearsed by the New Order. In their gestures of cutting throats and drinking blood, it is as if they share a script for how performatively to conjure the massacres' spectral powers. This is not the official history, but rather a generically conditioned, well-rehearsed, nationally known script for perpetrators to re-conjure and re-claim, through precisely this *acting out*, the spectral terror first performatively conjured during the actual killings. And it is for this reason that their interaction seems generic or, in other words, structured by the imperatives of genre.[108]

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[108] This script may include the ominous gesture of passing an index finger across one's throat, or demonstrating how to cut off a head, destroy a kebal victim, or drink blood, but it certainly doesn't include the naming of actual names – whether of individuals or local institutions such as the regency-level military command (Kodim). For this locates them as the murderers of specific individuals within their community, acting on orders of offices that can be approached. More below about how, lured by the camera, their performance moves into forbidden territory, including the *obscene* of the accepted script, that is, naming names and making visible that which was systematic about the massacres.

The footage's performativity creates problems for traditional epistemologies of interpretation, for once we acknowledge the motives behind the performance of history, we implicitly acknowledge the difficulty in interpreting the performers' original motive at the time of the killings. Still, the question of motive is an essential if unanswerable one. Arsan and Rahmat were part of a killing machine, and so understanding why they participated is part of understanding *why* the genocide happened.

The difficulties here are evident upon Rahmat and Arsan's very first encounter. Within a couple minutes of introducing themselves and establishing that they have come together to discuss the extermination of the PKI, they mention that they never got paid: "We never got compensation", says Rahmat. "That's right," confirms Arsan, "we weren't motivated by material gain." This is almost certainly false. One week before Arsan and Rahmat went to the Sungai Ular, I brought Rahmat's commander, Saman Siregar, to the very same spot. At the bank of the river, he explained:

> We'd be called to Koramil [district-level military command]. They gave us whiskey. We drank it. Sometimes [other members of Komando Aksi] would say to me, "Take me! Take me with you!" They just wanted the money. Koramil gave money. But when arrived here, they didn't have the guts. They'd get scared and stay in the truck so I'd slap them in the face.[109]

Obviously, admitting that people were paid would trouble Rahmat and Arsan's attempt to perform themselves as heroes. Likewise, Arsan says he spontaneously volunteered, but his wife contradicts that, explaining that her older brother, an army major, ordered him to lead Komando Aksi at the district level. Some Komando Aksi leaders, like Saman, may have already been natural bullies, thugs who hired their services out to whomever could pay. (Saman proudly explains that his father was also a hired assassin for the colonial authorities.[110]) Others may have originally joined youth groups out of loyalty to a patron or relative – a plantation manager, a boss, a business partner. I think Buyung Berlan, as a Malay

[109] Footage available upon request (Vision Machine video cassette I2-19, production translation by Taufiq Hanafi, postproduction translation by Erika Suwarno.)

[110] Footage and interview available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-18 through 20).

trader, may have been motivated by such lines of patronage. Still others joined to avoid being accused as PKI themselves; this was especially true of members of the left-wing faction of the party closest to Sukarno, PNI, the Indonesian Nationalist Party. Finally, some were doubtless forced to join, fearing reprisal if they did not, but this is by no means as usual as one might think, and generally applies only to poorer and lower-ranking members. Different groups also worked differently. In his memoir, *Embun Berdarah* (Lubis 1997:68), Arsan describes forcing his members to participate in the executions. From Saman and Rahmat's accounts, it seems members of Saman's group were able to refuse.[111] Members of other groups describe refusing to participate in the actual killing, but not being able to refuse other tasks, like driving victims to be killed at the river.

These various motivations aside, the previous sections suggest that people may have been motivated by the lure of power itself. A spectral PKI was conjured and endowed with tremendous powers. Participating in the killing held the promise of appropriating some of this power, claiming it for oneself. I am suggesting, once again, that the very spectrality of the PKI, as conjured in all the propaganda against it, was a lure, an attraction, making people jealous of the power. The killing was performed as an opportunity to claim that power, and become powerful – and spectral – oneself. Why spectral? Because by participating in the kidnap and arrest of one's neighbours, one constitutes oneself as a living threat, a sign of death (and an agent of "trauma", as discussed above) in everybody's midst.

This explains why people would come forward to brag about their role in the massacres. Appropriating the PKI's spectral power depends on being recognised as a killer in rumour and whispered gossip. For this reason, establishing yourself as a killer – or potential killer – in the eyes of the community may be more important than participating in the killing itself. Thus may people brag of things they never did or exaggerate their role. This attests to the *power of narrative* – of

[111] See, for instance, "Saman Siregar Narrates Rahmat Shah" numbers 1 and 2 on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2] (production translation by Taufiq Hanafi). Further relevant information is available upon request on video cassette I2-19.

rumour, stories and performance. This power is the subject of the rest of this thesis.

When I say that the spectral PKI (i.e., phantasmatic) exerted a hold, a fascination, this means that the spectres conjured by the vast anti-PKI propaganda campaigns had become real instruments of terror. Taussig writes about how such terror can lead those under its spell to themselves do terrible things. Writing about the Amazonian rubber boom, Taussig describes the reaction of colonists to the spectral terror of the imaginary Indian threat:

> The managers lived obsessed with death, Romulo Paredes tells us. They saw danger everywhere. They thought solely of the fact that they lived surrounded by vipers, tigers, and cannibals. It was these ideas of death, he wrote, that constantly struck their imagination, making them terrified and capable of any action. Like children, they had nightmares of witches, evil spirits, death, treason, and blood. The only way they could live in such a terrifying world, he observed, was *to inspire terror themselves*. (Taussig 1987:122, my italics)

The nature of this "terrifying world" needs real thought. Does it mean that the colonists actually *believed* they were surrounded by cannibals? Taussig does not quite say so. In the case of 1965, would it mean that Arsan and Rahmat actually believed the PKI kept secret death lists with their names on them, and was poised to massacre anybody who believed in god – despite the fact that the PKI members prayed in the mosque as much as everybody else? If they did believe it, what is the nature of such belief? Or, perhaps the colonists described by Taussig were obsessed by cannibals without having actually to believe that they were surrounded by them. Perhaps they lived "in such a terrifying world" because they were told, and were telling each other, terrifying stories about their world. But that does not mean they actually believed the stories. What matters is the genre of story, how it is repeated, how it is insinuated as rumour into the subtext of daily life, its context of circulation. A ghost story can terrify without one believing that it is true. Narrative has the power to conjure terror – i.e., a spectral power to terrify, and somehow, as with ghost stories, this power is attractive; we *want* to hear stories, even, or perhaps especially, terrifying ones; we voluntarily place ourselves under the spell of the terrifying effects stories.

This is not a unique observation about our susceptibility to narrative; indeed, it is the mechanism behind all entertainment that relies on the pleasures of narrative. But I am suggesting that this seemingly frivolous phenomenon can have very real and terrible political consequences. Just as we need not discuss belief to account for the spectral effects of ghost stories, we need not when we describe the effects of anti-PKI propaganda, or stories about Indian savagery. In order to kill, and to kill so many, Rahmat and Arsan may indeed have been *under the spell* of what Siegel identified in an 8 June 2004 email to the author as "that blind fear which no doubt had a certain historical explanation but which probably cannot be reduced to anything material". But when I say Arsan and Rahmat were under the spell of terror, I do not say anything about what they *believed.* Rather, I mean that they were attracted by the spectral power of terror invested in the phantasmatic PKI by all the stories about the PKI then in circulation, and they availed themselves of the opportunity to appropriate some of this power by participating in the killing. It does not follow that in order to be under the spell of terror they had to believe the stories that conjured it in the first place. We can discuss Arsan and Rahmat's motivation without entering into a debate about what they actually *believed.* We can account for propaganda's spectacular successes without having to demonstrate whether or not people believe it. This is a terrifying and terrible actuality: that one could commit genocide under the spell of ghost stories. And it is why ghosts and spectres play such an important role in this investigation.

Indeed, here is where our everyday conception of belief may fail us, and Althusser's account of ideological belief may be most urgently needed. What's convenient to believe may be more important than what one actually has empirically witnessed. Or, as cited above, Althusser's more subtle formulation of belief as practice: "Pascal says more or less: 'Kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe'" (Althusser 2001:114).

If credulity is not the critical issue, perhaps then it is stories: what they perform as obscene; how their faithfulness to the codes and conventions of genre make them pleasurable and effective; how they circulate; who legitimates them by

repeating them; and how do each of these variables affect their performance. Taussig also emphasises the role of stories in political conquest:

> It seems to me that stories like these were indispensable to the formation and flowering of the colonial imagination during the Putumayo rubber boom. "Their imagination was diseased," wrote the Peruvian judge Romulo Paredes in 1911, referring to the rubber station employees about and from whom he obtained 3000 handwritten pages of testimony after four months in the forest, "and they saw everywhere attacks by Indians, conspiracies, uprisings, treachery etc; and in order to save themselves from these fancied perils[...] they killed, and killed without compassion." (Taussig 1987:121)

And he continues:

> Far from being trivial daydreams indulged in after work was over, these stories and the imagination they sustained were a potent political force without which the work of conquest and of supervising rubber gathering could not have been accomplished. What is crucial to understand is the way these stories functioned to create through magical realism a culture of terror that dominated both whites and Indians. (Taussig 1987:121)

It is with these lessons in mind that we analyse Rahmat and Arsan's narrative account as *performative*, as conjuring spectres. And because these spectres have power for which people are willing to kill, the *performing* of history is, indeed, part of the *ilmu* (or magical knowledge) of state terror.

§ 4.2 Storytelling as *ilmu*

We ask, then, what do Arsan and Rahmat's accounts perform? What objects do they name and thereby, in Austin and Butler's sense, bring into existence? What conjurations do they effect? In short, what do Arsan and Rahmat's re-enactments *do?*

We begin with the following general observations: clearly unapologetic, Arsan and Rahmat perform themselves as heroes. They lie about not being paid, sacrificing accuracy for the requirements of heroism. They killed on behalf of religion in general, but not on behalf of any particular religion. They rose up and killed spontaneously to defend the nation against communism. That they admit the contradictory fact that they only killed official quotas – hardly spontaneous –

seems to fulfil the separate but related function of ensuring that they not be accused of murder: they killed (membunuh) *quotas* (jatah), and so they are not murderers (pembunuh).[112] This assertion does not in itself establish them as heroes, and indeed, the mention of jatah belies their claim to have killed spontaneously and on their own initiative – both prerequisite for true heroism.

Nevertheless, establishing (however they can) that they are not murderers may also be prerequisite to their becoming heroes, for murderers under no circumstances can be heroes. Their linguistic gymnastics have been quite successful, for across Indonesia 1965-era killers have been celebrated as heroes. Whereas in petrus, the government murdered its hired thugs, presumably with army marksmen, in 1965-66 those doing the military's dirty work were elevated to heroes, vaunted as the generation of 1966 (*angkatan '66*) that struggled for security and social justice.[113]

Turning now to how their performance conjures terror itself, we start by noting Arsan and Rahmat's interaction – from their very first meeting – is a performative reinscription of a series of myths about the PKI. The myths are almost too numerous to mention, but the following three are most prominent:

1. As part of their communist ideology, members of the plantation workers' union had taken a vow to give up all religion.

2. The unarmed communists were preparing to execute all their opponents, and possibly all non-communists. To this end, the PKI maintained secret death lists. In the Sumatran villages, these were often "found" when PKI members were arrested. The lists seized at the PKI headquarters in Jakarta were *blank*,

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[112] See *Snake River* (37-minute reel, chapters 3 and 8-10). The unedited footage is available on request (Vision Machine video cassettes I2-31 through 33). Production translation by Taufiq Hanafi, post-production translation by Erika Suwarno and Rama Astraatmadja.

[113] Celebrating these agents as heroes may in itself be understood as a strategy for producing terror; it not only serves to legitimate the regime by legitimating the violence upon which it was founded – i.e., figuring it as heroic; it also serves *performatively to conjure* further terror by invoking, again and again, the threat that it could recur and without apology, that mass murder is a spectral force the government can conjure at will, and without acknowledgement, since the agents of death will ultimately be vaunted heroic.

suggesting the terrifying possibility that the PKI maintained lists written in *disappearing ink* (!), spectral and ghostly, and was well equipped with high-tech chemicals to make manifest (or expose) the writing when and if needed.[114]

3. Evidence of the PKI's plan to murder all their opponents is the story that, a year prior to the massacre, communist infiltrators in the government had ordered all citizens to dig L-shaped holes in front of their homes. It seems unclear whether these holes existed or not, but if they did, even their official purpose remains ambiguous in the rumours: either they were part of a sanitation program (i.e., for rubbish), or else they were bomb shelters to be used in the event of an aerial campaign by the British or the Malaysians in retaliation for the Indonesian military's *Konfrontasi* (Confrontation) campaign against the newly independent state of Malaysia. In his afterward to Pipit Rochijat's memoir of the killings in East Java, Benedict Anderson refers to the rumours about such holes as the products of a psychological warfare campaign (Anderson 1985, quoted in full above). The holes, whether or not they ever existed, were used in propaganda to construct for the then-extinct PKI a phantasmatic but very palpable power of terror, to constitute the PKI as a spectre with a tremendous and terrifying destructive power.

When demonstrating how he killed his school friend, Subandi, Arsan first explains that until Subandi was influenced (*dipengaruhi*) to join the PKI, not long before he was killed, he had been the most religious person in the village, endowed with a beautiful voice and thus designated to read the Koran and recite the call to prayer.[115] Arsan makes no attempt to explain why Subandi vowed to give up religion – probably because he did not.[116] Similarly, when Rahmat tells

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[114] Rama Astraatmadja, in a July 2004 interview, told me about the "blank lists", explaining that this was a significant piece of anti-PKI propaganda, and the story still circulates among Jakartans. Notes from this interview are available upon request. The story is also cited in Anderson and McVey (1971).

[115] See *Snake River* (37-minute reel, chapter 8). The unedited footage is available on request (Vision Machine video cassette I2-32). Further reference to Subandi may be found in I2-28 through 30 and I3-14 through 16, and is discussed below in Chapter 5.

[116] Basmi, a Komando Aksi member from the nearby district of Dolok Mesihul, explains in a 28 August 2004 interview that despite propaganda to the contrary, he remembers meeting PKI members at Friday prayers in mosques, and seeing Christian PKI walking to church on Sunday.

in his interview how he killed Misbach, the Pemuda Rakyat leader from Sukasari village, he describes interrogating him about the L-shaped holes. He says that Misbach at first maintained that the L-shaped holes were for rubbish, but finally admitted they were graves for the PKI's enemies. When I asked Rahmat, both in a one-on-one initial interview and during his demonstration at the place where Misbach was actually killed, what would happen to Misbach if he did not admit this, Rahmat said, "we'd kill him" – which they did anyway. I then asked if he ever wondered if Misbach admitted it to avoid being killed. Rahmat just smiled and said, "That's not possible." Of course, if the holes never existed, neither did this dialogue between Rahmat and Misbach, except as a powerful conjuration of Rahmat's stories.[117]

Even if these stories directly contradicted Komando Aksi members' lived experiences of their PKI-affiliated neighbours, these stories still cast a terrifying spell, even to the point that those under their spell would commit genocide. I suggest that we try to account for these effects without speculating about what Komando Aksi members *believed*. Or, at least we would do well to distinguish belief (in Pascal and Althusser's performative sense) from what one has directly experienced (what one has empirically observed).

The paradigm sketched out above describes Suharto and the military conjuring the PKI as spectral threat and then appropriating this power for themselves, actualizing it in a terrible and tremendous massacre. Here, I suggest that Rahmat and Arsan repeat this process in their re-enactments at the Sungai Ular, now performed as an encounter between the physical bodies of killer and victim. There is evidence that as subjects their agency was severely limited by their military handlers; they were not allowed to kill anymore than their quota. Still, at

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He speculates that PKI religious participation was *higher* than that of those who would go on to join Komando Aksi, if only because Komando Aksi members tended to be drawn from local thugs (*preman*) who were not the god-fearing sort, at least before 1965. Afterwards, to avoid being seen as hypocrites, Komando Aksi members more or less replaced the now-extinct PKI in the mosques and churches. (Interview with Basmi available on request, Vision Machine cassettes I3-110 through 111.)

[117] Footage of Rahmat describing and demonstrating Misbach's murder is available upon request (Vision Machine video cassettes I2-21 through 23 and I3-111).

the level of confrontation between bodies, they perform the PKI body as powerful foe – empowering their own victims. Arsan and Rahmat conjure a spectral enemy and attribute to it terrifying plans – death lists, plans of mass extermination; then, in the massacre and subsequent re-enactments and re-tellings, they *manifest* all of the things of which they accuse their enemy, appropriating this spectral power for themselves.

Most of Rahmat and Arsan's victims are nameless – "PKI" killed in a routine way at the Sungai Ular. However, whenever Arsan and Rahmat *name* their victims, it is to perform a confrontation with a magical and tremendous power of resistance. Each of the victims *named* by Arsan and Rahmat – Subandi, Misbach, Lukman and Turib – put up a tremendous resistance, condensing onto named individuals the miasmic spectral power conjured for the PKI as a whole.[118]

Lukman, whose re-enacted murder forms the final scene between Rahmat and Arsan at the Sungai Ular, had to be killed *three times* before he would finally die. First, when he tried to escape from the truck bringing him and the rest of his quota to the Sungai Ular, he was stabbed and his intestines pulled out. Second, when he was re-captured at his parents' house, and slaughtered at the Sungai Mesjid creek in Sei Buluh. Third, when Lukman was fished out of the Sungai Mesjid by Buyung Berlan's Komando Aksi group, whose men could not figure out how to kill him until a dukun (shaman) instructed them to cut off his penis.[119]

Arsan describes Subandi as among the strong victims (*dengan jiwa kuat*), able to withstand beatings without making a sound.[120] Both Saman Siregar and Rahmat say that Misbach was *kebal*, or invulnerable to being killed with knives. They

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[118] Subandi and Misbach's murders have been referenced above. Lukman and Ribut's murders are described by Arsan in a 20 February 2004 interview (Vision Machine cassettes I2-28 through 30), available upon request. Lukman's murder is demonstrated in Chapter 10 of the 37-minute reel on the *Snake River* DVD, and forms the basis for much discussion that follows. See, too, "Lukman's Family Re-enacts Arrest" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2].

[119] As mentioned above, Lukman's ghost remains famous as a strong spirit, and brave dukuns occasionally summon him to predict lottery numbers. Surely, his celebrity derives from the visibility of his murder: unlike most victims, Lukman's murder was witnessed by crowds at the Sungai Mesjid.

[120] *Snake River* DVD, 37-minute reel, Chapter 8.

had to drown Misbach in mud because he was invulnerable to knives (*Nggak dimakan pisau*).[121]

At the river, Rahmat demonstrates in general terms on Arsan how kebal victims are invulnerable to knives. The knives simply bounce off the flesh. It is impossible to stab somebody who is kebal. This was a kind of generic explanation of kebal, not about any particular case, and apparently Arsan and Rahmat agreed on the general features of kebal – though they had never met before and thus had no shared experience trying kill somebody who was kebal.

Often, the kebal victims were those already acquainted with their killers. Arsan knew Lukman and Subandi. He was Subandi's school friend, and he was the head teacher in Lukman's siblings' primary school. Similarly, Rahmat was friends with Misbach.

But beyond those they knew personally, Rahmat, Arsan and also Saman said that many other victims were kebal, and that one had to be very careful, because otherwise they would come back to life (*hidup kembali*) and return home (*pulang ke rumah*). This could be a big problem, either because the kebal victim would take revenge, or because the local military command would get angry if the quota was not "finished off".

Probably most Indonesians of all classes and educational backgrounds believe in some version of kebal. I had heard stories of kebal many times in Indonesia, and particularly in relation to people who were challenging authority: trade union activists who worked on *The Globalisation Tapes*, for instance. Saman Siregar claims to be kebal himself, and once took me to a dukun to make me kebal.

Later, in our work with collaborators in Firdaus, we were invited to film a discussion of Misbach's friends and family at his grave.[122] Present were four

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[121] For Rahmat, Vision Machine cassette I3-111 is available upon request. For Saman's account, see "Saman Siregar kills Misbach Twice" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1].

[122] Footage is available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-07), production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

other survivors – all former political prisoners and slaves – along with their wives and the son of another man who was executed. When asked how Misbach died, his brother Warji said "We don't really know. We assume he was stabbed to death." I had expected them to say that Misbach's kebal was legendary, that he could not be killed with knives. The fact that his own family and the other survivors did not seem to know he was kebal raised some important and revealing possibilities about what, up to then, I had considered to be a foreign or even pre-modern form of power that I simply did not understand.

After showing James Siegel the footage of Arsan and Rahmat demonstrating how to kill a kebal victim, he wrote in an 8 June 2004 email to the author,

> The moment the account comes closest to the singular [remembrance as opposed to a performance] is during the considerations of kebal, because here they experience a counter power, the only place where they meet resistance, where they meet an individual rather than 'quota'. Kebal becomes the shifting image of the threat they were claiming to overcome – a power that was going to overcome them, if they did not appropriate it themselves. Kebal is no one thing, it represents multiple sources of non-centralized power, accessible power.[123]

Kebal, perhaps, can be described as an attempt to reconcile the reality of slaughtering people known to the executioners their whole lives, ordinary villagers with no unique powers, on the one hand, with the phantasmatic, spectral power created for the PKI by a vast, interlocking network of black propaganda campaigns engineered by Suharto's faction of the military, with the help of the CIA, USAID, and the MI6 (and at the insistence of multinational corporations with huge stakes in Indonesia), on the other.[124] I spell this out in such clear terms

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[123] In a sense, much of the argument of this thesis has been elaborated in response to the questions that Siegel's 8 June 2004 email raised.

[124] For more details, see chapter 1 above. Also: FRUS (Memorandum of conversation, March 16; National Archives and Records Administration, RG 59, Central Files 1964-66, POL INDON-US) for evidence of US corporations being involved with US covert operations, as well as Winters (1996) for a masterly account of how Suharto courted international corporations during and immediately after the genocide. For detailed information on the role of MI6 propaganda, see Curtis (1996, 2003, and 2004), Lashmar and Oliver (1998, 2000), Hulami (2000), Budiardjo (2002), McCann (2002), and *The Independent* (1999). A secret memoir to the Foreign Office from British ambassador to Indonesia, Sir Andrew Gilchrist, noted "I have never concealed from you my belief that a little shooting in Indonesia would be an essential preliminary to effective change", cited in Curtis (1996).

in order to suggest that a seemingly pre-modern and foreign form of power (kebal) may in fact be a manifestation of a contemporary spectre conjured as part and parcel of contemporary geopolitics and economics – and one that effects us all.

On the one hand, the victims were neighbours, even friends familiar to the killers. They were powerless: bound, blindfolded and naked. There was no difference between them and any other villager. As Arsan himself notes twice in his book, *Embun Berdarah*: I was reminded of "the Jews being escorted to their deaths by the German army" (Lubis 1997:65 and 85; tr. Taufiq Hanafi). On the other, the victims were members of a movement endowed (through official and unofficial conjuring) with a tremendous spectral power. Kebal becomes a kind of refraction, transformation and materialisation of phantasmatic power of terror of the PKI produced through sustained and systematic propaganda campaigns, beginning with the CIA's 1958 coup attempt against Sukarno.

The enormous number of reports of kebal members of the PKI – there were perhaps more kebal PKI members than the total number of kebal who ever lived previously or thereafter – surely means that the discourse of kebal in Indonesia was forever changed by virtue of the vast number of times it was invoked in 1965-1966. The scope or nature of these changes is beyond the scope of this research, but it certainly would be worth considering how the well-orchestrated campaign to conjure PKI as "spectre" – with its L-shaped holes and sadomasochistic orgies and secret weapons caches and death lists written in magical ink – conditioned the forms of kebal attributed to ordinary PKI members.

And so what seems at first to be a pre-modern form of power may ultimately be a transformation or condensation of a spectral power created, in part, by CIA and MI6 propaganda, an imagined power to resist, a non-ideological actualisation of the PKI's spectral power.[125] Kebal seems to function as a way the killers can

[125] The PKI's *spectral power* derived from propaganda campaigns that PKI members were attacking mosques, and planning to exterminate all Muslims, that they were trained in mutilating genitalia and drinking blood, and so forth – all activities later actualized by the killers.

empower their victims at the level of their bodies, imagining them as "up to" their spectral power, inflating them, endowing them with a phantasmatic power that can then be appropriated by the murderers. That is, kebal is the way killers imagine and appropriate the PKI's spectral power for themselves at the site of murder. First, by prevailing over kebal, Rahmat and Arsan imagined, encountered and prevailed over *resistance*, and thus may appropriately describe themselves (and, crucially, be described by others) as part of the *struggle* (*perjuangan*) against communism, rather than merely part of the extermination of communism; thus they can claim to be historical actors (*pelaku sejarah*) and even heroes (*pahlawan*). Here, a discursive power is achieved, transforming ordinary death squad members into heroes, and often heroes rewarded for their struggle.[126] The generic imperative that a hero must vanquish resistance is satisfied by conjuring the PKI as a spectral menace, and, for the actual people who "killed the PKI", endowing PKI bodies with a spectral power of kebal, the magic of invincibility, that can only be conquered with the killer's even greater magical powers.

Second, corresponding to this political power is an actual *ilmu* (magic power, but also knowledge) that is demonstrated in the confrontation with kebal. That is, kebal is a mysterious power that can only be defeated by very specific methods (cutting off the kebal victim's penis, or inserting a kelor leaf into his or her anus), and these are learned or appropriated by the executioners. Arsan and Rahmat somewhat nostalgically boast of their own *ilmu* in confronting kebal, as they help each other remember the different antidotes to kebal – black sugarcane, the kelor leaf, suffocation, forced defecation and castration. Kebal presents the murderer

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[126] We have recorded the following stories of killers being rewarded: Jamal Hasibuan, head of Komando Aksi for all of Labuhan Batu Regency, North Sumatra, was offered a scholarship to the University of Indonesia in Jakarta or a seat in the local legislature in exchange for his efforts; Saman Siregar was made first manager (mandor satu) at London-Sumatra's Rambung Sialang plantation; Arsan Lubis was made school inspector, head of the regency level educational and cultural department, head of the military-management dominated yellow union, SOKSI (later SPSI), at Societé Financière's Bangun Bandar plantation, founded as a direct and pliant replacement for the now-extinct SARBUPRI, and, in the past two years, head of the committee to ensure fair elections at the district level (his qualification being, presumably, that in his youth he had murdered all local leaders of the largest and most active political party); Kemal Idrdis, in reward for his zealous moves against the unions in the North Sumatran plantation belt, was promoted from head of the army's strategic command (KOSTRAD) in North Sumatra to commander of KOSTRAD nationally, based in Jakarta.

with a dilemma, and he triumphs by possessing greater ilmu. Whatever the means, the killer invariably triumphs over kebal in a way that establishes the murderer as a dukun (shaman) with an ability to define the very contour between life and death.

It comes as a real shock when, smiling as ever, Arsan holds the stick he is using as a sword over his mouth and says, "Sometimes the executioner would drink the blood like this."[127] Saman Siregar, Arsan and Rahmat all describe drinking blood as a preventative measure, something you do to avoid being haunted by the ghosts of particularly "powerful" victims – such as those who were kebal.[128] Drinking blood is not described as cannibalism, but rather as self-protection. In an interview between Rahmat and his wife, Damsiah, they explain, "Otherwise, you go crazy [*gila*], you get possessed by the people you kill and go crazy."[129] One might be tempted to interpret "going crazy" as an admission of the trauma (in the English sense) of killing, but those I have met in Sumatra describe drinking blood as a straightforward prophylaxis: the mental and spiritual strength required to avoid possession is literally imbibed in the blood of the powerful victim, conjuring the PKI as powerful, but the blood-drunk killers as even more so, having augmented their own strength with that contained in the victim's blood.

Taussig notes something similar in South American colonists' interpretation of cannibalism, writing that "Joaquin Rocha's man-eating tale ends not with the death of the prisoner but with his being eaten[...]ingesting him so as to incorporate his strength and augment one's war magic, as Konrad Preuss wrote was the case with Huitoto cannibalism, or to degrade him, as Captain Whiffen was told" (Taussig 1987:123).

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[127] See "Saman Siregar Narrates Rahmat Shah" number 1 on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2]. Footage of Arsan available on request, Vision Machine cassette I2-32. Production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

[128] Footage of Saman Siregar regarding blood drinking available on request, Vision Machine cassette I2-18.

[129] Interview with Rahmat and Damsiah available upon request, Vision Machine video cassettes I2-43 through 44. Production and post-production translation by Erika Suwarno.

§ 4.3 The Magical Power of Sadis

Drinking blood is one of many grisly details unabashedly recounted. Others include how water, not blood, would flow from the amputated breasts of Gerwani members,[130] how victims would urinate at the moment of death (Lubis 1997:39-41), how human corpses smell,[131] how the kebal were forced to eat and then defecate to overcome their magic powers (Lubis 1997:59), and how Komando Aksi rigged the bodies to float rather than sink so as to terrorize people living down stream.[132] These stories recount details that are routinely, to the point of cliché, called *sadis* (an Indonesian appropriation of "sadist"); indeed, these stories are told in the *register* of sadis (an Indonesian appropriation of "sadist"). Here, the performer lingers over the most excruciating details, gloating in the power of terror that inheres in the sadis, and that is inevitably conjured in the *act* of telling. The enthusiastic recounting of the sadis conjures, for the killer, an ultimate, metaphysical and magical power over detah. It is a power to be relished, savoured, by rehearsing again and again the grisly details. Thus may killers perform themselves not just as victors and appropriators of the PKI's spectral powers, but as shamans endowed with an ilmu far greater than that of their victims. Speaking in the idiom or register of sadis – that is, speaking in the *genre* of sadis – constitutes a veritable playground for the killers to explore and flaunt this power, conjuring their command over the boundary between the living and the dead.

Demonstrating in this way their own magical power over life and death is important because it makes the killings specific, and locates the power of death in the actual individuals who finally carried out the murders. Only by speaking the language of sadis can Arsan, Rahmat and Saman personally claim the power

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[130] Interview with Rahmat Shah available upon request, Vision Machine video cassette I2-22.

[131] From footage with Arsan and Rahmat at Sungai Ular, available upon request, Vision Machine video cassette I2-32.

[132] From Rahmat and Arsan's first meeting before going to the Sungai Ular, available upon request, Vision Machine video cassette I2-31.

of death from their superiors who ordered them to kill. If they merely spoke in statistical or general terms, performing themselves as mere killing machines in the service of the army, it would be apparent that the true spectral power of death was located in those who assigned their quotas. When Arsan, Rahmat and Saman highlight the singular and inevitably lurid moment of slaughter – the moment when they made the final decision to take life regardless of the blood and gore or, indeed, *because* of the blood and gore – when they gloat in the messy details of this moment, when they rehearse them again and again, they take for themselves, as individuals, the power of death otherwise vested in the institutions that commanded them.

Sadis, given its prominence on Indonesian TV networks like Trans TV, may be described as a non-fiction sub-genre of shock-horror. Violence is always explicit. Grisly and shocking details are told with pride and smiles, by respectable citizens – a school governor, in Arsan's case. For a respectable figure to tell a story full of sadis details is neither unbecoming nor tantamount to revealing secrets that should be kept from the uninitiated. Rather, sadis is presented as public fact. But despite – or perhaps because of – this explicitness, there is always also a gesture to something that exceeds that which is spoken, a secret, something being held back. This gesture takes many forms: a wink, a knowing smile, an unwillingness to name a name or speak of some particular incident, or perhaps simply the lack of any emotion appropriate to the terrible things being described. It may simply be the way the actual historical real remains always eclipsed by even the most vigorous attempts at description. That is, despite the fact that the sadis is so self-consciously explicit, almost pornographically so, despite all the detail – or perhaps because of it – one cannot help but feel, more poignantly than normal, the loss of the actual event, its eclipse by its symbolic and generic performance. And because the grisly detail is rehearsed as a boasting, one cannot help but feel the performer's *interest, his investment* in claiming power through the performance.

Perhaps it is this way in which the sadis always conjures something as *held back* that Rahmat alludes to when describing how dukuns always hold back the lion's share of their knowledge from their students so that, if a dukun must fight his

student, he will know the key to overcoming the student's kebal, but not the other way round. This provides an allegory for the *gesture of withholding*, a gesture that structures that most explicit of genres – the sadis, the shock-horror. For this withholding, this *secret* that one must always conjure as an excess or supplement even to the most luridly graphic story, also constitutes a certain ilmu, a mystique, a non-transferable power claimed by the performer who refuses to give away the whole game. I am suggesting, then, that structured into Arsan, Rahmat and the other killers' performance of sadis is the same withholding, so that in a double movement, they can at once claim the godly power over life and death from their superiors, while at the same time locate this power beyond that which they reveal, in a mystique conjured as a supplemental spectre, encrypted as the obscene to an already obscene performance.

This supplementarity may be the *narrative* analogue to a supplementarity Siegel identifies in the actual mechanics of massacre: however many they "had killed they could not be sure that they had subdued this supernatural power and taken it for their own. They killed more. The massacre founded itself on a logic in which each murder demanded another" (Siegel 1998:114-5). Having produced a spectre endowed with remarkable power, it must be appropriated, only to produce another, because its power lies in its otherness, in its alterity, its miasmic sense of being both pervasive and elsewhere, and so another must be killed, and another... Perhaps there was a feeling of forever chasing a power that remains beyond the killer's grasp, the irrecoverable *real* of the event; or perhaps the power was not as transferable as the killers hoped, locked as it may have been in the power of the corpse itself (thus necessitating drinking its blood), the corpse as a signal, left in the street as "shock therapy", sometimes adorned with flags, as Arsan describes.[133]

Through sadis, killers rehearse their command over life and death again and again, and always gesture at an excess to every incident, to every murder. And so by repeating narratives again and again, by telling stories, by performing within

[133] Mentioned during Rahmat and Arsan's first meeting before going to the Sungai Ular. Footage available upon request, Vision Machine video cassette I2-31.

these genres are the killers able to acquire the same spectral powers as they did from repeated killings. (Indeed, it is the sheer number of iterations of such narratives tha *constitutes* sadis as a recognisable sub-genre in contemporary Indonesia.)

Arsan and Rahmat's performance exemplifies this replenishment of spectral power through storytelling, through performances that seem well-rehearsed, even scripted. Rahmat in particular tells a lot of graphic stories. Saman thinks Rahmat's full of big talk but no action.[134] (For this reason, we were unable to convince Saman to be filmed with Rahmat.) Saman accuses Rahmat of lying, of having a big mouth, but never actually personally killing at the Sungai Ular. Saman's challenge to Rahmat's honesty is an attempt to prevent Rahmat from acquiring the power conjured by his stories. But in his own community, Rahmat's stories, whether true or merely "empty talk" (*omong kosong*), disseminated far and wide via Rahmat's "big mouth" (*mulutnya sampai ke mana mana*), have acquired for him the reputation of being an *algojo*, or executioner, a word often used generically – and in *sotto voce* – for anybody rumoured to have participated in the killing. This reputation makes Rahmat feared, anticipated as one with sufficient ties to the terrifying Indonesian state to be instructed to kill, and then be protected. There is a tense relationship to an unstable logic of anticipation, as Rahmat acquires a force precisely because his spectral violence threatens to suddenly explode into the spectacular. As such, this constitutes a real social power for Rahmat in his community – one constituted through stories, through his big mouth.

And so in the interviews and re-enactments between Rahmat and Arsan, stories of sadis abound, and those that are only hearsay are repeated as enthusiastically as those claimed as personal experience. There is the story of Rahmat's bundle of ears, to which Arsan replies that they used to play with ears like basketballs. There is Arsan's story of severed hands.[135] There is the story of Rahmat's friend,

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[134] See "Saman Siregar Narrates Rahmat Shah" numbers 1 and 2 on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2].

[135] For both stories, see Chapter 3 of 37-minute reel on *Snake River* DVD.

Usman, a killer who murdered his own sister, cutting off her breasts; neglecting to drink her blood to prevent himself from being haunted, he goes crazy (*dirasuki*, or possessed), locks his family in the house, burns down the house and climbs a coconut tree, repeating the *azan*, or call to prayer, as if from the minaret of a mosque.[136] These stories perform the killers as shamans at a séance of violence that occurred nightly on the banks of the Sungai Ular.

These stories are the performatives (in Austin's sense). It is not enough to drink blood or cut off heads; one must also tell about it, rehearse it again and again in whispered performances and repeated gestures, if one wants to conjure the spectral power claimed during the massacre, and manifest it as a social force. The performances of killers as they rehearse these stories are what accomplish this conjuration.

Writing about gruesome stories circulated by colonial functionaries during the Amazonian rubber boom, Taussig writes,

> The importance of this colonial work of fabulation extends beyond the nightmarish quality of its contents. Its truly crucial feature lies in the way it creates an uncertain reality out of fiction, giving shape and voice to the formless form of the reality in which an unstable interplay of truth and illusion becomes *a phantasmic social force*. (Taussig 1987:121, my italics)

Of course, these stories have a performative force only because there were actual killings, but the details are unknowable to the outside community, for there are no surviving witnesses (except other killers). Therefore, what matters is not which stories of sadis are actually true, but which are true to the genre of sadis, for it is these *stories* of sadis that, more than the *unknowable* incidents of cruelty themselves, produce the killers as shamans in the eyes of the community, as spectres, as individuals with the power to haunt, with an awesome power, blessed by the state, to determine the very boundary between life and death.

[136] Rahmat's interview regarding Usman is available upon request, Vision Machine video cassette I2-22.

It is in these stories of sadis that the spectral power of the PKI is again conjured and appropriated by Rahmat, Arsan and Saman Siregar (who continues to work as a dukun), refreshing their spectral power – and therefore continue to perform in the present. These stories have a literally mystical attraction, a magnetic hold, a pull, and this is the spectral power they conjure for the killers. Those who tell these stories claim a magical power over life and death, and create themselves almost as omnipotent, appropriating for themselves, and in the register of the supernatural, the spectral power produced by anti-PKI propaganda. The sadis itself is spectacle; the stories, not their truth, is what matters. Stories of sadis are the performative instruments of terror, establishing the magical power of the killers, and establishing the killers as spectral.

Taussig (1987:126) writes, "it's from the interpreting of such stories that sorcerer's gain their evil power".

Saman Siregar epitomizes this process. More than any other perpetrator we have interviewed, he relishes details of sadis during interviews, and he is frequently referred to in whispers as a *tukang potong*, or butcher from 1965. He is also, and famously, endowed with powerful ilmu, an ability to exorcise or call ghosts. He is a well-known dukun, or shaman. People visit him from miles around for everything from broken bones to finding a spouse to finding a lost driver's license to preventing their husbands from being seduced by other women to finding out what numbers are going to come up in the lottery.[137] There would seem to be something perverse about people going to a well-known killer for healing, but I am convinced that the spectral power of terror is precisely the source of his magic powers, as far as his community is concerned. I am reminded of Marcel Ophüls' film, *The Memory of Justice* (1976), in which with residents of a rural German village employ as their local paediatrician a woman who is known to have injected petrol into the hearts of children at Auschwitz. Ophüls asks residents, how can you send your children to be healed by a woman who murdered children just 30 years ago? The situation is similar in the village of

[137] See "The Magical Saman Siregar" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1]. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

Rambutan, where Saman lives, except his clients are not unreformed Nazis like the villagers in Ophüls' documentary. W— is friend of mine whose father was a PKI member, and had to change his name to avoid arrest. W— has seen much of our footage of Saman Siregar, and knows the details of his role in the genocide. Nevertheless, when looking for a dukun who could prevent her husband from being lured away by another woman who is also said to have gone to dukun, she confided that she would go to Saman except for the fact that Saman would instruct her to serve her husband coffee as part of the spell, which is impossible because her husband has ulcers and so no longer drinks coffee – plus the fact that Saman is expensive. I am convinced that W— would go to him not despite his history as killer, but *because of it.* The murders he committed and his sadis boasting of them are *the sources* of his shamanic power, and she, as part of a community paralysed by the spectral terror he commands, experiences this power as all too real.

Writing about the relationships between shamanism and the terror that underpinned colonial rubber exploitation in the upper reaches of the Amazon basin, Taussig (1987:127) suggests it is necessary to "work through the ways that shamanic healing[...]like the culture of terror, also develops its force from the colonially generated wildness of the epistemic murk of the space of death".

It is appropriate, then, that stories of the sadis are told in a macho, competitive register, germane to an on-going Indonesian competition to establish oneself as the most powerful shaman, or the dukun with the strongest ilmu. Not surprisingly, the stories most closely conforming to macho boasting are those that require a strong stomach (drinking blood), establishing power by terrifying others (as with Rahmat's ears or Arsan's severed hands), or vanquishing the victim's manhood (defeating of kebal by castration or inserting poisonous herbs up the anus).

This circuit of killer acquiring ilmu – even to the point of a killer becoming a famous dukun – could never be completed if the stories were completely unknown. But neither can the stories be public, because they remain obscene to the public history of 1965. Thus, they are whispered behind closed doors, as

rumours of fingers in the bellies of fish, cans of condensed milk containing genitals, killers who drank blood. And it is through these *spectral stories* that the killers finally acquire the spectral power of the phantasmatic PKI.[138]

Through their storytelling, subjects like Rahmat Shah, Arsan and Saman Siregar perform themselves not as foot soldiers implementing government policy, but as "living threats" in their communities: kind yet potentially lethal, neighbourly but sometimes murderous, respectable but always terrifying. And this latency is the source of their spectrality – what Siegel refers to as what you know already not to expect: we kill (this you can expect), but we are good neighbours and upstanding citizens (so you can expect that we will not kill). This terrifying and terrorising double bind is what constitutes the killers as spectres that haunt. Perhaps over-reaching himself to become a global spectre, Arsan says to the camera, "When this is shown abroad, people will think those Indonesians are all crazy [*gila gila*] killing people. No, don't worry, we only kill communists!"[139]

At the Sungai Ular, Arsan, Rahmat Shah and Saman Siregar project a history not with any view towards adequacy to actual events but as a fNgatiem for performing a certain will-to-spectral-power, for claiming the spectral power of terror itself. There is thus an awareness that the power to perform their version of the events – that is, to manufacture history – is, like the power they claimed over the boundary between life and death, a kind of shamanic power, a wizardry, one that terrorizes, silences, and empowers through the working of spectres – an applied hauntology.[140] They realise that claiming the power to create history is

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[138] It would be fascinating research to figure out precisely how rumours like the fingers in the bellies of fish circulate, how stories become spectral. They seem to have no known origin, no known author, and that allows them to be claimed as personal experience by everybody, incorporated without citation. Tracing the spread of such rumours would be challenging, because the process of dissemination is eclipsed by the sheer numbers of people claiming to have personally experienced these things, and thus claiming to be the source of the rumour. As mass killings, doubtless many people *did* share these experiences. Yet because these stories are also claimed as a way of appropriating the force of the story itself, surely many people claim to have experienced things they did not.

[139] Footage documenting this comment is available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-32). Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

[140] As already footnoted above, hauntology is an English translation of Derrida's trope for deconstructing the boundaries between existence and non-existence, deployed to mark the

not only a political struggle, but also a supernatural struggle, or even: it is a political struggle *insofar as it is a supernatural struggle*, and it is a supernatural struggle insofar as it is an ontological struggle, for it is a struggle to define the boundaries between what is actual and what is spectral, what is visible and what is obscene, what is certain and what is latent. How events are eclipsed by and transformed into histories – official histories, rumours, personal accounts – becomes the contested ground in which victors' jockey to conjure spectral powers of terror. Historiography – the codes and protocols for creating histories – becomes part of the killers' (and the state's) ilmu, or magical knowledge, for the stories and rumours that constitute history are the tools killers use for conjuring and marshalling spectral powers for themselves.

Taussig writes:

> All societies live by fictions taken as real. What distinguishes cultures of terror is that the epistemological, ontological and otherwise philosophical problem of representation – reality and illusion, certainty and doubt – becomes infinitely more than a "merely" philosophical problem of epistemology, hermeneutics, and deconstruction. It becomes a high-powered medium of domination, and during the Putumayo rubber boom this medium of epistemic and ontological murk was most keenly figured and thrust into consciousness as the space of death. (Taussig 1987:121)

Arsan and the other perpetrators have honed their ability to conjure again and again the power of terror through recognisable genres of narrative and performance, including kebal, L-shaped holes, and so forth. Through Arsan's novel *Embun Berdarah,* through Rahmat's legendary "big mouth", and perhaps, more than anything else, through the film we shot together, Arsan and Rahmat attempt to transform themselves into the spectral image of the spectral PKI they were lured to kill. The film scenes featuring them are striking because they are artefacts of a process in which Saman Siregar, Rahmat, and especially Arsan perform themselves as living threats, as spectres in a spectral history. Because Arsan and Rahmat's performance at the Sungai Ular is focused through the camera's lens, the footage is itself an instrument of their particular

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spectrality that haunts any claims to "presence" conjured by any one text – particularly, in the context of *Spectres of Marx* (1994), historical and historiographic ones.

historiographical ilmu, an attempt to create for themselves an instrument of terror.

§ 4.4 A well-rehearsed script: the generic, the kitsch, and the false

The camera constitutes for Arsan an opportunity not only to articulate his version of the events, but performatively (in Austin and Butler's sense) to claim spectral power through his performance. Arsan perceived the filming as a public relations opportunity – but not in the normal sense. Rather than the normal PR strategy of denying involvement and exonerating oneself, this is Arsan's big chance to claim the killing and the associated spectral power of terror. It is not innocence he is after but rather the power of death, which leads Arsan (and also Rahmat) to brag about what they did.

Bragging is not without precedence in stories told by genocidaires. As Hannah Arendt writes in her analysis of the 1961 trial of S.S. officer, Adolph Eichmann:

> Bragging was the vice that was Eichmann's undoing. It was sheer rodomontade when he told his men during the last days of the war: "I will jump into my grave laughing, because the fact that I have the death of five million Jews" (or "enemies of the Reich," as he always claimed to have said) "on my conscience gives me extraordinary satisfaction." [...] To claim the death of five million Jews [...] was preposterous, as he knew very well, but he kept repeating the damning sentence *ad nauseam* to everyone who would listen, even twelve years later in Argentina, because it gave him "an extraordinary sense of elation to think that [he] was exiting from the stage in this way." [...] What eventually led to his capture was his compulsion to talk big. (Arendt 1994:46-7)

Arendt argues that Eichmann attempted to stage himself not as the faithful, unimaginative and ambitious bureaucrat that he was, but rather as one who "made history" (what Arsan and other Indonesian genocidaires call a *pelaku sejarah*). Eichmann succeeded, for as Arendt observes, "His role in the Final Solution, it now turned out, had been wildly exaggerated – partly because of his own boasting" (1994:210), which ultimately won him notoriety as the architect of the Final Solution.[141] By claiming personal responsibility for the practices and

[141] In fact, as Arendt's book makes clear, the genocide was implemented by numerous and vast bureaucracies and industries, sometimes with distinct areas of competence and responsibility, but

procedures that constituted the holocaust, Eichmann also claimed *moral* responsibility, staging himself as a villain of epic proportion. This satisfied the demands of a judiciary that sought to hold individuals responsible, as well as a historiography favouring narratives that represent the past as the consequence of the wilful actions of individual heroes and anti-heroes.[142]

And so, while Eichmann's boasting led to his undoing, it did so by obscuring the "greatest moral and even legal challenge of the whole case" (Arendt 1994:26) – namely, the ways in which ordinary bureaucrats in banal (if not ordinary) bureaucracies can fashion a holocaust. Arendt's observations suggest that if we allow ourselves to be taken in by the bragging of genocidaires, we risk misrecognising systemic evil for individual evil, and therefore obscuring precisely the banality of evil itself. On these issues, Arendt writes:

> [There] lay the hard fact that [Eichmann's] was no case of moral let alone legal insanity. [...] Worse, his was obviously also no case of insane hatred of Jews, of fanatical anti-Semitism or indoctrination of any kind. He "personally" never had anything whatever against Jews; on the contrary, he had plenty of "private reasons" for not being a Jew hater. [...]
>
> Alas, nobody believed him. The prosecutor did not believe him, because that was not his job. [...T]he judges did not believe him, because they were too [...] conscious of the very foundations of their profession to admit that an average, "normal" person, neither feeble-minded nor indoctrinated nor cynical, could be perfectly incapable of telling right from wrong. They preferred to conclude from occasional lies that he was a liar – and missed the greatest moral and even legal challenge of the whole case. Their case rested on the assumption that the defendant, like all "normal persons," must have been aware of the criminal nature of his acts, and Eichmann was indeed normal insofar as he was "no exception within the Nazi regime." However, under the conditions of the Third Reich only "exceptions" could be expected to act "normally." (1994:26-7)

So that we do not repeat the errors identified here by Arendt – and thereby miss this central moral, legal and, it should be added, historiographic challenge – it

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often overlapping and in direct competition with one another. For a detailed explanation of the maze of Third Reich bureaucracies that implemented the Final Solution, see Hilberg (1961).

[142] Indeed, the judgement of the Court of Appeal to which Eichmann appealed his death sentence reads, "It was a fact that the appellant had received no 'superior orders' at all. He was his own superior, and he gave all orders in matters that concerned Jewish affairs" (cited in Arendt 1994:210).

has been necessary to recognise the Sumatran killers' bragging for what it is; this is important not, primarily, so that we avoid the factual error of attributing deaths to the wrong murderer; but rather so that we avoid the historiographic error of understanding the killings as the initiative of individual "patriots", and thereby fail to identify what was systematic about the genocide as a whole.

Like Eichmann, Arsan and other killers find being filmed an irresistable opportunity to brag, to claim responsibility for great historical events. Like anybody boasting on camera, Arsan is camera conscious, and in this self-consciousness, his performance becomes theatrical. And so, focused through the camera's lens, two forms of performativity converge: there is the performative in Austin's sense on the one hand, and performative as in "theatrical", on the other.

It is this theatricality that makes visible the imprint of the generic – the performance of a script that appears to be well-rehearsed. Arsan becomes a smiling presenter, and whenever he finishes a certain explanation, he pauses, refreshes his already gleaming smile, and gives the camera alternatively an enthusiastic thumbs up or a "V" for victory.

As Arsan drags imaginary naked victims along the ground, beats them senseless, cuts their throats, drinks their blood, and cuts off their genitals, perhaps the most unnerving thing is his relentless smile. It is a smile appropriate to the genre that Arsan seems to have in mind: a TV feature on something that certainly does not warrant the grave and serious voice appropriate to disasters or war.

Not only does Arsan never stop grinning, he provides a continuous, present-tense narration of everything they are doing. As he shows the camera how they would drag victims on the final stage to the river, he feels compelled to provide continuous commentary. Typical are lines like, "So now I am demonstrating how we drag him to the riverbank."[143] The lines seem appropriate to an on-location reporter providing a blow-by-blow account for the news anchor back in the

[143] See Chapter 2, 11-minute reel, *Snake River* DVD. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

studio, or perhaps even a sportscaster providing play-by-play narration for a football match.

It is apparent that Arsan has taken the lead in choosing his genre and settling into its conventions. By the time they reach the river, there is little for Rahmat to do except repeat the last few words of each of Arsan's sentences. But Rahmat seems to know the script, because the performance is evident from their very first meeting: a dizzying movement between nostalgia, grotesque one-upmanship and propaganda (about how the PKI had no religion, for example).

The following exchange between Rahmat, Arsan and Arsan's wife, Hapsa, is both typical and revealing for being the very first time they meet.[144]

Rahmat: Salam alleichoum
Arsan: Alleichoum salam.
Rahmat: How are you?
Arsan: So here we are, we're both old.
Rahmat: That's right, both old. We struggled [*memperjuang*] together.
Arsan: All we have now are happy memories [*kenang-kenangan*]. We came from all walks of life...
Rahmat: But that's all over now. It was 1945... I mean...
Arsan: 1965.
Rahmat: I don't have anything... Just a few friends.
Arsan: But at least we're proud because we built our country...
Rahmat: For that reason we're satisfied.

[A few moments of pleasantries about where Rahmat lives, and who he might know.]

[144] See Chapter 3, 37-minute reel, *Snake River* DVD. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

Rahmat: A few days ago, these friends came to my house. They wanted to know how we exterminated the communists in 1965. So I asked how they got my name.

Arsan: Very good.

Rahmat: And they said, from Mr. Saman Siregar... He's retired in Rambutan. He doesn't work for the plantation anymore. So I said, "Sure!" So I'm here today to show how we exterminated the communists. I can only say what I experienced.

Hapsa: Let's sit inside! It's hot!

Rahmat: We only know what we did.

Arsan: That's right, that's all we can say with honesty.

Rahmat: So these friends have invited us to the Sungai Ular, so I said, "Sure!"

Arsan: Yeah, I said, "Let's go!" Even here, there are people we killed and dumped in holes... A comrade just reported that one grave in Block 27, and also Lukman's grave in Pelintahan now have gravestones. But I don't know exactly where Lukman's is, because people from Buluh buried him [i.e. Buyung Berlan]. But the ones here I did myself.

Rahmat: I personally killed, I mean all by myself, ma'am, only one or two people, all by myself. Only god knows. But I helped kill another 15 people.

Arsan: I killed 32 people just around here.

Rahmat: But of course at the Sungai Ular, we deposited [*setor*] a lot more... Once, we sent the bus conductor down to the river by mistake, ma'am. He was innocent, but his head was chopped off anyway.

Hapsa: Poor fellow!

Rahmat: On the way home, all of a sudden I realised, "Where's the conductor?" "Yeah, he was killed too!"

Arsan: Yep, we sure were spirited back then!

At this point, it should be noted that they still have not even introduced themselves.

The accuracy of minor details is evidently sacrificed in favour of the conventions of genre and the attempt to create something sufficiently dramatic. At one point,

they seem to agree that the victims were blindfolded. A minute later, not having heard this comment, I ask them if the victims can see the blood of their slaughtered comrades. Despite having just said that victims were blindfolded, they both answer, "Yes". At another moment, they mention that the victims rarely screamed or begged for mercy, faint as they were both from terror and from having just been beaten in the trucks (so they could not run away). Nevertheless, when we ask them to demonstrate the last stage in their journey to the river, Arsan instructs Rahmat to "Just do a little screaming..." (*Teriak-teriak aja, oke?*).[145]

When I asked them to demonstrate how they would leave the river when their work was finished, they improvise an elaborate parting of old friends from two different death squads.[146] This was a spontaneous and apparent concession to the reality that they actually come from different villages with different death squads, but it was also fictitious, since each death squad operated independently by the time they reached the Sungai Ular – and, according to Saman, members of one group were threatened if they so much as stole a glance at other groups as they performed executions. Moreover, since they had easily assumed roles of executioner/victim from the same community, it was incongruous that they would opt to invent a fictional farewell rather than show how they actually would return from a night of killing. Perhaps the purpose was to stage a kind of camaraderie among the different Komando Aksi groups that otherwise would not be apparent. After all, the organization for Komando Aksi veterans is called the "Forum for the Veterans of 1966 – the Extended Family of Youth Who Exterminated the PKI". But whatever the imperative to articulate this unity of purpose and solidarity, it seemed to be a script already well-rehearsed by both Rahmat and Arsan.

In another sequence, the footage of Rahmat and Arsan at the river was screened for Rahmat's commander, Saman Siregar , who was asked to comment, creating

[145] See Chapter 2, 11-minute reel, *Snake River* DVD. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

[146] Footage available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-33). Production translation by Taufiq Hanafi and post-production translation by Erika Suwarno.

a voice over narration.[147] (Saman himself had already staged similar demonstrations at the river.) While Rahmat is boasting of how he killed people all by himself because other members of his group did not have the guts, "*nggak sanggup*", Siregar scornfully accuses Rahmat of never even participating in killings outside the Rambung-Sialang plantation. He even accuses Rahmat of never having been to the Sungai Ular. Rahmat's detailed visual memory of the place in 1965-66 makes this doubtful, but his narratives are so self-contradictory that we may accept Siregar's doubt. For instance, in a one-on-one interview shot several days before going to the river, he claims merely to have brought victims to the river; once at the river with Rahmat, he boasts of killing them all by himself. When he first meets Arsan outside his house, Rahmat says that Rahmat, a senior member of his Komando Aksi cell, was the man who gave the ears to the restaurant owner, but just one hour later at the restaurant, bragging for Arsan and the camera, he says that he personally handed over the ears.[148]

Rahmat and Arsan always play off their inaccuracies with confidence, and so too do they play off each other. Faced with inconsistency, they perform for the camera like actors in a play who cover up missed lines, keeping up a fast-paced exchange. Not once does Rahmat or Arsan make a searching attempt to remember what happened, or to correct inconsistencies. A sober reflection on the events might be the expected tone for recounting one's role in a genocide, particularly to a PhD student claiming a serious interest in historical investigation. Even if they were trying to cover up their role, I expected a serious tone. However, instead of sobriety, Rahmat and Arsan give us 3 hours of smiling and enthusiastic histrionics, performing their own version of the events with real gusto and enthusiasm, contradictions included. As cited above in a footnote to §3.1, Siegel notes after viewing the footage:

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[147] See "Saman Siregar Narrates Rahmat Shah" numbers 1 and 2 on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2]. Unedited re-narration available upon request (Vision Machine Cassette I2-34 and 35). Production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

[148] Inaccuracies are evident by comparing Rahmat's interviews on the one hand (Vision Machine cassettes I2-21 through 23 and I2-43 through 44) with the footage of Arsan and Rahmat at the Sungai Ular on the other (I2-31 through 33 and, especially, "Saman Siregar Narrates Rahmat Shah" number 2 on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2]).

> I don't have the impression that this is exactly memory, bodily or otherwise. But beyond that, I had the impression that they were [...] talking for the camera, which means using the language of the other rather than re-experiencing the events in ways that would elicit memories that feel un-coded and that need some struggle to become expressed.[149]

That Siegel recognises their performances as "using the language of the other" and thus as "coded" signals precisely the imprint of the generic, and Arsan and Rahmat's fidelity to generic codes. So long as the codes of genre are met, contradictions are accepted.

Arendt (1994) notes in Eichmann's speech a similar use of coded language, and she identifies these codes as "clichés". What cliché is to a single sentence, genre is to an entire narrative. This analogy allows us to apply Arendt's analysis of Eichmann's clichés to Arsan's faithfulness to genre. At the start of his walk to the Sungai Ular, Arsan goes to great lengths to set the scene, wistfully referring to the "romance of their work" (*romantisme pekerjaan*), describing the "fearsome night"(*malam takutkan*) with the crescent moon hanging over the dark oil palm plantation.[150] Arsan even attempts to freeze the moon in its romantic crescent, as on an opera stage, suggesting that the moon was always a crescent, as if, during the time of the killings, the lunar phases froze to create the right *suasana* (ambience) for the bloodshed. In his remarkable memoir of the killings, *Embun Berdarah* ("Bloody Dew"; Lubis 1997), *written in the first person from the perspective of the ghost of his victims*, and illustrated with his own graphic paintings of the murders, Arsan goes to even greater lengths to tell his story in an idiom faithful to a genre of romantic heroism.

As a genocidaire who has penned a florid autohagiography, Arsan once again walks in Eichmann's footsteps. Arendt (1994) writes:

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[149] Many of this thesis' arguments about the performativity of historical account in contradistinction to remembrance as adequate to individual experience were developed as answers to the questions posed by Siegel's 8 June 2004 email to the author.

[150] From Arsan and Rahmat's walk to the river, available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-32). Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

> [I]ndulging in his favorite pastime of writing his memoirs, he described this memorable event [his birth] as follows: "Today, fifteen years and a day after May 8, 1945, I begin to lead my thoughts back to that nineteenth of March of the year 1906, when at five o'clock in the morning I entered life on earth in the aspect of a human being." [...] According to his religious beliefs, which had not changed since the Nazi period, this event was to be ascribed to "a higher Bearer of Meaning," an entity somehow identical with the "movement of the universe," to which human life, in itself devoid of higher meaning," is subject. (Arendt 1994:27)

Arendt (1994:48-55) argues that Eichmann's bombastic and clichéd prose reveals an inability to think or speak outside of "stock phrases" and clichés. Furthermore, she suggests (ibid) that this was part and parcel of Eichmann's success as the *über*-bureaucrat, arguing that his incapacity to challenge established patterns of thought underpinned a deep reverence for authority.

> [T]he point here is that officialese became his language because he was genuinely incapable of uttering a single sentence that was not a cliché. (Was it these clichés that the psychiatrists [who examined him for the Israeli prosecution] thought so "normal" and "desirable"? [...] Eichmann's best opportunity to show this positive side of his character in Jerusalem came when the young police officer in charge of his mental and psychological well-being handed him *Lolita* for relaxation. After two days Eichmann returned it, visibly indignant; "Quite an unwholesome book" [...] he told his guard.) *To be sure, the judges were right when they finally told the accused that all he had said was "empty talk" – except that they thought the emptiness was feigned, and that the accused wished to cover up other thoughts which, though hideous, were not empty.* This supposition seems refuted by the striking consistency with which Eichmann, despite his rather bad memory, repeated word for word the same stock phrases and self-invented clichés (when he did succeed in constructing a sentence of his own, he repeated it until it became a cliché) each time he referred to an incident or event of importance to him. (Arendt 1994:48-9, my italics).

Arendt (1994:53) describes how Eichmann would feel "elated" when he used a cliché. The word "elated" accounts for the relish with which *Arsan* likewise uses clichés (often self-invented in the manner of Eichmann) to describe not only what he did, but also the importance of re-enacting and rehearsing it for the camera. Arsan's clichés include: "A great nation is one that knows her history"; "The past is archive, the future is a weather forecast, and the present is confusion"; "It was a matter of kill or be killed"; "A man who doesn't know his history is a small man who accepts whatever comes his way"; "It was a time of

revolution"; and the trauma and violence were all part of "the romance of life on this mortal earth" (this last one, certainly, is self-invented).[151] Arendt (1994:86) argues that "Eichmann's great susceptibility to catch words and stock phrases, combined with his incapacity for ordinary speech, made him, of course, an ideal subject for 'language rules'". (We can safely assume that, as with Eichmann, Arsan's own elated use of cliché made him a prime subject for the euphemisms popular among Indonesian genocidaires: "to make safe" [mengamankan] instead of "to kill" [bunuh], "quota" [jatah] instead of "victims" [korban], and so forth.)

The grandiose use of clichés and stock phrases is, for Arendt (1994), *performative* insofar as it performs the task of solving difficult problems of conscience. Often, it does so by establishing the killing as a great and historic duty – even a burden. Arendt writes:

> The member of the Nazi heirarchy most gifted at solving problems of conscience was Himmler. He coined slogans, like the famous watchword of the S.S., taken from a Hitler speech before the S.S. in 1931, "My Honor is my Loyalty" – catch phrases which Eichmann called "winged words" and the judges "empty talk" – and issued them, as Eichmann recalled, "around the turn of the year," presumably along with a Christmas bonus. Eichmann remembered only one of them and kept repeating it: "These are battles which future generations will not have to fight again" [...] What stuck in the minds of these men who had become murderers was simply the notion of being involved in something historic, grandiose, unique ("a great task occurs that once in two thousand years"), which therefore must be difficult to bear. (Arendt 1994:105)

Like Himmler, Arsan stresses that massacring communists was "something historic, grandiose, unique"; specifically, he describes the killing as simultaneously a noble struggle and a terrible duty.[152] Arendt's observations signal the fundamental role played by cliché and, if we generalise somewhat, the codes and conventions of genre in producing histories that simultaneously

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[151] Other Komando Aksi veterans seem to experience a similar "elation" when using clichés. All of the better educated Komando Aksi veterans whom we have interviewed frequently repeat, in English, "to be or not to be" as a way of rehearsing the fiction that it was a matter of kill or be killed [by the PKI]. See, for instance, "Arsan as Cecil B. De Mille" on the *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2] (production and post-production translation by Erika Suwarno). Footage of other Komando Aksi veterans is available on request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-104 through 105, I2-15 through 18 and I2-24 through 25).

[152] See, for instance, chapter 8, 37-minute reel, *Snake River* DVD (production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi).

reassure the public of the killer's ultimate acceptance of social norms (notwithstanding the duty to fight a heroic yet terrible battle on behalf of future generations), while at the same time performing the killers' atrocities in a terrifying show of force.[153]

Clichéd invocations of massacre as "heroic" and "historic" fNgatiem the killing as part of a historic battle against an enemy of mythic proportion. This is a central trope in both Arsan's memoir and his and Rahmat's performance at the Sungai Ular: set in a gothic landscape of ghosts, crescent moons, and a watchful animal kingdom (frogs, monkeys and birds are invariably mentioned as the witnesses of Arsan's atrocities), the PKI is performed as a supernatural threat to be overcome. Arsan empowers his victim as a mythic power to be conquered, allowing Arsan and Rahmat to claim that power at the moment of slaughter, transforming themselves into heroes rather than people who committed the cowardly deed of executing people with no power to resist.

There is a tension between that which is *well-rehearsed* about Arsan and Rahmat's performance and the fact that this is their first visit to the Sungai Ular since the killings, and certainly their first time together. The scriptedness of the encounter derives, I suspect, from the generic conventions conditioning all public discourse about the killings. For example, "the generation of 66" (*angkatan '66*) has been celebrated as heroes, and so they easily slip into a well-rehearsed performance as heroic patriots who would stop at nothing to defend the nation.

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[153] Arendt notes that clichés continue to work their magic even *after* the killers have been defeated and judicial fNgatiemworks established to hold them accountable for their crimes. "Reconciliation" itself, Arendt suggests, has become a cliché by which genocidaires may publicly perform their own contrition:

> [Eichmann] "would like to find peace with [his] former enemies" [i.e., the Jews] – a sentiment he shared not only with Himmler, who had expressed it during the last year of the war, or with the Labor Front leader Robert Ley (who, before he committed suicide in Nuremburg, had proposed the establishment of a "conciliation committee" consisting of the Nazis responsible for the massacres and the Jewish survivors) but also, unbelievably, with many ordinary Germans, who were heard to express themselves in exactly the same terms at the end of the war. This outrageous cliché was no longer issued to them from above, it was a self-fabricated stock phrase, as devoid of reality as those clichés by which the people had lived for twelve years; and you could almost see what an "extraordinary sense of elation" it gave to the speaker the moment it popped out of his mouth. (Arendt 1994:53)

Yet there is a grim mis-fit between their claim to be heroes and the events they perform. First, they must overcome the abject powerlessness of the victims, and this forces them into a supernatural register, conjuring magic powers of resistance. In *Embun Berdarah,* Arsan's narrative strategy is to blame any obstacles faced by Komando Aksi on the mischievous ghosts of those already killed; thus, only posthumously do the PKI victims summon the resistance required to constitute their killers as heroes. Having established the epic struggle between killer and PKI members, the door is now opened for another genre, quite unlike that of patriotic heroic struggle: slasher or shock-horror.

As already analysed above, shock-horror, and in particular its manifestation as sadis, is by now a recognisable genre through which the events of 1965-66 are narrated, first by killers or those who would pretend to be killers, and then circulated in the spectral form of rumour. It is a genre by which killers gloat over their kill, and sadly it is probably the most common idiom and context in which the genocide is remembered, at least in North Sumatra. And these shock-horror accounts conjure fear in the way a ghost story conjures fear – not by being believed in the everyday sense. Rather, they appropriate the spectral powers of the PKI's originary sadis: the imaginary PKI mobs that cut off the penises of the seven generals at the Lubang Buaya. Here I say "seven generals", because "the PKI's sadistic murder of seven generals" (*pembunuhan tujuh jendral itu yang sangat sadis*) has become the cliché which roles off the tongue, performatively constituting the phantasmatic reality of the "official history", whose spectral power may be claimed by ordinary Indonesians who tell shock-horror sadis stories of killing PKI. Thus may we think of shock-horror and sadis as strategies by which ordinary Indonesians – both killers and not – locate themselves in an official history, and seek to claim some of its spectral powers for themselves, either by casting the spell of terror and performing themselves as living threats, or by falling under the spell and thereby joining a national community that coheres by the power of terror.

As noted above, there is a terrible gap between Arsan's smiling face, buoyant tone and generous body language and the grim reality he and Rahmat are demonstrating, and it is to bridge this gap that Arsan uses the slasher genre. In

this register are respectable citizens, including a district head of the Department of Education and Culture, able to enthusiastically perform how their victims were tied up and dragged hundreds of meters along dirt paths before being decapitated. They can boast that killing people at the Sungai Ular was like killing chickens, and they can boast about licking the blood off their swords. "Shock-horror" allows them to recount without ever breaking their smile, for these are tales designed to terrify, to generate the same spectral effects as ghost stories. If it is more terrifying to tell the story while smiling, then Arsan may smile.

In his study of the psychology of denial in perpetrators of atrocity, Stanley Cohen (2001:96-97) argues that "Participants glibly appeal to "history" for vindication. A Serb soldier in 1999 talks about the Battle of Kosovo as if it happened the week before". The power of the victims in the past, be it actual or mythic, is used to figure the victims not as victims but as powerful adversaries to be overcome in heroic defence of the nation. Arsan and other perpetrators' repeated appeals to PKI treachery at Madiun and Gestapu – even if both are ultimately spectral conjurations in their own right – perform this same role. So does Arsan's clichéd claim that "they would have killed us if we didn't kill them first". But Cohen continues, referencing Michael Ignatieff's 1998 study of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans:

> This nationalism, Ignatieff points out, is supremely sentimental: *kitsch is the natural aesthetic of an ethnic cleanser.* This is like a Verdi opera – killers on both sides pause between firing to recite nostalgic and epic texts. Their violence has been authorized by the state (or something like a state); they have the comforts of belonging and being possessed by a love far greater than reason: "Such a love assists the belief that it is fate, however tragic, which obliges you to kill." This is your destiny. (Cohen 2001:97, my italics)

In the case of Arsan, Cohen's description of the Verdi opera proves to be more than just a metaphor. In a still-in-progress part of the film practice, Arsan has been working with us to film a musical adaptation of his book, *Embun Berdarah.* Arsan himself has assumed the role of "film director" for this musical film-within-our-film. To this end, he has recruited a university choir to create the music. He then wrote a series of epic poems and speeches, and recited them "amidst the beautiful nature of Indonesia" in North Sumatra's crater lake, Danau

Toba.[154] Basing these speeches on Cecil B. De Mille's introduction to *The Ten Commandments* (1956), which we had showed him as one of many possible models for his production, passages include:

> By watching this film, you will have made a pilgrimage to the actual land sanctified by blood in the patriotic battle to save our nation.
>
> Why make this film? Because this is my creation, the fruits of my own imagination, expressing the history of my own life. Let me tell you something you should know:
>
> [Quoting directly from *Embun Berdarah*] The red sunlight shines down upon the earth. Red, green, blue and other colours struggle to dominate the heavens. Banners emblazoned with writing seek to discredit everybody else. But storm clouds are gathering, and they cannot hold back the rain of blood that will fall upon our mother, the Earth. This is the fight between good and evil.
>
> This is the romance of life [*romantika kehidupan*] in our mortal world.

Arsan directly addresses the audience "amidst the beautiful nature of Indonesia" in North Sumatra's crater lake, Danau Toba. Paraphrasing De Mille, he declares, "By watching this film, you will have made a pilgrimage to the actual land sanctified by blood in the patriotic battle to save our nation." Under a soundtrack of choral music, Arsan delivers his speech before a shifting background of clumsy tourists learning traditional Indonesian dances, sipping multi-coloured cocktails, and bemusedly enjoying Arsan's poetry amid the tropical paradise.[155]

These mise-en-scène raise a whole series of exciting questions beyond the scope of this thesis, including the relationships between tourism and terror in the global south. For the moment, however, I refer to Arsan's miming of Cecil B. De Mille as an exemplary moment of the kitsch described by Ignatieff and Cohen – a striking example of how kitsch invariably embraces *the hybrid*, prefacing a film that will by turns combine genres of patriotic action-hero, slasher, gothic-

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[154] See "Arsan as Cecil B. De Mille" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2]. Production and post-production translation by Erika Suwarno. Rushes available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-92 through 99).

[155] These scenes are disarming precisely because they are *affecting*. The music is genuinely beautiful, the locations idyllic, and the actors' smiles generous and seductive, implicating us, along with the unwitting tourists, in the tragic comedy of Arsan's magnum opus.

vampire and musical-romance.[156] The footage of Arsan and Rahmat at the river, as an artefact of a performance as well as primary research for the later film work, also careens from genre to genre, and as such is another exemplary moment, pregnant with the issues of genre, history and the spectral being investigated further through the still-in-progress adaptation of *Embun Berdarah.*

§ 4.5 The Singular and the Generic

Despite his best efforts to remain faithful to genres, no matter how hybrid, there remains a tension between the generic and the singular. Arsan is willing to transform the character he bases on himself into a dashing, handsome romantic lead. He is willing to insert a love triangle between himself and Lukman. He is willing to change his wife's identity from school teacher to a mysterious and beautiful undercover agent for the military. He is willing to make the PKI a marauding gang of rapists. And he is willing to change names and set the whole thing in outer space, as an intergalactic battle, inflating his own role from district commander to commander of an entire planet – and not just any planet, but an essential planet of plantations upon which the entire intergalactic struggle against communism hinges. He is willing to do all this, but certain precise, singular memories still *arrest* him, and, he wishes to re-enact them with an almost obsessive fidelity. The actual killing of Lukman at the Sungai Mesjid, the slaughters at the Sungai Ular – these cannot be changed, even in their minor details. He is, indeed, possessed by the singularity of these memories, and feels compelled to incorporate their faithful re-enactment into his film, even if they are inassimilable to his chosen genre.

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[156] Analogous to Arsan's kitsch hybridising of seemingly incompatible genres, Arendt (1994) identifies a hybrid and contradictory use of clichés by Eichmann. Eichmann's choice of cliché in any given situation

> [was a question of] changing moods, and as long as he was capable of finding, either in his memory or on the spur of the moment, an elating stock phrase to go with them, he was quite content, without ever becoming aware of anything like "inconsistencies." As we shall see, this horrible gift for consoling himself with clichés did not leave him in the hour of his death. (Arendt 1994:55)

The killings, of course, trouble generic conventions of good guy and bad guy. This became all too apparent during auditions Arsan conducted in Medan on 6-7 August 2004, in which he auditioned around 30 actors for the parts of Arsan and Lukman.[157] Arsan himself perfectly realised the role of director. He cut people off in the middle of monologues, criticised their facial expressions, ordered them to sing, and then interrupted them with a curt "thank you" after the first couple bars. (Unless it was a patriotic song, which he always appreciated.) But on the second day of auditions, Arsan directed call-backs in which eight actors improvised scenes of killing lifted from *Embun Berdarah*. In one, Lukman is dragged from his home to be killed at the Sungai Mesjid creek. By this point, Lukman has already escaped from the truck bringing a "quota" to the Sungai Ular, and managed to make it home alive (though already gravely wounded by Arsan's men). Arsan recaptures him at his house, promising his family that they have come to take him to the hospital for treatment. Lukman sees through the lie, and cries out, "They're lying! Don't let them take me. They've come to kill me!" Lukman's mother and sisters cry, beg and scream as Arsan and his men forcibly drag Lukman away to be executed at the Sungai Mesjid.

It is impossible to view this scene and not identify with Lukman, the supposed villain, while Arsan, the hero, cannot help but look monstrous lying to Lukman's family and taking him away to be killed. For myself and Andrea Zimmerman, this was especially so, for the previous week we had filmed Lukman's actual family re-enact the events of that same fateful night.[158] In contrast with the actors' melodrama, Lukman's family performed with painstaking attention to detail. In the family's version, Arsan is not even present. They remember three local killers, including Awi and Abu, entering the house to take Lukman away. Both would have been members of Arsan's group, but Arsan himself remained outside, if he was present at all. (Lukman's siblings guess that Arsan stayed with

[157] See "Arsan Casts Himself" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2]. Production translation by Erika Suwarno, Heri Yusup and Rama Astraatmadja; post-production translation by Erika Suwarno. Rushes available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-54 through 73).

[158] See "Lukman's Family Re-enacts Arrest" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2]. Production and post-production translation by Erika Suwarno. Complete rushes available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-44 through 49).

the jeep out front.) Lukman's mother and siblings hold conflicting and complex memories of the event. Lukman's sister remembers that the Komando Aksi members spoke softly, that there was no crying. A very small girl at the time, she interpreted this to mean that her father didn't realise Lukman was being taken away to be killed: "If we knew that Lukman was going to be killed, father would have fought. He let them [take Lukman away] thinking that his son was going to the hospital". Her older brother, Timbul, says no: they all knew Lukman was being taken away to be killed, but there was nothing they could do, and the killers were polite because "in such a situation it would be impossible to adopt an aggressive tone". Lukman's mother describes holding back her tears until Lukman was taken, and asking Lukman's wife to do the same, so as not to frighten Lukman. The family's reconstruction is painful, and in their proud and anguished withholding of emotion, it offers no occasion for catharsis.

Arsan's version, by contrast, centres on Arsan.[159] His commanding presence focuses an otherwise chaotic scene of melodramatic weeping and pleading. In this way does Arsan stage himself according to the dictates of genre – as a disciplined and determined commander, and as the centre of attention. At the auditions, I expected to find the spectacle of mediocre actors screaming, crying and begging that Lukman be saved an offence to the experience of Lukman's family. However, the actors, for their part, understood that Lukman is the natural victim in the scene, and thus must be portrayed with sympathy, despite Arsan's having presented his character as the villain. Reversing (or setting right) the roles of good and bad guys, the melodramatic improvisation demonstrated that the memories of murder to which Arsan is stubbornly faithful – or, indeed, by which he is *possessed* – are inassimilable to the heroic genre of Arsan's movie. Because he cannot distance himself from the actual events, Arsan makes the hero into a villain, and vice versa.

And this mismatch, finally, offered a certain catharsis – both a release and a *relief* – for those of us who filmed the stoic re-enactment with Lukman's actual, long-suffering family, worrying the whole time that the police might show up

[159] Again, see "Arsan Casts Himself" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2].

and ask what we are doing. Because finally we have a loud, uncensored expression of *grief* by characters rightly regarded as victims, and in a relatively public forum. What came as such a *relief*, what was so refreshing, was the actors' public and unambiguous recognition that victims are entitled to an open and mournful grief. It hardly mattered that its rendering by the amateur cast was histrionic and over-acted. What mattered was its publicity and its clarity.

Arsan was so *taken* by recognition, by the singularity of his own experience of killing, that he did not even notice how inconsistent the scene was with the genre of film he seeks to produce. He thus fails to master the genre precisely because he is arrested by the singularity of his memories – a compulsive return of the singular troubling the imperatives of the generic.

As the actors perform Arsan killing Lukman at the Sungai Mesjid, Arsan himself was transfixed by the re-play of his actual memories before him. He sat on the stage, as close as he could without actually being in the scene. He reacted intently to every line, under the spell of the reconstruction. Suddenly, when an actor stabbed Lukman, Arsan seemed unable to restrain himself and, in a compulsion to re-create his own experience on film, shouted, "Cut!" He jumped up and into the scene, saying:

> No! No! No! Killing a person is not like cutting off a chicken's head! Slash, slash, slash. That's nothing. [Lukman] can fight back. A spirit has suddenly possessed you [the actor playing Arsan], so you really get into it! Like this! Understand? Now try again.

Despite the fact that Arsan and Rahmat had themselves compared the killings to slaughtering chickens (albeit on an occasion of scripted and generic boasting),[160] at this moment, what Arsan said was more true than perhaps he realised: a spirit had suddenly possessed Arsan. Standing behind his fictional self like a shadow, directing the movie version of his life, Arsan was suddenly possessed by recognition, by a memory, and by the compulsion to re-enact and repeat.[161]

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[160] Footage of Rahmat and Arsan making this grim comparison with killing chickens is available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-31 and 32).

[161] "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through" is the essay in which Freud first outlines his ideas on the "compulsion to repeat" (Freud 1914:145-56). These ideas have been so widely

I choose words like "possessed", "arrested", and "loses himself" self-consciously, because the close up of Arsan watching the audition shows him disappear into the grip of remembrance, leaving the present and entering another time, a time-image, to use Deleuze's figure for cinematic images that crystallise the overlapping and multiple layers of time – sheets of past – described in Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (Deleuze 2000, Bergson 1991). It is as if, in that moment of recognition, two temporalities touch – the present and that of Arsan's memory. Arsan as subject momentarily shifts to a sheet of past, and this discontinuity is legible in his face as a passing.

The moment is an artefact of the tension between "singular remembrance" (the attempt to recover, and in some sense be true to, a singular event), and "generic performance" (the acting out of a pre-scripted, conventional, or officially memorialised, and thus, generic, account of events). Despite his extraordinary effort to perform his history in accordance with the conventions of genre, certain gestures and memories break out by reflex, shards of a still vivid and singular scene, catapulting from past to present in a moment of remembrance and recognition.

Arsan justifies the inclusion of the scenes at the Sungai Ular and Sungai Mesjid, unmodified, because, he argues, they constitute "the climax" of his narrative. He thus appeals to narrative codes as a rationale for including that which cannot be assimilated to the codes of genre. Arrested by the singularity of certain "climactic" moments (perhaps ones that would conventionally be considered most "traumatic", in the English usage), Arsan troubles his chosen genre of

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diffused that it is hardly necessary to rehearse them here: In Freud's bio-energetic model of the psyche a protective reflex is posited that represses certain traumatic experiences in order to shield the ego. Consequently, these traumatic experiences resist conscious recovery, refuse to be remembered. However, the "affective charge" of such experiences is displaced and returns as the unacknowledged motive force behind ritual behaviours (often, rituals of repetition). Here, repetition is a way of *not* remembering. The aim of the psychoanalyst, then, is to work through this resistance, make the traumatic event manifest to consciousness, where it can then be *worked through* by the analysand. This working through allows the root of generic behaviours to grasped; once, as it were, the patterns and conventions of the genre have been realised, the cycle of rehearsals can be broken, and grasped precisely as a mode of performance (the playing out of a script whose text is all subtext). At this stage the traumatic experience can be effectively "discharged".

patriotic heroism at precisely the moment he is *possessed* by singular memories – memories of the gestures, routines and rituals that were the engine of genocide. He cannot quite *resist* the lure of the singular from disrupting his generic script, despite the fact that his is a kitsch genre whose hybridity embraces the most grotesque "slasher" violence cheek-by-jowl with a patriotic, heroic and pious moral purity.

§ 4.6 Contradictions between genres

As mentioned, shock-horror is a common enough genre of historical performance for ordinary Sumatrans because it functions as a strategy for claiming, as it were, the force conjured by the New Order history of PKI barbarism – particularly the imaginary events at the Lubang Buaya and their local equivalents. Although both of Arsan and Rahmat's dominant genres – shock-horror and patriotic heroism – are in their respective ways inseparable from the performance of New Order official history, there are contradictions between them and the official history, and between the two genres themselves, that once made explicit cannot merely be glossed over in the name of kitsch's hybridity.

In the official New Order histories, the fact of the genocide is excluded, rendered spectral and obscene, not to be spoken in any official capacity. Histories of Lubang Buaya conjure a spectral PKI endowed with the terrible force of sadis, but the government's *claiming* of this spectrality for itself is, wisely, left unspoken – known but inadmissible, allowed to circulate as spectral in the ways already described. Otherwise, if the government openly embraced the sadis, the spectrality of the PKI would be condensed into a nameable – and accountable – actuality.

Nevertheless, killers and would-be killers whisper and insinuate their experiences in the idiom of sadis to perform themselves as spectral threats, and thereby claim some of this force for themselves. It is a kind of parcelling out of the spectral spoils of victory. This seems permissible, even desirable, because it maintains in every community a stratum of terrifying agents of the state, individually invested with the massacre's spectral powers. If the state did not

want this, its agents could shoot several of their killers in each district, making examples of people who "talk too much". (This would be a similar to petrus, where the government shot the thugs who helped rig the 1982 general election.) But while killers may be allowed to tell their stories, the stories must maintain the status of rumour, whispered and spectral. Being too explicit undermines their *spectral* force.

It is to maintain this same spectrality that, in the official history, both the graphic nature of the killings and their systematicity are excluded. (By contrast, at the level of local rumour, graphic description of the genocide has become a genre in its own right, constituting the killers as living threats, spectres who haunt their communities.) The official history, without ever mentioning the genocide, rehearses again and again the spontaneous rejection of communism by patriotic Indonesian youth, and this is the basis for the patriotic heroism so enthusiastically performed by Arsan and Rahmat at the Sungai Ular. Moreover, the official histories exclude mention of the government's role, not only so those up the chain of command can keep their hands clean, but also to constitute as spectral both the massacre itself and the power of death wielded by the government yet invested in ordinary villagers.

Where Arsan and Rahmat run afoul of the official history is in making explicit that which was previously spectral, namely the sadis, as well as their description of the quota system and the role of the army.

In our filmed interviews with Komando Aksi leaders higher up both in the chain of command and in the Sumatran class system,[162] we still hear about rifles and pistols being given by sympathetic military officers, but we no longer hear about the army's direct role in administering the killings.[163] We no longer hear about the army giving orders, paying members, and, above all, releasing "quotas" to be

[162] Footage of higher-up Komando Aksi leaders available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I2-15 through 18, I2-24 through 25, I3-104 through 105).

[163] Medan's Komando Aksi leader, Soedirman, describes receiving weapons from Colonel Soekardi. Footage regarding Col. Soekardi available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-24).

killed at the rivers. Urban actors with comparatively more social power simply say they acted – and killed – spontaneously, without feeling any need to implicate the government. In ways already described, Soedirman and Jamal Hasibuan, head of Komando Aksi in Medan and Labuhan Batu regency respectively, perform themselves as heroes who spontaneously organised their god-fearing brethren to rise up in defence of Indonesia, Pancasila and religion (in general terms, never any particular religion). Even when they talk about killing, it is never a quota dispatched to them from a political prison, but rather people they themselves kidnapped and murder on their own initiative. Often, spontaneous mob violence – however incited it may have been by the military – is described, such as the 12 October 1965 action (*aksi*) when they surrounded the North Sumatran headquarters of the trade union federation SOBSI and burned down the building, forcing the federation's leader, Zakir Sobo, to jump from the windows of the upper floors, only to be beaten to death in the street below.[164] In my interviews with urban, middle-class Komando Aksi members, I often ask about quotas. Invariably, interviewees deny any knowledge. Occasionally, I felt they wondered how I might know such a secret.[165]

As described above, to remain consistent with a genre of heroism that celebrates the personal patriotic fervour of *angkatan '66* (the generation of '66), all members of Komando Aksi (including rural members with comparatively little social power such as Rahmat and Saman) will say that they acted spontaneously. In some ways, this is simple bragging, not unlike Adolph Eichmann's attempt to stage himself as a "great man" by claiming personal responsibility for "great events" (see above, and also Arendt 1994:26-7). But contradicting their claims to have acted spontaneously, rural actors also reveal in detail the military's role in ordering the formation of Komando Aksi, giving orders and dispatching "quotas".

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[164] Footage of the story of Zakir Sobo's murder available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-16).

[165] See, for instance, Vision Machine cassettes I3-104 and I3-105.

This discrepancy between the stories of powerful, urban actors and less-powerful rural ones may betray two things: first, how different levels of impunity attend different levels of social power and, second, actual differences in how the killings were executed in rural versus urban areas. Rural killers may invoke the distinction between murder and killing quotas as a means of ensuring that they not be accused of murder. That is, rural actors who may implicate the state as a way of protecting themselves. With little social power, they may not be confident in their impunity. Because rural killers still live in the same villages as their victims' families, they may invoke the state to protect themselves from the (very slim) possibility that their neighbours could hold them to account, legally or through direct action.[166] Describing the role of the state – thereby making explicit that which is obscene to the official history – may be a way of keeping their neighbours in line.

By contrast, upper-class killers who sit in the provincial assembly or are friends with the governor may feel no need to betray state secrets in order to protect themselves from sanction. They may feel secure in their impunity. Moreover, living in the luxury of middle-class suburbs, often gated and guarded, they may not live near people whose relatives they killed (though they are likely to live near to, or even in the same compound with, relatively prosperous ethnic Chinese families whom they may have targeted in the 1960s).

The discrepancy between rural and urban histories may also reveal differences in how the killings were perpetrated. In the cities, organisational leadership was arrested and killed, but most killings happened in the countryside, and especially in the plantations.[167] In the rural areas, a vast trade union and peasant movement was exterminated. An anonymous folio of notes at the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., notes that probably 1/3 of the plantation workers in North Sumatra were killed. It is very likely that a more systematic killing machine existed in the countryside, whereas in the cities the military gave Komando Aksi

[166] While there may be no court in Sumatra who would rule against a Komando Aksi member, legal possibilities may have opened since Suharto's resignation in 1998.

[167] Saman Siregar and Rahmat's one small cell killed between 50 and 200 people on one plantation, while Arsan's district-level organisation killed only 32 people across an entire district.

greater freedom, so long as they captured the organisational leadership. The more educated and wealthier killers in the city may not have been as supervised by the military, and may not have received quotas in the same way as rural cells. That is, they may not have been part of the same apparatus of genocide.

Middle class killers in rural areas may also not have directly received quotas, although I am convinced they would have known about them, since they still killed at the rivers, and they still attended the same Komando Aksi trainings. Saman Siregar, for instance, claims not to know the head of Komando Aksi in his own Sei Buluh district, Buyung Berlan, and vice versa.[168] I suspect Komando Aksi cells like Saman's, working on the larger and more remote plantations, had direct relationships with the army through the "plantation supervising officers".[169] They may have thus by-passed the district and regency level Komando Aksi chain of command, along with middle class commanders like Buyung Berlan and Arsan.

For these reasons, and ironically, to understand that which was systematic about the Sumatran genocide, one must talk to people *at the bottom of the chain of command.* People a bit higher up the chain of command either did not receive quotas, worked in urban areas where the real machinery of death was not installed, or else are powerful enough not to feel the need to invoke the state's responsibility, and would find their attempts to perform themselves as heroes (who acted spontaneously) compromised if they did. Those right at the top are either dead or, as in the case of Kemal Idris, surely know the systematic nature of the killings, but, in the absence of any international tribunal, will never admit to the mechanisms.

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[168] Interview with Buyung Berlan available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I3-09 and I3-10).

[169] These men were stationed in the early 1960s in the plantations by the army to challenge the power of SARBUPRI, the plantation workers' union, as well as BTI, the peasants' organisation pushing for the enforcement of land reform law (in particular redistribution of unused plantation lands on the periphery of the estates). After 30 September, any management sympathetic to SARBUPRI or BTI would have been purged, and the plantation supervising officers would have assumed complete control. See Ryter (2002:Ch. 1, footnote 15).

For all of these reasons, then, the footage of Arsan and Rahmat performance at the Sungai Ular makes explicit that which the remains obscene to the official histories – i.e., that which was graphic about the killings, as well as the military's systematic command over the whole process.

That which was systematic about the killings is also evidenced by the way Arsan and Rahmat's performance is so markedly conditioned by genre. Indeed, the generic reveals not only how scripted and well-rehearsed were the massacres, but also how scripted and well-rehearsed are their subsequent symbolic performances in official histories as well as spectral rumours. This allows us to identify the way the massacres and their subsequent spectral performance in history has been routinised, because rather than enacting and re-enacting the killing of individuals, Arsan and Rahmat enact a routine of killing, and they do so in a routine way. In an 8 June 2004 email correspondence with the author, Siegel notes that our footage reveals, unlike so many other documents of the genocide, that the killings were "mass killings" – i.e., that which is obscene to the official history.

It is precisely these contradictions among the various genres of historical performance that the film excavates, thereby making trouble for the continued smooth operation of any of them.

§ 4.7 Short Circuits – camera as lure, film as intervention

As I have suggested, Arsan perceives the filming as a rather unusual public relations opportunity – to claim, rather than deny, the killings and so too to claim the spectral power that attends them. Thus he expresses neither innocence nor guilt, but rehearses again the motions of the massacre that project the power of death. It is precisely through the camera's lens that this power will focus and condense for Arsan, and it is precisely through the television screen that, by virtue of its anonymous dissemination to anywhere and everywhere, it will amplify itself into a show of force to be reckoned with around the world.

Arsan's bid for publicity is fraught with contradictions, and these have emerged many times during the course of our film work. As he writes in his memoir, *Embun Berdarah,* and for our camera, when he first presents the book to Rahmat, "This is for people who wish to know more about our struggle, so that what we did will never be forgotten."[170] He makes photocopies of the book for all of us, but then tells us the book is full of national secrets and should not be made public. He changes all the names in the book, but then on the final page provides a key so the reader can know the names of the actual people upon whom the characters are based (Lubis 1997:99). He decides to collaborate with us to adapt his book into a musical film, and enthuses about the project to his friends; when his friends try to warn him off the project, suggesting the film might be too explicit (and thereby violate the national taboo around publicly discussing the massacres), he changes all the names and sets it on another planet, leaving the story intact.

Whole segments of his own community are already in the grip of his power – that is, they are afraid of him. The film entices him to enlarge the compass of his power, to draw others into his fold, to manifest publicly that which has hitherto been made explicit only on the unread and mouldy pages of his own memoir, written yet secret.

If he does see the film as somehow condensing his claim to spectral power, in what forums of presentation or circuits of distribution does he see his power emerging? That is, who is Arsan's imagined audience? Given how worried he is about "revealing secrets", despite his vigorous boasting, it is probable that he has no *particular* audience in mind. For as soon as Arsan imagines any *particular* audience, be becomes aware of *risk.* It is only when he imagines actual and singular human beings viewing his filmed performances does he realise that he is providing substantive and singular information. That is, only when he imagines a specific audience does he realise that his performance substantiates so much that had previously been unsaid, condensing the audience's reception of his image

[170] Footage of Arsan presenting book to Rahmat is available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-31).

into the transaction of a secret. Here is where he imagines danger, and suggests changing names.

At other times, for instance with Rahmat at the Sungai Ular, rather than imagining any particular audience, it is as if he is performing for an anonymous and, like spectrality itself, miasmic public defined and interpellated by an equally generic "media". Or perhaps he does not even imagine the public, but only the system of images that constitute "media". (When he surprised all of us and stood up in front of an audience of 100 tourists at Lake Toba, interrupting the Batak dance performance to recite his Cecil B. De Mille introduction, it was, indeed, as if he were completely unaware of the audience as such, and was speaking only for the camera, for the apparatus of media.)[171] Perhaps it is the rather impressive technology of filmmaking itself that enables Arsan to avoid thinking about how his performative project, in his mind, *lacks* an audience. That is, perhaps the spectacle of filmmaking functions like a fetish, a substantive *metonym* for the missing audience, as well as a concrete *metaphor* for the abstract apparatus of television and media as system of images.[172] Thus does the camera entice Arsan to forget, momentarily, the absurdity of the fact that he has authored and starred in so many performances for nobody.

The film Arsan has set out to make is self-consciously influenced by *Pengkhianatan G30S PKI* (Noer 1984). (In an unrecorded discussion about how to transform his novel into a heroic musical, he said that the model for him would be *G30S*.) By conjuring a PKI opponent roughly consistent with that conjured in *G30S*, he would claim some of the latter film's force: *G30S* has also

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[171] See "Arsan as Cecil B. De Mille" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2]. Production and post-production translation by Erika Suwarno.

[172] This would have echoes in the official history, for if he does see our film technology as a field that can actualise his spectral powers, this perspective is somewhat analogous to the fantastic idea that the PKI would similarly use technology to actualise their own spectral powers when they applied high-tech chemicals to manifest the invisible ink on their secret death lists. Thus does technology condense spectral powers and manifest their markers. See Astraatmadja (2004) and Anderson and McVey (1971).

Or perhaps Arsan is lured by the apparatus of scholarly research. I approached him, after all, as PhD student. Perhaps he hopes that the legitimacy of being recognised by official scholarship will allow him to transform his spectral power into actual power, without fear of reprisal.

been an instrument of terror, the film itself is part of the ilmu used to conduct the séance of Indonesian state terror, attempting to conjure the spectral power of the PKI, condense it in the film, and claim it for the state.

The promise of Arsan's spectral powers being amplified by his performance to a generic "media", an abstract apparatus that produces and distributes a system of images, forms for Arsan an irresistible lure, an opportunity to make a film that itself would be an instrument of his own power of terror. Thus does Arsan hope to use film in a performative bid to amplify and actualise his own spectral power, to make explicit that which is unspoken.[173] He hoped to use the film to close the circuit of spectral power's passage from the PKI to himself, and to amplify the strength of this ghostly power with the dissemination of his image around the world.

But rather than complete it, the film *shorts* this circuit of acquiring spectral power. As described, Arsan and Rahmat's well-rehearsed *performance of impunity* constitutes a spectral threat. Shooting and disseminating this performance should complete this circuit, but instead it shorts the circuit at precisely the moment when the spectral becomes spectacular. That is, once Arsan and Rahmat make a spectacle of their spectrality, they undermine their own power, because their power was established precisely as that spectrality conjured by that which was *obscene*, unspoken and unsubstantiated. That is, their performance – and its manifestation on film – makes public that which derived spectral power precisely because it was obscene to official history – rumoured but unsubstantiated and ideally, for the architects of genocide, unsubstantiatable.

Hannah Arendt (1994:105) cites a speech made by Himmler to upper level commanders of the S.S., the Gestapo, and the *Einsatzgruppen* (the mobile killing teams that massacred over one million Jews along the eastern front): "To have stuck it out and, apart from exceptions caused by human weakness, to have

[173] Before meeting us, Arsan had already explored the shamanic possibilities of photography. In addition to paintings and novels staging himself as historical hero, Arsan has obsessively collected photographs of himself that establish for him a certain *mystique,* dashing in white shoes and loud 1970s ties and flashy batik shirts and tight slacks. He even enlarges passport photographs to 8 X 10 and then paints the backgrounds in bold colours.

remained decent, that is what has made us hard. This is a page of glory in our history which has never been written *and is never to be written*" (my italics).

In an attempt to claim both its glory and its spectral power of terror, Arsan violates Himmler's taboo by writing this history, by performing it in a show of force for the camera, and by dramatising it in his in-progress musical drama. But by making everything explicit – by filming stories in the idiom of sadis that should remain as rumour, for instance – Arsan and Rahmat undermine the obscenity that is the basis of their power. The rehearsals and reiterations of their performance over the years before they ever had the opportunity to be in a film were permissible and effective precisely because they were predicated on them never having access to the means of recording their performance and disseminating it publicly. Like all the rumours of sadis, they may circulate only as rumours. Thus are Arsan and Rahmat so thrilled to have access to this power of technology, because with it they hope to condense their spectral power into a manifest power.

They are lured by the desire to secure their spectral power by making it manifest, by grasping it and possessing it with certainty; but this is impossible because once manifest it is no longer spectral, and its force is undermined. And here is where the contradictions between their performance and the performance of official history become crucial: by publicly performing the well-rehearsed but *obscene* scripts that constitute the massacres' systematicity, Arsan and Rahmat reveal that they were instruments of a system rather than its masters. And so, in their attempt to use film to complete the circuit of acquiring spectral power, and to manifest spectral power as actual power, they reveal that the power was never theirs in the first place. Arsan was ordered to kill by his brother-in-law, an army major. The killers were under army orders. They were killing only those whom they were authorised to kill.

Lured by the opportunity they perceive, Arsan and Rahmat get sloppy and fail to meet the terms of their own genre. They name names, including their own and, worse still, their superiors. They stumble and make precisely the kind of public admissions that have been proscribed, making that which has been spectral

explicit, undermining the terror of near-silence, or whispered threat. And this certainly would not curry favour with those up the chain of command who blessed them (rather than shot them, as in the case of petrus) for so many decades.

Of course, in some ways there is nothing unique here. Most interviewees see the camera as an opportunity to win recognition or claim other forms of power. This suggests that we ought not consider interviews as representations that function as a reliable or transparent window onto the events described, but rather as performance, asking what the subjects seek to *do* in their interview, and by what performative strategies?

It is worth recalling Taussig's comment, cited above:

> All societies live by fictions taken as real. What distinguishes cultures of terror is that the epistemological, ontological and otherwise philosophical problem of representation [...] becomes infinitely more than a 'merely' philosophical problem [...] It becomes a high-powered medium of domination. (Taussig 1987:121)

What is so shocking about the footage at the Sungai Ular are the strategies that Arsan and Rahmat choose to fashion their medium of domination. Certainly, for an international audience, their choices reveal that the discourses around the killings in contemporary Indonesia are somewhat different from those around the Nazi genocide in Germany today. Notwithstanding the example of Eichmann cited above, Germans who participated in massacring Jews might deny their involvement while Arsan and Rahmat boast. I had at first doubted whether Arsan and Rahmat's strategies – so shocking in London – would be surprising in Indonesia. I assumed that the register of Rahmat and Arsan's performance was somehow "typical" of Sumatran perpetrators, and expected that North Sumatran viewers would find their remorseless boasting rather ordinary. My assumption was wrong. In numerous screenings with collaborators, families of victims, as well as urban student activists, artists and friends from both Java and Medan, it became apparent that other Indonesians find the footage equally shocking, albeit for different reasons: rarely if ever have killers been so *explicit*. Particularly, by naming names and describing the killing machine in such detail, the footage

confirms what had long been suspected, or substantiates that which had been spectral. Lured by the filming apparatus, Arsan and Rahmat misjudge the nature of the opportunity that the filmmaking constitutes. Surely we are complicit in encouraging them to speak openly, too, in part because of our infiltrative performance.

Arsan, for his part, and to a lesser extent Rahmat, ultimately realised that they somehow overstepped the hauntological boundary between the explicit and the spectral. Thus, on second encounters, Arsan was much more careful when we discussed history *per se*. He never again exhibited the same naive enthusiasm he performs at the river. Rahmat's retreats are more subtle: he asks for money, and he withdraws certain of his more extraordinary claims (probably boastful lies to begin with) only to make them again as soon as he is overcome by enthusiasm for boasting, for relishing in the pleasures of the realm of death.

Tellingly, after our first visit, Arsan would never perform another "re-enactment" (*peragakan*) as such. I suspect he was concerned that the re-enactments, even if he were not to name more names, by being so obviously conditioned by genre, make too explicit that which was well-rehearsed (i.e., scripted and systematic) about the killings. Our strategy for getting around this worrying stumbling block has been through fiction. Originally, Arsan had asked to produce an explicit adaptation – albeit a musical, heroic one – of his memoir. After talking (bragging?) about this with friends in the regional government as well as veterans of his Komando Aksi group, including a member of the *Badan Inteligen Negara* (National Intelligence Body, Indonesian equivalent to the CIA), he was told that this might not be such a good idea. He was warned against doing any more filming about 1965-66.[174] He was crestfallen, until he came up with the

[174] Those who advised Arsan not to adapt *Embun Berdarah* into a film may have recognised that killers must not make explicit that which has long been obscene to official history. Even when Suharto was in power, identical advice would have been given for identical reasons. On the other hand, the *way* the advice was given is symptomatic of (possibly superficial) changes in post-Suharto North Sumatra. When Arsan described his film project to the bupati (district head), he was told that he should not adapt *Embun Berdarah* into a film *because another film*, Pengkhianatan G30S PKI (Noer 1984), *can no longer be screened now that Suharto is not in power* ("tidak boleh diputar lagi"). This is an interesting and perhaps disingenuous response, because *G30S PKI* certainly *can* be screened; it simply is no longer mandatory viewing.

solution of keeping everything the same except adding a love interest, changing all the names, and setting in outer space the whole "battle" between himself and the ghosts of his victims.[175]

He considers this within the sacrosanct realm of "art", and thus somehow no longer about his experiences. He continues to make the same blunder, making explicit that which had been obscene, only now it is encoded by changing names and locating it all in outer space – a space already structured by the well-rehearsed genres of patriotic heroism that code films like Star Wars, a model for Arsan's adaptation. The code is easy to break, however, not least because we already know all the names, and more importantly Arsan is repeatedly *arrested and possessed* by the singularity of his own experience, as described above regarding the auditions he held in Medan. He even wants to shoot his film in more or less the historical locations, with original costumes and weaponry, along the muddy rivers of Sumatra's oil palm belt, despite its purported interplanetary setting.

Arsan's use of historical performance as a performative bid for power, and his veiling of that performance, even from himself, in the name of "art", is repeatedly troubled by the tension between the spectral and the substantial. The meaning, force and consequence of circulating substantiated stories with named killers and victims is vastly different from that circulating unsubstantiated and spectral rumours. Not only do they substantiate their stories before the eye of the camera; their self-conscious histrionics make all-too-evident the generic imperatives that have constituted so many thousands of similar historical performances. That is, their own theatricality, borne of their eager attempt to seize the filmmaking as *opportunity,* produces a kind of over-acting that makes obvious the fact that their performance is scripted. These previously inadmissible scripts, thus revealed through the obviously generic qualities of their histrionic performance, lose the obscenity from which they derived their power. It is in this sense that we can answer Siegel's question, cited above, asking how it was

[175] Footage documenting the workshops wherein Arsan makes these adaptations is available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-7 through 8, I3-14 through 16, I3-30 through 32, I3-37 through 41).

possible for us to get such extensive responses from genocidaires. Cinema itself is the condition of possibility for these accounts. Moreover, it is through cinema that Arsan and Rahmat's power dissolves at the moment their performance is condensed onto tape and taken away from them, beyond their control.

§ 4.8 Intervention and Audience

Without seeming immodest, we can describe the filmmaking as an intervention, for by luring Arsan, Rahmat and other killers with the camera, they perform in ways that ultimately diminish their own spectral power precisely by performing it, while at the same time making possible an archaeology of the ways such power is conjured by historical performance as instrument of terror. But if both the raw footage and, ultimately, the completed films are performative, how they perform depends upon their stage.

For instance, an intervention to contest Rahmat and Arsan's power of terror is only potent in their own communities, for where else do they have such power? On three occasions in July and August 2004, the footage of Arsan and Rahmat's walk to the river was screened for families of Arsan and Rahmat's victims.[176] The intention was both to reveal what we know about how their relatives died, and to invite responses. Material that may be shocking and compelling in London may play very differently to Arsan or Rahmat's own community. As I prepared for the screenings in Indonesia, I was concerned that the footage terrify a survivor who had to encounter Arsan in the market, on the road, or in the mosque. I was concerned that within his own community, Arsan's footage may indeed constitute the instrument of terror that Arsan sought to produce. After all, the footage features a man describing the most grisly details of killing his own neighbours without ever letting slip his Cheshire cat's grin. Screened for a member of his own community, the footage may perform Arsan as living threat within the viewer's own village, a local *ghost* – for now the spectre has a body.

[176] Footage of these screenings is available on request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-01 through 05, I3-48 through 49, I3-113 through 116).

The word in Indonesian is *penunggu* – a ghost that haunts a particular locality, or, literally "one who waits".

Ultimately, only those who wanted to see the footage did so, and anger rather than fear was the dominant response. Moreover, there was a surprising sense of empowerment, particularly among Lukman's family. It was as though they now have an upper hand with Arsan because, in a clear demonstration of the equivalence of power and knowledge, they know about him, but he does not know that they know. This led Lukman's younger brothers, for instance, to talk about taking Arsan to court. Previously, the very idea of holding *anybody* to account, of confronting *anybody*, was virtually unthinkable.

To Arsan's superiors, the film reveals too much, substantiates too much, and likewise for members of his own community, who now perceive opportunities for challenging him, giving rumours a body that one can locate and hold accountable. If Suharto were still in power, Arsan would have succeeded in producing an object of terror, but for the fact that he undermines the spectrality of the force he seeks to acquire by being too explicit. Nevertheless, nobody would have dared challenge Arsan, except the local military command, who might have punished him for revealing too much. Indeed, for some who have not yet emerged from the terror of the New Order – such as Ibu Ngatiem, sister of Arsan's victim Rege, who asked not to see the footage – the unedited footage may yet be terrifying. Arsan's own performance suggests that he himself is barely aware that the New Order has ended, but that is because the New Order *has* barely ended, and particularly in North Sumatra, where the same people are in power. The footage is thus an artefact of the New Order, a shard of an overly explicit New Order performance, provoked by a camera, and a located only slightly out of its archaeological stratum.

Ultimately, the film series will have different Indonesian audiences, and different audiences may end up with different films. Certainly, our collaborators in Indonesia have various hopes. Some, like Lukman's brothers, hope the film will be distributed as widely as possible within Indonesia. They would like to take Arsan to court. Their position is that total visibility provides the best protection.

Others, like ludruk performers Sunardi, Turia and Turas who are working on a wayang opera based on Saman and Arsan's massacres, would like to see the film distributed but with their names changed. We all agree that risk must be assessed concretely, for it depends on concrete variables: what actually is in the finished film, and the frequently changing political situation in Indonesia. We all agree, therefore, that the best thing to do is make the films, and then, before they are released, bring everybody together who may be affected by the film to view the film and discuss strategies for minimising risk. If names must be changed or cuts made, this can only be decided once it is clear who is actually in the film, and once we know the political situation at the time.

That everybody involved perceives some element of risk is a sign of the potency of the project in Indonesia. We all work from the real hope that the final series of films may have a dramatic effect nationally, provoking a serious discussion where once there was almost none about the genocide, whose history has been wielded as an instrument of terror until today. This is particularly needed in North Sumatra, where there is truly no public discussion of the killings.

It is worth noting that there are many *different* Indonesian audiences, each quite distinct, each requiring different strategies, and each producing different effects. There is a national television audience, an audience of urban students and activists, as well as a local audience of survivors within the plantation belt. The latter is both similar to and coextensive with Serbuk's circuit of village-to-village and plantation-to-plantation screenings of *The Globalisation Tapes.* Here, the film becomes a tool to provoke discussion, to ask the questions prerequisite to forming a collective response to a history whose incoherence has been a source of terror for the plantation communities directly affected by massacres.

It also must be remembered that the footage is the seed for an extended process of "archaeological performance", in which successive screenings generate new layers of histrionic performance and response. The edited films will consist of the combination of different layers, including Arsan's own musical dramatisation of his memoir, and a Javanese opera (*wayang orang*) based on a series of possessions in which our collaborator Gunawan is possessed by both victims, as

well as generals and CIA officials up the chain of command. (More on this in chapters 5 and 6.)

Although much of this work is still in production, the few Sumatran screenings of Arsan and Rahmat's walk at the Sungai Ular suggest certain provisional hypotheses. Most important is that the other layers provide a purchase on a critical space for audience members who otherwise might simply find the material frightening. From the distance of London, we can readily discuss the generic imperatives at work in Arsan and Rahmat's well-rehearsed performance at the river, but for the sister of one of their victims, this may not be immediately evident. As survivors watch the footage to learn something of their friends' or relatives' fate, their overwhelming impression may simply be that Arsan has a terrifying power to perform his own impunity, and the effect may simply be terror, conjuring for him precisely the spectral force he seeks to embody. However, the other layers open up other spaces. At a screening with the families of Lukman, Rege and Edikman, audience members read aloud from Arsan's memoir before viewing the footage.[177] Arsan's bombastic tone gave people the chance actually *to laugh*, to recognise the *genre* of Arsan's historical performance, as well as that of the official history – rehearsed *ad nauseam* in Arsan's book. They were not simply laughing at Arsan, but rather at the arrogance of performing murderers as national heroes, at the obscenity of that which such historical performance withholds as *obscene*, and at the absurdity of a patriotism resurrected upon unmarked and unmarkable graves.

The experiments with Arsan doing his Cecil B. De Mille introduction at Lake Toba, his auditions in Medan, and of course the still in-progress scenes from Arsan's film adaptation of *Embun Berdarah* will all serve to project other critical and imaginative spaces where previously, to quote Ibu Arbahiyah after watching footage of Siregar, there was only "fear and trembling".[178]

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[177] Footage of this reading is available on request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-113 through 116).

[178] See chapter 2, 37-minute reel, *Snake River* DVD.

§ 4.9 The Generic and the Real

Before closing this chapter, I want to return to ideas first flagged in section 4.3, namely a tension between a graphic sadis and an excess, or supplement, which resists figuration and, as such, is always conjured as the obscene of even the most "obscene" performance. Specifically, I want to develop these ideas in relation to the present discussion of precisely the role filmmaking has played in luring and, indeed, short-circuiting Arsan and Rahmat's performative attempts to manifest and possess their spectral power.

I have argued that the spectral is spectral precisely because it goes unsaid, unmarked, haunting the edge of the fNgatiem. But Arsan and Rahmat make *everything* explicit – within a genre of sadis. Genres of sadis or shock-horror promise to tell all and withhold nothing, and this constitutive illusion serves to reassure us that nothing remains invisible.[179] Indeed, it is precisely the excessive visibility of the genre, its *graphic* nature, that by explicitly promising to deliver the obscene, intensifies its irrecoverability.

In this way does Arsan and Rahmat's performance evoke the *irrecoverability of the historical real* as its own obscene (because this is precisely what such an "obscene" performance promises), and so the historical real threateningly shadows their performance, a realm of terror, endowing it with a spectral force.[180]

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[179] But of course, this is a promise that no genre can keep, as the historical real necessarily resists representation. But unlike other representations, shock horror, the sadis, or the pornographic admit no space for humility, silence or incoherence in the face of the unrepresentable.

[180] Importantly, we distinguish here the "historical real", the "actual" and the "past", on the one hand, from social or historical "reality", on the other. We do not claim that there is no material basis in the latter, though we do claim that the former resists figuration (and is therefore irrecoverable *as such*, for any apprehension of the historical real is inevitably already a figuration). As we juxtapose an irrecoverable historical real with the myriad symbolic performances that constitute history, we are indebted to Lacan's distinction between the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary. Generic performances of history – national official histories as well as individual killers' performative attempts to appropriate the force conjured by official histories – conjure phantasms (such as kebal and L-shaped holes) that may never have materially existed, but have a rich life in the victors' historical performances, and thus play an actual role in Indonesia's political Imaginary. (Among other things, they serve to justify the actions of the powerful, and, as instruments of terror, to augment their power, while silencing the families of victims.)

Thus we identify a gap between Arsan and Rahmat's enthusiastic performance of shock-horror violence and the actual events conjured yet inassimilable to the genre. In the transformation into shock-horror of pleading victims, drinking blood, and killers trembling with nausea, something remains obscene, and it is this constitutive obscenity that conjures the spectre of the irrecoverable actuality of terror. Until now, we have argued that this conjuration inheres as the obscene to all performances of sadis – an explicit genre, to be sure – and it is precisely this conjuration that transforms such performances into instruments of terror to be wielded by the performer.

There is, then, a structural homology between the spectres conjured by New Order official histories that perform the genocide as obscene, on the one hand, and the spectres conjured by more explicit histories (such as performances of sadis) that cannot help but perform the historical real itself as obscene, on the other. In both cases, of course, the spectral is conjured by the symbolic

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Lacan's Imaginary and Symbolic are useful figures for focusing on the *reality effects* of historical performances. For according to Lacan, "reality" emerges through the subject's relationship to the Symbolic Order – a relationship always mediated by the Imaginary, a realm of desire through which the subject navigates (and is constituted by) the Symbolic Order in pursuit of the lost plenitude of the Real. The Real itself always resists articulation in the Symbolic, but the subject's Imaginary relationship to itself and the Symbolic always gives the promise of a *sense of the real* – that is, "reality" *as an effect*. Althusser (2001:109), in equating reality and ideology, suggests that "ideology represents the imaginary relations of individuals to their real conditions of existence" – that is, our *sense of reality*. For Althusser (2001) as for Lacan, it is impossible to recognise the real conditions of life, and this as a result of our dependence on language and symbols, an always already ideologically inflected field.

My argument that the irrecoverable historical real is the obscene to all that is symbolically performed is indebted to Lacan's exclusion of the Real from reality, insofar as reality is an effect of the subject's Imaginary relationship to the Symbolic. Thus is Lacan well-equipped to describe the *reality effects* of symbolic performances, and the historical real which they simultaneously simulate and exclude, rendering it obscene and thus spectral. My argument that historical performances construct historical reality by always excluding the historical real is likewise indebted to Lacan, for obvious reasons. So too is my account of how genres of historical performance which promise to be "explicit" (such as sadis) ultimately dissemble their own participation in the erasure of the always irrecoverable historical real. The real itself emerges as a spectre, the obscene to all discourse, precisely that which can never be spoken and thus haunts – and motivates – all symbolic performance, *luring us to misrecognise the performativity of all discourse as faithful representation of the real*. Phantasmatic and spectral, but commanding a power of attraction and fascination, organising perhaps the whole field of desire: this we refer to as the real. And in this essay, "the historical real" becomes a figure for identifying the past as both similarly irrecoverable and similarly endowed with a spectral force by virtue of its resistance to symbolic performance.

performances' obscene; that which is performed is always haunted by the spectres of that which remains unnamed or unnameable.

In considering the relationship between the explicit and the obscene, we examine how historical performances are always shadowed by that which they cannot recuperate, in a kind of *ghosting*. We identify this process as a doubling of the explicit and the conjured, of historical performance and historical real, and explore how such doubling can always double back and haunt the performer.

Siegel describes how the spectral condenses precisely beyond the fNgatiem of the image, beyond the limits of visibility, endowed through this invisibility with a power to haunt. Analysing photographs accompanying crime stories in the Jakarta tabloid, *Pos Kota*, Siegel first indicates how they are conditioned by their own genre to reveal nothing of the monstrous event they are meant to record:

> The pictures are stiff and even stereotyped. They seem sometimes to be posed or arranged to show what one should see.[...]Rarely do they show spontaneous moments.[...]Whatever one wonders about, it is not likely to be the various alternative actions that might have occurred after the picture was taken, at least so far as Pos Kota can help it; the artificial arrangement of persons, the pose, forbids that. (Siegel 1998:126)

But, Siegel stresses, it is not as if *Pos Kota* is trying to present a sterile and stereotyped world wholly conditioned by the codes and conventions of the generic. On the contrary, they use

> [p]hotographs not to actually obscure, but to indicate a limit to vision. In doing so, they imply something beyond that limit that, again, is not precisely the realm of ghosts but is its analogue in being elsewhere, removed from life, and associated with "death." But the photograph not only conceals, it also reveals; or it does both at the same time, so that occasionally what is concealed appears to live a second time in the picture. It is like a ghost, but a new sort of ghost, a ghost of technology. (Siegel 1998:129)

The manifestation of ghosts is a useful language for describing the interplay between genre, the historical real, and the spectres performatively conjured in Arsan and Rahmat's footage.

In reference to *Pierrot le Fou* (1965), Godard once said, "That's not blood, it's red!" (Comolli et al. 1965). But in *Weekend* (Godard 1967), when Corinne and Roland finally reach Oinville and murder Corinne's mother, there is a shot that suggests that Godard's assertion may not be so easy. Corinne's mother is holding a skinned rabbit when Corinne attacks her with a knife. After she dies, a close up shows the rabbit in a pool of human blood. But the human blood is fake blood (red), while the rabbit is an actual skinned rabbit. The shot juxtaposes two visually distinct shades of red – the rust of actual blood with the "red" of fake blood. This juxtaposition becomes an allegory for the tension between blood and red, the real and its symbolic performance. (I say allegory because there is no actual real in the image – the rabbit itself is of course only a film image of a rabbit long disappeared.) The allegory suggests that blood is not always *simply* red, because red always conjures blood, the symbolic performance always conjures the obscene real – and this conjuring means that the performance is haunted by, doubled by, ghosted by that which it inevitably excludes. This doubling, which is the source of any performance's spectral attraction, is thus the source of narrative fascination itself, the *lure* we often regard as the *pleasure* of narrative.[181]

The juxtaposition of fake blood and skinned rabbit becomes an allegory, too, for Rahmat and Arsan's conjurations at the Sungai Ular. Performing in the register of sadis, of shock-horror and slasher, Arsan and Rahmat make everything visible, but in its generic visibility becomes only "red". There is no blood. But because Rahmat and Arsan are the actual killers performing on the actual location where they killed actual people, they cannot help but evoke the irrecoverable real itself. By evoke, I mean to conjure and, inadvertently in this

[181] It is worth considering here Roland Barthes' (1975) theorisation of pleasure (*plaisir*) as distinct from bliss (*jouissance*). Moments of bliss, for Barthes, are possible when the codes that constitute narrative pleasure are broken, and the reader is *arrested* as a result. In *Camera Lucida* (1982), he describes similar ruptures of visual code as *punctum*, making possible a flood of other and unpredictable meanings. Indeed, the punctum is where Barthes is closest to Bazin (1967) – the punctum being the moment where the real makes its presence felt in the photographic image, trapped there like a mosquito in amber. In the case of *Weekend*, the use of red to conjure blood relies on a semiological code upon which narrative pleasure depends. The juxtaposition of blood with red when Corinne kills her mother is precisely such a punctum, a moment where the real has made its presence felt, thus rupturing the tissue of signification (and, for Barthes, occasioning the possibility of a moment of bliss).

case, *mark the conjuration as such.* The juxtaposition of rabbit and fake blood is analogous to the juxtaposition of actual killers and their generic performance. But since there is no rabbit in the picture, all that is evoked is the *absence* of the victims.

The same can be said about the footage of Arsan's auditions in Medan: the juxtaposition of the actual Arsan with his assembled cast of actors is also analogous to the rabbit and the fake blood, constituting the same visual allegory for the evocation of the real as spectre haunting its symbolic performance. And because it is an *evocation*, that is, a conjuring of the irrecoverable historical real and a marking of its conjuration *as* conjuration, it conjures not only the irrecoverable historical real as such, but by marking it, also the *irrecoverability* of the historical real.

This *striking*[182] juxtaposition of the actual and generic makes visible the relationship between performance and conjuration. And, more specifically, it makes visible the relationship between "obscene" genres and their own obscene – the historical real itself. And in this evocation of the historical real, what is made real is the absence of the victims – that is, their death.

And the genocide that killed them.

(That the victims' absence is *real* is what renders them spectral, and this spectrality is the precondition for their being imagined and imaginable as ghosts. Thus only after viewing the footage at the Sungai Ular was Gunawan able to call the victims' ghosts. More on this in chapters 5 and 6.)

Signalling a similar relationship between visual image and the irrecoverable historical real, Siegel writes of a photograph showing a police agent looking at the location of a murder – not wholly dissimilar from the footage showing Arsan at the site of his own murders, except in this case Arsan himself is the murderer:

[182] Again, I use "striking" to suggest Barthes' (1982) discussion of the *punctum.*

> In the issue of September 5 there is a photograph with the caption, "Locus of the Burning of Serkap Bambang Visited by East Jakarta Deputy Chief of Police." What it shows is precisely a visit. Five men stand on the edge of the spot where the body was incinerated. They are not actively looking. One might expect to see them close to the ground searching for neglected clues of some sort, in the manner of police detectives, but this is more of a ritual visit. (Siegel 1998:125)

Just as Arsan's performance at the Sungai Ular is precisely *a performance* (performative), rather than a searching attempt to recall the actual events, the police

> simply stand and gaze vacantly at a piece of ground, which is distinguishable from the area around it only by being cleared of vegetation. What they are thinking or what the purpose of their visit was is not said in the accompanying report. It is enough that they are simply looking. There is, apparently, nothing much to see. It is a place where something took place, the traces of which have already vanished. It is the sight of a disappearance [...]
>
> Without the caption one would not be able to make sense of the picture at all. And that, I believe, is the point. Behind what is shown in the photo, not merely out of sight but necessarily invisible, is "death," the realm of "death". When the police gaze at the blank ground, presumably they picture Serkap Bambang there. There, but also out of sight, disappeared, dead.[...]Even if it has nothing to do with death, the photograph indicates the absence of what is in the picture. It has the power[...]to evoke an irretrievable absence.[...]But the photograph need not evoke absence as one knows from the way it is usually viewed today. *Pos Kota* tries to ensure that the photograph is the site or the sight of absence by its captions. It does so because its aim[...]is to establish a certain realm of terror or fascination, then to turn it into a story, and by doing so, to reestablish a social and political community by tracing the trajectory of "trauma," cure, and the need for political security. (Siegel 1998:125)

Because I have suggested a reading of the Sumatran usage of the Indonesian word "trauma" that does not figure it in the usual sense of a psychological condition, I would avoid Siegel's language of cure and healing. Instead, I would suggest that *Pos Kota* or, as I'll argue in a moment, Arsan, or the state, step forward to offer not so much a cure but a solution, insofar as they provide an alternative site for investing the fascination that attends the realm of terror. A Lacanian analogue may be appropriate, then: the realm of terror constitutes a realm of desire, and *Pos Kota* seeks to reinvest this desire into the law, that is, the Symbolic.

Arsan and Rahmat's performance at the Sungai Ular can be analysed in similar terms to the photographs in *Pos Kota.* The historical real as a spectral "realm of terror or fascination" is evoked by his generic performance. All the more so because his smiles, his gesture, conspicuously and, I think, deliberately, describe but seem impervious to the terror of the historical real that he conjures. (Indeed, his response to Rahmat's most graphic stories of sadis – such as the severed ears or drinking blood – usually consists of a high-pitched giggle.[183]) For his part, he evokes a realm of utter terror in a reassuring and fatherly tone ("Don't be alarmed, we only kill communists..."[184]), and this is the basis of his charisma: inviting us to accept his explanation, perhaps because there is no other, perhaps because we are bewitched by his own poise and smile as he speaks the unspeakable. Thus does Arsan offer his audience a trajectory through terror and then back to reassurance – but unlike in the *Pos Kota* photographs, he is not the police but the killer himself: we accept him as interpreter and guide through the grisly events for which he claims responsibility, and which he graphically describes, but whose actuality as the historical real remains spectral and obscene, haunting his description, endowing it with a remarkable power of "fascination". But like the *Pos Kota* photographs, Arsan goes on to offer resolution, precisely by providing a semblance of reassurance and explanation and narrative closure. And this resolution, or solution, is analogous to the Indonesian army returning to the scene of the massacres they unleashed to "restore order" and, occasionally, offer protection.

Arsan's enthusiasm to write a book, to take snapshots, to make a film may be understood as Siegel (1998:130) writes, "It says in effect that the realm of 'death' is connected with those who control technology; thus, we might be grateful to the police who protect us from technological phantoms or negatives, as it were". Whether Siegel's "realm of death" or Taussig's "epistemic murk", these phantoms are the irrecoverable real that remains the *obscene to* (and thus

[183] See chapter 3, 37-minute reel, *Snake River* DVD. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

[184] Footage available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-32).

conjured by) the photographs and their captions, but resolutely and deliberately excluded from the image's stiff and generic imaginary. At the Sungai Ular, it is the unrepresented and unrepresentable terror persistently alluded to by Arsan, but never once allowed to speak, not even in silence, for Arsan and Rahmat blanket the entire soundtrack with ceaseless chatter. Like a torture victim under the spell of her captor, we might be *grateful* to the murderer (be it Arsan or "Pak Harto" or any New Order military functionary who wields arbitrary, lawless and violent power in a tone of paternalistic reassurance) whose command of his own movie, whose fluency in his own genre of "respectable sadis", can protect us from the spectral terror *produced as the excess* – signalled but unrepresented – of his own generic performance; the exclusions of his genre.

In his seamlessly generic performance, Arsan mimes, then, the Indonesian army's performance: producing trauma as a spectral force by creating the Orwellian double bind of forcing people to seek solace from the source of their terror. This is a standard script in New Order Indonesian officialdom, and probably all regimes of state terror: the reassuring bully who intimidates by insinuating the most terrible tortures while effecting a fatherly demeanour seemingly impervious to the very horrors he describes. This process, whether in the *Pos Kota* photographs, the Indonesian army posturing as "restorer of order", Arsan's own grandfatherly demeanour, and similar posturing by New Order officials, is ultimately the process whereby the spectral is made all the more terrifying by the paradox of explicitly conjuring it while effecting an utter innocence as to just how terrifying is this conjuration.

This is essentially an issue of how Arsan, for instance, regards the spectres that he conjures. Nowhere does the footage of Arsan and Rahmat reveal more of their own position toward their conjurations than at the end of their dialogues at the riverbank.[185] Here, Arsan and Rahmat negotiate with each other and with the camera about the "making of", what we were shooting and what we should shoot next time. This provides particularly salient material for analysing their strategies

[185] See chapter 10, 37-minute reel, *Snake River* DVD. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

for conjuring spectral power, as well as their attitudes toward their strategies and the spectralities they conjure. Nowhere more clearly does the footage gesture to the historical real while also excluding it, *producing* it as spectral, while at the same time marking this very production, indicating for us, as it were, the location and contours of its own ghosting. Moreover, because this exchange ends the entire series of enactments at the river – notwithstanding their improvised and wholly fictive "farewell" – it provides a kind of summary to their whole performance.

While demonstrating again and again how they overcame Lukman's kebal by cutting off his genitals, at some point Rahmat produces a knife.

Rahmat: But wait! So it's clean... Sorry, yeah? So it's authentic, don't use this, sir.
Arsan: (realizing that Rahmat has a knife) You have one? You brought one?
Rahmat: So it's authentic...
Arsan: That's it!
Rahmat: So it's authentic, look! A knife! That's how it was, more or less.
Arsan: Oh, but it's dangerous!
Rahmat: No no! We won't do anything! It's just so it looks authentic!

Then, after demonstrating Lukman's execution, knife still in Arsan's hand, grin, as always, on his face, they realise they have reached the *tamat cerita*, the end of the story.

Arsan: That's the story I can tell you. And other events, I think, are similar but not the same.
Rahmat: Not the same!
Arsan: Not the same. But that's the event we experienced. (Handing the knife back to Rahmat.) So, in brief, that's the story.

Long pause, as they look wistfully off toward the river. The camera keeps rolling.

Rahmat: With this knife, they can see our weapons. So when they show the film, it's the real thing!

Arsan: I still have my sword at home. I could have brought it.

Rahmat: Yeah, that would have been even better.

Arsan: More clear.

Rahmat: Yeah, more clear.

Arsan: And I could have brought my members to beg for mercy in the re-enactments...

Rahmat: But this was pretty cool!

Arsan: Yeah, this was good enough.

Rahmat: (speaking to the camera.) But you should also take shots of the river, right?

Arsan: Absolutely.

Rahmat: Take the river... Let people see the river. "This is the Sungai Ular." Later take shots of the bridge. That's all.

Another long pause, as Arsan takes out his camera to take snapshots.

Rahmat: (wistfully) Yes! That's how it is, life on this earth.

JLO: (off camera) Feel free to take a photo.

Arsan: Thank you. (Snaps picture of JLO filming, then asks Taufiq, who is recording sound.) Can you take our picture? Taufiq can take the picture.

JLO: (off camera, addressing collaborator) Go ahead Taufiq.

Arsan: We'll stand here.

Rahmat: But facing the river is nicer.

Arsan: No. With the river behind, so you can see the river flowing...

Arsan and Rahmat walk toward the river, trading places with the camera so they may be photographed with the river behind them. In the first cut since they began demonstrating Lukman's execution, we cut to a reverse angle, showing Arsan and Rahmat posing for pictures with the Sungai Ular in the background. Arsan has his arm around Rahmat, smiling. Rahmat looks perplexed and small. Arsan gives the victory sign. He holds it. We hear the camera click and the film wind.

Arsan changes pose, gives the thumbs up. Hold it. Hold it. Click. "OK," Arsan says. Blackout.

This footage functions differently to other long sequences at the Sungai Ular. For example, the first meeting of Rahmat and Arsan is a long, impromptu, but camera-conscious dialogue between two men who are still unacquainted and who are establishing their credentials as killers. The material quoted above is, by contrast, interesting not merely as a performance for the camera. It begins as a negotiation between Rahmat and Arsan over how to make the footage more *asli* (authentic) and *bersih* (clean) – in short, how to make the footage satisfy their own expectations of the genre.[186] It is an impromptu "making of" the genre they seek to establish. This is interesting because the knife signifies actual danger, conjuring the historical real that the generic excludes. The knife is like *Weekend's* skinned rabbit, lent authenticity by the fact that it is handled by real killers. The sticks of wood that the knife replaces are the fake blood – that is, red. That the knife may be a source of danger is all the more palpable because we are aware that Arsan and Rahmat could not really trust each other, since we know they have only just met, not to mention the fact that they both claim to have used knives to kill other human beings. The knife suddenly becomes a visual allegory akin to Godard's skinned rabbit in its pool of red, marking the conjuration of a

[186] In *On the Subject of "Java"*, John Pemberton (1994) has written brilliantly on how the New Order has used notions of *asli* (authenticity) and *lengkap* (completeness) to dissimulate Suharto's invention of Javanese tradition to legitimate the military regime, particularly by inscribing an ideal state of utter stability in which nothing ever changes (*slamet*) as the core value in Javanese culture. Most relevant are his brilliant and amusing writings about *Taman Mini Indonesia Indah*, or Jakarta's Beautiful Mini Indonesia amusement park, which claims to be more *asli* than the real thing, and that once you have seen Taman Mini there is no need to see anything else in Indonesia. Here, he reveals precisely the way *asli* has come to be a figure not for the actual, but for that which most perfectly lives up to the generic ideal. The account is a peculiar military dictatorship manifestation of Baudrillard's precession of the simulacrum. Excited by these writings, we visited Taman Mini and have collected archive footage of various "traditional rituals" (*upacara tradisional*) being performed by President and Madame Suharto. Equally hilarious and relevant is Pemberton's post-script on the petrus killings, which he describes as an attempt to make a "show of force" before the expected influx of foreign tourists to view a total solar eclipse. He goes on to describe how the New Order, jealous of the supernatural power of the eclipse, sought to appropriate this power – not, I am afraid, by shooting the moon, but rather by over-regulating it: announcing a series of bizarre decrees that made it illegal to view the eclipse except on state television, and wheeling out a series of experts who warned all Indonesians that the TSE was a source of deadly radiation. (The government called the eclipse "TSE" in an attempt, perhaps, to create a new and mysterious acronym invested with the eclipse's spectral force.) Astronomy students who dared to view the eclipse from outdoors were arrested, while those who obeyed orders and watched the eclipse on TV were treated to images of foreign tourists in shorts and t-shirts basking in the crepuscule at the ancient Buddhist ruins of Borobudur.

historical real normally obscene to their histrionics or, as Arsan himself would refer to it in a follow-up telephone conversation, their *sandiwara* (skit, or play).

The knife may be akin to the rabbit, but because it is dangerous they can no longer perform the motions of stabbing and decapitating. That is, they can no longer perform to requirements of genre because they are confronted with an actual knife and actual danger, revealing precisely how the real is excluded from generic.

To make his account even more *asli*, Arsan makes a generic reference to his personal experience. Accepting the knife, Arsan then returns to his camera-conscious presentation. He adopts a serious tone as he says, "That's the story I can tell you. And other events, I think, are similar but not the same... But that's the event we experienced." This announcement serves to authenticate by way of apology, as if to say: "We'll only tell you what we know. We won't tell you what we heard. Just the facts. We won't make up stories." This is a very common trope, both within Arsan and Rahmat's re-enactments, and in my discussions with perpetrators more generally. By claiming authenticity, it serves to dissimulate precisely what's generic about their account. This line is often used precisely when they are making up stories, and their efforts to probe their memory for "the facts" are half-hearted at best. In short, it serves to make more *asli* an account that performs the codes and conventions of a generic narrative, and in such a brazen way that otherwise it might be considered merely sandiwara.[187]

[187] Pemberton (1994) suggests that in New Order Indonesia, the *asli* may always be that which is most generic. It is worth noting, also that depending on who appeals to "personal experience", it may be a symptom of terror – a symptom of being afraid. If the speaker is afraid, or is subordinate, or is made to be aware of their low status, they often will say "I can only tell what I saw" as a way of keeping quiet, of disavowing information that, in an economy of state terror, may be dangerous to admit. There are many contexts in which this may happen. When interviewing victims, I have noticed that, out of fear, they are prone to deny any knowledge that doesn't derive from personal experience. When interviewing killers who lie about the killings, several times I have tried to lure them to tell the truth by confronting them with stories I heard from their commanders in Komando Aksi or the military. This rock bottom common denominator – that one only knows what one personally experienced – is of course unworkable in practice. We all know much more than what we experienced, and we use this information all the time. But in the context of state terror, the safest lie is to feign ignorance, and the most common trope for this seems to be, "I only can say what I saw", or even "what I personally did", which implies denying, or perhaps not trusting, what one sees but did not do. In this formulation, that which one

Having thus authenticated their story, it is natural that they discuss ways of making their presentation even more authentic (*asli*), which is equated with being cool (*mantap*). What starts with a single knife spirals into a fantasy of a much more complex film shoot with real death squad veterans playing both killers and victims alike, wearing authentic clothes and demonstrating with authentic weapons. This invitation to take the re-enactments that much further was exciting to us, but not for Arsan's reason. Arsan and Rahmat thought it would be more "cool", more "authentic".

By contrast, we were attracted to the idea for its very complexity. Clearly, bringing many death squad members together for such re-enactments is a difficult undertaking. Each participant would have different feelings about what they did, and different responses to the process. How would they cope with conflicting agendas and different motivations for participating? What if they perform conflicting memories? How would they negotiate their multiple perspectives to produce coherent re-enactments? Would they be coherent? Could they be coherent? What does coherence mean in such a context? These questions made the whole proposition a fascinating thing to attempt, a real life *Rashomon* (Kurosawa 1950) for the Sumatran massacres. Moreover, as soon as Arsan brought in so many others who, unlike Rahmat, are members of his own community, the shoot would inevitably be affected by what the community as a whole would understand about the film project. What would people say about Arsan directing such a film? What do they already know about Arsan? What would they come to know through the filming? As a process that would surely add numerous layers to our archaeological performance, its complexity seemed to be a remarkable way to excavate not only what actually happened in 1965-66, but rather how the performing of its history continues to function today – both for participants and the broader community – for it seemed an opportunity to document how participants negotiate the production of history around what they did.

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personally witnesses does not have the status of knowledge, while that which one did is iron-clad, must be believed, no matter how formulaic or generic its narration.

Arsan's offer evolved into his request to direct a film adaptation of his memoir, *Embun Berdarah,* and the first stages of this process occupied us throughout July-August 2004. Suffice to say for now that Arsan was not thinking about its overwhelming complexity when he first mentioned the idea that day at the Sungai Ular. Apparently, he was only thinking about how the image would be *lebih asli* (more authentic), which for him meant more in keeping with the generic script he was performing. He apparently had no thoughts at the time about the real complexity here: how the spectres inevitably conjured by such collective performance, from members of his own community, would haunt and lay claim to the lives of each participant.

For at that moment, for Arsan, the question was not complex. It was simple: there would be a smiling presenter, and heroic killers with real swords. There would be frightening forays into the sadis, and reassuring returns to comforting rhetoric of patriotism. For Arsan, it was simple: he would conjure the historical real of the genocide as an unspeakable terror that would be allowed to haunt, and invest his frozen grin with a real force. For Arsan, each of his Komando Aksi members would share Arsan's own masterly command over the power of terror. They too would be master mediums, accomplished dukuns, equally capable of conjuring the realm of terror without ever breaking their smile.

This is precisely the imaginative structure of the *Pos Kota* photographs described by Siegel. What's excluded by (obscene to) Arsan's formulation is the power of terror itself, and it is this exclusion that conjures it as spectral, and its spectrality is what gives it power. Moreover, it is excluded not only from Arsan's own performance, but also from his own imagining about future and hypothetical film shoots.

After this dialogue about the next shoot, Arsan is silent. The edge of our fNgatiem and the edge of Arsan and Rahmat's performance drift apart. Our fNgatiem now includes him, creating his own fNgatiem, considering his next film shoot, considering how he should be represented in his next movie. This gap between our fNgatiem and Arsan's reveals precisely the process by which

spectres are performatively conjured, because the camera keeps rolling, even when Arsan and Rahmat are struggling for the next thing they wish to say. For two hours, his and Rahmat's ceaseless chatter has performed a terrible conjuration, a spectral historical real, an excess that resists symbolic performance – what Taussig and Siegel refer to as the very "space of death". But suddenly he is silent, and the camera captures his own silence.

For me, the fascination of this very long take lies in sharing real time with Arsan, and wondering whether he, in these unfolding moments, is himself haunted by the terror he has conjured. But now the camera captures this silence. As I filmed this moment, I recall being riveted: finally silence, a chance to scour the fNgatiem to see if it is finally, really, there, the terror that he has banished.

There is a similar moment at the end of Saman Siregar's demonstrations and re-enactments at the Sungai Ular, but with him it is somehow less surprising.[188] The silence functions differently in his footage, perhaps because there is so much more of it. Partly this is because he is alone, so there is nobody for him to talk to. Partly because Saman seems, somehow, permanently haunted by what he did, constantly gripped by a certain angry speechlessness, a fear of his victims – a fear of the spectre of revenge unleashed during the massacre and conjured by so much New Order propaganda. At the conclusion of his own re-enactments at the Sungai Ular, Saman says, "My blood is tumultuous. It is uncertain. I feel uneasy seeing this disposal place [*tempat pembuangan*]. I feel disturbed." He then walks back toward the embankment above the river. He climbs the embankment in silence. The silence seems meaningful, pregnant with the unspeakable. At the top of the embankment, he turns toward the camera. He pauses, unsure whether he should keep going or wait for us to join him. While waiting, he launches into an impromptu kung fu demonstration with an imaginary (spectral?) foe. This is a startling moment. I, as filmmaker, and presumably the audience, were experiencing a silence haunted by the disappeared victims on whom Siregar demonstrates his "theory of cutting" (*teori pembacokan*). Apparently, during the

[188] See the DVDs accompanying this thesis, particularly *Snake River* (11-minute reel, chapter 3) and "Saman Siregar Presents Saman Siregar" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1]. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

haunted silence, Siregar was simply imagining how best to stage himself as a star in his own kung-fu movie.[189]

But when Arsan responds to his own silence with the impulse to take snapshots, this is somehow more startling, perhaps because the silence itself was so unprecedented, and perhaps because it is clear how he sees himself, how he imagines himself in relation to the terror he has conjured. His performance is total, hermetic (and far more generic than Saman Siregar's).[190] His mastery of terror complete. In the silence, he does not appear haunted or reflective. He wants only to smile and pose for more photographs – this time generic snapshots

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[189] The ease with which Siregar dispels his own gloom suggests yet another telling comparison to Eichmann. Remembering his first mission to monitor gassings at Lublin, Poland (later Treblinka) in the early days of the Final Solution, Eichmann testifies:

> For me, too, this was monstrous. I am not so tough as to be able to endure something of this sort without any reaction.[...] If today I am shown a gaping wound, I can't possibly look at it. I am that type of person, so that very often I was told that I couldn't have become a doctor. I still remember how I pictured the thing to myself, and then I became physically weak, as though I had lived through some great agitation. Such things happen to everybody, and it left behind a certain inner trembling. (cited in Arendt 1994:87)

(Saman Siregar likewise describes "trembling".) After a particularly gruesome trip to monitor and report on the progress of the killing, Eichmann decided to cheer himself up by visiting a historic railway station in Lwow, Poland, built to honour sixty years of Franz Joseph's reign. According to Arendt's account, "This sight of the railway station drove away all the horrible thoughts, and he remembered it down to its last detail – the engraved year of the anniversary, for instance" (Arendt 1994:88).

Similarly, whatever trembling, anxiety and uncertainty Saman Siregar felt at the Sungai Ular seemed to be completely forgotten over the luxurious lunch we ate on our way back from the river. Immediately afterwards, he says: "After visiting the Sungai Ular, my sadness [as a result of his wife's death] is gone. If I'm alone here I don't know what to do. It was refreshing to walk around and eat like just now."

Saman's comments about feeling disturbed were made just before he walked back toward the car from the banks of the Sungai Ular. The remark is not included in the *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1], but is available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-19, production translation by Taufiq Hanafi, post-production translation by Rama Astraatmadja). The kung fu demonstration and the lunch is on the DVD (see "Saman Siregar Presents Saman Siregar"). His comments about how visiting the Sungai Ular made him feel better are available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-20, post-production translation by Rama Astraatmadja).

[190] He is, after all, a *tukang pidato*, gifted at giving speeches. After performing his Cecil B. De Mille introduction at Lake Toba, I congratulated him for being, truly, the *tukang pidato* he claims to be. His response, in English, was "I am Mussolini." Heri, our translator, couldn't resist himself, and added, "Or even Hitler!" to which Arsan said, "Yes, or even Hitler! How cool! [*paten*]" See "Arsan as Cecil B. De Mille" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2]. Production translation by Heri Yusup and Erika Suwarno, post-production translation by Erika Suwarno.

to record his nice memories of his nice day out, his new friendship with Rahmat, and above all with the filmmakers who have come from far away.

Arsan himself directly refers to this production of spectrality through silence, through a process of vaulting, of banishing the historical real into the crypt, as it were. For after all, the historical real makes itself felt at those moments when Arsan must confront the materiality of his own existence. Thus in his book *Embun Berdarah* does he mention moments of nausea, of trembling and dizziness. In his book, he writes precisely of this consignment to silence of the unspeakable, spectral (because unspoken) enormity of what he has done, the spectres that he creates as the dark matter that defines the gaps and silences of his own discourse, the space between the fNgatiems of his own relentlessly *graphic* performance, rendered now both on film and in the paintings in his book. He writes of the banishing of all that is real into the crypt, an unmarked grave for disappeared referents, referents that have been excluded from the chain of signification, cut off from their signs, denied their signs, let alone any signifier, closed to representation and remembrance and whose very impenetrability inaugurates the spectral. A condition of total encryption. Arsan writes of all this directly:

> Sometimes, I just sat lamenting, staring, far, so far.
> I saw flickers of light, of different colours, dazzling.
> Sometimes I was hearing things, passing by on the wind.
> I saw them disappear.
> When I was overwhelmed by sorrow, I became a bit frightened, goose bumps.
> I saw Nazi soldiers leading the Jews to their deaths. I was scared, too.
> I then read the quotation from Napoleon Bonaparte on a piece of old paper on top of my desk:
>
> > If I want to erase something from my mind, I lock its drawer, and open another drawer containing something else. The contents of the drawers never mix together, and never disturb or trouble me. When I want to go to bed, I lock all the drawers and fall asleep.
>
> (Lubis 1997:85)

It is the fact of having the quote on the desk that means he can file things away in its drawers. In reporting the quote on the desk – that is, in telling yet another story – he accomplishes the act of locking his terror away in a drawer of generic

narrative. It is not the drawer that locks it away, and it is not the quote that probably never lay on top of his desk that he probably never had; it is the telling about the quote on top of the desk with the drawers that accomplishes the locking away of his terror. The performance is the drawer, the means of its own encryption, protecting Arsan from the unspeakable obscene of his own performance.

Where is this obscene? The things he does not want to remember? Locked in drawers? Excluded from view? Slipped between the fNgatiems, in the gaps between each film fNgatiem. In the gaps between each snapshot. Not recorded. Not visible. Godard said famously that cinema records truth 24 fNgatiems per second. Here, the truth seems to have fallen between the cracks, fallen between the fNgatiems. Invisible.

Chapter 5 – Séance as Intervention

§ 5.1 Haunted Killers

Arsan's performance, by condensing its obscene spectrality into a manifest force, has unleashed a power capable of doubling back and haunting him. I am describing here a circuit by which *generic* historical performance produces the spectral by excluding that which is *singular* about the historical real. This spectrality then returns as a ghost to haunt the very person who excluded it. We recall that the spectral, as defined here, differs from ghosts in that ghosts belong to somebody, are *of* somebody, specifically the person killed, as opposed to the miasmic spectral. Arsan and other killers have personal histories with ghosts, accounts to settle.

By enacting and re-enacting, performing and marking the massacre *in generic terms*, Arsan and Rahmat render obscene – and thus spectral – the actual people they killed. By speaking in terms of routine procedures, with named human beings only mentioned by way of the occasional useful example to illustrate *the typical*, they render spectral their actual victims, as lives with personal histories and families and social relations. These, then, have the power to return as ghosts to haunt their killers.

And not only people who killed personally are haunted in this way. The rational structure of Indonesia's military regime, all the way to the top, has been afraid of its ghosts. As mentioned above, Suharto himself is rumoured to have a *susuk*, just as Rahmat claims Lukman has. A magical metal pin inserted somewhere in the body to guard Suharto against untimely death and possession by the ghosts of dead enemies (his victims), a susuk must be removed by the dukun who inserted it. Otherwise, the patient has trouble dying, and thus, after a long while, dies a terrible death. It is rumoured that Suharto's own dukun died long ago, and so the aging dictator, while protected from possession, has something quite unpleasant in store for him.[191] Similarly, upper level commanders – as high as the

[191] From an unrecorded conversation with Benedict Anderson, 10 October 2004. Notes available on request.

operational executor of the massacres, Sarwo Edhie – are not immune to being haunted. On his deathbed, Sarwo Edhie called television psychic, dukun, and Sukarno loyalist Mas Permadi to be exorcised, haunted as he was by the terrible truth that he had organised the murder of 3,000,000 people.[192]

Saman Siregar is also possessed. He is terrified of *balas dendam*, or the vengeance of the PKI families that "live all around me".[193] When patients seeking his service as dukun come to his home at night, he answers the door with a machete, ready to kill a spectral enemy that would never dare confront him.[194] The spectre of revenge that haunts Saman is one performatively conjured by decades of generic Suharto propaganda, and especially the policies of "vigilance" designed to evoke the latent threat of PKI revenge (*ancaman PKI laten*). Saman's case illustrates how impunity can sit side-by-side with fear of his own community. Having killed scores of people without censure, it is understandable that he might also be paranoid, especially after decades of anti-PKI propaganda conjuring the spectre of underground PKI conspiracies (*PKI bawah tanah*). Thus does Saman shudder with each change in the political landscape, and repeat again and again how now, under "Reformasi", things are no longer safe, how with Suharto everything was clean; there were only three political parties, and if you made trouble you were shot. Even though the military largely retains its power over North Sumatra's traumatised plantation communities, and even though Indonesia has just elected a military general as its new president, the official end of the New Order fills Saman with dread.

But Saman is not only possessed by fear. He is also possessed by the people he killed. He may have killed hundreds, and drank their blood to protect himself

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[192] Sarwo Edhie himself admitted killing 3,000,000 people, if we are to believe Permadi's account, which is cited by Anderson (2000) in *Petrus Dadi Ratu*, and was repeated to me in a July 2004 interview at the Indonesian parliament, where Permadi now sits as a member (a post unthinkable during the New Order). (Interview with Permadi available upon request – Vision Machine cassette I3-24 through 25.)

[193] This comes up in almost every interview we have shot with Saman Siregar. Footage available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I2-18 through 20, I2-34 through 35, I-01 through 08, I3-42 through 43, I3-90).

[194] Interview available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-20).

from being possessed, but apparently it was not 100 per cent effective. After demonstrating how he massacred at the Sungai Ular, we asked him if he was ever haunted:[195]

Saman: Yes, sometimes I see things. But not for long.

JLO: What's it like?

Saman: He didn't have a head. It was horrifying. I was in my bed. I screamed.

JLO: Where was it?

Saman: Sometimes at home, usually when I was eating, he'd appear. Sometimes when I'm walking I see him.

JLO: Were you ever haunted on the truck bringing prisoners to the Sungai Ular?

Saman: Yes, my friend was haunted on his trip. A hitch hiker asked for a ride, but when the driver saw that this man had no head, he sped away. He was afraid to go home. So he and his conductor stayed overnight.

Moreover, he says he gets angry too easily. He has a violent and unpredictable temper. Sudarmin and others whose families were terrorised by Saman in Firdaus, the village surrounded by the plantation where Saman operated, speculated that Saman became an executioner to curry favour with the London-Sumatra corporation, hoping for land or, more likely, to be promoted to "assistant".[196] We can ascertain from Saman's stories that his hopes were dashed by the ghosts of the people he murdered. They possess him and make him furious. Once, he beat up plantation staff, destroying any chance of promotion.[197]

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[195] Footage available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-19; production translation by Taufiq Hanafi, post-production translation by Rama Astraatmadja).

[196] "Assistant" is the term for a manager of a whole division of the plantation, an area of 500-1000 hectares. Assistants live in relative luxury, with access to the tennis and swimming club, satellite TV, company cars, and numerous opportunities for corruption in the administration of the plantation. An assistant's official salary may be three times that of a worker's, but with kick backs and bribes he can expect to make much more. Footage with Sudarmin and friends from Firdaus available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-07).

[197] Footage of relevant interview with Saman Siregar Sudarmin available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-20).

He is lucky not to have been fired, or worse. Perhaps this is the vengeance Saman truly fears: the vengeance of ghosts.

It is of real importance that Saman Siregar and other perpetrators are simultaneously empowered and haunted by the spectres they have conjured – both through the killings themselves, and their symbolic performance in personal and national histories. This fact suggests that the power of terror can never be "mastered", that conspiracies can never be total, because power can always double back upon the powerful.

I recall here a film shoot when Saman Siregar invited us to see him make somebody kebal – part of his ilmu as a dukun.[198] We asked Saman if we might take Arsan, whom he had heard of through us. Saman agreed. We wanted to document their interaction, particularly after such a fruitful encounter between Arsan and Rahmat. As it happened, Saman was to work his magic at his nephew's house, Edi Siregar, himself a powerful dukun, though nowhere near as powerful as Saman. Apparently, Saman was only there to assist, because his ilmu is so strong that it can be dangerous. If one is made kebal by Saman, there is a serious risk of one's hair suddenly turning white. On the day, nobody showed up to be made kebal, so Edi instead demonstrated his own kebal for the camera. His demonstration involved stabbing himself in the stomach with a knife, and attempting with all his strength to cut himself. We managed to shoot this remarkable scene, and it remains a mystery how he managed not to disembowel himself. During the demonstration, Saman had to wait across the road, for fear his presence would undermine Edi's protective powers. Arsan enthusiastically presented the whole thing for the camera, explaining how it was relevant to his film adaptation of his book.

After the demonstration, we planned to go to Pantai Cermin, a beach near the mouth of the Sungai Ular. The hope was that Saman and Arsan could visit the

[198] Footage of kebal demonstration available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-42 through 43).

place where corpses had washed up in 1965. (Rahmat had said in his interview[199] that Saman had taken his whole Komando Aksi group to Pantai Cermin to see hundreds of corpses stranded on the sand bars.) Saman's nephew, on hearing of the plan, explained that Pantai Cermin is not really near the mouth of the Sungai Ular, and that to reach the actual estuary would require a perilous journey by small boat. He claimed the place was haunted by white crocodiles, ghosts of the people massacred upriver in 1965-66. Without his help, Edi said, ghosts could easily capsize our boat. Nominating himself, he suggested we needed the help of a powerful dukun to control the ghosts that haunt the place.

Arsan liked this plan, and suggested we go together on 15 August 2004. He hoped to convince us that ghosts actually exist because they play such an important role in his film. And so, on 15 August, I, Andrea Zimmerman, Edi Siregar (as dukun) and Arsan (as presenter) set out on a hot day for the mouth of the Sungai Ular.[200] Unbeknownst to us, Edi invited 25 cousins for a seafood lunch at the beach. While they lounged on the beach, playing in inner tubes and ordering lunch, we set out by boat for the estuary.

The sea was calm. There were no white crocodiles in sight. In fact, with at least half a mile to go before the estuary, Edi said we had to turn around because the journey was too dangerous without a *pawang laut* – another dukun who could control the ghosts of the sea. Disappointed (we were not even near the estuary), we asked the skipper to kill the engine so we could at least discuss the cause of our failure in quiet. Edi had broken into a sweat, presumably terrified by the power of the ghosts. When I asked who the ghosts were, his friend gave the generic gesture of cutting off heads, passing his index finger swiftly across his neck. Arsan, always smiling, had stopped talking. I asked if he was afraid the ghosts might recognise him as "somebody who struggled against communists". I did not say, "as their killer", because he was with people he did not yet know. He said no, there was no risk of that, but he was clearly afraid.

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[199] Interview available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I2-21 through 23).

[200] Footage of Arsan and Edi Siregar at mouth of Sungai Ular available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-81 through 82).

Meanwhile, Saman's nephew, Edi, sat next to him at the bow of the boat, asking forgiveness from the ghosts, repeating again and again, "We didn't come here to disturb you. We came here in respect. We don't mean any harm..." When Edi started mumbling Koranic readings (*bacaan*) to protect us from the spirits, it was clear that Arsan could take no more. "Please let's leave," he said. "This place is the very most dangerous place we could possibly be right now," he said. I looked around. The sea was calm. It was a bright sunny day. One could see families playing on the beach in the distance. We went home.

Arsan was terrified. The dukun was terrified, or at least feigning terror. And we were perplexed. For his part, Arsan was no longer in control of the situation. A spectral power – ghosts both literally created by him, by the murders he perpetrated as well as the narratives he has performed – had taken over our film shoot. None of us were in control. We were possessed by a force unleashed by both Arsan's deeds and their symbolic performance.

Arsan tries his hardest to follow in the footsteps of his idol, Napoleon Bonaparte, and encrypt these disturbing forces. But banishing them to the crypt only constitutes them as more powerful spectres. Arsan sometimes sits, "lamenting, staring, far, so far" (Lubis 1997:85).

At the Sungai Ular, he tells the story of killing his old school friend, Subandi. He described how Subandi was silent while he was being beaten, and refused to answer when Arsan offered to deliver a last message to his wife and children. Arsan was offended by this, and so beat him more.[201] (Apparently, Arsan could not imagine that Subandi might be terrified that Arsan would only bring more death upon his family.) Later, though, Subandi took his revenge, possessing Arsan's wife, Siti Hapsa.

[201] See chapter 8, 37-minute reel, *Snake River* DVD (production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi). Unedited footage concerning Subandi available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I2-32).

Hapsa was also a school principal, and also Subandi's friend. Her older brother was the army major who commanded Arsan to form Komando Aksi in Galang district. Siti Hapsa tells the story of being possessed by Subandi's ghost while she was pregnant:[202]

> It only happened once. It was our executed friend [Subandi] who came to me. Probably what he said was, "How could your husband kill me?" [Subandi] couldn't posses my husband, but could me. I felt despair, but it only lasted a short time. I hope it won't happen again.

The baby died shortly after being born. Hapsa implied that the possession and the death were somehow related.

Arsan and Hapsa's terror, locked away in its drawer, took the lives of three of their children. Hapsa gave birth to children in 1965, 1966, and 1967. All of them died. The one born in 1966 died, somehow, as a result of the possession by Subandi. The one born in 1967 died because Arsan named her Mahmilinda, after Mahmilub, the kangaroo court set up by Suharto to hand out death penalties to PKI leaders accused of being involved in Gestapu. As Arsan explained during a session brainstorming how to adapt his book into a film:

> There were effects not mentioned in my book. We had to sacrifice one of my daughters. She was four months old. I had named her Mahmilinda. The court for the PKI was called Mahmilub in Jakarta, the Extra Ordinary Military Court, and I named her after the court, Mahmilinda. This was a burden too heavy to bear [*panas*], in such a difficult situation. My daughter passed away.[203]

Arsan alludes to a terrible power that haunts him, possesses his wife, kills his children. For Arsan, ghosts actually claim the lives of his children. The interplay between the spectral and the real has manifest, observable effects. It is not unlike the pre-1965 conjuration of a monstrous, spectral PKI to counter the PKI's actual power. Thus do spectres and ghosts interact with real structures of power, paralysing the powerless, but also haunting the powerful.

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[202] Footage available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I3-14). Production translation by Rama Astraatmadja, post-production translation by Erika Suwarno.

[203] Once again, footage available upon request (Vision Machine cassette I3-14).

§ 5.2 Counter Histories – collaborating with ghosts

These ghosts have been a resource in our collaboration with survivors and local artists, excavating the genocide and its histories by layering new performative responses to the perpetrators' interviews and re-enactments. Our collaborators have insisted on inviting, too, the collaboration of the ghosts that haunt Arsan and Saman Siregar, and even the ghosts of perpetrators themselves. The aim is to harness their spectral force by conjuring and working with them. As a *performative* process, it is intended to *accomplish* something: to gain a purchase on a process of remembrance, recognition and redemption from which survivors have been excluded by the paralysing power of terror. Thus do we use spectres to intervene against the power of spectrality itself. The layers of performative response may be thought of as interventions, diminishing terror's hold and opening up, in the process, new spaces for performing counter-histories of the genocide.[204] In this sense, we can (with some irony) describe the practice as "counter-terror filmmaking".

Our collaborators in this process include several of the filmmakers who joined us to make *The Globalisation Tapes,* but also local artists, especially ludruk performers Turia, Sunardi, and Turas – all children of PKI political prisoners. We collaborate, too, with Wagiran, himself a former political prisoner and *wayang kulit* dhalang, or shadowplay puppet master and composer. We collaborate most intensively with Gunawan, a local artist with a tremendous ability to call ghosts. He ekes out a living by gathering kindling in the Tanah Raja rubber plantation and selling it as firewood. Gunawan also performs *kuda kepang* – a popular dance in which the dancers are possesssed by the spirits of horses and monkeys. Gunawan stands out for being in his early 60s while the

[204] Counter-histories in a threefold sense. First, by re-framing the victors' history, the project forces them against the grain. Moreover, in detail and analysis, the project contests both the state-sanctioned version as well as the perpetrators' historical performances. Second, the histories built through archaeological performance, in collaboration with survivors, counter the *contemporary* performative power of the victors' show of force. Third, these histories project the redemptive possibilities of a "counter-factual" history – a history of what *might have been* – and it activates those possibilities through a series of contemporary interventions that shift between memory and imagination, documentary re-enactment and genre restaging. Through this filmmaking process, the project hopes to catalyse the formation of solidarities, networks and collectives founded on a moral imagination and social consciousness that the military regime had sought to exterminate.

other dancers are 15-18 year-old boys. And rather than monkeys and horses, Gunawan is possessed by transvestite singers, army officers and characters from the Ramayana. Most importantly for our project, Gunawan is a lucid dreamer, able to incorporate any story into his dreams, and then elaborate and extend it in his sleep. Moreover, while dreaming he can call the ghosts of dead characters (and sometimes live ones), who interact with each other, creating elaborate epics and complex rivalries among ghosts. Upon waking, Gunawan remembers every detail, which he recounts in a voice thick with urgency, mystery and, often, fear.

Our collaborators' first strategy was to identify the vulnerabilities of the powerful, cracks in their veneer of power. Thus was Gunawan drawn to Madame Suharto's dental problems, CIA director William Colby's family troubles, and stories of vengeance by ghosts like Lukman and Subandi.[205] Gunawan's dreams have formed the basis of a *wayang orang* opera film,[206] currently being composed by Turas and Wagiran, tracing the interaction of ghosts and killers to produce an epic in which the performers wield the power of ghosts against the killers' power of terror. As a response to the killers' interviews and re-enactments, and as a gathering of the ghosts therein conjured, the opera – and all of the possessions and dreams that constitute its "making of" – will read against the grain a history that must, in the first instance, be told by political prisoners and victors. (As cited in chapter 2, Lyotard [1988] observes in reference to the Holocaust, that no victims of the massacres survived to bear witness. Thus must the archaeological performance begin first with the accounts of former prisoners, as well as killers and executors of the genocide.)

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[205] Audio cassettes of such dreams available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I2-36, 37, 39 and 40; and I3-03, 21, 26, 33, 51, 74, 83 and 84).

[206] Wayang orang is related to wayang kulit, or Javanese shadow puppetry, but is performed by human beings rather than puppets. In this instance, the opera will be combined with other strands in the film, and the opera scenes will not be set on a stage but on location, in the idiom of Menotti's *The Medium* (1951) and Jacques Demy's *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (1964). I use the term "wayang orang" loosely, because technically it is a central Javanese "high art" associated with the courts of Solo and Yogjakarta. Our Sumatran version will use wayang music, but will be far more eclectic, influenced by ludruk – a popular form from East Java. Our performers are, after all, plantation workers and rickshaw drivers, not court musicians from Surakarta.

For example, Arsan and Rahmat's performance at the Sungai Ular conjures the ghosts of Lukman and Subandi, endowing them with an extraordinary power of resistance.[207] Arsan attempts to appropriate this power twice (first by killing Lukman and Subandi, and again when he performs the killing on film). After viewing this footage, Wagiran and Gunawan sought to reclaim this power by invoking Subandi and Lukman as ghosts capable of haunting Arsan and his family. (They did not know, at this point, that Arsan's wife had been possessed by Subandi.) In this way, Wagiran and Gunawan ensure that Lukman and Subandi's resistance continues after their deaths. Their method is to invoke Subandi and Lukman, literally to call them (*panggil roh*), to summon their powers and offer them a space for performing their own counter-histories.

In general, the film's intervention in circuits of spectral power may be summarised as follows. To claim the power of a phantasmatic PKI conjured by, among others, Suharto, the CIA and the MI6, Arsan and Rahmat had to name names, to condense this miasma onto specific individuals, endowing them with supernatural powers of resistance (i.e., kebal). In killing them, Arsan and Rahmat lay claim to their powers. Then, nearly 40 years later, they are lured by the power of the camera, lured by its *efficiency* as a tool for condensing the spectral into a show of force. Thus do Arsan and Rahmat seek to complete the circuit, transforming spectral power into manifest power by enacting their stories on film. And thus do they name names and describe fates, but they do so in a generic register, producing the *real* (and absent) human beings whom they name as singularities obscene to the genre of their performance, and thus as spectres. But as spectres with names and histories, they are, precisely, ghosts. By producing ghosts in their bid to appropriate spectral power, Arsan and Rahmat create a power they cannot actually have, because as *ghost* it no longer belongs to them, or even to the spectral phantasm called the "PKI" that was its original source of power. By conjuring ghosts on film – a medium whose dissemination they cannot control – they accidentally relinquish their power. Once manifest as

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[207] As explained in chapter 4, Lukman was already an underground symbol of resistance, perhaps because he was killed so publicly. But aside from giving helpful lottery tips, Lukman's ghost is a palpable symbol of resistance, *a power derived no doubt from his unwillingness to disappear, a persistence rooted in his very visibility as victim.*

a ghost, it belongs to its surviving family, to its children, to its dead friends (other ghosts); in short, it belongs to its own weave of social relations. Ghosts are defined by their relationships with their communities, and these relationships lay claim to ghosts, constituting a spectral right of return to their families and friends. The film practice seeks to facilitate this return through the production process itself. By collecting and investigating the stories of those victims whom the killers name, the project opens a narrative conduit for ghosts to return.

Furthermore, ghosts constitute a breach in an otherwise near silence. By producing ghosts, Arsan produces a *knowledge* where before there was only absence, mystery and questions – a diffuse spectrality. By transforming this spectrality into a ghost, Arsan and Rahmat have inadvertently located an object to mourn, and a life to remember. This opens the possibility, even the moral necessity, of gathering together the ghosts' surviving friends and family members so that they may know the ghost's story, which was inevitably first told by the ghost's murderer. But in this return of ghost to community, it is not sufficient to let the murderers have the last word, to conjure a ghost only with stories told by its killers. There is an additional moral necessity to create a forum for the ghost's friends and relatives to imagine the ghost, to *repossess* it. And since ghosts are a real part of the social fabric, that is, because people *do* still believe in ghosts, imagining ghosts means allowing the ghosts to speak. And so ghosts are called and they are listened to, and then, to counter the performances of their killers, the ghosts' stories are performed, and this is the work of Wagiran, Sunardi, Turia, Gunawan, and any other of the ghosts' friends who wish to be possessed by this symbolic performance.[208]

So the film seeks to return ghosts to their communities, repossessing at the same time a spectral power that was taken the moment actual human beings were kidnapped from their homes and disappeared. A circuit was opened in 1965, when these human beings became *the disappeared,* their names invested with desire, loss and unresolved grief. For the survivors, the film practice, as social

[208] Lukman's younger brothers, in particular, have wanted to be involved with calling Lukman, and Lukman's younger sister is frequently possessed by Lukman, but not reliably enough to document on film.

practice, helps to close this circuit by returning to their communities not the bodies of the disappeared, but their ghosts, their stories, so that they may be memorialised and mourned. Lured by the camera, Arsan and Rahmat help us in this process, giving substance where they should not, and thus shorting their own circuit of appropriating spectral power through murder and actualising this appropriation by performing it on film. The film completes a circuit for survivors by shorting it for the killers.

Of course, the film practice is a small practice, of a completely different order than the history in which it seeks to intervene. As such, its work will be a modest one. Still, it gestures to the bigger work that must be done if the terrible passage that Siegel has described as the "nationalization of death" is to be closed. We have followed Siegel (1998:94-100) in arguing that trauma replaced ghosts when the social fabric was torn, social relations ruptured, individuals ripped from their communities and, literally, *disappeared.*[209] The project seeks to recuperate ghosts from trauma, to conjure and condense them, produce them as knowledge, and deliver them back into their communities, into the social weave. It was never that our collaborators did not believe in ghosts. Rather, by having their friends and relatives *disappeared*, there were no ghost in which to believe, and, moreover, until Suharto's resignation, calling ghosts (*panggil roh*) in a searching attempt to make contact with the disappeared, to discover their fates, would have been dangerous. As a social practice, the project is a small step in this enormous process of identifying mournable lives. What's needed are many more practices by which ghosts may return in place of trauma.

But the project is an interventionist one in other senses, too. By intervening to diminish the spectral power of killers, the film practice reveals and exploits the vulnerability in any system that conjures and destroys spectral enemies as a strategy for claiming power and using it as an instrument of terror. For whenever the powerful attempt to flaunt their spectral powers by performing their history,

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[209] In Firdaus, survivors seldom if ever refer to victims who were killed at the Sungai Ular as *dead.* Instead, they always say "they never came back". Only those in known graves, with definite and knowable fates, are declared dead, and thus capable of being mourned.

whenever they seek to rehearse their deeds as a show of force, they give substance to the spectral, opening a passage for the re-emergence of ghosts – a power not controllable by the victors, and thus one that can slip back to the communities from which it came, and then rise again with a vengeance, as a force to haunt the killers.

There is a final, crucial sense in which the film project intervenes, condensing a different sort of miasmic spectrality into nameable ghosts. By revealing the systematic nature of the violence, the film project explodes the myth that it was spontaneous. The whole point of the official histories was to locate the violence everywhere, a spectre that traumatises and renders incoherent the entire field of social relations. The project turns this around, relocating the spectre of massacre, condensing its miasma onto the state itself, giving it a location and institutional identity. Actual killers are named and identified with actual murders, and just as the ghosts of victims are defined by relational points within their communities, killers are defined by relational points within a systematic chain of command. As the disappeared are gradually identified as ghosts, so too is the miasmic spectrality of terror and death gradually, perpetrator by perpetrator, condensed into identifiable killers, within a matrix of killers and functionaries that constitute an identifiable and specific killing machine.[210]

In the few communities where we have worked, the project has made thinkable a debate about justice and reconciliation within communities where such a thing was unthinkable before. There can be no justice when the killer is, literally, everywhere, and rather than victims there are only the disappeared. There can be no justice without nameable individuals with defined ranks and responsibilities. There can be no reconciliation if there is nobody with whom to reconcile, and no genocide to be reconciled.

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[210] This process is not merely an act of eposé; not merely a case of revealing a massive and hidden violence. The violence was never *simply* denied. What this intervention involves is disrupting an economy of power through terror (a spectral economy) that was always driven and underwritten by the violence of the massacres. What it does is to locate this violence and to rearticulate the solidarities it shattered.

§ 5.3 Possession as Dispossession, Possession as Repossession

Dispossession is a precondition for the project. Our collaborators have all been *dispossessed* – dispossessed of friends and family who were killed, and dispossessed of the possibility of imagining and publicly performing their own history. *Possession* becomes a means for repossessing that which has been taken away – especially the spectral force of history and its symbolic performance.

Closing a circuit from dispossession to repossession, spirit possession *as process* has allowed our collaborators to repossess a space for imagining and performing their own histories; to repossess the lives and stories whose narratives comprise such histories; to repossess the powers of resistance that these histories conjure; to repossess the ghosts of friends and family long-since disappeared; and to repossess the vision for which many of them struggled as members of unions, land reform movements and women's groups.

Dispossession is also, in a sense, the condition of possession; self-identity must be surrendered to engender otherness and difference. The difference ushered in by possession is a radical and *radically other* imaginative space, a forum for generating precisely *wild* responses to the footage of Arsan, Rahmat and Saman Siregar at the Sungai Ular. These responses comprise new layers in an archaeological performance.

Gunawan and Wagiran viewed the footage as it came in, and then dreamt about the perpetrators. While watching Saman Siregar, Gunawan entered into an impromptu trance in which his *prewangan*, or inner ghost, narrated the shots of Siregar miming massacre at the Sungai Ular. Gunawan narrated the footage several times, creating a dense, multi-layered voice-over track.[211] By allowing his prewangan to narrate, Gunawan *repossesses* the footage from Saman Siregar, who sought to use it as his own show of force, manifesting and actualising his

[211] See chapter 3 of "Gunawan on Colby, Colby on Siregar" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1]. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

own spectral powers in the process. Gunawan's prewangan dispossesses Saman of this weapon by repossessing it for the dead.

Repossessing the spectral powers conjured by the footage of Arsan and Rahmat at the Sungai Ular is slightly less straightforward. Arsan's flawless, cheerful performance is *efficiently* performative to the point that he successfully conjures himself as a spectral force to be reckoned with, *a living ghost*. This became evident by Gunawan's response: first he dreamed of Arsan's ghost, and then was possessed by him, conjuring stories of Arsan giving birth to a stone baby, and catching fire after being possessed by Lukman.[212] That Arsan's ghost may be called by Gunawan while Arsan is still alive is an index of something always already spectral about Arsan, a spectrality achieved both during the genocide itself, and condensed into the specificity of a ghost through his smiling performance on film.

After his prewangan meets the ghost while narrating footage, after calling ghosts in his dreams, Gunawan is ready to dispossess himself of Gunawan in order to be possessed by ghosts.

§ 5.4 Possessing William Colby

Ghosts as process may be most spectacularly illustrated with the spirit of William Colby, former CIA chief who stayed up all night in Ambassador Marshall Green's office, listening in on the radio system supplied by the CIA to the Indonesian army to help them coordinate the massacres, monitoring the progress of death squads as the work their way down US death lists.[213]

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[212] Footage and audio recordings of the Arsan possessions available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I3-33, 51, 74, 83, 84, 102, 103, 108, 109, 110).

[213] See Prados (2003:144-57) for Colby's role in the Indonesian genocide. Confirming and building upon Prados' research, in a December 2002 conversation with journalist Kathy Kadane, Kadane summarised for me private transcripts of her interview with Colby where he describes staying up all night in the Ambassador Green's office listening to a radio to monitor the progress of the army's destruction of the PKI.

Footage of William Colby giving a speech on the progress of the pacification of South Vietnam is taken from the National Archive in Washington, D.C. The sound remains classified, and so we asked a deaf man – a lip reader – to read Colby's lips.[214] It is not easy, because the footage is blurry, and the lip reader requires eight passes to produce even a fragmentary picture of what Colby is saying. With each pass, the lip reader picks out more and more phrases like "from time to time", "isolating the population", and, several times, "sportsmanship". The words from each pass are layered over the others, each at the same relative point of utterance. This results in a thick and strangely contoured voice track – some moments become dense with the same words or phrases, a crowd of echoes seeming to issue from Colby's mouth; at other moments different words are read from the same mouthing, the syllables of each interfering with those of the others to produce a perverse double (or triple) speak; some words are picked up on one pass and not another; different words are picked up on different passes; and sometimes there is only silence – nothing can be read from his moving lips. William Colby is saying different things at the same time; but, of course, he is saying nothing.

The silence beneath the re-narration is telling, it speaks at once of the uncertainty of historical knowledge, and of the deliberate attempt to erase it – in place of an account of the murders, in place of the murderous directives, and in place of the voices of the murdered, we have footage of a small, spectacled man in a suit, mouthing banalities in silence.

Here we possess Colby: we speak as Colby, we give him a voice. As he mimes, he is mimicked – both mocked and mined for what he withholds. Very little historical knowledge is yielded, and very little is made known of the regional policy that he was instrumental in shaping and administering. More tellingly, the banal administration of tremendous power and violence is made to speak through his silence, and the official history of which he was an author (a history of silence and forgetting, a history of spectacular lies) is given another voice that

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[214] See chapter 1 of "Gunawan on Colby, Colby on Siregar" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1]. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

speaks out against it, becoming the material of a historical imagination it would want to destroy.

The last words that the lip reader manages to reconstruct are the fragment of a sentence: "What you have to do..." In an abrupt sound cut from the voice of the lip reader to the voice of Gunawan, Gunawan's prewangan completes the sentence: "What you have to do", mimes the lip reader; "*said William Colby...* " continues Gunawan's prewangan. And with that, Gunawan's prewangan bursts forth in a flurry of urgent and wild whispering, conjuring a fraught and angry dialogue in which William Colby threatens and bullies Saman Siregar, ordering him to drink blood, to kill them all, threatening Saman's manhood, sometimes terrifying him, sometimes flattering him, but ultimately convincing him to kill. The dialogue ends with a delighted William Colby saying, "I knew you would do it. Pak Naga is loyal. Pak Naga is strong. Pak Naga is fierce. Excellent! Excellent! Excellent!" Like the lip reader, Gunawan's prewangan narrates the footage eight times, and details change with each pass. (Siregar's payment, for instance, starts at 1.5 million dollars, drops to 150 dollars, and finally ends up as a measly packet of cigarettes.) Colby's enthusiasm ("Excellent! Excellent! Excellent!") marks the gap between the terror of killing and the optimism and incoherence of the official history, the incomprehensible yet clearly banal assessments of the Vietnam War's progress recovered by the lip reader. And by imagining a relationship between Saman Siregar and William Colby, Gunawan's audio performance excavates a truth about the actual genocide, locating his neighbourhood murderer within a clearly defined killing machine, and giving voice to that which had slipped beneath the silences of both censorship and platitudes.[215]

These narrations condensed the miasma of the killings onto William Colby as a concrete and identifiable ghost. More than narrate the footage, Gunawan spent every night for four weeks dreaming about Colby, chasing the dreams that

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[215] See chapter 2 of "Gunawan on Colby, Colby on Siregar" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1]. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

Colby's sleeplessness had displaced during his long nights sitting vigil in the American Embassy in Jakarta in 1965.[216]

Then, in April 2003, we staged a ludruk performance in the village of Rambutan, based largely on Saman Siregar's interviews and re-enactments.[217] The performance was a kind of study, or test, for the next layer – the wayang opera to be composed by the ludruk performers Turas and Wagiran. Gunawan joined the troupe in the classic role of both jester and visionary, a Cassandra-like role whose Javanese origins lie in Gatotkaca and Petruk, jokers of the wayang epics.

At around 12:30 am on the third night of the performance, Gunawan sang a passionate, improvised ballad recounting a dream in which Colby and his daughter, Catherine, were fishing at the Sungai Ular. Suddenly, in the middle of the song, with the gamelan orchestra playing, stage lights and sound system on, Gunawan drops to the floor, literally falling out of his close up. Christine Cynn, shooting this scene, widened the shot to reveal a Gunawan possessed by William Colby before a large audience on a small stage in the pouring rain, a tropical downpour with lightning and thunder.

Colby's unexpected and ghostly cameo terrifies the gamelan orchestra, as well as the film crew. Musicians rush to remove their instruments and get away from what is clearly perceived as dangerous. Without a designated *pemandu* (a dukun who exorcises the spirit), everybody is nervous, and shouting, "What do we do? He's possessed!" Taufiq Hanafi and I climb up on the stage. Taufiq tries to pacify Colby with Koranic readings. I call Gunawan's name again and again, trying to bring him to, while gesturing to the camera to make sure it is still filming. Around us, the frightened crew takes down the set, revealing the entire

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[216] Footage and audio recordings of Gunawan's early dreams about William Colby available upon request (Vision Machine cassettes I-26 through 31).

[217] See "Gunawan Possessed by William Colby" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1] (production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi). For background of the performance, see "Saman Siregar at Ludruk Performance", *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1]. Other footage available upon request, Vision Machine cassette numbers I-46 through 46. Production and post-production translation by Taufiq Hanafi.

gamelan orchestra and crew milling about back stage. In the pouring rain, the stage is deconstructed around William Colby.

Sunardi eventually helps extract the spirit from Gunawan's toe. Gunawan returns, disoriented and exhausted, unable to remember what happened, only that William Colby kicked him on his way out. He sits there with the vulnerability of one who has just been dispossessed of oneself, like waking up from anaesthesia or coming to after fainting. William Colby arrives and departs in real time. As a force of incoherence, the camera documents how Colby paralyses the performance, disjointing it, constituting the conditions of its impossibility. That is, Colby's arrival makes further remembrance impossible.

For Gunawan to even to know about William Colby, much less invoke his ghost in a public performance in rural North Sumatra, is almost an impossibility, and also an act of real defiance, an intervention not only into the official history of the killings, but thereby too into its spectral history, exposing perpetrators like Siregar, Arsan, Kemal Idris and Suharto himself to the vulnerability of being haunted by the ghost of Colby. Those who knew him, who really knew him, tried so hard to keep his name from public address, to deny and banish him from thought and from symbolic performance. Suddenly, at midnight in a small village in Sumatra's oil palm belt, Colby appears as a ghost, a presence identifiable and capable of being summoned.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

§ 6.1 Cinema of Possession – healing and resistance

I would like to conclude this thesis with a more precise consideration of the work performed by the film practice as it facilitates this circuit of dispossession, possession and repossession. I want to consider possession as a strategy of remembrance, resistance and then redemption. I want to consider, too, the ways in which the film practice itself is possessed by the ghosts it seeks to conjure, by the histories it seeks to excavate, by the counter-histories it seeks to perform, and by the past whose incoherence, violence and spectrality it seeks to address. Finally, I want to consider the formal consequences of possession – for the cinematic forms that the films ultimately assume, and for the forms of social practice and intervention that the film project embodies.

Remembrance, mourning, redemption, working through – these are all idioms we have used to describe the project's attempts to reappropriate and repossess the spectral powers of Indonesian genocidaires. It might also be wise to follow Taussig (1987) and discuss healing, in the shamanic sense, because North Sumatra is a place where shamans call spirits, where spectres are literal, not figurative, where ghosts are abroad and the dead have interests and interactions with the living. To explain away the rich social interactions of the spirit world, or to interpret it through psychoanalytic discourses of repression and return would be to disregard the ontology (hauntology) of the very people whose narratives and imaginations form the basis of the project.

The process of working through must be adequate to the network of social relations, and thus must include both the community of spirits and the fraternity of metaphors. But to include the community of spirits does not mean to enter into a discourse of credulity – possession is an empirically observable phenomena. To enter into questions of the "actual" existence of ghosts is, needlessly, to enter the realm of metaphysics, whereas to work with and conjure these spectral manifestations is to remain in the domain of the empirical.

While shamans normally heal by *purging* ghosts from those unwillingly possessed, possession by an adept may also be a form of healing in the sense that it increases *resistance*. It constitutes a space of complete difference, radically discontinuous with the structures of self that constitute the adept's normal subjectivity, endowed with radically different rules for imagining. It is precisely this discontinuity and difference that offers such promise as a forum for creating a subaltern culture of dissent, a spectral laboratory for developing the wildly imaginative acts necessary for repossessing actual power, but articulated through radically different structures, inhering a radically different ethics than that of the regime being challenged.

As remarkable as Gunawan's possession by William Colby may be, it is not entirely unprecedented. In *Les Maîtres Fous* (1955), Jean Rouch filmed a Hauka ritual in which participants are possessed by the spirits of colonial authority, including the British Governor General. The possessions are wild, but also structured, and Rouch himself initially described them as essentially forms of cathartic release that enabled the colonial subjects to lead lives that were otherwise normatively well-adjusted. It was a precisely conservative and psychoanalytic interpretation, and he soon recognised this and regretted featuring it in the film's closing voice over.[218]

I would argue, instead, that the Hauka possessions, like the ones we have filmed in Sumatra, are strategies of resistance, precipitating processes of decolonisation in a number of ways. The ridiculing mimicry of the coloniser is a symbolic performance that allows the colonised to accommodate the reality of colonisation in a mode which simultaneously resists it and intensifies solidarity in a community of practice alternative to the social relations imposed by colonialism.

And if dispossession is a condition of possession, then the relationship to decolonisation is at once evident: the colonial subject is always a disciplined subject; colonial identity is defined by being subject (to colonial law). The wild

[218] From a conversation with Vision Machine collaborator, Michael Uwemedimo, who has spoken with Rouch at length about *Les Maîtres Fous* in the context of organising the Possessing Vision retrospective of and conference on Jean Rouch's work (Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 2000).

adept is precisely not herself, not identical, thus colonial identity (the target of discipline) is disrupted; the wild adept is hard to target. The adept must be dispossessed of identity to become possessed, and so she is not herself, but another. She becomes hard to locate, hard to pin down, absent at the very moment of spectacular excess. This is not merely metaphor, because it is true, too, at the level of the adept's body – the possessed body is resistant, it writhes, collapses, starts up, is hard to shackle, will not answer questions, is impervious to the pain of torture. The wild and wildly imaginative subject makes a mockery of the very notion of discipline. The adept is an embarrassment to order.

Similarly, our Sumatran possessions constitute a space beyond the control of the military, a space of deterritorialisation, a space of non-identity that infiltrates a (barely) post-New Order society structured by rigid notions of stability and security, not to mention a rigid regime of identity cards. In this space, adepts like Gunawan may conjure and perform that which is obscene to official discourse, and do so in wild, unpredictable and undisciplined ways.[219]

If the visiting spirit is that of the master – whether William Colby or the Governor General of the Gold Coast – then the master is revealed as grotesque, is mocked, and, indeed, mastered. For possession is also a power, not only a submission to a spirit, but a power of calling; it makes manifest a power over the spirits of the powerful. They can be summoned, and they submit, just as the subject would normally be summoned to the master's office.

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[219] From 1966 until Suharto's resignation, the identity card has been a particularly potent tool in the ascriptive and interpellating apparatus of state repression. Black ID cards for those accused of membership in a PKI-affiliated organisation (and *no* ID cards for those accused of nationalist sympathies in secessionist regions such as Aceh – ensuring a violent experience at every military checkpoint) have been used to produce "subjects neither fully constituted as a subject, nor fully deconstituted in death" (Butler 2004:98). This has formed an essential part of the New Order's regulatory apparatus of power. Such a regime is impotent when confronted with the adept's condition of dispossession.

The military dictatorship was doubtless aware of these risks, as is evidenced by how intimidated ordinary Sumatran dukuns can appear when asked if they would be able to call the ghost of somebody connected to the genocide. Similarly, the "witch killings" and campaigns against "dukun palsu", or false dukuns, indicate a broader regime of using intimidation to limit the subversive potential of the supernatural.

In these ways, Hauka possession posed a real political threat to the colonial authorities and led to the arrest and imprisonment of adepts, as well as other unsuccessful methods of suppression. In Sumatra, we always planned for the worrying eventuality of police arriving while Gunawan was possessed. (It was a challenge to find adequately secluded and private spaces for shooting possessions.) Even if they only came to demand a small bribe, I had no idea how they would react to Gunawan's mimesis of locally respected killers like Arsan, his euphoric reworking of the Indonesian national anthem as a celebration of mass slaughter, or his drunken (*mabuk* – the Indonesian word for drunk is also used for possession) manifestations as national heroes like General Nasution or Madame Suharto, Ibu Tien. Surely, Gunawan would not heed the police's orders to stop.[220] He would continue, impervious to the discipline of police authority – not least because Gunawan would be absent, vacant, and whomever was in possession of his body, be it Madame Suharto or William Colby, may well be far more powerful than any mere local police officer. (A low-ranking police officer being insubordinate to Madame Suharto could provoke an angry response from the dictator's wife, which in turn could provoke *violent* response from the police.)

§ 6.2 Possession, Ascription and Performative Force

There is another sense in which possession resists discipline, for a force inheres in speech articulated from the (non)position of possession – that is, dispossession. The utterances of the possessed cannot be ascribed to the speaker in a process that *constitutes* her as a single, individual, expressive subject – a subject that could be identified as the locus of culpability, the target of discipline. For the speech of the possessed defies what Foucault (1980:113-38) has identified as the disciplinary *regime* of authorship.[221] In his archaeology of the author as social practice, Foucault identifies authorship as a "function" whose

[220] Footage of further Gunawan possessions available upon request, Vision Machine video cassette numbers I3-85 through 86, I3-99 through 101, I3-103, I3-108 through 110.

[221] Foucault's essay, "What is an Author?" (1980:113-38), deals primarily with written text. Here, we extend his arguments to the spoken utterance. Those sections of Foucault's essay that excavate the *history* of authorship naturally pertain to written texts, but his conclusions bear upon the status of spoken texts within disciplinary regimes.

work at once relies upon and thus reinscribes an epistemology of hermeneutics, and as such is a process that produces simultaneously the *expressive author* as well as the *meaning expressed,* and does so by ascribing texts and utterances to individual subjects (the authors). Foucault argues that this hermeneutic regime is a disciplinary regime by excavating the ways in which authorship has, in the past, produced subjects who could be censored and disciplined for their statements. Moreover, Foucault argues that by contouring the author as *individual*, authorship (as social practice) closes the possible meanings and circulations of discourses by bounding them as the expressions of single individuals.

This process renders invisible, as it were, precisely the ways in which all discourses – their languages, their genres and their scripts – are always already well rehearsed. Thus does Foucault argue for a circulation of "discourse" not ascribed to individual authors. He writes:

> We can easily imagine a culture where discourses would circulate without any need for an author. [...] No longer the tiring repetitions: [...]
>
> "What has he revealed of his most profound self in his language?"
>
> New questions will be heard:
>
> "What are the modes of existence of this discourse?"
>
> "Where does it come from; how is it circulated; who controls it?" (Foucault 1980:138)

By emphasizing the performativity and history of discourses, Foucault's new questions ask us to excavate the archive of past iterations for which any discourse's generic codes and conventions have emerged as the norms. In many ways, we seek to create a film project that asks these new questions of the participants' articulations of history – this is one of the tasks of the *archaeological performance*, a method that works down though a discourse's historical layers by working up histrionic stagings, and this in order to deconstruct the scripts, clichés and generic codes that inflect the historical performances being excavated.

For these reasons, in contrast to individual *testimony*, the speech of the possessed (and dispossessed), particularly when positioned as such, defies the hermeneutic process of interpretation that simultaneously: constitutes the author as individual; produces meaning by delimiting the utterance as an *individual* expression; and obscures precisely the ways in which the utterance is always already iterated and iterable, well-rehearsed, *and thus performative*.[222] With an adept such as Gunawan, to interpret his possessions as the expressions of a creative individual, symptoms of psychological trauma, or some psychoanalytically fNgatiemd "return of the repressed" would be to mask their performativity, reducing and bounding them to a discourse of the narrowly psychological and the symptomatic;[223] this, in turn, would be to deprive Gunawan's performance of precisely the *performative force* that has been the subject of this thesis. On the other hand, if we analyse these possessions *as* possessions, we acknowledge their performative and social force.

In general, although constituted by hours of historical accounts, our film practice seeks to avoid a register of "individual" testimony, forming a mosaic of multiple perspectives that can be resolved into an image adequate to the past. We avoid this by working with subjects whose positions trouble notions of the autonomous individual. There are three ready examples of this. First, by working with the possessed as described, and understanding that the articulations of ghosts resist being ascribed to individual subjects, and thereby bear an inherently social and performative force. Second, recognising the ways in which articulations of survivors in states of grief or trauma (in the Indonesian sense) similarly resist ascription as individual testimony. As mentioned in chapter two, Judith Butler (2004) argues that when we grieve, "we are dispossessed", and such a condition

[222] Already cited in Chapter 2, Section 4, it is worth noting again in this somewhat different context that Derrida describes how every performative utterance is indebted to something already well rehearsed. He writes, "Could a performative utterance succeed if its formulation did not repeat a 'coded' or iterable utterance, or in other words, if [it] were not identifiable as conforming with an iterable model, if it were not then identifiable in some way as a 'citation'?" (Derrida 1988:18). Butler (1993) has pointed out that it is this iterability that constitutes *every* utterance as performative – not only those that fit Austin's rather technical definition (Austin 1975). All utterances, she argues, either reinscribe or trouble the scripts that they rehearse, and therefore have performative effects.

[223] One can readily imagine a psychologist interpreting Gunawan's possessions as an individual's manifestation of "trauma", in the psychological sense, buried deep within a psychoanalytically conjured unconscious.

"shows us that these ties [to what has been destroyed] constitute what we are, ties or bonds that compose us. [...] I not only mourn the loss, but I become inscrutable to myself" (Butler 2004:22). She continues:

> We are something other than 'autonomous' in such a condition [of grief] [...] [W]e cannot represent ourselves as merely bounded beings, for [the dead] not only live on in the fiber of the boundary that contains me [...], but they also haunt the way I am, as it were, periodically undone and open to becoming *unbounded.* (Butler 2004:30, my italics)

The historical articulations of those who survive in states of trauma and grief are articulations that resist being pinned down to individual speakers, because the speakers themselves are, like the possessed, unbounded in their grief, out of joint, radically other even to themselves. Their speech, as such, defies the hermeneutics of ascription as well as the subsequent erasure of the collective catastrophe that unbounds and disjoints the speaker in the first place, conjuring for the articulation a force that is social, located in and between histories. Third, by facilitating the generic performances of perpetrators – especially Arsan's own musical extravaganza – and by documenting the process as a filmic intervention into a spectral economy of terror, we produce film material, scripts, treatments and scenarios that, in their *legibility as generic*, precisely resist being read as the *individual expressions* that Arsan claims, ironically, during a moment of mimicry – while miming Cecil B. De Mille on the beautiful banks of Lake Toba: "This film is my creation, my own imagination concerning my own life, written as the history of my life."[224] The question our practice ultimately poses, then, is this: "*my own* imagination" is always already *whose* imagination?

§ 6.3 Spectres and the Claims of the Past

As a response to a genocide that remains virtually unwritten in almost all histories, the practice of possession is an acknowledgement of the claims of the past, the hold of the dead upon the living, and the force of history. Useful here, as an intercultural *translation*[225] (rather than interpretation), is Walter

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[224] See "Arsan as Cecil B. De Mille" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 2]. Production and post-production translation by Erika Suwarno.

Benjamin's account of redemption as weak messianism. Here I signal a convergence between the temporal and anticipatory logic of spectres and Benjamin's account of the messianic hold of the past.

Benjamin (1988:257) wrote in the context of the holocaust: "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight". The idea that the present catastrophe is anomalous implies a conception of progress, because the implication is usually an "amazement that the things we are experiencing are 'still' possible" (ibid). Benjamin describes "progress" thus:

> A Klee painting named "Angelus Novus" shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress. (Benjamin 1988:258)

The angel of history has a redemptive mission, and seeks to attend to a past that appears as one enormous wreckage, frozen in time. The messianic possibility of redemption would be a matter of making whole something terrible – a conception of the good that emerges from a vision of catastrophe. "Progress", in this vision, is anti-redemptive: it prevents the angel from doing its work, and, by

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[225] Translation was, of course, a favoured epistemology for Benjamin, in contradistinction to an epistemology of hermeneutics. Implicitly anti-interpretive, and speaking of translation in the broadest sense, Benjamin writes:

> Particularly when translating from a language very remote from his own [the translator] must [....] expand and deepen his language by means of the foreign language. It is not generally realized to what extent this is possible, to what extent any language can be transformed, how language differs from language almost the way dialect differs from dialect; however, this last is true only if one takes language seriously enough, not if one takes it lightly. (Benjamin 1992:81)

moving the angel into the future, delays its redemption of the past while creating ever more catastrophe.

Just as the angel of history sees possibility (that is, the good – "awaken the dead, make things whole") in the wreckage behind it, Benjamin suggests that the past as catastrophe – and histories that symbolically perform the catastrophic – offer us a *negative redemptive possibility,* for they impart upon us a vision of the good as defined against the past, a hope, indeed, for something better:

> Reflection shows us that our image of happiness is thoroughly coloured by the time to which the course of our existence has assigned us. The kind of happiness that could arouse envy in us exists only in the air we have breathed, among the people we could have talked to, women who could have given themselves to us. In other words, our image of happiness is indissolubly bound up with the image of redemption. The same applies to our view of the past, which is the concern of history. (Benjamin 1988:253)

And for this vision we are indebted to the past. For Benjamin, this is not a figurative debt, but a literal one, and at the heart of his notion of weak messianism:

> There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a weak Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. That claim cannot be settled cheaply. (Benjamin 1988:253-4)

When Benjamin writes that the claims of history will not be settled cheaply, he suggests that only through struggle, and certainly *a struggle to remember* – that is, precisely through an imaginative act – will we *redeem* out weak messianic potential, attaining to the (historically situated) vision of the good *lent* us by the catastrophic past. Benjamin proposes, here, precisely an act of excavation, of remembrance as both imaginative act and archaeology, because he requires us to work through the endless wreckage that constitutes the past. It is a difficult task, but the past's claim cannot be settled cheaply.

The temporal structure of spectres is strikingly congruent with that of Benjamin's "past", endowing the present with both a redemptive power and responsibility:

"Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a weak Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim."

We are expected by the past, and this expectation endows us with a power, delivered through our own historically situated vision of happiness and our subsequent conception of redemption. Through struggling for these, which for Benjamin is inseparable from the *work* of history, we do not squander our weak messianic power.

The structure of spectrality and haunting is well suited to a film project that tries to engage the redemptive powers of spectres, to ignite a process of redemption, and especially redemption as process – a process of both remembrance and struggle, remembrance through struggle, and struggle through remembrance.

It is telling that the Indonesian word for a ghost that haunts a particular locality is *penunggu,* one who waits. Waits for what? Waits for whom? Surely, for a certain encounter with *the living*. And so penunggu patiently wait for the moment when living human beings will need them, will call them, will conjure their stories and harness the force therein. Like Benjamin's past, penunggu lay a claim on the present, and persist stubbornly, unwilling to accept a cheap settlement. This claim is activated by the work of remembrance, the excavation of the past and the performing of history. The stubbornness of ghosts is a *translation* of Benjamin's description of the past's hold on the present, its claim on us, demanding both attention, remembrance, and action. The penunggu hopes to meet the living in order to reignite this claim. And at this encounter with spectrality, the past "flashes up at the instant it can be recognized and is never seen again" (Benjamin 1988:255).

Essential to a social weave that includes ghosts is the contention that the present is constellated by the claims of the past, and that these claims have something to do with the limits of both that which is manifest, and that which can be symbolically performed. This thesis has suggested that the spectral emerges just beyond the edge of symbolic performance, as its obscene. That is, whatever is

unfigurable, whatever is unspeakable *constitutes and conjures* the spectral, *creates* spectres, forming their very structures and sites of operation, and these spectres, thus produced by the very limits of our historical ontology, are nothing less than markers of the past's claims on the present, challenging us to remember, to speak, and to struggle to push the (ontological) boundaries of the thinkable that constitute the very basis of this spectral force.

Redemption, in the full sense of Benjamin's articulation, is thus an appropriate hope and process for a film project that excavates history through the imaginative act of conjuring ghosts, as part of the *work* demanded by our weak messianic potential, a work that can only be achieved through activist remembrance and practice. This analogy may be extended further. Benjamin's weak messianism refigures the messiah not as god's man on earth, but rather as process, as human struggle for the past. The language is important, because the cliché of struggling on behalf of one's children, or future generations, or the future in general, emphasises hope. Benjamin's formulation, like the angel of history, looks backwards, emphasising remembrance, but also *anticipation,* and especially the past's anticipation of the present – which need not imply the present's anticipation of the future.

For Benjamin, then, redemption and messianism emerge as process and potential, respectively. In our discussion of spectrality, ghosts likewise emerge as process, performatively conjured through the process of telling stories, conjured into existence by successive acts of remembrance, indeed, nothing other than the ungraspable historical real – i.e., the past itself, the endless pile of wreckage – on behalf of which messianic remembrance strives not so much to recount with adequacy, but rather to redeem by telling counter-histories, and especially by excavating the process by which dominant histories were written, performed and transmitted in the first place. "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism. And just as such a document is not free of barbarism, *barbarism taints also the manner in which it was transmitted from one owner to another*" (Benjamin 1988:252, my italics). Benjamin suggests here that the protocols of canonisation, of writing and performing history, of declaiming its heroes and masterworks, are themselves protocols of barbarism.

And so, we "regard it as [our] task to brush history against the grain" (ibid) and thereby to create sparks precisely by touching upon that which is obscene, by marking it and conjuring it as a force, revealing the barbaric protocols, the generic codes and conventions, by which it has been made obscene, and by which history is written and rehearsed. Our project, then, seeks to ignite these sparks in an attempt to acknowledge and act upon their claim on the present, and on ourselves, in particular.

There is, here, a paradox, but a productive and important one. The film process not only conjures ghosts, but also produces them, collaborates with them. And yet these very same ghosts (*penunggu*), once conjured, lay claim upon the film project itself, somehow anticipating (*menunggu*) the very practice that conjured them into existence. Lukman, currently the film project's most prominent ghost, is conjured in Gunawan's narratives as a *penunggu Sungai Ular.*[226] But what is he waiting for, if not the collective act of imagination that performatively conjures him into existence in the first place, actualising his hold on the present? Although borne of the filmmaking process itself, Lukman's ghost somehow presages us, anticipating us and the filmmaking that would conjure him.[227]

That is, by conjuring Lukman as a *penunggu,* we have produced a spectre who awaits his own conjuration as ghost. To theorise this paradox, we can say that Lukman's ghost is an index of the anticipation of his own remembrance. *Ex nihilo*, spectres, as markers or indices of the past's anticipation of the weak messianic process that unfolds in the present, are (performatively) created where before there was, perhaps, only repressive and paralysed silence. Ghosts, then, may be understood in our practice as markers *retrojected* into the past, markers of a certain anticipation (*penungguan*) for those collective acts of imagination that would conjure the ghosts into existence in the first place as a means of acknowledging and actualising the past's hold on the present, participating in the weak messianic *process.* Translating back to Benjamin's language, it would be as

[226] Documentation available upon request (See from chapter 2 of "Gunawan on Colby, Colby on Siregar" on *Show of Force Compilation DVD* [disk 1] and Vision Machine cassette I2-40).

[227] Of course, although conjured through the filmmaking process itself, there is nothing figurative about the ghosts. For once conjured as penunggu, they become *actual* ghosts, capable of possessing Gunawan, and haunting Sujiran's dreams.

if *the past's claim on the present is only materialised by our struggle in the present on behalf of the past.*

We locate spectres, then, as simultaneously a process, the effects of a process of imagining, and the anticipation of the very same process that would conjure them in the first place. Such is the paradoxical temporal topography of the spectral in relation to messianic anticipation, penunggu in relation to penungguan, and the filmmaking in relation to redemption.

§ 6.4 A Project Possessed:
cinematic form, temporality, and filmmaking as historiography

What this implies is past and present creating, marking, and anticipating each other, which is precisely what is embodied by the layers of performance and response that constitute the films. It is in this sense that the film project is a collective imaginative act that, through the substantiation of existing spectres into ghosts, and the performative conjuring of new spectres, actualises the past's claim on the present. It is in this sense that the filmmaking *as process* should be theorised as redemptive intervention, *a practice in the grip of the past.* And it is in this sense that Lukman, and Subandi, and the other ghosts, possess not only Gunawan but the project as a whole.

As Rouch discovered in his work with possession, cinematic-time[228] must unfold the space of the possession, rejoining a mythic and mimetic temporality. With experiments in single-take shoots, often lasting the entire 400 foot 16 mm reel, Rouch moved toward a "mimetic temporality".[229] (I say "mimetic temporality" to

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[228] By calling "real time" "cinematic-time" we acknowledge Bazin's argument that the cinematic is what *records* the cinematic event in real time (Bazin 1967).

[229] The ritual of possession is at the etymological root of the original Greek term, mimesis. Mimesis as "the expression of an inner state through cultic rituals rather than the reproduction of an external reality" (Jay 1997:32). This sense of mimesis as a figuring forth can be recovered from the Delian hymns or Pindar. Its salience to the filming of possession is clear. Just as in the ritual itself the visible body is the expressive figure, the signifier that bears the invisible spirit, so in film only the bodily aspect of the phenomena may be registered. At stake is not the adequacy of representation to reality, but the expressive relation of surface to depth. The surface of the screen, like the surface of the body is figured as an expressive expanse. See Jay (1997:29-55).

signal an inseparability between the mimesis of possession, on the one hand, and the *giving over* of film to the mimetic process, to the ghost that possesses the adept.[230]) Rather than compressing, expanding, and rearranging time through montage to command the temporal, Rouch's shots give themselves over to the time of the possession being filmed, allowing the temporality of the event to determine that of the film. Similarly, as Gunawan is possessed by the ghost of Colby, our films, too, are possessed by the sudden spectral intervention, because to accommodate this remarkable and unexpected cameo, the camera keeps rolling, recording in real time Gunawan's crisis, which halts the ludruk performance, whose scenery is deconstructed around him as he lets out sibylline whispers and growls, as the rain falls and falls, as the audience disperses, as the spirit departs and Gunawan looks around bewildered at the now bare stage he is sitting on – the whole process in a single fifteen-minute take. The camera has been possessed by the temporality of the possession, accommodating the scene rather than imitating it. The ghost transformed the recording; the camera thus takes the other into itself, becoming possessed like Gunawan.

This is one literal sense in that our camera, too, is possessed by the spectres conjured by Gunawan. From William Colby, administrator of a civilian extermination programme, to Lukman, a villager murdered on the banks of a local creek, a host of spirits have claimed dozens of *hours* of tape; and occasionally a single take might last an entire tape.[231] The rhythms by which ghosts come and go, the time they *claim*, has come to literally possess the temporal architecture of our film practice.

Similarly, the footage of Rahmat and Arsan at the Sungai Ular unfolds through very long takes, often more than 10 minutes. Their intervention was a conjuring of spectres in a bid for spectral power, executed through their performance of a particular generic history. Our counter-intervention has been to re-claim this

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[230] A different and still mystical understanding of mimetic temporality as cinematic real time may be found in Bazin (1967), as well as Deleuze's discussion of duration and *the time image* (Deleuze 2000).

[231] Of the numerous video cassettes claimed by filmed possessions, Vision Machine cassette I3-103, available upon request, is perhaps the best example of an entire tape being possessed by the series of ghosts requisitioning Gunawan's body.

power, to repossess it, and return it in the form of ghosts. But in order to claim the spectral power ghosting their show of force, we had to record their performance, along with its inherent spectralities, on a videotape. Only in this way could we project it in a different fNgatiem. This required, in the first instance, giving over the camera to the temporality and rhythms of their performance. In this same sense, the force conjured by Arsan and Rahmat's riverside séance possesses our camera.

Allowing our filmmaking to *be possessed,* whether by ghosts of the dead or by the haunting powers of killers who remain, to this day, *living ghosts*, forces us to invent new forms. Now that we are working with hour-long tapes rather than 12-minute reels, the duration of the footage has grown to nearly 200 hours. A large proportion comprises interviews shot in order to record stories that will never be told again, and in this sense too does the past lay a claim on the project, claiming the time required to gather testimony, and to translate and transcribe it. But this too is a kind of possession, a way in which the spectral possesses the film, for any possession is precisely a claim the past makes on the present. And so we allow the narratives of both survivors and perpetrators to possess our film with their testimony, honouring the claims of historical catastrophe on the recording of the present.

Both the films and the filmmaking process may be thought, therefore, as a series of possessions. The process has been given over to the temporality of spectres (ghosts, documentation of spectral histories, and the conjurations that consist of performances like Arsan and Rahmat's at the Sungai Ular). This temporality – and the enormous amount of footage it claims – requires us to find *forms* adequate to the task of conjuring and excavating spectrality, adequate to film as *screen* for the condensation of a series of possessions.

With the hundreds of hours of interview, there are several projects in the practice. There is an archive of testimony more detailed and robust than any other attempts to document the genocide in Sumatra, if not Indonesia as a whole. There is a book of testimony, surely. There is a theoretical project, of which this thesis is a part, which attempts to trace the historiographic implications of the

film practice. And there is a series of films. Even without the hundreds of hours of interview, the sheer volume of material, and particularly its mimetic temporality of very long takes, requires us to invent new film forms to accommodate it. Precisely what these forms will be remains unclear.[232] But certainly the logic (and structure) of the project is likely to be a serial one. Not only must such a series of films resist narrative closure, but, more precisely, it must conjure and collaborate with those spectres that are conjured by the closure of any narrative, that congregate just beyond its limits and boundaries, endowing it with a spectral power, and transforming it into *a show of force*.

The structure of the project as a whole is likely to mirror the structure of the method, an excavation that proceeds by way of layering. In this sense, each film in the series may be analogous to another layer, building on the previous one, excavating further the spectres conjured by the histories that the project performs. But this analogy should only be pushed so far, because it is unlikely that any one film will be taken up with only one type of material, or one particular set of characters, or possessions. Rahmat and Arsan's performance at the Sungai Ular is *temporally demanding,* commanding its own time in long, continuous takes. And it lasts for at least 90 gripping (possessing) minutes. But as a conjuration by killers, it demands a response, and so, while it may form a thread in a first episode, it is likely to be edited with (or overlaid by) the response of its survivors, the performances of its ghosts, and perhaps the beginnings of Arsan's own "second take" – the musical adaptation of his spectral auto-hagiography, *Embun Berdarah.*

These layers of performative response are the seeds of new films, producing an open-ended dialogue with historical catastrophe. As such, it is a logic of long-term engagement with a group of friends, with a particular past, in a particular region. Like Jean Rouch's project, it is one in which films beget films.[233] But

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[232] The lengths and forms of documentary projects excavating genocide, and in particular the forms of historical performance by which it is remembered, suggest the strong claims of the past on such projects of remembrance and excavation. Consider Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (544 mins, 1985), and the films of Marcel Ophüls, especially *The Memory of Justice* (276 mins, 1976) and *The Sorrow and the Pity* (251 mins, 1971).

here, there is a also the logic of spectral acknowledgement, in which each film – like each performance, like each history – is not a whole but always already anticipates what comes next, and supplements that which came before. In this sense, each film lays claim to the next, while also remaining indebted and, as a work, constituting an acknowledgement of this debt to the previous films, to be sure, but also to the past itself.

Without narrative closure, this cannot be a project that seeks to make a film about a genocide. Rather, it is a process of performance and response that manifests, marks and responds to the claims of a past that have not been recognised. And in the context of a genocide, one that has barely been addressed by history, the film must, in every sense, be a show of force – but, this time, the force of the silenced, the disappeared, and the voiceless. And as such, it must open up a forum for conjuring whatever wildly imaginative acts may be required to address the past's still unanswered claims.

When terror exerts a terrible hold on the present precisely because it was made spectral by virtue of being obscene to all official narratives and accounts, *imagining becomes the main job of the historian.* When a show of force is an actual force, we require a historiography capable of imagining counter-forces, and capable of performing them in shows of counter-force, and because these are spectral forces, we require a historiography that is not afraid of ghosts. The film project aims to embody precisely this practice of historiography, and to be possessed of this force of imagination.

[233] Consider, specifically, the way *Moi un Noir* (1958) anticipates *Jaguar* (1967), which literally and directly anticipates *Petit à Petit* (1971).

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