

about the politics of meaning. This demands a high degree of discursive reflexivity, in which the editors and writers have no problems locating themselves. Disavowing “strict academic definitions” in favor of “political activism” (5), the editors acknowledge the omission of more influential and widely supported movements in the Philippines (e.g., evangelical Christian groups like El Shaddai) and the inclusion of only “progressive” groups as a political act. As such, *Social Movements* can also be seen as an artifact of the legacy of the fragmentation of a previously unified national democratic movement into contending camps.

In the final analysis, *Social Movements* is a rich empirical document of different flavors and currents, not unlike the dynamic political movement(s) without a manifesto that it clearly celebrates.—CHNG NAI RUI, PHD CANDIDATE, DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE.

* * * * *

Ariel Heryanto, *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia: Fatally Belonging*. Routledge, 2006. 242 pp.

This book attempts to analyze the relationship between the efforts of the New Order regime in Indonesia to define its political identity and the state of terror that allegedly reigned during much of the period. By state terrorism, the author refers to “the series of state-sponsored campaigns that induce intense and widespread fear over a large population” (19). It consists of five elements: (a) the fear generated by state-sponsored violence (b) “directed against individual citizens who are selected as a (c) representative of a particular target group. Target individuals are (d) publicly exposed so as to generate paranoiac response from the general public who, as a consequence (e) “reproduces and elaborates the images of violence and intense fear among themselves” (19).

Such a conception of state terrorism is noteworthy for eschewing the simpleminded and deterministic, top-down, and singular-center-of-power model that forecloses spaces for resistance and collaboration, as well as for the open-endedness of outcomes—aspects not merely theoretically desirable but empirically warranted. By incorporating the responses or the roles played by the general populace in reproducing the state of fear that the state-sponsored violence aims to generate, the author ups the ante for analysts of terrorism and state terrorism. In effect, a warning has been duly served: state terrorism is not all about

in action and/or as internalized by specific persons who lived through it. The author carefully demonstrates that these cases, otherwise unremarkable or insignificant, became important as they were meant to reproduce precisely the state of terror that in the first place gave rise to these cases. These chapters also painstakingly show the particular ways in which the law and the state, often thought to be the opposites of disorder and terror, were in fact complicit in perpetuating state terrorism.

The conceptual or analytic frame of the book could be daunting, especially for those uninitiated to the basic tenets of poststructuralism. It is helpful that the first chapter clarifies the otherwise complex or slippery concepts such as discourse, simulacra and hyperreality that underpin the book's theoretical frame. Regarding the first, Heryanto is keen to emphasize that he drew on Bakhtin rather than Foucault for his notion of discourse. In the author's view, Bakhtin's theory eschews Foucault's "discursive determinism" and highlights instead the "unequal power relations among diverse texts and discursive practices" (10). With the second concept, he borrows from Jameson's and Baudrillard's idea of simulacra or hyperreality, which refers to "the replicas (or images) that overtly represent and replace the unattainable ambition for totality that the dominant discourse claims" (12). Heryanto rightly emphasizes that simulacra should not be confused with the Marxist notions of dominant ideology and false consciousness. Whereas the latter constitutes distortions of reality that precede it, simulacra comprise images that precede the "real" and hence, "conceal nothing" (12). Simulacra, citing Baudrillard, are signs that are more real than reality itself (hyperreal).

While Heryanto's use of the notion of simulacra as an analytic device could be intimidating, if not downright opaque, it proves comprehensible and useful in explicating the features of state terrorism and in offering refreshing and textured insights not only on the character of state terrorism but, more important, on how society in general or non-state actors in particular get implicated in bringing about, nurturing, or reproducing terror initiated by the state apparatuses. Here lies one of the most significant contributions of the book to political analysis.

As made explicit in chapter 5, the reference the author made to the New Order regime as a "simulacral regime" (156) was not meant to supplant the more conventional analysis of the regime, but rather to supplement it. The notion of simulacral regime, moreover, should not be construed as privileging perception and downplaying reality in the analysis of the New Order. The author wryly reminds us, "One wishes

political terror, killings, tortures or imprisonment could only be other than real” (158). The notion of simulacral regime is particularly useful in drawing our attention to the importance of hyperreality effects (perceptions both deceptive or not) not only in scholarly analysis but in everyday views of the public toward anything including the government. Lest we forget, the public, or perhaps even those who should know better such as the scholars, could be unwitting accomplices in making or reproducing state terrorism and simulacral regimes. Thus, awareness of the insidious nature of simulacra would better equip people of conceptual tools to help prevent the reinforcement of the simulacra that enhances the oppressive situation.

The author’s overall arguments are both simple and very complex. Simply, the book argues that the events surrounding the 1965-1966 killings that happened primarily in Java and Bali have laid the ground for a master narrative that underpinned the authoritarianism of the New Order, at the level of both state apparatuses and the common people. Such authoritarianism, however, should not be mistaken—as often happens, he claims—as indicative of the overpowering strength of the New Order regime. Rather, it should be viewed as a simulacrum of such strength—an image made real by people’s perception of the regime’s strength, a perception that springs from the internalized fear that emanates from a spectacular display of violence (mass killings of 1965-66) and kept alive, even reinforced, by the intermittent state-sponsored violence widespread throughout the New Order. The cases of the three Yogyakarta activists, detailed in chapters 3 and 4, support this claim. The author’s exposition is persuasive and cognizant of the agency of the people, who are otherwise seen to be mere passive victims of state violence. In effect, the author offers a nuanced picture that recognizes, yet does not exaggerate or downplay, the exercise or impact of state violence as well as the resistance and complicity of the people involved in the formation of state terrorism.

But things are far more complex. The richness of details the author provides, especially in chapters 3 and 4, is bound to produce conceptual “excess,” which escapes the neat ordering that “analysis” entails, presupposes, or aims at. The tension emanating from such an “excess” is fairly evident in the very working definition he offers for state terrorism, which includes the public’s active reproduction of the state of fear. This seems to blur the conceptual boundary between what is and is not specifically “state” in state terrorism as it takes the victims’ responses as part and parcel of the phenomenon of state terrorism itself. This line of

analysis could easily fall into “blaming the victim trap” that, among other pitfalls, obscures full accountability for the lingering oppression of the people. This is one thing quite surely that the author expressly wishes to avoid, but it is a possibility whose dire impact cannot be ignored. By subsuming the people’s response under the rubric “state terrorism,” the author’s very effort to emphasize the agency of the people tends to be subverted. Moreover, it runs counter to his argument that the state of terror assumes a life of its own after having been unleashed by the state apparatuses. The people’s response, I feel, deserves conceptual autonomy and should not be effaced by being subsumed under the notion of state terrorism.

By underscoring the sociality of state terrorism, by loosening its moorings on the state’s political interests, the question of responsibility or accountability tends to take a backseat in favor of the need to attain analytic sophistication. Here lies not only the politically contradictory tendency of the author’s analysis but also the implications that could politically emasculate the people that this kind of scholarship wishes to empower.

Perhaps that was a consequence of treading “poststructuralist” waters, while at the same time allowing one foot firmly grounded on realist epistemology and methodology. I suspect that this study is yet another example of the risks entailed in drawing from the arsenal of antifoundational epistemology, such as poststructuralism, in one’s effort at scholarship. Scholarship is essentially foundational. The use of poststructuralist analytic devices cannot but plant the seeds of contradiction between analysis (scholarship) and the critique of the basis of such analysis (poststructuralism), between the fleeting or the contingent and the stark reality or permanency of the cases that he has teased out in great detail.

The author’s attitude toward the use of theory reveals this tension. He is highly conscious of the need to resist the totalizing or “fascistic” tendencies of any theoretical project. Yet, the very foundation of his arguments rests on the salience of the poststructuralist paradigm. The notions of simulacra and discourse hold only on the poststructuralist theoretical plane. They neither have conventional scholarly attributes that establish their unassailable “existence” nor do they assume commensurability once seen within the frame of foundational theories, such as Marxism. Similarly, he is very careful to emphasize the historical contingency or specificity of the cases he analyzed. Yet again, the very notion of historical contingency lends very tenuous ground for his own

the state's monopoly of violence and neither does it confine itself within a particular and spectacular explosion of violence. It assumes a life of its own once its impacts are internalized and reproduced by the people, both the immediate target group and beyond.

The book is notable and admirable for a number of other things. It is empirically rich and theoretically informed, analytically innovative and deliberately nuanced. Its arguments are complex, but it is cogently organized and lucidly written in most parts. It is perceptive and timely, and it transcends the often restrictive disciplinary and theoretical straitjackets in exploring a particular case of state terrorism and its social imbrications. Moreover, it carries significant implications, both theoretical and methodological, on the analysis of certain aspects of the now-ubiquitous studies on the phenomenon of transnational terrorism and state terrorism. No less significant are its insights on the politics of identity-formation and state-society interactions. Through the author's careful deployment of poststructuralist analytic tools, against the backdrop of a firm grasp of the more realist framework, the book offers insights that are easily missed by the predominantly descriptive and empiricist mode commonly employed in the analysis of Indonesia's New Order.

The book has six chapters. The first chapter does a good job of setting the mode, tone, and background of the story and analysis that unfold in the succeeding chapters. It highlights, in particular, the contemporary manifestations of the lingering anticommunist master narrative that traces its origins in the 1965-66 mass killings in Indonesia. The second chapter examines the impact of the master narrative on the life of the nation, with particular emphasis on a number of cases including those of holders of sensitive positions in the New Order regime.

One of the chapter's key objectives is to demonstrate the extent to which the master narrative has assumed a life of its own. The fear that terrorism has sown could not exempt even political elites, who were presumed to be secure in their position in the New Order that even those who initially nurtured it are terrified. Rather than seeing the New Order regime, or state actors, as all-powerful, and the general public as the undifferentiated victims, it offers a more textured picture that seems closer to reality.

The third and fourth chapters focus on very specific cases of the trials of the three Yogyakarta-based activists charged of subversion in 1989-1990. These chapters constitute the empirical "heartland" of the book and offer a very complex and highly nuanced picture of state terrorism

analysis, which necessarily presupposes not only the historicity (as in the past *qua* past) of the violence that the New Order had inflicted on the public but also the stability of the analytic yardstick that he utilized.

The apparent seeds of contradiction embedded in the book should not be construed as weaknesses. Perhaps they are necessary for studies that dare cross the epistemological divide separating poststructuralism, on the one hand, and those that subscribe to realist epistemologies, on the other. To Indonesian and political studies, in general, Heryanto's book is a very important contribution. I hazard a view that it will, in time, be recognized as pathbreaking. It is a must-read for anyone concerned about Indonesia, comparative politics, as well as those interested in how poststructuralism, in hybrid form, may be employed in sociopolitical analysis. —ROMMEL A. CURAMING, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, LA TROBE UNIVERSITY-MELBOURNE.

* * * * *

Rey Ventura. 2006. *Underground in Japan*. Quezon City: ADMU Press. 162 pp.

About 8.1 million Filipinos either work or live abroad—nearly 10 percent of the Philippine population as of December 2004. In 2005, a Pulse Asia survey found evidence that an increasing percentage of the populace agrees with the following statement: “I would emigrate to another country and live there.” The same sentiment is not limited to adults alone. In an earlier nationwide survey (2003), 47 percent of children aged ten to twelve wished to work abroad someday, and 60 percent of the children of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) expressed the same plan. The reason: the benefits of working abroad far outweigh the benefits of living in the country.

Rey Ventura's *Underground in Japan* is a moving narrative of well-webbed life stories of people who belong to the ever-growing number of Filipinos seeking greener pastures abroad. The book narrates the lives of illegal migrant laborers in Japan, illegal in that their existence is unaccounted for in the official national statistics, whether of the sending or receiving country. With poignant sympathy, the book intimately presents the everyday lives of these migrant aliens, from the more mundane and minute details to norms that constitute emerging moral unities far from those held dear at home.

The story revolves around the exploits of “standing men” set in the Koto (short for Kotobukicho). The narrator, Rey, is a former exchange