Collating the Nation

The Disruption of the New Society's and the New Order's National Narratives in the Novels of Edel Garcellano and Seno Gumira Ajidarma

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Abstract

Edel Garcellano (1946-2020) was one of the Philippines' most iconoclastic writers during and after the Marcos regime. His novel *Ficcion* (1978) remains not only as one of the most stylistically crafted indictments of elite Philippine historiography and the early Marcos regime but also presages the hollow theatrics of Marcos's 'New Society'. On the other hand, due to mounting political and economic pressure during the late 1980s and early 1990s, Suharto's Orde Baru (New Order) regime was forced to declare an era of political openness (*keterbukaan*). During that period, Seno Gumira Ajidarma (1958-present) entered the scene as one of Indonesian literature's most critical and innovative writers. Initially known for his fiction about Indonesia's invasion of East Timor, it is in his experimental novel *Jazz, parfum dan insiden* [*Jazz, Perfume, and the Incident*] (1996) where he unleashes his critique against the Suharto regime.

Focusing on the two novels' deployment of various types of texts (from historical documents to declassifed incident reports) within the narrative, this article will attempt to uncover marginal narratives of the nation undercut by the national narrative of order, development, and progress propounded by both authoritarian regimes.

Keywords

New order, new society, national narratives, Philippine novel, Indonesian novel

Introduction: Nation as Narrative

This article seeks to first explore the Philippine and Indonesian concepts of "nation" as products of various narratives espoused by competing moral forces in society. As such, the following questions are inevitably raised and tackled in the article: (1) From whose subject-position does the dominant and hegemonic national narrative(s) come from? (2) With the existence of these national narrative(s)—sometimes in the form of slogans like "order and development"—what has become of the marginalized national narrative(s)?

Likewise, this article also attempts to examine the national narratives advocated by past authoritarian regimes in the Philippines and Indonesia through Ferdinand E. Marcos' New Society and Suharto's New Order. To achieve this, the so-called illegitimate and marginalized narratives (e.g., obscured anti-colonial perspectives, anti-authoritarian gestures, communist nationalism) will have to be resurfaced and weighed against the "legitimate" national narratives -- veritable proofs of a present political dispensation's claim to antiquity and a great ancestral past. In doing so, the study aims to perform an act of tracing, which is incidentally also an act of assembling, of collations from two novels that seem to reanimate narratives that have been crushed under the weight of state-sponsored narratives, common sense, and institutionalized historiography: Edel E. Garcellano's *Ficcion* (1978) and Seno Gumira Ajidarma's *Jazz, Parfum, dan Insiden* (1996). I particularly argue that through both novels' deployment of various texts, e.g., poems, reports, leaflets, news clippings, etc., the marginal national narratives are uncovered and, as a result, effect a literal and symbolic disruption, albeit momentarily, of the dominant narratives' trajectory.

Both novels were written during fractious periods in the Philippines and Indonesia. Both were also published at a time when writers and intellectuals were being watched closely by state forces. Garcellano, for instance, finished writing *Ficcion* in 1972, two months before Marcos' declaration of martial law, and was only able to publish it six years later. The additional six years, in retrospect, gave him the opportunity to make the novel's narrative appear to be presaging the declaration of martial law in the Philippines (199). Be that as it may, like many others who chose to oppose the Marcos dictatorship,

whether through the pen or active participation in the broad anti-dictatorship movement, Garcellano knew the consequences of publishing a novel that was critical of the regime. Styling himself as a serious writer and scholar (and taking in a number of writers and intellectuals under his fold), Marcos, through his regime and dalliance with scholarship, arrogated to himself the role of sole imprimatur of the so-called "New Society." By consequence, this just means that alternatives to the national narratives of the New Society were regarded as subversive and terrorist—excesses to a national narrative that has been fully exhausted and realized. Seno's novel, on the other hand, was published in 1996, five years after the Dili massacre and two years prior to Suharto's forced resignation from power. This, however, was not the first time Seno published something critical of the regime. In 1993, for instance, at the height of the initial wave of protests against the Suharto government, Seno published *Penembak Misterius* (*Mysterious Shooter*) which consists of stories about the puzzling spate of killings of suspected drug dealers, vagrants, and lowlifes by unknown assailants (hence, the monicker "petrus," short for "penembak misterius"). Although writing about events that happened almost two decades ago, the collection was an unflinching look at the New Order regime's militaristic origins and nature. And while Seno did not suffer the same repercussions compared to what he would go through after publishing *Jazz,* it did not help his case when state authorities were already on his tail. From the aforementioned political conditions, it seems self-evident that both writers wrote according to the imperative of portraying socio-political truths and realities—an imperative that characterized the 19th-century European realist novel (Jameson 12) and influenced many novelists from former colonies in Southeast Asia. And while this is not something that is supposed to be novel or controversial, the fact that debates about the writer's role in society and the supposed apolitical nature of art and literature raged on in both Philippine (cf. Villa vs. Lopez debate; Philippine Writers League manifesto) and Indonesian literary circles (cf. LEKRA vs. Manikebu debate; LEKRA's Mukadimah [1951 and 1959]) from the 1930s to the 1960s indicate that the said imperative's validity was something that needed to be argued for or against.

The article is indebted to the works of Benedict Anderson, Caroline Hau, Pheng Cheah, Alexander Beecroft, and many other scholars who have extensively theorized about the nation. For the purposes of this project, however, I will only focus on two concepts that relate to the idea of the nation as an entity composed of narratives. The first is national narratives as forms of ethical technologies. Hau, for instance, makes a very compelling argument about the state's tendency to create and use narratives to equip citizens with the necessary know-how in order for them to become capable political subjects (15-30). In both the Philippines and Indonesia, ethical technologies came in the form of slogans, required courses and training programs, and state-sponsored cultural products. During the Marcos regime, for instance, songs like "Bagong Pagsilang" ("Rebirth") or "Awit ng Bagong Lipunan" ("Hymn of the New Society") can be considered as prime examples. In New Order Indonesia, meanwhile, the 1984 propaganda film *Pengkhianatan* G30S/PKI (*The Betrayal of G30S/PKI*) directed by Arifin Noer and the "Normalization of Campus Life" policy both perfectly encapsulated the anti-communist attitudes that became the backbone of the regime's founding narratives.

The second concept is national narratives as means to locate, accumulate and/o construct primordial antiquities. Beecroft, for example, argues that the formation of nations (and national literatures) was always preceded and maintained by constructed antiquities (235). That is to say, claims and/or inventions of a great common past that would explain the values that the nation and its citizens extol and live by. In the case of the Marcos and Suharto regimes, both embarked on, to varying degrees of impact and success, massive state-sponsored national history writing projects. In both cases, generally speaking, the objective was to justify the existence of the current regime and discredit any existing or possible political dispensation.

While this article draws from the astute contextualization analysis on Philippine and Indonesian socio-economic and political conditions during and after the Marcos and Suharto regimes (see Cook and Pincus 1-17; Sison *Struggle* 44-48 , *Philippine Society* 55-60, *Philippine Revolution* 69-73 ; Abinales and Amoroso 196; MacIntyre 244-46; and Mijares 257) in terms of tenor

and disposition, the project is more attuned with works that problematized the complex relationship of historiography and nation-building (see Kartodirdjo 88-97) and the use of cultural products (film, novels, etc.) in order to legitimize violence against alternative narratives of the nation (see Herlambang 10-11; Robinson 292). Moreover, it must be said that although the article touches on specific events in the Philippines and in Indonesia, its focus remains on highlighting the implications brought about by the literal juxtaposition of diametrically opposed national narratives in the novels of Garcellano and Seno.

The Collators

The critical praxis of Garcellano, who has always been considered as a maverick writer and intellectual in the Philippines, has always been evident in both his literary works and critical writings, especially in his engagement with Marxist theory. As Hau notes in her introduction to Garcellano's *Knife's Edge*, "Garcellano's mode of writing is specifically directed against a prevailing idea of "writing" in the Philippines, which is synonymous with the mere acquisition of "skills" (ix). In the last part of her statement, Hau implies the loss of (re)imagination in the actual process of writing. When literature becomes only a matter of craftsmanship and writers decidedly withdraw themselves (and their work) from any political engagement, what happens is the almost clockwork reproduction and redistribution of the state's official discourse. By ostensibly eschewing politics, writing gestures away from the present in order to enshrine timeless and universal ideas, all while being reduced to an act of pure abstraction and not as a way or process of imagining a better and more just future. Thus, instead of arriving at a universal or transcendental truth, the only thing that writers achieve by continuing to devoid their works of political content is the reinforcement of the existing cultural, political, and social dispensation. For Garcellano, these writers, especially those serving as bureaucrats, contribute to the reproduction of the state's already widespread and hegemonic national narratives. In this connection, Hau writes,

> Garcellano appears to have set himself in deliberate opposition to the kind of "good writing" which is the trademark of the literary practitioners whose problematic ideological positions he most wishes to expose. His liberal use of parenthetical remarks directs his readers resolutely to the branching lines of flight and inquiry taken by his ideas. By forcing his readers to backtrack on any given sentence, he defamiliarizes the reading process itself, calling to the attention the material production of ideas and their fraught disentanglement, and more significantly, the labor of meaning-making that is demanded of text and reader alike. (ix-x)

Meanwhile, in his introduction to *Ficcion*, literary critic Petronilo Bn. Daroy distinguishes Garcellano from his contemporaries who tried to dilute literature of social, historical, and political realities. Daroy writes,

> Indeed, the younger writers who, previously, had distinguished themselves with the command of language and preoccupation with words and their own preciosity had to do with some kind of new learning and exert some effort at understanding the current scene and what it means to one's individual history. **Ficcion** considers the very stuff of Philippine history as the focal point of consciousness. The method of stream-of-consciousness which so many of us have learned from Joyce and Freud became an excuse for re-inventing the writer's autobiography. It became introverted in a negative sense, namely, in the fact that literature became an occasion for indulgence in personal memories which mattered only to the writer himself. The incidental, rather than the social or historical, became the very stuff of fiction. There is still something of the stream-of-consciousness method present in the novel. But memory here does not relate to the private events of an individual life. Rather, it has something to do with the recollection of a learning process on the facts of Philippine society. (v-vi)

In what seems to be similar characterizations of Garcellano's praxis as a writer and an intellectual in both introductions to his works, what becomes most obvious to us is perhaps its confrontational nature of his writing. Confrontational in the sense that it does not steer clear of themes and modes of expression avoided by so-called apolitical writers and intellectuals. By doing so, Garcellano is able to trace and interrogate the ideological discourse of the said writers—an ideological discourse that serves as a copy or replica of the state's national narrative. Hence, in the hands of a writer

who claims neutrality, the state's narrative, when unchallenged, is replicated, redistributed, and eventually, as Lacan would have it, takes precedence over the real (164). For Garcellano, writers who try their hardest to avoid being political become more political for they can become willing (sometimes unwilling) imprimaturs of the state's national narrative by refusing to directly engage it (54).

Also interesting to note is Daroy's emphasis on the "learning process" as the stuff of Garcellano's fiction. This, I believe, alongside the uncovering of marginal national narratives before and during the Marcos regime, is one of the more crucial conceits of *Ficcion* as both a work of fiction and criticism. In this sense, it can be argued that a work of fiction does not only tell a story but also reveals to its own author and prospective readers the ways in which we learn about the workings of society. The recollection of the said "learning process" does not only turn out to be merely a dose of nostalgia. In putting emphasis on the ways we receive and experience facts about our social being, what is achieved is the examination of the violence wrought by the continuous rewriting of Philippine history according to the interests of its colonizers and local elites. In the same vein, Hau, in her take on the inclusion of Rizal's life and works in the curricula of public and private universities via Republic Act No. 1425 or the Rizal Law, reminds readers of the pedagogical potential of literature. She writes:

> In fact, by stating that the heroes' lives and works were responsible for "shap[ing] the national character," the bill suggested that the heroes, especially Rizal and his novels, originally represented, if not embodied, the nationalist ideals of virtue, patriotism, and self-sacrifice. These ideals formed the "content" of their lives and works. Thus, by reading Rizal and his novels as exemplary, inspiring stories that could be "applied" to everyday life, the Filipino was presumably inspired to live by these ideals. The bill therefore made the act of reading literature an act of (re)discovering the nation's origins. (2)

With literature occupying a mediating position between "the universal ideal of nationalism, on the one hand, and its realization within a specifically Philippine context, on the other" (Hau 2–3), the idea of the nation as

composed of narratives becomes all the more solidified. This is important to note because it determines whose narrative of the nation will be subject to continuous reinforcement, reshaping, and redistribution. By legislating literature as the wellspring of nationalist ideals, the state becomes the primary interlocutor in the transmission of nationalist ideals. And as such, the state is also able to arrogate to itself the prerogative to identify and mark specific narratives as subversive, extremist, or terrorist.

In the current state and shape of both Philippine and Indonesian societies, there is no shortage of this. In the Philippines, for instance, the formation of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict in 2018 gave the Philippine government, the military, and its civilian operatives all the necessary pretext to label all competing national narratives as "communist" or "terrorist." In the same manner, Islamic political organizations such as Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders Front) -- with the prodding of the Indonesian military—continue to frame any form of popular dissent as "PKI Gaya Baru" (literally, New Style of PKI [Indonesian Communist Party]). Both recent examples show the unwillingness of both the Indonesian and Philippine governments to let competing narratives and visions of the nation gain a foothold. However, this clear disavowal of any alternative can only mean that the writing of the nation's narrative is already finished, the nationalist project is fully realized, and the only thing left to do is preserve its legacy.

This view, for Hau, becomes problematic because "no writing or political program can exhaust the possibilities of the social reality it tries to engage" (7). Hence, the nationalist project will always be a continuing and unfinished process since literature and politics can only produce more writing and action. Here, Hau introduces the concept of "excess" to explain the generative trait of nationalist thought and praxis, a trait that is not accidental but actually a constitutive feature of nation-building. For Hau, the violence of the nationalist project is a by-product of "different nationalist projects of imagining and making a community" (7).

In the case of Marcos' New Society, for instance, what it deemed as excesses in its nation-building project were the communists and rightists'

nationalist projects. In Marcos' *Notes on the New Society*, he described the communist project as a prelude to the totalitarian regimentation of the lives of the masses, on the one hand, and rightist nationalism as a cover for maintaining the poverty-creating order, on the other (69). What prevails, according to Marcos, in both nationalist projects is the imposition of ruling-class ideology on the masses. The alleged flaws of these emergent ideologies were used by Marcos as pretexts to take a "developmentalist" approach to governing the nation (Abinales and Amoroso 196). Eventually, with the emergence of the new communist movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the constant threat posed by the disgruntled elites from the right as excesses to his narrative of order and development, Marcos will finally declare martial law on September 21, 1972. To further rationalize and trace the origins of his regime to a mythic past, Marcos would "author"—with the assistance of several of the best historians in the nation—the massive *Tadhana: A two-volume abridgement of the History of the Filipino People* (1982). And while Curaming cautions us from viewing projects like *Tadhana* from the simplified perspective of "one side manipulating or co-opting the other" (184), the facts remain that Marcos, like other despots, saw history and scholarship as a means to legitimize his and the New Society's existence (Reyes 208-9).

It is in these contexts that I situate Garcellano's praxis as a writer. In the succeeding sections of the article, I will argue that what Garcellano achieved in *Ficcion* was the unveiling and juxtaposition of these national narratives considered excesses before and during Marcos' New Society. Particularly, by utilizing and incorporating different types of text in the narrative, the truism that the nation as a narrative is retold to the people under the state's supervision is truncated and critically interrogated.

Seno Gumira Ajidarma is one of Indonesia's most acclaimed contemporary writers. Though he started writing at a young age —publishing his first poem in *Horison* at the age of eighteen —Seno only began to gain popularity and respect among his contemporaries, on the one hand, and flak from state functionaries, on the other, when he started publishing fiction that deals with the militaristic nature and ways of the New Order. Having

published more than 30 books of novels, poems, stories, plays, and graphic novels, Seno, alongside Wiji Thukul and Putu Oka, is recognized as one of the first Indonesian writers to produce works that are openly critical of the regime. Fuller, for instance, characterized the works of Seno as "recordings of the sounds of state violence" (1–20), while Bodden sees Seno's fiction as resistance to Suharto's authoritarian regime (153–56). However, I argue that, similar to Garcellano, Seno's fiction—especially his earlier fiction like *Manusia Kamar* (*Room Man*) (1988) and *Penembak Misterius* (*Mysterious Shooter*) (1993)—are collations of narratives elided by official state narratives. And as such, these collated narratives present antipodes to the manufactured narratives of order and development circulated by the regime.

If Garcellano is considered a pariah by state functionaries and too left field by his own contemporaries, Seno, for a time, worked as an editor for *Jakarta-Jakarta,* a magazine owned by the media conglomerate Gramedia, before being fired for publishing classified documents about the Dili Massacre in Timor Leste. Having lost his job, Seno turned to fiction to fulfill his "responsibility to history." His turn to literature yielded a slew of short story collections such as *Saksi Mata* (*Eyewitness*), poems, and plays about events in Indonesian history censored and whitewashed by the Suharto regime. About this commitment, Seno quotes a passage from his previous work, *Ketika Jurnalisme Dibungkam Sastra Harus Bicara* (*When Journalism is Gagged, Literature Must Speak*), in his essay "Fiction, Journalism, and History: A Process of Self-Correction":

> When journalism is gagged, literature must speak. Because if journalism speaks with facts, literature speaks with the truth. Facts can be embargoed, manipulated, or blacked out, but the truth arises of its own accord, like reality. Journalism is bound by a thousand and one constraints, from business concerns to politics, from making its presence felt, but the only constraint on literature is one's own honesty. Books can be banned, but truth and literature are a part of the very air we breathe, they can't be taken to court and they can't be stopped. Covering up the facts is a political act, covering up the truth is one of the greatest acts of stupidity committed by human beings on the face of the Earth. (164)

Seno's will to truth—the belief that literature can surpass the limits of journalism in times of repression and strife—might be one of the reasons why his fiction, especially his novels, rely on postmodern narrative strategies. In his 2004 novel *Kitab Omong Kosong* (*Book of Nonsense*), for example, Seno was able to successfully write a retelling of Rama and Sita's story (Indonesia's version of the *Ramayana*) by using Togog, one of the defeated antagonists in the original version, as the novel's primary (unreliable) narrator. This decision to use Togog as the narrator effectively communicates to readers Seno's view that no story can fully exhaust itself. There will always be an opportunity to rewrite or retell stories. And in that process, truths that were illegible in previous versions will become legible.

In the same essay, Seno also talks about his attempt to blur the line between fact and fiction in *Jazz, Parfum dan Insiden*. By collating and incorporating into his stories and novels classified information from reports censored by the New Order regime about its military campaigns in Timor Leste, Seno was able to throw off the watchful eyes of censors. Moreover, his turn to postmodern narrative strategies as opposed to the realist and magical realist techniques used by some his predecessors and contemporaries signaled the return of what Lenard Davis calls historicity, or the ability of people to comment on past events and, similarly, record novelty (46-8). About his own style, Seno writes:

> Of course what's even more important is this question—why wasn't the journalistic text changed at all? My answer is: I'm never entirely aware that I'm creating a short story or a novel. I only feel that I'm resisting being silenced. I concentrate completely on ensuring that the forbidden text which has been banned can be disseminated—in a way that is safe and according to the rules. I choose not to publish anonymous leaflets, because I'm not an activist. I can only write, and I write to confront silencing. I'm gagged in the official print media, and I'm happy to resist in the same place—something which I can mainly do through my short stories, which to be sure, only find a place in the newspapers…. Under such circumstances the difference between fact and fiction doesn't hold much meaning for me, maybe it doesn't mean anything at all. What I do through both journalism and fiction forms my answer to the demands of temporality—which for me means my responsibility to history. (166-67)

Like Garcellano, Seno acts as a collator of silenced narratives in order to weigh these excesses against the accepted national narratives of the Suharto regime. In most of his writings, especially during the 1990s, facts and critical stances concerning Indonesia's invasion of Timor Leste and the massacre and incarceration of its people (especially those who were discovered to be connected to Fretilin) were the excess national narratives that Seno juxtaposes against the accepted narratives of order, stability, and development brandished by the Suharto regime. However, Seno notes that his objective in exposing such facts through his works should not be considered as an absolute claim to truth. What he instead intended to achieve was to make the presence of these facts legible through literature in order for people to be aware of them. About this, he writes:

> That's why I no longer make an issue of how literature can grasp truth. What concerns me is how literature comes to be present, and how can it justify this presence—a question which can be reformulated as: what can a writer say about a text which he/she has written him/herself, by way of taking responsibility for it? If I am that writer, what can I do? I can only tell the story of the process by which that piece of writing was born.... What concerns me is how literature comes to be present, and how can it justify this presence—a question which can be reformulated as: what can a writer say about a text which he/she has written him/herself, by way of taking responsibility for it? If I am that writer, what can I do? I can only tell the story of the process by which that piece of writing was born. (165)

Triteness and possible confusion aside, this seeming contradictory attitude of Seno when it comes to differentiating "fact(s) in journalism" and "truth in literature" can be directly associated with his attitude when it comes to resistance. Refusing to see himself as an activist or a revolutionary, Seno views himself as writer acting in response to the calls of history. And by doing so, he places more value in the act and process of writing in the face of narratives presented by the state as historical inevitabilities. In this case, both the perceived process of telling the truth and the mere presence of what can possibly be true are more important than a claim or a text's actual truth value. Seno's view on writing is akin to how Jacques Ranciere sees art

and literature as a way to redistribute the sensible "forms-of-life", that is, to make visible other ways of being, alternative histories or dispensations, and types of feeling or emotions that were illegible in the narratives of the existing aesthetic regime (12; 21-4). This epiphany also reveals how Seno sees literature as an effective vehicle for voicing out certain truths about history and society. Contrary to his direct predecessors and contemporaries who fully embraced the belief that literature can only operate in the cultural sphere, Seno's fiction and views on literature make him a writer who directly participates in the socio-political sphere through writing. Equally remarkable is the twofold invocation of fiction and history, which confers on Seno's fiction the flexibility of novelistic and historical discourse. Moreover, by categorizing his work as fiction and making certain truths are present in it, Seno, without being put to task for any form of bias, was able to comment about social and historical realities, as if arrogating to himself both roles of historian and social critic.

Bodden, meanwhile, has an interesting take on Seno's act of justifying literature and the truths it makes legible. In his article, "Satuan-satuan kecil and uncomfortable improvisations in the late night of the New Order," Bodden comments about the collations in *Jazz, Parfum dan Insiden*:

> This collation of historical and analytical texts, as well as endnotes, blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, a technique also explored by, although less conspicuously and systematically, in some of the stories in his *Saksi Mata* and *Negeri Cabut* (*Country of mist*) collections. Ajidarma's novel shows another similarity with Sae's plays: like *Yanti* it is mainly set in a thoroughly urban landscape, a contemporary Jakarta full of films, television, telephones and computers. Yet in marked contrast to Sae, *Jazz, Parfum dan Insiden* revels in popular culture. Still, there is a curious twist. Only occasionally is Indonesian pop culture mentioned. Rather, the popular most clearly foregrounded—jazz, the blues, the perfume industry, films—is all associated with the United States. (in Foulcher and Day 312)

Bodden's remark about the presence of American popular culture in the novel implies that the Suharto regime's national narrative of development and modernization was hinged on the global narrative of development and

modernization promoted by the United States. This is not a totally misplaced observation. Tadiar makes the same observation in her reading of novels set during the Marcos era, e.g., Jun Cruz Reyes' *Tutubi, 'Wag kang Magpahuli sa Mamang Salbahe*. But unlike Bodden, Tadiar sees the manifestation of the said national narrative in the attempt of then Minister of Human Settlements Imelda Marcos to beautify and urbanize Metro Manila (146–47). This beautification program consisted of the demolition of informal settlements and replacing them with hotels, restaurants, and financial institutions—all three representing prospects for foreign investment. A similar reference to the futility of authoritarian modernization and urbanization is present in Seno's novel. However, due to the different path taken by the Suharto regime, as noted by Vatikiotis in terms of local economic policies especially in the early years of the New Order wherein firm interventionist and protectionist policies were still in play (39-40; 45), a thorough comparative approach to the urbanization and modernization projects undertaken by both countries will not be pursued in the article.

That being said, the next two sections of the article will focus on the various "found texts" collated and deployed through and within the narrative of *Ficcion* and *Jazz, Parfum dan Insiden*. These uncovered texts will then be discussed and put into context against the national narratives they are trying to resist and disrupt.

The revolution will be quoted: Edel Garcellano, the Bricoleur

Ficcion tells the story of the interwoven lives of the Extranjeros (literally "strangers" or "foreigners"), a landed family who trace their roots to one of Juan de Salcedo's soldiers; the Dimasalangs, a family of peasants and revolutionaries; and the Resurreccions, a middle-class family reared in and obsessed with the American educational system. In the novel, history is what ties the lives of these families together. As if in a Mobius strip, these families will be involved in the making of Philippine history through a series of revolutions, collaborations, political machinations, mass demonstrations, and inter-class conflicts. One of the Extranjeros' second-generation members, Don Fernando, served as a civil servant for the Spanish government. Jesus,

Don Fernando's son, joins the Katipunan, only to find himself siding with the Americans after the Spanish forces were routed. Emmanuel, Jesus' son, will meanwhile become a congressman after the Second World War. And finally, Simon, Emmanuel's son, will try his hand at literature and join the national democratic youth movement, only to find himself succumbing, like his grandfather, to the limitations of his class.

The Dimasalangs, on the other hand, are a picture of consistency. From their homologous nicknames up to their commitment to the social movements they were a part of, the Dimasalangs represent the longest and most assiduous resistance to the narrative of the nation, which has been continuously exploited and misrepresented by the elite. More specifically, Garcellano, through the Dimasalangs, was able to textualize the fiercest resistance to the New Society's narrative of discipline, development, and social justice. For instance, Andres, the fourth generation Dimasalang and a union leader, finds himself in the crosshairs of the military due to the number of demonstrations he has led in various factories in Metro Manila and in the farms of Isla del Fuego (literally "Island of Fire"), a large portion of which is owned by the Extranjero family.

Aside from representing the middle class, the Resurreccions represent the disconnect between the old and the new, an interregnum of sorts in the flesh. Potenciano Resurreccion experienced the violence of all the colonizers: the cultural stagnation during the twilight of Spanish colonialism; the Janus-faced benevolence of the Americans; and the brutality of the Japanese. As a history teacher in a public school, he witnesses not only the various attempts of making the nation but the contradictions in its writing and narrativization as well. Potenciano understands the plight of Andoy Dimasalang, who was a member of the Huk army during the Second World War. But just like Jesus Extranjero, he also finds himself beholden to the Americans for supposedly granting the Philippines its independence; although at that time, the Philippine Independence Day was moved back to its original date (June 12) as a way to commemorate Emilio Aguinaldo's orginal proclamation date. History will seem to repeat itself when Renato, Potenciano's only son, becomes a history teacher and a conservative like him. This is evidenced

by his view that history should be taught by making students memorize endless names and dates—a simplification of a myriad of events that made possible the signifier of "the event" via the myopic homogenization itself of the signifier.

Everything comes full circle when the fourth-generation sons from each family meet each other a few years prior to the declaration of martial law. By that time, Andres Dimasalang, after having lived a life of abject poverty, now holds a key position in the worker and peasant movements. Simon Extranjero, meanwhile, has distinguished himself as an avant-garde poet, a bohemian alcoholic, and an armchair Marxist. Elias Resurreccion, on the other hand, becomes Simon Extranjero's antithesis: a poet for the masses and an emerging intellectual in the anti-dictatorship movement. Thrust in the trenches of a critical historical moment—that is, the possibility of a dictatorship and the emergence of various forces who resist or are complicit with it—Garcellano uses these characters to tell readers that the narrative of the nation, the makings of the Philippine nation, is fashioned by different forces. And as Hau says, "productive violence" is a constitutive feature of nation-building (7).

As mentioned earlier, the novel, with its narrator as an outsider—a bystander who admits the fault of the narrative by claiming lack of talent—becomes a meta-fictional agent-device of self-criticism aimed at proving the futility of any narrative's attempt to exhaust the possibilities of the social reality it sought to engage. About this, the narrator of *Ficcion* bemoans the reality that his "lack of talent in delivering the full form and color of what he has wrought is indeed a big obstacle to your speculation, prospective reader, if it is really irony or truth that he wishes to convey" (14).[1]

What is of interest in the narrator's revelation is the implied need to verify a narrative that he is in the process of retelling. This (un)intended incredulity toward what was supposed to be an authoritative narrative is one of the main conceits of the novel. To solve this dilemma and avoid the homogenizing potential of a narrative, the narrator would then quote from various sources, e.g., historical documents, excerpts from literary and scholarly works, news articles, etc., in order to illuminate, supplement, or

contradict specific moments in Philippine and world history. At the very moment of retelling, the novel's narrator ceases to be merely a tool of the master narrator/narrative and instead becomes what Claude Levi-Strauss calls a "bricoleur"—a person who fashions something new (qtd. in Genette 57). In the novel's case, what is being fashioned from the assemblage of culled quotes and passages is a new narrative. In the novel, this assemblage comes in the form of the following: a passage from the work of nationalist historian Teodoro Agoncillo juxtaposed against an orientalist statement from Rachel Carson; lines of poetry from Pablo Neruda and César Vallejo complemented by lines of poetry from Aurelio Tolentino or Amado V. Hernandez; a line from Simone de Beauvoir's novel alongside passages from anti-colonial historian Renato Constantino; snippets from a news article about the killing of demonstrators and the Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier match in the Philippines; and a passage from the work of Marxist philosopher Jean Paul-Sartre juxtaposed against a Shurman Commission document or lyrics from a The Beatles or Simon and Garfunkel song.

Marcos rationalized the declaration of martial law and the subsequent inauguration of the New Society by using two political pretexts: the existence of so-called "lawless elements," whose political, legal, economic, religious, and moral principles are based on Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology and the burgeoning Muslim secessionist movement in Mindanao. Thus, like Suharto, Marcos attempted to consolidate state power to resolve what he deemed as unstable and anarchic conditions in the country—to restore order, introduce radical reforms to the system, and return the country to its path, albeit singular, of development (73; 204–06). In short, the creation of the New Society implies the creation of a singular national narrative of order and development at the expense of other equally valid national narratives. As mentioned earlier, any excess in *the* national narrative will be silenced and relegated to obscurity. This, for Marcos, constitutes what he called the "revolution from the center"—a revolution that comes from within and involves the constitutional reform of the government (65; 77). This is the singular and homogenizing national narrative resisted and disrupted in the novel. As a counterpoint, for example, the novel reanimates a Renato

Constantino quote about history's collective nature after a scene where Andres Dimasalang learns about his family's revolutionary past while incarcerated for his involvement in labor strikes months after the declaration of martial law: "[f]or history, as it is commonly defined as the story of man, is not the story of man, the individual, but man the collective, that is, associated man… Human society is the cause and result of people in motion and in constant struggle to realize the human potential" (160).

A similar example, albeit from a different historical period, can be found in an earlier scene of the novel. The scene focuses on Jesus Extranjero's scattered recollections (as heard by his son Emmanuel) of his past involvement in the revolution against the Spaniards, subsequent surrender and cooperation with the Americans, and his bitter confrontation with Andoy Dimasalang who, by that time, was leading the remnants of the anti-American revolutionary forces. Interspersed between these recollections are collated passages from American military officials and remnants of the Katipunan. For instance, a scene where Jesus Extranjero bemoans his complicity with the American colonial government is succeeded by a passage from the revolutionary playwright Aurelio Tolentino, deemed by some critics as a proto-socialist, about the seeming inevitability of struggle between opposing moral forces:

> Man's life is a constant struggle… Struggle for dignity and life, death amidst a crooked government and in the face of a brotherhood on its last legs. Food is being taken away from the mouths of the weak and spoils in the hands of the powerful. Now he is up against the one who reigns over all creation, the embodiment of greed is none other than his fellow men" (21).[2]

In another scene, meanwhile, several quoted statements from American military officials precede a long exposition of Jesus Extranjero and Andoy Dimasalang's conflict as members of opposing factions during the Philippine-American War. Of interest here are different attitudes of American generals toward their supposed adversaries. The first one comes from Jacob Smith, the general responsible for the Balangiga massacre: "I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn; the more you burn and kill the better it will please me" (42).

On the opposite end is Henry Lawton, one of the few American generals who died during the Philippine-American War: "Taking into account the disadvantages they have to fight against in arms, equipment, and military discipline -- without artillery, short of ammunition, they are defective, inferior in every particular equipment and supplies—they are the bravest men I have ever seen" (42).

As the above examples illustrate, the deployment and juxtaposition of diametrically opposed texts with the narrative sets off two things: first, the establishment of a quasi-parity between the authoritative narratives and the marginalized narratives; and second, the unmasking of their inherent and incidental ideological oppositions. Moreover, by weaving in these texts within the novel's narrative, Garcellano was able to give readers a horizontal version of a specific historical event. Instead of a neat and definitive narrative of, say, the Philippine-American War, readers are forced to experience the full brunt of contradictions, tensions, and competing visions of a post-revolutionary dispensation in a space of a few pages.

News, in a society dominated by state-sponsored national narrative, also becomes an issue. A good illustration of this is the scene where Simon Extranjero complains about the lack of "new" news, which in a sense means that nothing can be "news" anymore in a society that has a predestined path or telos. As he reads through the broadsheet, Simon feels the burden of living in a society that has rendered everything mundane. The narrator writes,

> He wastes away until the morning and gingerly walks in the streets without even stretching: The honk of the bread seller. The calls of the newspaper boy. **Boys, Times nga!** But as he starts to read through, he would feel a bit sad because yet again, four demonstrators... Muhammad Ali beats Fraizer in points! (Son of a bitch! Had the WBC not laid him off!)...."[3] (96)

Though the Ali-Frazier rematch (the last fight in their epic trilogy) took place in the Philippines three years after the declaration of martial law -- which back then was seen as a sign of a country's draw and ability to finance important events -- what is of interest here is the existence of news about demonstrators: students adhering to the call of anti-imperialist struggle and

factory workers dissatisfied with their existing working conditions. They are part of the forces that oppose the vision, narrative, and workings of the New Society. Moreover, if read closely, this passage reveals the naiveté that the resurfacing of national narratives considered excesses will result in an immediate parity of forces and narratives. Although the narratives of the marginalized are spoken about in the media, they are almost always framed according to the interests of the ruling class. In Simon's head, what remained unspeakable while reading the news about the demonstrators was the fact that their dispersal was justified since they were considered lawless elements.

Another thing of interest is what Daroy noted as the novel's gesture of remembering an individual's or collective's "learning processes." Also noted earlier was its conceit of placing diametrically opposed texts within the narrative as if these had exerted the same influence in the making of the nation. Yet what such actualities in the novel's structure really suggest is the existence of opposing nation-making projects. By making these texts appear simultaneously at specific scenes in the novel, the very experience of learning and knowing about the history of our nation is put under the microscope. In *Ficcion*, this conceit is perfectly illustrated by a single sequence. Preceding a scene where several military officers are planning the capture of Elias Resurreccion due to the latter's involvement in the massive peasant struggle in Isla del Fuego is an excerpt from National Artist for Literature Nick Joaquin's *Culture and History: Occasional Notes on the Process of Philippine Becoming*:

> The attitude, to repeat, springs from the static view of culture, which, in turn, breeds the illusion that history can be rejected at will, as we would reject our creole history as not Philippine and not affecting the Filipino. The Filipino is thus seen, like the Asian, as a "timeless" type defined by certain persistent qualities; and Filipino, throughout history, never becomes but always is, which would make us a rather godlike being. (8)

The quote from Joaquin is interesting because it (potentially) conditions the readers' reading of the succeeding scene. Without the Joaquin text, the scene may be interpreted by readers as a typical portrayal of feudal relations

in the Philippines, where most farmers and peasants are executed or stripped of their own land the moment they start organizing themselves to assert their rights. What the Joaquin quote (and all the other texts collated and deployed within the novel's narrative) does is push readers to dig deeper, to make them question the very roots of existing power relations in society. Moreover, this quote suggests the existence of resistance to the predominant notion of what it means to be a Filipino.

Another topic relevant to the Joaquin quote is the conflict between what is considered "Filipino" and "foreign." This conflict has been at the heart of the first few iterations of the Philippine postwar nation-building projects. Even Marcos could not resist dipping his toe in this perilous project. For instance, to justify his "democratic revolution," Marcos pointed out the "foreignness" of the ideologies that guided past and current revolutionary movements in the Philippines. Marcos argues:

> We need not go beyond our historical experience to establish the origins of the Democratic revolution. The fundamental nationality of a revolution determines its success. Exported revolutions can only fail, as many of our self-professed revolutionists have yet to understand. It is certainly wise to learn from the experience of others, but it is also unwise, if not traitorous, to fashion ourselves after—or submit ourselves to—foreign models. We have a revolutionary tradition that we can well be proud of, a tradition that, moreover, continues to exercise its influence on our serious political thought. (70)

Though Marcos recognized the virtue of learning from the experiences of other nations, he also assumed and asserted the existence of a truly Philippine revolution. This, as the above Joaquin quote suggests, is problematic because if indeed the truism "revolutions make nations" holds true, then Marcos' claim suggests that there is only one way to build a nation. Hence, the existence of a singular national narrative, while all others are considered excesses, unconstitutional, and anarchic. In order to legitimize a singular national narrative, other national narratives should be eliminated. And this imperative (along with a constitutional pretext) necessitates the use of repressive tactics. About the necessity of repression, Boudreau writes,

> Under cover of Philippine martial law, Marcos jailed many of his parliamentary opponents and chased communist insurgents into the hills—but eliminated neither. He then built his New Society regime by amassing central powers and resources and using those to limit the exercise of civil liberties, representative institutions, and legal processes that he still formally allowed. (30)

Aware that it was almost impossible to completely eliminate all opposing ideas and notions about the nation, the Marcos regime settled for keeping them at bay through repression and censorship. As a consequence of this, Filipino writers had to be more "creative" in order to circumvent the state's apparatuses for capture and censorship. Jose Lacaba's legendary poem, "Prometheus Unbound," is a prime example of this literary detournement. This also explains why *Ficcion*'s narrative is suddenly and momentarily interrupted by quoted passages from American military officers, foreign news outlets like *Newsweek*, and American folk songs. Alongside excerpts from the works of known nationalist and anti-imperialist intellectuals and writers like Bienvenido Lumbera, Amado Hernandez, and Renato Constantino, the deployment of the said texts within the novel's narrative recreates for readers the inherent violence in the process of speaking of and writing about the nation. Moreover, considering that these texts mainly functioned as novelistic digressions and narrative syncopations, the existence of quoted passages forces readers to abandon any notion of linearity in the novel. Encouraging readers to backtrack, evaluate, corroborate, and scrutinize every scene preceded and/or succeeded by a found text, the novel is able to supplant the very possibility of a clear, unified, and homogenizing national narrative. And as way to emphasize the inevitabity of change (in all its possible definitions), Garcellano quotes a passage from Daroy's work about Nick Joaquin:

> Nick Joaquin himself points out the error in this attitude: the failure to accept change is a form of sickness, of neurosis. Unable to prevent change and the destruction of their civilization, Joaquin's characters die with their old houses or confine themselves in rooms. There is something of the romantic spirit here; something of the Renaissance spirit of heroism, which

> implies positive attitudes. Cities like Intramuros are built; they change and die. That is also true of ideas and values. But Nick Joaquin is correct in showing that there are limits to what man must accept in order to live. (195)

Ficcion's method of collating various texts, its textual bricolage, was indeed crucial in exposing the marginal narratives undercut by Marcos's idea of "revolution from the center" and his New Society's narrative of order and development. This method deployed in the novel revealed to readers the traces of resistance against the attendant social realities wrought by the Marcos regime and provided them with a purview of subversive textual assemblages. However, the disruption of the singular national narrative in *Ficcion* does not in any way nullify the real and concrete violence wrought by the Marcos's regime on the Filipino people. What *the* novel successfully does, though, is wage war against the prevailing aesthetic (and narrative) regime that served the homogenizing and totalizing impulse of the New Society.

Syncopating the New Order: Seno Gumira Ajidarma and Dangerous Collations

As singular as Suharto's political, economic, cultural, and social programs were, the evaluations of economists, demographers, agriculturalists of the New Order's impact on Indonesian society were mixed (Hil xxii). Most of them view the Suharto regime in favorable terms despite the carnage and violence it left upon its wake after the 1965-1966 anti-communist genocide (Melvin 28; Robinson 177). As Michael R. J. Vatikiotis points out:

> Arguably, memories of the repression of 1966 have faded in the light of the New Order's successful strategy of national development. The programme of national development, or *pembangunan nasional*, became a slogan with mesmerizing effect on Indonesians and outsiders alike. There was a reason for this. Within a decade of his coming to power, Indonesia stabilized, join[ed] the exclusive ranks of oil-producing states and was using the revenue from oil to implement an extraordinary programme of development. It was a turnaround too remarkable by Third World standards to argue with. Indonesia, the nightmare of US foreign policy analysts in 1960s, suddenly became a burning proof that not all regimes born out of the barrel of gun are bad." (34)

During the 1980s, Suharto was even dubbed "Bapak pembangunan," or "Father of development." In the same way, Hil and Mackie describe the early years of the New Order in the following terms:

> Intense political instability, bordering on civil war, has given way to an almost bland uniformity and monotony. The drama and flamboyance of Sukarno has been replaced by the low-key and pragmatic Soeharto administration. The economy has been transformed by effective economic management and the ability to take advantage of a benign international environment. (xxiv)

Critics and detractors of the New Order, on the other hand, such as McVey, described the regime as "perpetuating much of the symbolic trappings and organizational character of the East Indies state at the height of Dutch colonial power" (qtd. in Foulcher and Day 1). Others found the state of human rights, the suppression of civil liberties, and rampant corruption during the regime's peak deplorable. Cook and Pincus, on the other hand, noted the legacy of poverty and inequality left by the regime (13). However, the assessment that truly captured the socio-political and socio-economic character of the Suharto regime comes from Boudreau. About the importance of repression to the Suharto regime, Boudreau writes:

> By eliminating the PKI, constructing a corporatist machinery, and restricting the possibility of independent political organizations, the Indonesian state under Suharto completely reworked the conditions of political contention. Mobilizations no longer had the institutional support, guidance, or continuity that political organizations, particularly the defunct PKI, once provided. (31)

What both supporters and detractors of the New Order agree about, though, is the presence of strong state power and of a singular, unbending, and total vision of order and development in every aspect of the regime's bureaucracy. Similar to those of the Marcos regime, these traits of the New Order regime entail adherence to a single nationalist project and the elimination of all others. This, among all other atrocities linked to the New

Order regime, was one of the reasons for the invasion of Timor-Leste in 1975 which ultimately culminated in the Dili massacre in 1991.

Among others, what becomes the main concern of Seno Gumira Ajidarama's fiction is state-enforced repression and violence in Indonesia and East Timor. Born in Boston, USA, in 1958, Seno returned to Yogjakarta, Indonesia, in 1963 to attend his primary and secondary schools. According to Fuller, Seno's first artistic foray was in theater, "before pursuing writing and journalism more seriously" (55). His stint as journalist and editor for the magazine *Jakarta Jakarta*, especially when news about the Dili incident was published under his editorship, would become the turning point of his career. Harris, in his introduction to the English translation of *Jazz, Parfum dan Insiden,* writes:

> When reports of the Dili incident crossed his desk in November of 1991, Seno recognized the moral outrage of the situation, and the government's clumsy and blatant cover-up for what it was. The texts of several interviews with eyewitnesses by *Jakarta Jakarta* reporters revealed a story completely different from the government line. The interviews spoke of atrocities: rape, torture, and bizarre cruelties such as soldiers forcing the wounded protesters to drink buckets of blood and to swallow pieces of their broken rosaries. Overwhelmed by the intensity of these accounts, Seno began to write, and by New Year's, he had written a collection of poems which attempted to respond in some way to the horror of the eyewitnesses' images. (viii)

When it comes to the impact of the Dili incident on Seno's writing, Fuller makes a comparison of Seno's earlier works and his writings after the incident:

> Although some of Seno's early stories in the Penembak Misterius collection had dealt with state violence and social issues, the stories of Manusia Kamar (Ajidarma, 1988) and Negeri Kabut (Ajidarma, 1996b) were largely abstract, philosophical and general – that is, somewhat removed from the immediate social, cultural and political context of New Order Indonesia. It can be argued that the Santa Cruz violence was a turning point in his career: not only did it bring Seno increasing media coverage and attention for his writings on the violence in East Timor, the incident also provided

> Seno with a clear point of opposition. By criticising the Indonesian army (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia), Seno's criticisms were going to the very heart of the New Order regime. (56)

As mentioned and argued in the previous sections, Seno's fiction as a form of social criticism does not only operate on the expository and polemical planes. Though some of his early fiction tackled the violence in Aceh and East Timor, it is in his experimental novel, according to Bodden, where Seno enacts his resistance against the ideas of order (*ketertiban*) endorsed by the New Order regime (311; 315). The novel is comprised of three alternating and interspersing narrative and thematic streams: the first deals with the narrator's encounters with different women and his fixation on the perfumes they wear; the second is composed of reflections about jazz as an artistic and social form; and the final stream follows the narrator's thought process as he reads through various incident reports about the Dili massacre. Read as a novel of resistance, at first glance, the novel's narrative strategy of deploying three seemingly unrelated narratives clears a space for readers to formulate their own readings and syntheses of the novel. This strategy is obviously in opposition to the totalizing and homogenizing concepts espoused by the New Order regime such as order, control, hierarchy, unity, and development. However, like Garcellano's *Ficcion*, the novel's literal disruption of the national narrative's trajectory does not in any way annul the brutality of the Suharto regime. As Bodden writes, "[y]et the brutal reality of the Dili massacre, coupled with the difficulty of speaking the truth directly through the mass media—or in any other form—shines through as the moral fuel that fires Seno's deconstructive attack (155)."

Indeed, *Jazz, Parfum dan Insiden* is a head-on assault against everything the New Order stood for, with the disruption of the New Order's national narrative being the novel's main conceit. Through its collation of texts with "dangerous" and "improvisory" content that would serve form assemblages of resistance, the novel becomes a war machine, to borrow from Deleuze and Guatarri, against the state apparatus (25). By doing so, the New Order's constant beat of control is syncopated. Two incident reports of the Dili

massacre collated in the novel can attest to this textual detournement. The first, from a victim's eyewitness account, reads:

> The government later said nineteen people had been killed, but with that many soldiers shooting rapid-fire into such a large crowd, there's no way only nineteen people died. Nineteen dead? Absolutely impossible! A number of parents said that as many as five of their children never returned home. I personally know of more than nineteen who died, and the names of many of them aren't on any official list. (Ajidarama 10)

The Human Rights Watch report (1993) on Xanana Gusmao's trial, one of Fretilin's leaders, makes a similar assessment about the incident:

> In interviews with the Asia Watch observer, ABRI officials indicated that the search for the some 66 persons who "disappeared" following the Santa Cruz massacre continues. According to those officials, responsibility for the search has been turned over to the police. However, the military is cooperating in the current strategy to locate the disappeared, which is to work with village heads to identify residents who may have "come down from the hills" or otherwise "reappeared". The strategy implies a presumption that the disappeared are still alive, which appears unlikely given estimates that at least 100 persons were killed and only 19 bodies have been officially acknowledged as discovered so far. (19-20)

In the novel, Seno quotes an actual report which features a version of the incident according to an ARBI general:

> Yes, I've seen the footage of the incident and, I must say, for those who don't know the situation, the video can easily lead to the wrong conclusions. In the video you can see people running into the cemetery from outside. This means that the crowd was still outside. So, if the crowd was still outside, then there was no ceremony, right? How could they be having a ceremony outside? (103-04)

After a brief diatribe against the foreign press' portrayal of the ARBI as a faction of brutal and merciless exterminators, the ARBI general then

proceeds with his litany against people and groups pressing the him for the truth:

> You want to know why the bodies of the victims haven't been returned to their families? Just look at what happened when one person was buried. And now, nineteen people died. So if the bodies of the nineteen were given back, how many more might die? The most important thing is safety. With nineteen bodies, there would be all these funerals and special masses. Imagine having several hundred masses and how many more people dying. Are we going to have to do this kind of work forever? Just bury them before any of that can happen. (104)

These collated reports clearly show different perspectives on the incident which engenders in readers a kind of dilemma. Like Garcellano's *Ficcion*, instead of just accepting the propaganda churned out by the state machinery, *Jazz* forces Indonesian and international readers to reconsider, verify, and examine an event with serious ramifications, such as the Dili incident, against the fragile state of orderliness and stability in everyday Indonesian life in the 1990s fostered by the New Order. This explains the existence and necessity of the two other narrative and thematic streams. These two streams function as self-reflexive and self-defensive attempts to avoid the real dangers of incorporating incriminating reports in the novel. Referring to the external circumstances of the novel's publication and distribution, according to Harris, Seno "relied on the fact that Indonesia's official censors didn't pay much attention to literary titles, particularly those by a young author being published by a small literary press" and a "superficial cover-up of jazz and perfume" (xi). This attempt to elude state censors had the opposite effect on the novel. Instead of veering away from the consequences of collating incriminating texts, the novel engages these consequences head-on. Even the narrative streams deemed by Seno to be cover-ups, in themselves engaged in the act of collation, give the novel an additional subversive layer. For instance, the works of jazz musicians and scholars such as Wynton Marsalis and Stanley Crouch are referred to and collated by the narrator as he tries to find the true essence of jazz. In the process of collating and annotating the said texts, the narrator was able to link

jazz to slavery, oppression, suffering, freedom, protest, and improvisation (17–22; 43–8; 65–70; 85–90; 107–12; 159–64). Through these linkages, the seemingly unrelated narrative strands in the novel find a meeting point. The narrator's reflections on jazz become the mediating point between the violence and terror induced by the narrative strand about the incident, on the one hand, and the decadence and materialism of Indonesian urban life portrayed in the 'perfume' narrative strand, on the other. Of the narratives' interrelatedness, Bodden writes:

> One of the things which does link the strands structurally is the brief segues from one strand's main focus to the next at the end of a number of chapters, for instance, the mention of a particular jazz song at the end of a *insiden* chapter, followed by a jazz chapter. More serious in tone, however, is the second kind of linkage, that of more direct intrusions by the ceaselessly inventive, collating narrator. On several crucial occasions, startling because they are so exceptional, the narrator brings the main strands together. For example, following a grisly description of the manner in which the military checked for survivors among bodies in the Santa Clara cemetery, the narrator comments: 'What kind of song would Chick Corea create if he heard this tale? I smell no perfume, I smell the putrid stench of blood'. (313)

The said occasion of linkages in the novel serves as the apotheosis of the improvisation and syncopation of the New Order's national narratives. Told and/or read from the perspective of someone steeped in New Order ideology, the three narrative strands are supposed to remain unrelated, forever inhabiting separate and disparate timelines. But the opposite occurs in the novel. By locating the connection between the collated texts, ideas, and memories, the novel's act of collation also becomes an act of improvisation—an improvisation that engenders the collapsing and coalescing of these narratives unto and with each other.

However, Seno's most direct criticism of the New Order's national narrative and ideology can be found in his latter engagement with the incident reports. In what Bodden calls a "cynical, taunting move" (317), the narrator riddles the final set of Amnesty International reports with "sensori dari pengarang" (literally, "censored by the author") (119–26; 139–47;

165–72). As Bodden suggests, this can be read as a critique of widespread censorship during the New Order regime—a censorship so encompassing that it forces writers to censor themselves to avoid the risk of incarceration, or at worst, state-enforced disappearance (318). The more serious implication of this scene in the novel, however, is its attempt to further syncopate and improvise the beat and trajectory of New Order ideology. By omitting the names of victims and perpetrators, institutions and organizations, and places and dates pertinent to the incident, the very possibility of material resistance from the side of the incriminated becomes impossible. In the collated document of violence and barbarism, the narrator-collator performs an act of erasure, effectively destroying the perpetrator-victim dichotomy. One must, however, take this scene with a grain of salt for although it removes within the novel's confines any possibility of resistance from the perpetrators, it also extols and affirms the violence of the incident by removing traces of the victim's existence. As Bodden notes, though *Jazz* attempted to extol the importance of freedom through its improvisation, it also suggests limits to liberation (315). This kink in the novel implies a sort of complicity with the New Order's national narrative of order. Despite this though, Bodden asserts that *Jazz* is in no way a reactionary novel (315–17). Though littered with residues of New Order ideology, the novel remains a stylistically crafted indictment of state censorship, military violence, and authoritarian rule.

Conclusion

All authoritarian regimes are found twice—the first time in the wake of a military coup or foreign intervention and the second time through state-sponsored national narratives. Like most authoritarian regimes in history, the Marcos and Suharto regimes both offered all-encompassing national narratives of order, development, and progress in order to give their respective regimes a concrete sense of direction and legitimate claims to a great past. To strengthen these narratives' grip in the imagination of the people, both regimes actively stifled competing ideas and visions of the nation through repression, pogroms, censorship, and constant propaganda.

In place of these alternatives were narratives—functioning as ethical technologies that would teach people how to be proper political subjects—that is, as passive beneficiaries of the state's benevolence and destined greatness. In the Philippines, the workings of the New Society were inextricably tied to Marcos's "revolution from the center" which implied that the only legitimate revolution is the kind that is initiated by the state. Anything outside of the ambit of the state—in this case, Marcos himself—is deemed illegal, subversive, and terrorist. Likewise in New Order Indonesia, all narratives about order, development, and progress were intentionally linked to the overall anti-communist agenda of the regime. This was of course to give the regime the necessary pretext to eliminate all its fiercest opposition.

Despite these concerted attempts to eliminate all forms of opposition, direct and indirect challenges to these narratives have continued to emerge and flourish from various sectors, communities, and political forces. The literary field is just one of the many possible terrains of resistance. In the case of this article, I focused on Edel Garcellano's *Ficcion* and Seno Gumira Ajidarma's *Jazz, Parfum dan Insiden,* two novels that were written and published during those fractious periods in both the Philippines and Indonesia. Both novels, through their deployment of various texts within the narrative, were able to collate national narratives undercut and marginalized by the New Society and the New Order. The collations performed in both novels affords readers the opportunity to reevaluate, examine, and interrogate the dominant national narratives espoused by the ruling regimes. As a narrative strategy, the act of collation in both novels becomes a form of textual resistance against the homogenizing and totalizing logic of an authoritarian regime. Seen as an act of curation and excavation, the act of collation demonstrates the improvisory, violent, and disruptive nature of both writing and nation-building.

One, however, would be remiss to overestimate the liberatory potential of the collated and deployed marginalized narratives in both novels. Moreover, the temporary disruption of the New Society's and the New Order's national narratives does not in any way nullify the real and concrete violence wrought by both regimes on their people. One can even go as far as to say that the resistance of both novels was merely aesthetic. Despite all

these possible misgivings, both novels were successful in reminding us that the writing of the nation will always be an inexhaustible project and that all attempts to write a definitive national narrative will only beget more writing and resistance.

Notes

1. “Ang kawalan ko ng talento upang maihatid ang buong anyo at kulay ng kanyang hinabi ay tunay na isang malaking balakid sa iyong pagkukuro, babasa, kung kabalintunaan o katotohanan ang kanyang tinuran.”
2. “Ang buhay ng tao isang labanang walang humpay… Agawan sa karangalan at sa buhay, kapaslangan sa gitna ng mandarayang pamahalaan, sa ibabaw ng naghihingalong pagkakapatid. Ang pagkaing ay inaagaw sa bibig ng mahina at nagpapanis sa kamay ng malakas. Ang kaniyang kalaban ngayon ay ang hari ng buong nilalang, ang diwa ng lahat ng sakim ay dili iba kundi ang kapwa tao.”
3. “Hanggang abutin siya ng umaga, at lulugolugong lalakad sa kalyeho bago pa lamang mag-iinot: Pot-pot ng tinapay. Sigaw ng diyaryo. **Boys, Times nga!** ngunit pagkabuklat niya , siya’y bahagyang manlulumo sapagkat apat na demosntrador na naman... Si Muhamad Ali ay nagapi sa puntos ni Fraizer (Anak ng puta! Kung hindi lang naman ni-lay-off ng WBC, eh!)...”

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