

**SPECTRES OF NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES: THE HOPE FOR
DEMOCRACY IN THE POSTCOLONIAL PUBLIC SPHERE**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study is an intervention in postcolonial theorising through a critique of technologies of representation. It examines the effects of technologically-mediated representation in a postcolonial condition that the Philippines has exemplified. New media technologies are mechanisms of representations that embody the logic of spectrality presented in Jacques Derrida's later work. Spectrality, which brings doubts, ephemerality, and instability to dominant discourses and modes of representation, provides a chance for change.

Spectres are effects of technologically-mediated representation that articulate the infinite demand for justice under conditions of enduring inequality. As quasi-transcendental elements of deconstruction, spectres are not reducible to either human or technical intervention; they express the *relation* of humans to technologies, in which representation is central to the mediation of political authority. This technological representation is the condition of what Derrida calls "iteration," or the transformation of hegemonic authority through the very repetition of its fundamental terms of identification.

The examination of emancipatory new media technologies in a postcolonial condition is inspired by the work of Jacques Derrida, in his deconstructive reading of Marx's spectres. However, the writings of Habermas and Adorno have offered an implicit appraisal of the ontology of spectres. Habermas's theory of the public sphere and Adorno's negative dialectics are discourses that unwittingly solicit spectres. The account of the postcolonial condition in the Philippines works through the questions of universality, subalternity, and the right to theory that are raised by the project of Western critical theory.

The already-there is the pre-given horizon of time, as the past that is mine but that I have nevertheless not lived, to which my sole access is through the traces left of that past. This means that there is no already-there, and therefore no relation to time, without artificial memory supports. The memory of the existence of the generations that preceded me, and without which I would be nothing, is bequeathed on such supports. (Bernard Stiegler, 1998)

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INTRODUCTION

THE POSTCOLONIAL CANON AND SPECTRES

A scholar, says Jacques Derrida, is someone who dares speak to spectres while a scholarly work is an engagement with phantoms (Derrida, 1996, p.39). Scholarship deals with conjuration, of speaking in absence, death, and mourning. It allows ghosts to communicate with the living – an analogue of research (Appelbaum, 2009, p.4). In his examination of the possibilities of archiving and writing in *Archive Fever*, Derrida suggested that writing within a disciplinary canon is spectral, or representing a presence that is never fully achieved, and to believe otherwise is delusive (Derrida, 1996, p.94). Derrida was less concerned with preserving privileged writings, or the canon, than with how such conservation closes off writing from that which may animate it (Derrida, 1996, p.40). It is then better for a scholar to be hospitable to the anxiety of spectres than adhere to an imposing presence of the canon.

Similar to an archive, postcolonial studies have a reserve of suppositions and methods, so that any attempt to re-invent and renew them is in equal measure subject to trepidation and resistance. This tension arises from the prevailing politics and academic attitude. Take for instance the designation of the work of Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Homi Bhabha as the representative of postcolonial canon (McLeod, 2007, p.10). Their ground breaking work on literary texts have become so dominant that any work of postcolonialism that does not reference them is deemed deficient. However, if we bring back Derrida's arguments, privileging certain kinds of writing actually weighs a discipline down. For that matter, as we shall see, Derrida's desire to transform the canon is the task that I take as a challenge.

So, what is a canon, who privileges it, and why? Can there ever be a postcolonial canon? A canon is a body of work regarded as universal and enduring but, at the same time, it is also criticized as elitist and exclusive because its confirmation is done by a select few. A canon's authority is at once proof of its fixed identity and ambiguous superiority (Kolbas, 2001, p.58). Adorno, for example, spoke against turning a cultural artifact into cult to serve the imperatives of certain kinds of politics. It is also on this premise that he and Horkheimer have examined the strains of domination projected onto the canonical myth of Odysseus in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Kolbas, 2001, p.93; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979, p.51 -61). Adorno suggests that the institutional consecration of art amounts to reification, which means its artistic decline (Adorno, 1977, p.111). Thus, if some postcolonial theories are invested with similar standing, they become reified, while opening up the canon to accommodate other voices would perpetuate the fetish (Kolbas, 2001, p.138).

A canon deconstructs itself, or at least it is replete with possibilities that undermine its cult image (Caputo, 1997, p.10). For Derrida, the canon should not be consecrated, preserved, or copied; rather, it should be picked apart and stripped of its totalizing tendency. To read the canon is to locate the "tensions, contradictions, and the heterogeneity" within the body of work (Derrida in Caputo, 1997, p.9). Consequently, it has to be opened up to "new works, new objects, new fields, new culture, new language," as well as fresh tensions and aporias (Derrida in Caputo, 1997, p.11). A canon anticipates its subversion, or to become different from what it purports. It is then best to heed Derrida's counsel that a canon is an aporia; it does not guarantee anything as it opens itself up to the "hospitality of a difference from itself or of a difference with itself" (Derrida, 1993, p.10).

I do not intend to register an aversion to postcolonial theories, even the “canonized” ones. I acknowledge the cogency of various critiques that invigorated postcolonial studies, and the discussions in the following chapters will bear this out. The point is the so-called postcolonial canon cannot fully account for emerging knowledge, approaches, and critiques, and there are aspects in culture that do not figure in postcolonial theorizing. One of them is the relationship between technology and representation that bears on the media through which texts are imparted. The textual approach in postcolonial theories generally delved into the text as an interpretive strategy, and not on the very condition of the text, to include its technicization and the interfaces through which it is conveyed. I maintain that the text, per se, cannot be a stable object of postcolonial inquiry nor it should alone define the limits of the analysis. Text is produced out of specific historical conditions, but which cannot be fully apprehended without the mediation of technology that re-presents writing, or inscription, and discloses the power underlying social institutions and relations. Thus, textual analysis has to consider the technological analysis of writing that includes the condition that provides the text with its indeterminacy and possibility.

This study offers another way of thinking about postcolonialism through a critique of representation, which is instantiated among technologies of representation that are termed “new media technologies.” The latter are mechanisms, or interfaces, of representation where one can read off the differential rhythm of a postcolonial society. New media technologies exhibit the consequences of some larger cultural processes that, in turn, also illustrate the transformation in society. The Philippines, which is the context of this study, exemplifies the concept of uneven development, which names a social formation that has several modes of production existing simultaneously (Sison and De Lima, 1998, p.25). This unevenness manifests the absence of accretive growth of capitalism, backwardness of agriculture, and the

dominance of money capital accumulated from speculative rather than industrial and manufacturing activity (San Juan, 1999, p.3-5). In this growth pattern, colonialism, which inserted capitalism into the indigenous modes of production, is implicated in the particular development of forces of production, social relations, and structures of power. The cultural expressions and practices of these material conditions are so syncretic, ambivalent, and multiplicitous that they are best understood in relation to the history of their emergence, differentiation, and imbrication (San Juan, 1999, p.200-201). New media technologies have developed alongside cultural, economic, and political transformations since colonial times, where possibilities of change have been rife, given the shifts, regressions and advances of social conditions that gave rise to new subjectivities and effects. New media technologies are vehicles of formal and aesthetic representation; they also mediate representation to conform to their technical convention and interpretative resources. New media technologies' contribution to social transformation lies in their articulation of persistent demands of subalterns and in precipitating or sustaining a public sphere, even under conditions of extreme inequality. This study looks at their social, economic, and political effects in the Philippines.

The effects of new media technologies emerged from the process of representation, which concerns rendering presence of something that is absent. In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida assigned to new media technologies the capacity to construct virtualities, which name other modes of representing reality (Derrida, 1994, p.212). Representation presupposes technologies that make something absent appear to be present. Representational technologies provide new ways of overcoming time and space as well as storing and retrieving memory so that the process of representation becomes illimitable. Their effects, for instance, manifest modification and multiplication of representation, or its possibility of being repeated infinitely (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.115). The effects of new media technologies are called spectres

(Beardsworth, 1996, p.147). Spectres are not reducible to either human or technical intervention because they express the *relation* of humans to technology, or the process of technicization. The latter refers to the technological mediation of meaning making, where meaning is part of the process of constructing a collective memory (Stiegler, 1998, p.10-13; Beardsworth, 1996, p.147). Given their effects, new media technologies allow representation to realize its possibilities.

Derrida's engagement with "spectres" is probably his most controversial work, not only for his exegesis of a Marxian problematic but also how he deconstructed Marx's work in order to make it more flexible, timely, and prescient (Jameson, 2010, p.127). In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida extended the boundaries of Marx's spectral theme, to include the return of the dead, capitalism's capacity to conjure up the means of alienation, and globalization as the time of unbounded speed, connection, and reification. Across these themes, spectres proliferated in aporias where they disrupt the existing order, be it text, technology, tendencies, and thinking, and provide a space for rethinking this order. Spectres are also traces of representation that is being repressed and effaced. This is where the element of justice can be seen as a possibility inherent in spectres. They are a challenge to the idea of presence in representation because they disturb the established dominance that sets the hierarchy of value and commensurability (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.132-133). I contend that the force of spectres lies in how they extend the boundaries of thought into the unknown, as the turn to the phenomenon of spectres involves seeing the unforeseeable within the calculable and the apparent.

I am interested in spectres as effects of new media technologies, especially their role in political transformation in the Philippines. This indicates my years of engagement with new media technologies as a journalist who has witnessed and written about social change, but had

never explored what the stories illustrate about the transformation of the Philippines. My study aims to think critically about spectres as possibilities of new media technologies in a postcolonial context, which refers to the period and problems brought by colonialism and its aftermath. My account of spectres goes hand in hand with the examination of new media technologies that can be apprehended in many forms throughout history – the beginnings of print media, the emergence of electronic broadcasting, and up until the rise of the Internet. As instruments of colonization and elite domination, new media technologies transmitted representations that glorified the colonizers' culture and role of the native ruling elite in the Philippines. These imaginaries not only fix the limits of representation, they also sustained the asymmetrical relations of power, by the way they mobilized symbols that induced fear, awe, and alienation (Wayne, 2003, p.174). On the other hand, it is also true that new media technologies are mechanisms through which subalterns discovered the emancipatory potential of spectres. Spectres are instantiated in political and aesthetic practices, while the technical modes of representation have made their infinite iteration possible. Spectres destabilize the logic of technological rationality and seriality inherent in capitalist production: with the disruptive potential of spectres, the functions of new media technologies exceed hegemonic agendas and provide a space for their subversion.

My examination of new media technologies informs an approach to a wider exploration of historical modes of modernization. The possibilities for theorizing are plentiful, but current media scholars have cautioned that many theories have struggled to keep pace with the speed of technological growth and that they have ended up less critical than intended (Lovink, 2011, p.77). At present, new media technologies are assigned under Web 2.0, a periodization characterized by the profusion of user-friendly, socially interactive, and self-broadcasting computer interfaces, partly aided by avant-garde designs, a range of applications, and the

rapid spread of high-frequency wireless (wi-fi) signal (Lovink, 2011, p.5). Given the pace of the development in digital technologies, attempts at theorizing have the tendency to play catch-up while the suppositions, which tend to be positivist and linear in their approaches, are bereft of “critical-theoretical capacities” (Dean, 2010, p.2). The remedy, it was suggested, is not to match the momentum of technologies as they speed toward obsolescence, but to opt for a “slow-down,” and the use of critical concepts that can “migrate from one generation of applications to the next” (Dean, 2010 p.3; Lovink, 2011, p.7). A slightly different approach was offered by new media theorist Lev Manovich when he argues that each stage in the history of technology has its own research paradigm that includes aesthetic opportunities and goals. The challenge is to highlight the paradigm’s distinctiveness and relevance when it is combined with other paradigms (Manovich, 2001, p.8).

I believe that apprehending new media technologies in a postcolonial context, using spectres as a framework of analysis, offers a fuller understanding of their role in the economic and political logic of globalization. The ways that spectres relate to history should be seen in a continuum that Derrida termed as the “living present.” The latter attends to the “immediacy of (the) present moment,” but negotiates with “life and afterlife,” as one indivisible whole (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.51). This suggests that spectres provide a transhistorical way of discovering and constructing narratives that brings disparate elements of immediate experience to bear on the existing whole. New media technologies embody a particular expression of power, and it is in this light that they must be understood, and not merely for their ubiquity or instrumentality. This perspective is the basis of my account of the potential of new media technologies to undermine established knowledge and practices, and enable new ways of perceiving reality.

Another way of using spectres to analyze the effects of representation is seeing them as a metaphor that discloses a relation of language with reality (Derrida, 1974, p.5). Metaphors, according to Derrida, are “trope(s) of resemblance,” that presuppose continuity and do not signify congruence, but a “notion of wear and tear of language” (Derrida, 1974, p. 13). The latter means that metaphors bring mutations, breaks, and detours that operate by simultaneously adding to and diminishing the cachet of a term. Derrida regarded metaphors as supplements that negotiate sufficiency and deficiency with the subject, hence the process can never be closed because it anticipates the instability of the idiom (Derrida, 1974, p.18). However, despite the freedom in positing association, Derrida argues that metaphors are not “imaginative or rhetorical ornament(s)” because they articulate philosophical truths (Derrida, 1974, p.23). The strength of spectres as a metaphor lies in the way they act as an analogue to the process of transformation. The metaphor introduces something new but, at the same time, it bends back to itself to reflect on what could be refashioned from what exists, which are the possibilities for truth.

I have used concepts in the preceding exposition that need more elucidation: these are “spectres,” “representation,” and “new media technologies.” Given their importance to my thesis, I will say a little more about them here. I will not supply normative definitions, rather this short discussion foregrounds the complexity and nuances of their meanings. *Spectres* are effects of new media technologies; they are also the articulation of an ethical demand within a particular space and time. The logic of spectres exceeds the opposition between being visible and invisible, rationality and irrationality; spectres are absent but they register traces whose absences are marked in advance (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.117). Neither dead nor living, present nor absent, but at once both, spectres register presence that is never sufficient, stable and absolute. Spectres defy the logic of technological rationalization because they solicit

differentiation and alterity. *Representation* shares the logic of spectres in two domains – formal and aesthetic – and it expresses the spectres’ capacity to shape discourses and activate agency (Derrida, 2007, p.98). Formal representation also means direct representation, which denotes a presence that stands in for oneself or someone. This form of representation is often in its political sense, as in being voted to public office, as a representative of a constituency, or participating in the public sphere. On the other hand, central to the aesthetic, or symbolic, notion of representation is how social identity is constituted, which is to say that it is as political as direct representation. Mechanisms of representation, such as new media technologies, crucially configure discourses, naturalize ideologies, and help to formulate identities. Edward Said’s concept of *Orientalism*, as a construction of the exotic “other,” is an example of such identity-forming representation that is alienating and dominating in its depiction of a reality (Webb, 2009, p.113-114). But in both formal and symbolic mode of representation, there is a common idea of return or repetition (Derrida, 2007, p.106). Representation allows the possibility of re-presenting or returning to render presence. This implies that presence is also absence because the latter can have virtual presence. Given the diversity of the modes of representation, there could be no single way to bring a presence or absence to affect a reality, and any attempt to posit a dominant presence simultaneously invites its subversion (Derrida, 2009, p.106-107). *New media technologies are mechanisms of representation that intensify the logic of spectrality*. Technologies solicit spectrality because their effects counterpose doubts, ephemerality, and instability against the dominant discourse. Another way of apprehending spectres in new media technologies is to look at how they have extended representation by repetition, which involves the process of transmission. The latter may happen in “real time,” which often means the transmission of an event as it happens. However, mediation defers instantaneity even if the time lapse is reduced considerably

(Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p,129-130). This means that deferrals and delays exist in a technologically mediated representation, and this technicization is what inscribes upon an event a memory that anticipates iteration (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.129). The interval between repetition and deferral generates effects with unforeseeable consequences, while the acceleration of the process of re-presentation multiplies presence-absence. This is how spectres work in new media technologies; which is also to say that new media technologies have made it possible for us, the living, to exist with ghosts.

The concept of “new media technologies” itself needs a little more explanation. The phrase “new media” often refers to digital technology as differentiated from obsolescent analogue technology, while “technologies” designates an assemblage of techniques with social uses. “New media” is often the preferred term for digital and Internet-based applications, while “technologies,” or “technology” acquires modifiers like “digital” and “tele” to convey their material constitution as machines or devices. Lisa Gitelman wrote that the term “media” presupposes the use of technologies while appending “new” to “media” to signify digitization seems like erasing the past and the representational function of the media (Gitelman, 2006, p.4-5). For Gitelman, new media is “never entirely revolutionary” as the term does not signify epistemic breaks but how media are embedded in society (Gitelman, 2006, p.6). Gitelman’s arguments resonate with Carolyn Marvin’s; the latter notes that “new technologies is a historically relative term” (Marvin, 1988, location 23, e-book). In her book, *When Old Technologies Were New*, Marvin considers “new media” as a rhetorical proposition to signal that the preceding media or technologies are to be challenged, technologically and discursively, by the emerging ones, in relation to the novelty, change and progress that they precipitate (Marvin, 1988, location 31, e-book). In his survey of the history of the term “new media,” Benjamin Peters said the latter has to be understood beyond digital technologies

because media are renewable and combinable (Peters, 2009, p.13, 22). Corollary to that, Bernard Stiegler argues that a technology is “ancient,” and could not be a product of a singular epoch, because it embodies the specificities and reproducibility of the antecedent technological innovation (Stiegler, 2002, p.155-160). Drawing on their arguments, I contend that the composite term “new media technologies” can thus sufficiently express the social and technological aporia of each term, their place in history, technical constitution, representational function, and spectral possibilities.

My work is an intervention in postcolonial theorizing through a radical critique of new media technologies. In the following chapters, I will provide the account of the political effects and possibilities of new media technologies in the Philippines. Chapter One constructs a genealogy of spectres, showing how spectres are configured in the theories of Marx, Habermas, Adorno, and Derrida. Of interest here is how these theories seek the possibility of agency, independence, and transformation through spectres – of class, difference, culture, and so forth – that emerged from the regime of capital. Chapter Two analyzes the relationship between technology and culture through spectres as the effects of techno-representation. I will argue that spectres arise as destabilizing impulses from within the resources of political hegemony, and they open up possibilities of resistance that are multiplied by the networks of new media technologies. Chapter Two offers an analytical framework to foreground the examination of new media technologies as interfaces of representation that have contradictory resonances and unforeseeable consequences. Chapter Three examines colonialism as a solicitation of spectres that haunted the subsequent historical periods, social relations, and representations. Colonialism brought the beginnings of capitalism to the Philippines, along with the rationality and arrangements of power that justify the economic system. Colonialism, conjoined with capitalism, has profound effects on the representations, imaginations, and

bodies, to this day. Chapter Four is about postcolonialism, both as a historical period and matrix in which to understand the possibilities of new media technologies after the nominal termination of colonial rule. This chapter foreshadows Chapter Five, in which I offer an account of how an authoritarian regime uses new media technologies to justify its rule as the route to modernization. Chapter Six juxtaposes globalization and neo-liberal regimes with the growth of new media technologies. It examines the possibilities of new media technologies, in the era of networked communication and globalized markets, and in the light of Derrida's deconstructive politics of spectres.

Finally, let me make one concluding comment on postcolonial canon that opened this piece. For a canon to maintain the hegemonic position, it has to continually adapt to the shifts of circumstances, taking in new ideas and bringing them closer to its interest and the agenda it is aligned with (Wayne, 2003, p.178). It is for this reason that a canon has to be rendered hospitable to the "other," and also undermined as a canon, in order to provoke other thoughts and possibilities for the emergence of other canons.

CHAPTER 1

SURVEYING THE SPECTRES IN THE POSTCOLONIAL TERRAIN

Introduction: The Subaltern's Right to Theory

Instead of an anecdote, a quotation, or paradox, I will begin with a 'disclosure' that explains my discursive stance and the use of some European theories to render my position. In other words, I will give an account of the way I speak and write as a postcolonial subject, and this includes declaring my intentions. Do I wish to settle a score, redress a wrong, or bring back the phantoms of the colonial past? And, above all, speaking as a subaltern (with apologies to Spivak), do I have the right to theory?

These questions are not rhetorical; they are issues that have pre-occupied postcolonial studies. In the latter, one does not only attend to the economic and cultural realities of colonialism and its aftermath, one also locates a speaking position in relation to such realities -- a move that bestows on postcolonial writing some kind of academic glamour. Not really. It is akin to being asked to stand trial for radical action, or an impassioned belief, when defining one's politics using the provenance of Western theories. I believe that the same dilemma was farthest from the colonizers' mind when they appropriated knowledge and other discursive resources of the colonized for imperial ends. They acted as if they have an exclusive power to inventory and describe reality in the colonies (Boehmer, 2005, p.15-16). This system of defining a reality was termed *Orientalism* by Edward Said; it is also the title of his book, which is regarded as the seminal text in postcolonial studies, and a model of 'writing-back,' that stakes out a politics of resistance (Ashcroft et al., 1989).

In his introduction to *Orientalism*, Said underscores the “personal investment” in the interrogation of European views, by quoting (and amending) the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks*: “The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and in “knowing thyself” as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, . . . *therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such inventory,*” (Gramsci quoted in Said, 1978, p.25, amended line in italics). Said’s notion of the “personal dimension” in theorizing Orientalism also speaks to postcolonial theory, where it is paradigmatic and formative. Through Gramsci’s words, Said acknowledged how Orientalism is overdetermined by the historical processes and social formations that it has given rise to. Said’s mention of “infinite traces” implies an erasure while the call for their inventory suggests that Orientalism is not a metaphysical but historical structure. To transpose Said’s argument to postcolonial theorising is to say that theorising should not only look at the colonial traces in the present, or confine the narrative to the hegemonic intentions of colonizers, but also include the struggles that eroded their hegemony. It is from this position that I claim my right to postcolonial theory, for even if aspects of the colonial experience that I drew from have been forgotten or foreclosed by Eurocentric historiography and theories, their traces can be conjured up and included as resources for representation and honing one’s subjectivity.

Postcolonialism is not an excuse; it is a tool to foreground understanding of a form of colonization that continues long after a direct foreign rule has ended. Postcolonialism needs no apologies for illuminating political questions. As the “discourse of the colonized,” postcolonialism ranged beyond a designated colonial period and looks at the enduring forms of colonial oppression and anti-colonial struggles (Ashcroft, 2001, p.12-13). An engagement with a particular history does not make postcolonialism exclusive, or less relevant in the

larger context, anymore than a sweep of histories makes the analysis encompassing. In other words, the abundance of theoretical resources offers a diversity of approaches, such that no ideological position or canon should appropriate postcolonial discourses. One has to simply concede that within postcolonialism are unknown areas and untapped resources for theorizing that are as numerous as the known ones, if not more so. However, even more important is the idea that appropriation of Western theories does not mean complicity, but an act of transgression.

The interrogation of postcolonialism, as a discourse and a range of material conditions, provides the matrix in which to understand the possibilities of new media technologies in the Philippines. The experience of colonialism, which inserted capitalism into pre-colonial modes of production, is a ghost that haunts the modern-day social relations and political practices in of Philippine society. Throughout history, these relations and practices have undergone changes, but the latter are unimaginable without the presence of new media technologies. The latter can foreground the change that the colonized could imagine. Think, for example, of books, newspapers, and the Internet as spaces of free expression and resistance. Thus, what orients my inquiry is this question: *What are the possibilities of new media technologies within a postcolonial social formation?* There are also two supplementary questions: *What is the logic of technology that supplies new capacities for political transformation in a postcolonial society? Given the transformative orientation of postcolonialism, and the emancipatory potential of new media technologies, what role do they play in political change?* The aim of this study is to examine the political possibilities of new media technologies in the context of the Philippines. It attempts to document their development and provide a theory of their effects. It will also highlight the emancipatory potentials of these technologies to become, what Ithiel de Sola Pool termed “technologies of freedom.” The term

does not connote the instrumentation but the transformation of technologies that are subjected to control when authorities sensed the onset of change (Pool, 1983, p.14).

Thinking about new media technologies in a postcolonial context is a novel approach to postcolonialism. New media technologies are inextricably linked with the conditions of postcoloniality, both as tools of domination and weapons of anti-colonial resistance. They also offered ways in which anti-colonial sentiments were expressed, and it was through their different genres and modes of representation that the struggles were inscribed, understood, and sustained. The development of new media technologies can be tracked throughout history, particularly how they transformed a colony like the Philippines. Capitalism started out in the era of primitive accumulation marked by plunder, exaction of tributes, and long distance commerce that deprived the colonized of whatever little surplus from subsistence modes of production (San Juan, 1999; Abbinnett, 2006; Constantino, 1975). The production of crops for export to the industrial centres of Europe allowed feudalism's integration into the capitalist mode of production, and this arrangement sealed the Philippines's fate as peripheral to the growth of industrial and financial capital in Europe and United States. From this process of accumulation, social hierarchies were created out of the predominantly indigenous stratification system, built upon symbolic ties and custodial authority over communal lands. Class also draws on the racist ideology of the colonizers, who transplanted the notion of racial superiority over colonial subjects, by some physiognomic criteria, not the least of which was skin color. This differentiation participated in reifying economic and social relations. Racism is conjoined with the construction of classes in colonial society, but what makes this particular interplay of class and race revelatory is that it opened up the experience of "labouring bodies," where abstract labour – especially the kind which relies on the affect -- is neither solely defined by economics nor by physiognomy, but both (Gibson-Graham et. al,

2000, p.1-2). In other words, thinking about the colonial “other” in the Philippines brings complexity into concepts of class and race that anticipate their neoliberal configuration.

The so-called decolonization provided some relief to the most inhumane forms of economic, class and racial oppression because of formal freedoms allowed by post-independence ruling elites. About the same time, the cultural dominance that colonialism engendered had intensified, with the culture industry providing capitalism with the virtual space to expand by conjuring fantasies and desires, in order to stimulate commodity consumption. In the time of the accelerated expansion of capitalism (also called globalization), class domination, racism and resistance retained their cohesion although they are slowly being dissolved into other domains like culture and technology, to be disguised or aestheticized. Globalization has been inflected by a postcolonial discourse that bears on practices and meanings in all spheres of the social, but especially on the technological sphere. The omnipresence of the discourse makes globalization a virtual space where anti-colonial spectres are summoned. The solicitation of spectres is an articulation of the demand for justice in a postcolonial society. Spectres are effects of the iteration of such a demand in which new media technologies are presupposed, affirming the unconditional demand for justice that subalterns would like to attain.

The preceding discussion of Marxist categories foregrounds the deconstructive turn of postcolonialism as the anti-colonial critique that opens up concepts to contestation in order to intensify their spectral effects. The engagement between postcolonialism and deconstruction enriches both fields, contrary to what Marxist critics have said that it neutralizes the agency of the colonized (McLeod, 2007, p.161). Deconstruction, which is associated with Derrida’s work, demonstrates how seemingly inconsequential things, such as the trace, supplement, or spectre, could challenge interpretation because, as protoconstructs, they account for

conditions of possibility and impossibility in discourse (Gasche, 1986, p.154). They constitute the irreducible heterogeneity in concepts, and are behind the emergence of differences, aporias, and ambiguities in discourses. In deconstruction, a preeminent presence (hegemony) is possible because of exclusions, and this implies that difference, or the “other,” is constitutive of an inscribed beginning. Racism, class, exchange value, as well as other reified and undifferentiated categories are opened up by deconstruction in two ways: first, it reveals the binaries where one category subsumes and dominates another; and second, it brings to light the trace or spectre that is disruptive of that relationship (Spitzer, 2011, p.xviii; Gasche, 1986, p. 192). Not only does deconstruction reveal the Manichean logic of colonial thinking, it also undermines the foundation of such logic by exposing its fragility. Thus, the kind of postcolonial critique that deconstruction offers goes beyond the negation of reified categories. By exposing the reification of categories, deconstruction hopes to provide a space to rethink them in a new way. In all, the conceptual tools of postcolonial critique gesture toward the realization of seemingly inconceivable justice for the “other” (Spivak, 1999, p.7).

The preceding arguments intend to create a space for deconstruction and Marxism as an approach to thinking about postcolonialism. The two strands of postcolonial thinking are not meant for fusion, but they can interpenetrate each other and allow the co-mingling of their aporias, in the same way as true adversaries gauge each other’s strength and weakness. Marxism has supplied the major issues – imperialism, capitalism racism, and so forth -- which shaped postcolonial studies and which one cannot simply disavow (Bartolovich, 1999, p.3). Deconstruction also worked with similar issues in postcolonial studies, not so much as a counterpoint to Marxist systematization of preeminent categories, but in another stream that potentially could become a ‘supplement,’ to nuance the analysis. The engagement with both linked two forms of politics – difference and identity with equality and social justice. This

means rounding out Marxist critique with what deconstruction has to offer, and using Marxist analysis to question essentialism in cultural theory (McLeod, 2007, p.186-187; Parry, 2004, p.26; Bartolovich, 2002, p.10-11). Meanwhile, let us turn to the question on Eurocentricism, with some postcolonial theorists raising the issue against Marxists, and the latter also accusing the former of favoring texts produced in the West and elevating them as canons of postcolonial literature (McLeod, 2007, p.187). The exchange, according to Crystal Bartolovich, betrays the unequal relationships between the centers, which are the main producers of knowledge, and their satellites. The imbalance is the result of a disproportionate production of knowledge that is entangled with issues like access, standards, and exclusions (Bartolovich, 2001, p.12). As a solution, Bartolovich suggests that cultural works should be referenced for their *specificity* that also includes the conditions of their production and circulation (Bartolovich, 2002, p.14; italics by Bartolovich). To attend to the ‘specificity’ of a theory, therefore, is to be aware of the inequality underlying the act of theorizing, thus it is necessary to be conscious of the asymmetries that emerged when using concepts whose genesis is essentially Western.

Asymmetries are conditions that solicit spectres. For this reason, colonialism and postcolonialism, as time and conditions for the emergence of asymmetries, which are considered the matrices of spectres. One of the aims of colonial conquest is to eliminate primitive irrationality and superstition that are incompatible with the ‘rational’ European mind. For example, the insertion of capitalism and, to some extent, monotheistic religion, aimed to cast the supernatural out of the consciousness of colonial subjects. Postcolonialism is also the time for haunting and schemes to deny the spectres their power and corporeal presence. The notion that spectres haunt the living is a way of saying there are events and thoughts that are persistent enough to suggest a redress of the forms of inequality. It also

suggests that colonialism and post-independence consolidation have failed to eliminate their own ghosts, and that the latter returned to intrude into the living world as the disembodied “other.” Conjuring the spectres connotes the possibility of their multiplication and the ability to disturb the presumed harmonious and self-evident configurations of global capitalism.

So, what are spectres and where do they come from? What accounts for their transformative power? It is in the question of the spectres’ ontology that Derrida brings deconstruction to bear upon. In *Spectres of Marx*, ontology is almost the homonym of hauntology, which is the logic of haunting, or the economy in which the spectres operate (Derrida, 1994, p.10). Central to ontology, as a philosophical system, is the identity of being that provides the ground or foundation of thought but, in Derrida’s terms, ontology is not confined to material and physical domains because it can be apprehended in “temporal dilemmas” (Jameson, 2010, p.141). Ontology answers the question ‘what exists,’ but for Derrida, the answer must yield a full range of possibilities, such that the spectres’ ontology is paradoxical because it is both spirit and “becoming-body,” “neither soul nor body, and both and the other” (Derrida, 1994, p.5). Fredric Jameson has remarked that you don’t have to believe in ghosts to be convinced of the existence of spectres, and, instead of contemplating their “density and solidity,” it is better to think of what they represent and account for -- aporia, differences, and contradictions in a discourse or some forms of presence (Jameson, 2010, p.142). Spectres inhere in ontological constructs and concepts; they are detected as effects when they disturb order, command, or code.

Spectres supply the sense of the metaphor that they convey (Beardsworth, 1996, p.1; Gasche, 1986, p.128; Derrida, 1994, p. 79,94). A metaphor has revelatory elements that suggest the narrative sense and form. Thus, spectres, as a narrative device, constitute an economy of

engagement, judgment, and promise that opens up meanings to new structures of thought and experience. Derrida's reading of Marx's spectres' demonstrates how deconstruction intervenes in Marxist's text that Jameson termed "provocation" because it shakes the foundation of Marxism and, as Michael Sprinker notes, challenges it to "come to terms with its own past, politically and theoretically . . ." (Jameson, 1999, p.26; Sprinker, 1999, p.2). I will not restage the debates on Derrida's spectres' here. Instead, I will offer a reading of spectres as an intervention in postcolonial theorizing. In the latter, spectres provide a chance for "democracy to-come," which, for Derrida, represents a promise that is being worked out in the present, against the seeming remoteness of its realization. My engagement with spectres is a contribution to postcolonial debates, in which Marxism and deconstruction have the centre stage but I will also include other theorists – Jurgen Habermas and Theodor Adorno, whose work figured less in postcolonial studies but have also exhibited exemplifications of spectres.

In the survey of theories that follows, I will provide a genealogy of spectres. A genealogy is an account of a phenomenon but also includes the context that overdetermined the phenomenon's beginnings and consequences (Jameson, 2010, p.434). The retelling is not rendered chronologically but in a manner that includes historical events, disjunctures, and their concealed modes of representation. This approach to genealogy, I believe, can reveal the anterior states that resist effacement in the history of the Philippines: centuries of colonial rule, decades of post-independence nation building, authoritarian rule, and the emergence of neoliberal regimes. All these regimes solicit spectres. From the works of Marx, Jurgen Habermas, Theodor Adorno, and Derrida, I will appraise the ontology of these spectres. Two things are at work here: first, the account will explain the spectres' occurrence or presence, and second, it will expound the connection between their presence and the political possibilities that they foreshadow in the Philippines. The possibilities will cover the

technologically mediated modes in which the spectres undertake their haunting that, in the light of an emancipatory politics, includes uncovering transformative impulses, promises, and demands.

1.1 The Spectres of Marx

Although the spectre is a dramatic opener in *The Communist Manifesto*, the first place to seek it is in the first volume of Marx's *Capital*, where the spectre is insinuated as "effaced sensuousness" in the theory of commodity form (Marx, 1976, p.128). However, throughout his writings, Marx liberally turned to spectres as metaphors to describe the aporias that emerged with capitalism as well as to examine the ideological figurations through which it represented itself as freedom (Erickson, 2009, p.124). At the outset, two things should be noted in this discussion of Marx's spectres: first, its presence, and second, its usefulness as a concept to dissect the logic of capital. Marx's spectre is embodied in the commodity, in a manner that is phantasmagoric or mysterious as when the commodity goes through the process of abstraction, substitution, and equivalence (Marx, 1976, p.164-165). Marx notes that the value of a commodity is expressed as a representation of its exchangeability, in relation to other commodities (Marx, 1976, p.152). This means that value posits an idea of equivalence or exchangeability among incommensurable things or entities that puts them in a relation of mutual definition (Marx, 1976, p.128). Marx also introduced the terms 'use value' and 'exchange value' to demonstrate how capitalism operates as social relations that delineates value. Use value, which is associated with beneficial use, conveys the qualitative worth of a thing in relation to society's needs and wants (Harvey, 1999, p.5). However, use value is immediately disavowed because the product of labour has to abandon its relative heterogeneity and takes a form that realizes the logic of the market (Marx, 1976, p.165-166;

Ryan, 1982, p.97). In this sense, the determining mediation of the market, which is governed by equivalence expressed in money, extinguishes use value in the consideration of a commodity. On the other hand, exchange value, which is a representation of human labour in a commodity, particularly the necessary labour time to produce a commodity, reflects the intervention of forces in society to privilege equivalence over relative differences. Thus, instead of being a relation between labour and commodity, exchange value becomes a relation of commodity and market with the mediation of money as the measure of value (Marx, 1976, p.94). In other words, the exchange of commodities concealed human labour and social relations that had created them (Marx, 1976, p.75-76). To sum up, the effacement of use value eclipses the tangible worth of a commodity while the mediation of the market, which sets exchange value, masks the causal agency of labour power and social relations. Simply put, the circulation of capital creates new forms of mastery, determination, and further alienation.

The thing-like relations that Marx called 'commodity fetishism,' exemplify the condition in which social relations appear as 'objectified' because the labour power of individuals is disclaimed (Marx, 1976, p.165). In this condition, where the commodity is tied up with process, or history, and social relations, Marx was showing the way in which a thing, or its representation, can be disavowed, distorted or embraced. The disavowal, as Adorno would argue later, is not due to compulsion but the process of dissolution of singularities, within a particular system of thought, a state that he designates as reification (Rose, 1978, p.44). On the other hand, acceptance may also be partial and contingent. The importance of recalling the notion of commodity fetishism is this: it reveals the essence of the commodity-form as a system of representation, and also suggests a specificity in which this representation is made possible (Marx, 1976, p. 166; Mocnik, 1999, p.118). Put differently, value arises from a socially mediated system of exchange, which has the totalizing criteria of association,

equivalence, and parity. Value arises from the obfuscation and displacement of some elements, not so much to conceal them as to render them inconsequential and determinable. The switch from use value to exchange value also stands for a “misrepresentation of reality” that reduces elements to become mere shadows of their presence (Erickson, 2009, p.136). This brings the second sense of understanding the spectre as a metaphor, which designates the opacity of commodity-form, and inflects the symbolic systems, institutions, and social relations that mediate it.

Another place to apprehend Marx’s spectres’ is in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, where he uses the spectre as a metaphor to draw insights from ideological constructions of the turbulent period in France between 1848 and 1851. Just after the opening paragraph, Marx provides a paradigm of spectres that runs through his rumination; it is worth quoting in length to show the spectres’ semantic sway and their logic of iteration:

“Men make their own history, but not of their own free will, not under circumstances they themselves have chosen but under the given and inherited circumstance with which they are directly confronted. The tradition of the dead generations weighs like nightmare on the minds of the living. And, just when they appear to be engaged in the revolutionary transformation of themselves and their material surroundings, in the creation of something which does not yet exist, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they timidly conjure up the spirits of the past to help them; they borrow their names, slogans and costumes so as to stage new world-historical scene in this venerable disguise and borrowed language” (Marx, 2006, p.8, e-book).

The text brings out two elements that put the spectral metaphor to work: first, the spectre is omnipresent in history and can be thought of as legacy; second, it can be summoned to bear on the present through unforeseeable forms that arise out of the repetition of events (Erickson, 2009, p.127-128). The repetition does not mean duplication but an iteration of underlying contingencies as implied in the *Eighteenth Brumaire’s* opening paragraph -- “the first time as

tragedy, the second time as farce” (Marx, 2006, p.8, e-book). The line shows that the spectres, as effects of repetition, enabled the unmasking of the ideological sophistry that Marx identified. Representation, in its formal and positive sense, insinuates the presence of spectres in two ways: first, representation is a delegation of presence as shown in how a representative stands in and speaks on behalf of individuals, and second, representation also claims to repeat something that has to be present, like a voice of the will of a collectivity, that conveys the symbolic force of images and texts to register absence and presence (Webb, 2009, p.88; Thomassen, 2006, page 116). Marx’s arguments would admit that social relations involved exclusions and violence to the “other,” which is presupposed in the relation, is an exercise of power with spectral consequences. By the latter, I mean the logic of substitution that undermines, erases, and neutralizes presence, hence hegemonic representation is a “farce” because it misrepresents, as what Louis Bonaparte’s dictatorial rule exemplifies (Erickson, 2009, p.128; Webb, 2009, p.91). The spectre, in this case, is oriented in several directions – in one sense, summoned as a legacy by those in power to provide a mantle of legitimacy to their political agenda, and, in another sense, conjured up by those who repudiate the hegemonic representation, and who consider spectres as having the potential of creating radical spaces in seemingly impossible conditions. This is what Marx meant when he said the revolutions are not a “parody (of) the old (ones)” but the “resurrection of the dead (that) served to exalt the new struggles . . .” (Marx, 2006, p.8, e-book). Instead of being deployed as ideological tools of the ruling class, spectres have the capacity to provoke the thinking of possibilities that, despite the erasure of an actual presence through formal representation, bring some kind of restored presence and possibilities.

The other places to locate Marx’s spectres are the three instances where commodity production gestures toward ideological domination. The first condition emerges in the process

of surplus value accumulation through a process of transforming money into commodities, and then to money again (M-C-M). Money is a material representation of value, which has to be expanded limitlessly through production of commodities that yield more money, or surplus value (Marx, 1976, p.250-257). Surplus value arises from surplus labour, or the process of subjecting workers to work beyond the labour time necessary to produce their means of subsistence (Marx, 1976, p.344). This is an inescapable condition under capitalism that is repeated in various ways around the world: workers have to sell their labour power to those who own the means of production. This situation underscores an unspoken element of alienation; capitalism is interested in labour power, not the labourers per se, but it does not mean that it is less interested in shaping labouring bodies according to its logic of accumulation. Their bodily desires are roused by commodity consumption that seeks to neutralize critical and irrational impulses (Haraway, 1991, p.163; Cherniavsky, 2006, p.xviii).

The second condition relates to the expansion of exchange and circulation of money capital that are crucial to the accumulation and appropriation of surplus value. Marx has shown that these pursuits are based on inequality, or the disavowal of certain peoples, classes, and groups (Marx, 1976, p.345). Marx cites capitalism's reliance on these objective but compliant conditions for its growth. These conditions could take the forms of state or organizations of power, distinct patterns of production and consumption, social relations, culture, or ideology. Altogether, they comprise a distinct social formation with a mode of capitalist production partly constituted by old but agreeable production patterns and social relations. Instead of supplanting it, capitalism may retain the old mode of production because it could yield more surplus value, given its exploitative relations of production (Marx, 1976, p.873-876). However, while the superimposition of the capitalist mode of accumulation transforms the mode of production to a certain extent, capitalism also disavows the recalcitrant elements that

defy subsumption. They are revealed as sediments of the past that disturb the classic goals of surplus accumulation as well as traces available to subaltern representation.

What emerges now is the variegated process of accumulation that, in the words of Marx, thrives in a “particular historical social formation, which simply takes the form of a thing and gives this thing a specific social character” (Marx, 1981, p.953). However, more than a system of production, capitalism is also a social relation that calibrates its movement according to circumstances that favour its continued expansion. Marx made similar, but tentative, arguments on his account of colonization in the first volume of *Capital* and in his pieces to the *New York Tribune* (Marx, 1976, p.931; 2007, p.213). Colonization, in Marx’s time, was accomplished through primitive accumulation to extract surplus value from agriculture in the colonies, where labour power was freely available for expropriation by the colonial administration, which also sanctioned its exploitation by private capitalists (Marx, 1976, p.940; 2007, p.224). Primitive accumulation became the matrix for creating the “material basis” of capitalism in the colony that re-enacted the logic of accumulation and appropriation of surplus values in the colonizer’s country (Marx, 1976, p.875). Marx’s accounts of British rule in India, and his compressed chapter on colonialism in the first volume of *Capital*, imparted an idea that the capitalist mode of production is inseparable from the political forces that accompany it, or from the confluence of historical, economic, cultural, and political factors that are also shaped by repression, hegemony and resistance, which, according to Marx, could be written in “letters of blood and fire” (Marx, 2007, p.225; Marx, 1976, p.724). Capitalism has advanced in industrial countries but primitive accumulation has been a permanent fixture in other countries that have been sources of cheap labour and raw materials for capital. The unevenness in the growth of capital provided the means through which resources and labour power were exploited for the surplus valued they yield. This

process of accumulation and appropriation was termed by Marxist geographer David Harvey as ‘accumulation by dispossession,’ and has supplied insights for postcolonial theorizing.

Technologies evince the growth of capitalism, and this is the third condition where Marx’s spectres can be located. Technology, for Marx, is more than just an assemblage of machines and tools, which are termed fixed capital, because it also reveals intangible elements like labour power, accretive knowledge, and skills (Marx, 1976, p.493). Technology is integral to the process of production and has a dialectical relationship with social relations. With the latter, I mean a condition where technology is ascribed with meanings, and shaped by designs and uses that emerge from social processes rather than their intrinsic properties as objects. In other words, technology is subject to the social, economic, and political context into which it emerges, and in which its effects are felt. New media technologies best exemplify how these social relations and interventions, in Marx’s sense, are worked through. With representation as their primary function, new media technologies are illustrative of conditions arising from the cumulative growth of the forces of production, expansion of capitalism and the social interactions that shaped and were also shaped by technologies. Representation constitutes ideology; it is the process of acquiring meaning within, and beyond, a given particularity. Thus images, myths, ideas, for instance, adopt a particular logic and vigor to permeate and influence society. In other words, representation has an ideological value; it expresses a will or point of view that, within a social relation, is not only instrumental or mirror-like, but also constitutive and aporetic.

The spectres in new media technologies are part of the whole process of displacement, repetition and modification that their technical capacities are attuned to, while performing the work of representation in political and aesthetic domains. As in political representation,

aesthetic representation also operates in the economy of obfuscation, disavowal and aporia and is inflected by relations of power. These states, however, can never be fixed because representations are subject to being rehearsed and reiterated and are thus capable of undermining the dominant ideology. Emancipation, for Marx, is linked to the dissolution of the process of accumulation and appropriation of surplus value through the takeover of the capitalist means of production. Marx has advocated this stance in the *Communist Manifesto* where he, and Friedrich Engels, sketched the messianic role of the proletariat. However, this political project necessarily solicits spectres because, while the transfer of the means of production may eliminate alienation, it may not do away with objectification or reification that Habermas, Adorno, and Derrida were keen to point out. Marx did not endow spectres with the power to undermine the logic of capitalism; it was the role reserved for the working class. However, in deconstruction, this role is also a form of direct and symbolic representation. What is germane is Marx's recognition of the importance of technologies in material and symbolic reproduction, in which the notion of value shifts to prefigure a different social reality, and through which the logic of iteration brings a chance for change. Which is to say that Marx's spectres will continue their haunting, for as long as the notion of value that is tied to exploitative social relations, persists.

1.2 The Spectres in the Public Sphere

Referencing Iris Murdoch, Richard J. Bernstein once posed a rhetorical question intended for Jurgen Habermas, a question that must be the bane of philosophers: "What is he afraid of?" "Irrationalism," said Bernstein, answering his own question (Bernstein, 2006, p.79). Thus, one does not expect Habermas to indulge in the metaphorical flourishes like Marx's account of spectres or similar preoccupations – ghosts, spectres, and dancing tables. For Habermas is a

philosopher grounded on the particulars of reason. He takes responsibility for the recovery of Enlightenment-born rationalism from its descent into instrumental rationality. Habermas offers communicative action, a process of interlocution that aims for truth, transparency and consensus, in lieu of the hypostatizing language games of metaphors, allegories, and metonymies, deployed by those who are out to derail the march of modernity (Habermas, 1987, p.63). It is not that Habermas is closed to critical dialogues and supplementations with other thinkers; it is just that he thinks everyone should agree with him because, after all, who doesn't want to communicate and be understood, or be rational sometimes, if not all the time. Consensus, if applied to global politics and events, could have stopped unspeakable horror or tragedy (Thomassen, 2006, p.177). However, I will argue that Habermas undermines his own rational enterprise because he, too, conjures up spectres, of the Enlightenment for one, and, what he feared as signs of irrationality and "undemocracy" are but the unrecognized "other" of his thought.

Habermas set aside Marx's premises in the domain of production and instead reconstructed historical materialism to focus on processes of communication that are oriented toward the "truth" that could bind people together (Habermas, 1979). For Habermas, the production and distribution of commodities presupposes social interactions that have arrived at intersubjective understanding, which is crucial to the development of any society (Habermas, 1979, p.131-132). Like his predecessors in Frankfurt school, Habermas believes that the growth of forces of production does not lead to the overthrow of capitalism. Instead, the profusion of labour skills and technologies results in more complex social organizations and communication practices that, for him, allow for a "consensual regulation of conflicts"(Habermas, 1987, p.375-376; 1979, p.148-149, 156). To state it differently, he has deferred the inevitability of the proletariat's role as a revolutionary class, and he thinks that

Marxism needs a communication theory that provides a way to override rationalization, reification, and instrumentalism of productive forces in society (Habermas, 1984, p.144, 362-365).

Habermas is better known for his theory of the rise and decline of the public sphere in his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, but this is more of a prelude to his two-volume work, *The Theory of Communicative Action*. The public sphere, as a metaphorical space for democracy and rational will formation, is the more popular theory, and has inspired many in societies where exclusions and censorship are a fact. Habermas characterized the public sphere as a transhistorical idea of democratic engagement built from the demands of the bourgeoisie to enjoy free commerce and unrestrained interaction -- ideals that support a liberal order as envisioned in the West (Habermas, 1989, p.27). Initially conceived as a spatial metaphor, the public sphere, in Habermas's later work, became a mediated process of interaction among political publics that considered representation and legitimation as vital functions of social interaction (Habermas, 1996, p.360). Notwithstanding the shifts in the political function of the public sphere, its ideals persist, and the most important of them all is that intersubjective understanding is possible even in the most critical of discussions. The latter are governed by the norms of human communication that always strive toward rational consensus. Through his theory of the public sphere, Habermas made explicit the connection between communication as a process of representation, and the goals of bourgeois liberal democracy inspired by speech ideals (Thomassen, 2010, p.34). The underlying premise of this connection is Habermas's intention to redeem the promise of the Enlightenment -- of progress through the public use of reason -- and then apply it to modern-day politics, mainly the parliamentary form established in liberal democracies in Europe. Against Marx, Habermas does not regard class politics and the economy as having a

determining effect on the constitution of the public sphere as a place of linguistic mediation. Interaction in the public sphere proceeds from a premise that all are equal; participants can find a commonality from among their points of view, experiences, needs and dilemmas, and are also capable of sealing agreements. The public sphere draws its relevance from the idea that modes of association should be kept open while representations equally need wider political response (Habermas, 1989, p.85). Simply put, arguments need to be placed into the public realm, if they are to influence or initiate action. By subjecting political and aesthetic representation to the norms of public sphere, Habermas hopes to bring ideologies to critical evaluation, an exercise of re-appraising the norms and practices that are ingrained in the institutions, practices and histories of Western society (Habermas, 1989, p.88). In a clash of ideologies, only the force of the better argument wins, and this brings an insight that disruptive ideologies would have little chance of undermining existing structures of power. In all, Habermas's theory of the public sphere allows critical theory to consider the unrealized potentials of constraint-free communication, based on a premise that everyone can freely speak and interact with anyone, which are essential conditions to maintain a "free civil society" (Goode, 2005, p.13).

Habermas's theory of communicative action shares the democratic matrix of the public sphere. However, in the former, he unites rational interaction with a practical intent to democratize the conduct of everyday life (Habermas, 1987, p.62). The theory reprises the value of reason encouraged by Enlightenment but, this time, it specifies that communicative rationality is the only form of reason that could deliver the Enlightenment's promise of progress and emancipation (Habermas, 1987, p.93-96). One essential starting point in understanding communicative action is Habermas's diagnosis of modernity as the motor of societal rationalization. The latter refers to the emergence of structures of consciousness to

apprehend the development in the realm of production, technology, knowledge, administration, and control (Habermas, 1984, p.340). Here, Habermas underscores an aporia of modernity: the latter brings rationalization that improves life but rationalization that also reduces life to a matter of efficiency and instrumentalism. However, unlike Horkheimer, who believes that rationalization ultimately leads to the loss of meaning and freedom, Habermas thinks that instrumental reason holds certain emancipatory potentials when human consciousness is no longer controlled by nature, religion, and traditions (Horkheimer, 1974, p.6-10, 16-17; Habermas, 1984, p.346-347).

Habermas regarded reason as having the interpretive capacity to understand the pathologies of modernization (Habermas, 1984, p.389-390). The notion of instrumental reason, as the percipient logic of modernity, does not necessarily lead to domination because, for Habermas, it also gives rise to new forms of self-reflection and rational deliberation. This is because reason permits “coming to an understanding,” a normative process of “mutual convincing,” in which the action of participants are coordinated on the basis of motivation by reasons” (Habermas, 1984, p.392). For Habermas, the realization of human potentials is not about asserting of one’s knowledge and autonomy, but interacting with others to reach an understanding and consensus of action. Habermas came up with two structures of consciousness, which aid in achieving understanding: cognitive-instrumental rationality and communicative rationality. The first one finds its relevance in the sphere of production because it deals with knowledge suited to adoption and manipulation of the environment, or objective world (Habermas, 1984, p.14-15). The second one, communicative rationality, is process of reaching understanding where participants rely on each other’s competence, sincerity and commitment to reach a consensus (Habermas, 1984, p.100-101). In communicative action, language is presupposed as a medium for coordinating action

(Habermas, 1984, p.94). This turn to language, as central to intersubjective understanding, means that not only does language become a vehicle of social cohesion; it also affirms its known, intrinsic purpose in communication, that is, making everyday interaction intelligible. Language is supposedly an “uncurtailed” medium of representation that users refer to and negotiate meanings with, so that it is possible to reach an agreement with others, as what is presupposed in every act of communication where Western humanism is the underlying thought (Habermas, 1984, p.95).

Both the public sphere and communicative action stand potentially as realms that solicit spectres due to reification that arose from exclusions in the public sphere, and the bracketing off of the lifeworld. Criticisms of exclusions in the public sphere are nothing new, and the most spirited ones came from women and subalterns (plebeians or non-bourgeois) whose presence, numbers and radical politics became an afterthought in the theory of the public sphere (Thomassen, 2010, p.53-54; Goode, 2005, p.29-32)). It is one thing that these exclusions are rectified by Habermas in his later work on the public sphere; it is another thing if, in practice, they are ever removed. Habermas tried to update the public sphere but it even became more rule-bound and exclusive. For example, in *Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas came up with the concept of weak and strong publics, the former tied to civil society, the latter with the parliament, hence citizens occupy an implicitly secondary position (Habermas, 1996, p.371). Thus, Habermas’s bias toward formal rules in the context of liberal and constitutional democracy appears to undermine the very ground from where they emerged, that is, the ideals of democracy, equality and freedom (Thomassen, 2006, p.55).

As in the second volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas, in *Between Facts and Norms*, continued to regard popular movements and new media technologies as less

of an embodiment of the public sphere because they have the tendency to be ambivalent and particularistic in terms of interests and demands (Habermas, 1987, p.389; 1996, p.371). In other words, they might have “irrational impulses” (Thomassen, 2006, p.54;). While Habermas accommodates popular movements and the media in the web of democratic practices, he only grants them an “auxiliary” function because they have to learn how to live with the tradition of Western liberal democracy (Thomassen, 2006, p.56; Habermas 1996, p.317, 372). And yet in societies where positive freedoms are nearly, if not altogether, absent, street parliaments and new media technologies are spaces where the communicative ideals of the Enlightenment are instantiated. In other words, Habermas’s distrust of citizen groups’ inability to exercise the “public use” of reason undercuts the ideals of the rationality he seeks to protect and, hence, implies a certain tyranny of reason. By discounting some movements as expressions of democratic practices, Habermas tied democracy to procedures and formal structures, thus reifying it. However, this condition solicits a spectral position that could radically refashion the Habermasian public sphere.

Spectral possibilities can be imagined in Habermas’s concept of the lifeworld, which is a repository of intersubjectively formed knowledge, practices and attitudes that can be accessed linguistically. I will argue that the value of the concept of the lifeworld lies in its spectrality, or its potential to articulate traces and impulses of certain recurring and latent demands. Habermas’s discussion of the lifeworld, linked to his concept of reification, holds the key to the lifeworld’s spectrality. In the final chapter of the first volume of the *Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas revisited the concept of reification, first, Lukacs’s, and then Adorno and Horkheimer’s. Lukacs developed his concept of reification from Marx’s theory of value, particularly commodity fetishism, where exchange value supplies universal equivalence to a commodity that is objectified and cut off from its natural properties and

producers. Reification, to recall Marx's theory of value, is a condition analogous to commodity exchange, where sensuousness disappears, and relationships become objectified and thing-like (Marx, 1976, p. 164-165). Lukacs sees the role of rationality in reification, which he analyzes as collective alienation derived from instrumental exchange and relations that has "ghostly objectivity" which finds expression in consciousness and ways of relating with others (Lukacs, 1971, p.100). Although not Lukacs's intent, Habermas reads reification as a pathology of the individual consciousness, such that, in a reified society, individuals relate to each other in instrumental fashion, that Habermas construed as "strategic actions oriented to their own success" (Habermas, 1984, p.359, 379). Habermas credited Lukacs for implying that the reification and rationalization are not synonymous, so that it would be possible to infer the effects of reification from politics and culture where instrumental rationality operates (Habermas 1984, p.361).

Habermas argues that reification does not only manifest itself in humanity's relationship to nature, it is also present in the interpretive systems of the lifeworld. The lifeworld is a metaphorical community accessed by a discrete individual; it is a repository of a "culturally transmitted" and "linguistically organized stock of knowledge" that is relevant to a particular social context (Habermas, 1987, p.124). This stock of pre-interpreted knowledge provides a common background and conviction that are "always already familiar" and applicable to the everyday communicative practice (Habermas, 1987, p.125). Language and culture are important elements of the lifeworld as they facilitate intersubjective understanding. The latter is possible when communicating parties raise claims that are open to criticism, verification, and resolution of disagreements (Habermas, 1987, p.126). In other words, the presence of the lifeworld presupposes mutual understanding, whenever communicating parties use the lifeworld to raise objective, social and subjective claims. The lifeworld complements

communicative action because the meanings that the lifeworld supplies enable participants to come to a consensus (Habermas 1987, p.126-127). It is also through communicative action that lifeworld is reproduced (Habermas, 1987, p.133).

The lifeworld maintains a stock of shared knowledge and normative concessions which resist reified economic, administrative and technological necessities. Hence the lifeworld is, in itself, becomes a contradictory realm; it incorporates spectral objectivity of use value that underlies rationalization but, at the same time, it gestures toward something persistent and subversive (Habermas, 1987, p.186). The anxiety over the loss of feelings, traditions, and solidarity that enters into the “horizon of experience”, to use Habermas’s words, solicit something sedimented in the lifeworld that has an effect on social relations, representations and power structures. As rationalization puts technology at the center of modernization, it can be argued that the lifeworld, too, assimilates the aporias of technology in the way it represents knowledge and meanings. Put differently, the modes of perception and practices that emanate from the lifeworld are not to be regarded as purely rational forms. The horizon of experience constitutive of the lifeworld, and also the lifeworld itself, manifests the paradoxical incarnation of value: on one hand it is associated with strategic and instrumental rationality, on the other hand, it holds a promise of renewal, reminiscent of the Enlightenment’s call to reason. This suggests that the resources supplied by the lifeworld can also be “irrational” and resistive forms of representation.

In a way, Habermas provides a promise of transformation through the lifeworld, and the same could be said in the public sphere, but he held back on their possibilities. He was inclined to confine their function within liberal and constitutional democracy conjoined with capitalism. He appears to be wary of the effects of reification, “structural violence” for instance that can

influence how individuals relate to each other (Habermas, 1987, p.187). This explains his introduction of all sorts of ramparts to protect the lifeworld from being “colonized” by money and power as evident in the second volume of *The Theory of Communicative Action*. While Habermas’s democratic theory provides analytical resources to examine reification, it is without the necessary intensity to mitigate it. Thus, I maintain that the theory of communicative action cannot be a truly radical critique of capitalism and its accompanying forms of unwarranted authority.

Applied in the postcolonial condition, the public sphere and communicative action are spaces and processes of solicitation of spectres. However as a matrix of possibilities, they have limited potentials for emancipation. While their categories, relations and interactions may not be ideological justifications of postcolonial domination, neither do they herald progressive rationalization for the “irrational” other. Unlike the leeway that Derrida gives to the concept of spectrality, by giving it the chance to unconditionally acknowledge “irrational” demands, Habermas’s notion of reason is bound to procedures that manifest as discourses that can be accepted and admitted (Thomassen, 2010, p.24). While seemingly inclusive, the public sphere and communicative action provide little hope for subalterns in societies where civil liberties are restrained by regimes that present themselves as democratic and modernizing. However, it can be argued that the postcolonial transformation of the public sphere is not the variant of modernity that Habermas had in mind, because it is many times removed from the rationalization of society that the Enlightenment has aimed for. In other words, the project of modernity falters in postcolonial regimes because the actual relations and interchanges in the public sphere are not compatible with the classical ideal that Habermas sketched, even in a qualified form he offers in his later writings. Moreover, owing to deviations from Western democratic tradition and the operation of capitalism, the postcolonial project of modernity

cannot be expected to realize its goals because it cannot (and should not) dissolve differences and “irrationality.” In the end, the notion of the public sphere and communicative reason in postcolonial societies with less than ideal democracies provoke certain spectres of the Enlightenment that animate the forces of radical heterogeneity.

1.3 The Spectres and the Culture Industry

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer are known for their “counter-Enlightenment” stance and their relentless critique of the universality of ‘reason,’ which is a legacy of the Enlightenment, have marked them as those that highlighted the “dark side” of this legacy, and its fall (Bernstein, 2006, p.75). For that, they could be considered among those who introduced the critique of the Enlightenment as, in the words of one writer, “something of an intellectual blood sport” (McMahon, 2001, p.12; 201). The charge is neither fair nor accurate. In the opening pages of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, one can sense Adorno and Horkheimer’s rectitude, such that when they call for the evaluation of the Enlightenment, it was not to reify it but to redeem hope (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979, p.xv; Adorno, 1973, p.405). This hope is what had been lost in the wake of colonialism, racism, and the Holocaust as well as Gulag, Vietnam, and the present-day horrors that were all committed in the name of reason. Thus, I consider Adorno and Horkheimer’s work as a solicitation of spectres of the Enlightenment, in which certain subversion can be possible, and yet this possibility is entirely left to us to recognize.

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer outlined the idea of progress as regression that emerges from their examination of modernity as a promise of the Enlightenment. Their use of the myth of Odysseus, as a semantic strategy, demonstrates how

nature and traditions, rendered in myths, are subsumed by reason, which presupposed an identity that is dominant, calculable and logocentric. Myth, which consists of beliefs, practices, and attitudes, is generally regarded as irrational hence it has to submit to reason. However, as the shorthand of reality, myth can also be refashioned to fit to certain codes of authority (Taylor and Harris, 2008, p.65). The myth's representational capacity is superimposed into the rational way of thinking, an iteration that unites time and memory to conform to a particular articulation. In this context, irrationality, in one form or the other, is incompatible with modern thinking because it interrupts its rhythm and disturbs its goals (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2010, p.37). The rationalization of myths illustrates hegemonic intervention to repress differences, within a binary relation that valorizes one pole over the other. On the other hand, the integration of myth and reason expands the field in which reason can range, through representations that reflect the nature of myths as ambiguous, oracular, and neither true nor false, and it is this condition which necessitates the exercise of moral judgment. However, there is a danger that the uncanny conflation of myths with reason can result in their becoming the mirror images of each other (Adorno, 1979, p.6). "Myth turns into enlightenment, and nature into mere objectivity," says Adorno, and this schematization of domination runs through the length of modernity – which is "the system from which all and everything follows" (Adorno, 1979, p.7). In all, the instrumental turn of reason, as exemplified by the appropriation of myths, functions to control an individual's self-identity and his, or her, labouring and consuming body (Taylor and Harris, 2008, p.65). The illusory narratives, pleasures and choices are bound up with a logic driven to gain from anything with exchange value. Thus, propaganda and commodification easily take over, while passivity and apathy are the consequences of the effectiveness of instrumental reason.

Adorno and Horkheimer's idea of the regression of reason prefigures the presence of spectres through the way in which reason feeds upon and subsumes existing narratives and representations. They grant that reason was the underlying agent of emancipation, which is observable in the development of capitalism, technology, democracy and culture that demonstrate the triumph over forces of nature, religion, and fatalism. However the instrumentality of reason arises when homogenization successfully eliminates even the "partially autonomous spaces" where non-instrumental reason resides (Lunn, 1982, p.161). As Adorno notes that the process of substitution and the manipulation of myths inevitably bring contradiction: it is possible to imagine "something is itself and at the same time something other than itself" (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997, p.15). In other words, while reason fortifies itself by subordinating entities to a command, control is untenable in the long run. The appropriation of myths is a process that enables modification, repetition and replication that could loosen up suppositions and allows the emergence of elements that were unseen or banished. Iteration brings out dissonances that defy equivalence and similitude, as Adorno's version of dialectics seeks to show (Adorno, 1973, p.136-137)

Adorno's concept of negative dialectics implies the spectrality that inheres in his radical thought. Reason dominates when it performs a figurative operation upon a reality through 'identity thinking' (Adorno, 1973, p.4). The latter occurs in a pairing arrangement between the concept and the object, which is also a relation between the universal to particular. To identify is to classify, and while this is presumed as devoid of value judgments, Adorno would argue otherwise. The problem starts when the concept designates the object but is construed as if the concept can sufficiently indicate the object's properties and presence (Adorno, 1973, p.145). With the object's identity being subsumed by the concept, the object's particularity is effaced; the object merely resembles the concept that it could otherwise

contradict (Adorno, 1973, p.141). This is an operation of positing a likeness that makes the concept congruent with the object it identifies (Rose, 1978, p.45). For Adorno, identity thinking “perpetuates antagonism by suppressing contradiction” – a “violence of equality-mongering (that) reproduces the contradiction it eliminates” (Adorno, 1973, p.141-142). Adorno argues that commensurability is not possible in this operation of equivalence and reversibility. In the first place, the concept is so “spent and impoverished” that the only way to articulate the condition of the object is to “dilute itself to the point of mere universality” (Adorno, 1973, p.138). This conceptual dilution is the function of homogenization that is analogous to the process of commodity exchange in Marx’s *Capital*, where commodity fetishism and reification set in and take hold of subjectivities (Adorno, 1973, p.146; Rose, 1978, p.46).

Adorno provides a distinct direction for dialectics when he conceptualized “negative dialectic.” Dialectic, as a method of analysis, is often seen as a relationship of binaries, sometimes resolved as a synthesis of opposites, other times, seen as opposites in identification with each other although they can never be in harmony (Warren, 1984, p.50; Jameson, 2010, p.3). Dialectic connects an object with a historical process, in a relation that brings out their identity, difference and possibilities (Ollman, 2003, p.15). However, in all these instances, the categories were accepted as pre-given, sufficient, and within a reciprocal circuit. For Adorno, the key issue to dialectics is commensurability, or whether one pole of the opposites can sufficiently affirm the other within a relationship that presupposes the other. He argues that congruence erases differences and places an object under the control of the identifying category. Thus, the “dialectic is obliged to make a final move . . . it must turn even against itself” (Adorno, 1973, p.405).

The negative dialectics of Adorno falls under what Fredric Jameson calls “the dialectic of incommensurables,” which unmask a posited relationship of likeness to detect or reveal the false union of opposites (Jameson, 2010, p.25). Rather than likeness, negative dialectic perceives difference, and instead of accommodation, it grants two categories their distinctiveness, or that they could separately thrive in heterogeneity (Jameson, 2010, p.25-26). Incommensurability and freedom are presupposed in dialectic, or to put it slightly differently, that “unlike thought” is “represented in the inmost cell of thought” (Adorno, 1973, p.408). He went on to argue that while there is much emphasis on wholeness, “the idea of ‘otherness’ is one whose time has come” (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2010, p.65).

Adorno reprises Marx’s theory of value to show that identity thinking is a parallel movement of reification in capitalist production and can also be revealed in social relations and structures of thought in society. These structures and relations provide the basis for the construction of a reality that strives toward commensurability and a particular rationality that seeks to prevail against unpredictability and irrationality (Adorno, 1973, p.23). To recall, value is a contingent relation of exchange, in which production and social relations are integral to its expression in a commodity. The exchange value in a commodity is expressed in the universal money-form, which is a model of how abstract relations present reality. Put differently, value is a social relation inscribed in a commodity. When use value is presented as the property of a commodity, when in fact it is exchange value that determines its fate as a commodity, this is a moment of enforced equivalence, or reification (Marx, 1976, p.166; Rose, 1978, p.47). Likewise when exchange value reflects the logic of the market rather than labour time expended, equivalence is also imposed.

Adorno attributes the totalizing process of identifying and classifying to capitalism, implicating it in cycles of production, the alienation of labour, totalitarianism, and the domination of technologies of consciousness in the realm of culture. This means that capitalism creates conditions of reification that negative dialectics aimed to uncover. Control resides in the principle of association, in which the relations between two things become an “unfolding of an already existing process,” of equivalence and subsumption. This conjunction of value with social relation, according to Adorno, is coincident with other relations of exchange, as it can also be appropriated into philosophy, language, art and so forth, where it operates on various levels and subjectivities (Adorno, 1973, p.146-147). As a way of thinking, reification works through concepts that are posited as self-evident and sufficient to describe a reality (Adorno, 1973, 147-148). As a social phenomenon, reification brings a condition where social relations are objectified, or having properties that resemble a thing (Adorno, 1973, p.148). Adorno’s social grounding of the concept of reification, within the theory of value, has prevented it from becoming an encompassing concept dependent on psychological states (Rose, 1978, p.49). Not only does it reveal the cultural consequences of the process of accumulation and appropriation of surplus value, it also exposes the latent workings of the bourgeois ideology that sustains capitalism. Thus, Adorno’s negative dialectic infuses vitality into dialectics, and prevents them from falling into a formulaic and positivistic position (Lunn, 1982, p.230-234; Warren, 2003, p.146-148). Reification exposes the undersides of both social orders, a critique that indicts capitalism’s instrumentalism as well as the dogmatism of planned economies. In those contexts, progress is more like a running inventory of material growth while crises, which arise from social incongruities and reification, are largely ignored.

Adorno's analysis of reification is confined to capitalist relations in the West, and he has not acknowledged other forms of reification that are not in accord with such model. The issue at hand is how to reconcile Adorno's work with postcolonial theories so that it can sustain a critique beyond the usual appropriation of his epigrams and ingenuous turns of phrase. Two postcolonial theorists have championed the cogency of Adorno's scholarship by working out the critical theory's place among the contemporary postcolonial discourses. Neil Lazarus and Keya Ganguly reflected on the basis of conceptual resources that Adorno and Horkheimer inaugurated and developed for critical theory. The basis of the latter is Marxism, which sustains a critique of capitalism, but for Adorno, along with his colleagues at Frankfurt School, Marxism has undeveloped frameworks that have to be teased out (Lazarus, 1999; Ganguly, 2004). If postcolonialism has missed out on Adorno's theories, it is because, according to Lazarus, of the trend and trajectory that postcolonial studies have taken, that is, dwelling on the "post"-ness and the privileging of textual exegesis over historical materialist analysis (Lazarus, 1999, p.9-13). In a more reconciliatory tone, Ganguly suggests revisiting critical theory, especially its "political and epistemological commitments" to truth and knowledge, whose formulations and interpretative approaches could be made to bear on "various discursive productions" (Ganguly, 2004, p.243). He notes the value of Adorno's notion of authenticity, which reckons with the concreteness of history that is relevant to colonial and postcolonial theories. Importantly, he underscores the spectrality in Adorno's dialectic ("wherein there are things that have escaped the dialectic") – that does not consign the "unverifiable to non-existence" as positivist theories are wont to be (Ganguly, 2004, p.244). This observation resonates with what Adorno said about the import of his theory, which lies not so much in order to "clearly see how things have to be changed" but in order to "see enough . . . that change is possible" (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2010, p.60).

Adorno and Horkheimer's work on the rationalization of cultural production and the emergence of the culture industry has been well received in anti-colonial studies, where the mobilization of the culture industry thesis served the critique of cultural imperialism. The term culture industry connotes an 'economy' concerned with the production of cultural commodities for mass consumption (Adorno, 1991, p.98). While broad enough to encompass the many aspects of cultural production, the term, however, becomes more intelligible when applied to certain media or technologies where manipulation, commodification, and ubiquity predominate. The media that primarily fit the criteria include the news media in print and broadcast, entertainment media of television and films, the Internet and digital interfaces, mobile telephony, and advertising.

Instrumental reason is the underlying principle in the production and transmission of representation in the culture industry. Its goal is "anti-enlightenment" because it engenders disinformation, mass deception, and pretence (Adorno, 1991, p.106). The culture industry also manifests reification as it orients its convention toward uniformity, passivity, and repression of the incommensurable (Taylor and Harris, 2008, p.69). While it presents choices that are the embodiment of freedom, they are but semblances of this free rein. Understood as the instrument of class rule and its administration, the culture industry is constitutive of hegemony, which propagates technologically mediated representations that pre-empted the exercise of critical judgment (Adorno, 1991, 112-113). There are two ways in which the administration of the culture industry is exercised: direct control and technological control. First, direct control may entail intervention in the production of representation by owners and authorities that, depending on their power, resort to explicit or extra-artistic techniques (Adorno, 1991, p.102-104). State propaganda is an example of direct kind of intervention, while extra-artistic techniques refer to the realm of effects or manipulation of representational

techniques and the variation of representation as a result of reiteration. Second, the administration of the culture industry can be done through technologies whose design, use, and logic are oriented toward instrumental reason. For Adorno and Horkheimer, the logic of technology reflects the rationale of domination (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997, p.121). The omnipresence of technologies testifies to the prospective rationalization of the culture industry. Rationalization means the incorporation of technological forms and codes, while technological growth relates to the process of mechanical reproduction and its ideological justification (Adorno, 1991, p.101). With rationalization comes technological control, which is the process of accumulation and appropriation of representational interfaces. In practical terms, this means the inscription of conventions, codes, elements and forms of representations as a way of organizing, retrieving and re-presenting information. This includes the aggregation of images, sounds and texts into the prevailing techniques and modes of reception. Never purely mechanical, this process also allows dominant ideology to be naturalized and aestheticized (Adorno, 1991, p.113). The effects are the virtualities, or technological impressions, that enable iteration of representations which, for Adorno, deter autonomous praxis (Adorno, 1991, p.117, 122).

To sum up, Adorno provided the theoretical resources for the critical examination of technologically mediated representations, locating them in history, particularly the way in which rationality and capitalism operate to capture minds and markets. The concepts and reflections he offered were forthright and prescient while many of his arguments on the culture industry are remarkably attuned to the networked era we are in (Taylor and Harris, 2008, p.84). Adorno's negative dialectics are often derided as banishing hope and inflexibly pessimistic. However, Fredric Jameson's reading asserts that negative dialectic, as a formulation, has a messianic dimension. Jameson names negative dialectic as a critique of

“the linguistic and conceptual untrustworthiness” of identity thinking that has suffused reason (Jameson, 2010, p.57). Negative dialectic offers the possibility of experiencing reality in concrete terms because it allows the articulation of difference that the “wholistic approach” has failed to accomplish (Adorno quoted in Jameson, 2010, p.55). This suggests that the emancipating power of reason lies in the inference of the particular out of the universal even if the latter tries to attenuate the former. It further suggests that while reification cannot be avoided as a consequence of capitalism, a relentless critique, such as negative dialectic, provides a way of subverting it.

Adorno’s negative dialectic, as a process of renouncing a legitimating narrative, prefigures deconstruction because it summons certain spectres. In that, Adorno’s negative dialectic shares the matrix of deconstruction, anticipating Derrida’s assault on logocentrism, which privileges dominant and unifying master narratives that repress differences. It can be said that the logic of negative dialectic is *de facto* deconstruction’s logic. However, it was Derrida who articulated the spectres of Adorno, especially in the culture industry, in which the “other” is always already inscribed within a reified relationship, disrupting the presuppositions that the pairing seeks to engender. Derrida also argues that while reification strives to eliminate differences, the exclusions set the stage for spectres or traces to return and unsettle the structures of reason, such that the myths rationalized by the Enlightenment return as phantoms. Adorno seems to have alluded to this deconstructive gesture in the closing lines of his brief exposition on the theory of ghost: “Only the conscious horror of destruction creates the correct relationship with the dead: unity with them because we, like them, are victims of the same condition and the same disappointed hope” (Adorno, 1997, p.215).

1.4 Spectres and the Chance of Justice

In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida underscores Marx's fascination with ghosts and spirits that stalked his assumptions and exemplifications in *Capital*. However, in Derrida's hands, Marx's specters are parodied, multiplied, concretized, and sent to haunt in all directions. Jameson says Derrida's *Spectres* was a "provocation," which does more than nudge those who have forgotten Marx's legacy in the wake of the collapse of grand ideologies, the aggressiveness of globalizing capitalism, and pervasiveness of new media technologies (Jameson, 2010, p.127). In a sense, Jameson was saying that Derrida's purpose, in conjuring spectres, is entirely serious rather than ironic. However in lieu of a requiem, Derrida launched a discursive soiree. *Hamlet* is the curtain raiser in Derrida's *Spectres of Marx*; the ghost of Hamlet's father that returns to demand the settlement of an unfinished business, provides an analogy to Derrida's reading of Marx, and the structure for conjuring a certain politics that could speak to the present (Derrida, 1994, p.1-3). The ghostly apparition in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a fitting metaphor for the deconstructive logic of presence-absence and life-death, in which both function as a theme (spectrality) and the process of textual intervention (Jameson, 2010, p.128; Davis, 2007, p.8-11)

With Derrida, Marx's spectre functions as a metaphor that describes the dissimulation of capital, to become a "thing" that can simultaneously be invisible and visible, absent and present, or a spirit and "having a body" (Derrida, 1994, p.55). Analogous to how Marx sees money as essentially a piece of paper with value, Derrida's reference to spectre as a "thing" is a sleight of hand that bestows upon the spectre its specificity. This is a deconstructive gesture that alludes to the importance of a context on which ethical responsibility can be established; it avoids the epistemological ploy of "impossibility of the subject" that postmodern theories

sometimes resorted to (Toth, 2010, p.3). First, the spectre is a spirit because it exists as a trace or remainder of something from the past (Derrida, 1994, p.5). By his definition, Derrida introduced an aporia into the logic of spectrality, a dual function of haunting and re-presenting that suggest repetition. The latter testifies to the possibility of a spirit coming back, time and again. The logic of haunting is marked by repetition, which is singular at any time, not a duplication, but providing a recognizable copy nonetheless (Derrida, 1994, p.10, 11). It is also an iteration that is disjointed, producing some heterogeneous effects. Spectres are the effects of the acts of conjuring that disrupt space and matter. These effects have the ability to modify a reality, even at a distance or in absentia, for example a Twitter feed that broadcasts an event as it unfolds, an operation that I will discuss later. Iteration provides spectres a new lease of life just when they, like Marxism for instance, are considered absent, dead or anachronistic (Derrida, 1994, p.39, 42). With repetition bringing “something other” to the picture, spectres add a new capability by allowing the transformation of a reality. For Derrida, repetition can neither exhaust the memory it is drawing from, nor the heterogeneity that it enables. Thus, the future can never be determined in advance because “the future to come and the coming back of the spectre” guarantees nothing (Derrida, 1994, p.46). But, at the same time, we could never think of the future without thinking the prior necessity of spectres.

Second, spectres undergo a degree of visibility and materialization through technologies of representation, which is also termed new media technologies. The spectres were reincarnated as the effects of new media technologies, in which they register varying and destabilizing effects on politics, culture and the technologies themselves (Derrida, 1994, p.66). New media technologies circumscribe the spectres’ presence, manifest simulation, transmission, and reception. Presence is perceived through certain kinds of texts – images, visual, sound, and anything that can be taken as having the conditions of text – that function as instrument of

power and control to manipulate representation across space and time. But, for Derrida, presence can never be self-sufficient or primordial because it also brought instances of disjunction, difference and deferral. Thus, spectres' presence is never partial nor absolute; by differentiating and delaying something, it delivers unknowable outcomes. It has effects on reality, through amplification, alteration of motion, and compression of space and distance. The effects not only altered the aura, or the relation to space, in fact, they eliminated aura when they overcame the space and time dimension altogether. The effects of new media technologies emerged with the development of science and technology, whose design and function may be geared toward accumulation and appropriation of surplus value as well as communicating hegemony. This is evident in the technology of the printing press and the Internet that both illustrate the growth of new media technologies. For example, book printing allows reproduction and circulation of a singular text, thus allowing the interposition over a tangible object and relation, whereas books in digital formats are electronic impulses that emitted texts that are rapidly transmitted, virtually stored, and manipulated. The mutability of both formats permits various responses as to their effects that are possible within the epoch they are in. However, what is salient here is the fact that technology, which made spectrality possible, has disrupted the reality of the book form. However, despite the delineation of spectres as spirit and non-spirit, they are actually both and, in fact, exceed all depictions because a possibility always exists to cast doubt on the presumed completeness and unity of a moment or a supposition.

Spectres have to be elaborated within the context of Derrida's deconstructive politics. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida lays down the principles and politics of deconstruction, which can be broadly thought as a critique and a way of sensing reality (Spivak, 1997, p.xiii). Deconstruction is a critique of metaphysics, which works within the universal and self-

evident grounds of identity, presence, and history (Spivak, 1997, p. xvii- xviii, xxi). The conceptual resources of metaphysics include conveying reality through the use of binaries, where one category is presumed to be superior and prior to the other, while the second, inferior term, stands as a threat to first term that represents stability, harmony, and primordially. But, for Derrida, the taken-for-granted binaries and prior origins are, in fact, strategies of effacing and repressing the secondary term that it is deemed absent and “other.” Thus, deconstruction’s task is to redress that wrong, by exposing the pairing as a relation of domination, in which the second term is taken as inferior whenever supplementation and differentiation have to be presupposed in this relationship. A supplement adds itself to make a concept complete; it enriches presence (Derrida, 1997, p.144). However, at the same time that it posits a lack, it also voids a relationship of mutual signification that is “destined to reconcile” (Derrida, 1997, p.145). Difference, which is *differance* in Derrida’s neologism, roughly means dissimilarity and delay, hence providing a simultaneous sense of forbidding and yielding. As Derrida says: “Differance produces what it forbids, makes possible the very thing that it makes impossible”(Derrida, 1997, p.143). Differentiation is an *effect* that disrupts presence, or, in other words, differentiation is constitutive of presence, where presence translates to a thought, being, or truth that also reconfigures difference in the process (Ryan, 1982, p.15). Deconstruction functions to insinuate an absence and marginality in relations and suppositions, which are considered complete and unalterable. The anxiety over primordially, which deconstruction exposes, reflects a profound truth: that the particular hierarchy and identity, upon which presence is grounded, are themselves plastic. This argument finds relevance in the colonial conquest in the Philippines, for instance, where racial classification was a social construction arbitrarily fashioned out of visible markers, an argument I will expound in Chapter Three. Racism informs stratification, classes, politics and cultural

representations. However, the elements from which race is constructed, exceed the concept of race that they signify thus putting its meaning in doubt. The reiteration of the unstable concept implies the possibility that inflected meanings could emerge from a serial articulation. In other words, Derrida's deconstruction seeks to bring out the aleatory movement he wanted us to see in synthetic concepts, categories, politics, and relationships, like race.

Derrida relates deconstruction to the unprecedented and accelerated development of technologies in *Spectres of Marx* (Derrida, 1994, p.67). Technologies become the universalizing, rationalizing media but, at the same time, they also constitute what Stiegler describes as "objective, factual deconstruction" (Stiegler, 2001, p. 238). Derrida termed this the "new speed of apparition" where the reiteration of the "simulacrum, the synthetic or prosthetic image and the virtual event" reconfigures the social (Derrida, 1994, p.67). The acceleration of the accumulation and the appropriation of these synthetic representations in no way discount the possibility of contradicting the reality they staged because, according to Derrida, there can be no possible coherent meaning or understanding inscribed in the process of a technological iteration (Derrida, 1994, p.72). The technological effects, or spectres, of this articulation echo a promise that can be made or broken, fulfilled or forgotten, pledged or renounced, which, in either way, all presage newness or re-orientation (Derrida, 1994, p.92). Simply put, technologies supply the conditions of reification and emancipation – in which possibilities are reproduced whenever technologies intervene in a reality, or upon a technological reality/virtuality.

At one point in *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida argues for the pluralities of spectral effects, not for stylistic effects but to underscore the logic of commodity-form that permeated not only the economy, but also the states, laws, culture, the public spheres, and private lives (Derrida,

1994, p.73). This explains his preference for the plural “spectres,” which draws attention to numerous, unforeseeable and iterable effects that exceed binary or dialectical logic. For Derrida, the effects of simulacra, the ghosts, ideologies and prosthetic images “materialized themselves in novel means and forms” made possible by modern technology (Derrida, 1994, p.94). That is why, he adds, while certain spectres are attributable to Marx, they are not entirely his heritage because his version was only “faithful to a certain spirit of Marxism” whereas spectres, in their repetition, summon other kindred evocations (Derrida, 1994, p.95).

The synthetic or prosthetic effects enabled by technologies, which Derrida pointed out in *Spectres*, can be seen in two sensory levels: first, on the technological appearance or simulation, and second, on technologies’ impact upon society or reception. On simulation, one has to be reminded how new media technologies, that function as mechanisms of representation, have played a part in the development of visual images destined for technological reproduction. From the manual creation of visual images to algorithm-generated images, the changes afforded different ways of simulating a reality – for instance, think of an actual painting as against its digital version that are visually similar but of different material composition. The level of reception to an automated intervention can vary because the digital image, for example, can be subjected to all sorts of modification and manipulation. The same logic of iteration can also be seen in other modes of representation – texts, sound, and moving images. At present, there are numerous ways in which consumption of representation manifests as new media technologies simulate not just images but also actions, sound and the capacity to grow, react, feel and think – activities that lie within the sphere of human behaviour and mental states. The range of technological interventions includes alteration of images to the use of prostheses, in which technologies become parts or components of human bodies, as Donna Harraway’s notion of the cyborg evokes (Harraway, 1991). The point of the

preceding discussion is simply this: the possibilities of new media technologies affect the way in which meanings are constructed, testifying to the power of spectres to reconfigure a representation of reality for redefinition. As Derrida says, “a technical development suspends or calls into question a situation which is previously deemed stable,” and this condition brings anxiety and doubt upon the social (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.149).

What is at stake in this condition of uncertainties is democracy, which Derrida sees as a promise arising from conditions that deny it – inequality, displacement, and exclusion (Derrida, 1994, p.81). As a promise, it is meant to summon itself to fulfill an injunction known in advance, an event that is to-come but whose form is amorphous. In *Spectres*, Derrida linked the concept of democracy to a messianic experience, to which hospitality without reserve, or the unconditional opening up to the otherness of the other, is inextricably linked (Derrida, 1994, p.81-82). Democracy is not a fixed ideal, not an end-goal, but a prefigurative event. In his closing words of *The Politics of Friendship*, Derrida gives an elegant but aporetic definition of democracy to-come: “. . . not only will it remain indefinitely perfectible, hence always insufficient and future, but, belonging to the time of the promise, it will always remain, in each of its future time, to come: even when there is democracy, it never exists, it is never present, it remains the theme of a non-presentable concept” (Derrida, 1997, p.306). From the quotation, one detects an aporia that emerges from the contradictory demands of democracy to-come: it is a promise but at the same time it is an unfolding reality; it is anticipated and yet it is happening in the present. It is what Derrida describes as messianism, to mean that the “*condition of possibility* of the event is also its *condition of impossibility*” (Derrida, 1994, p.82; author’s italics). In *Faith and Knowledge*, messianism becomes “messianicity without messianism,” which names a promise linked to a desire for justice, an ethical demand that attends to a persistent call of opening up to “the possibility of

the other” (Derrida, 2002, p.56; Derrida, 1994, p.92). Democracy, in this sense, is not an ideal, not a political program, or an end-goal that postcolonial nation-building was aiming for. It is more of a process of installing justice where the decision of everyone, regardless of differences, matters. Justice guides the process of democratization that inspires every act of instituting democracy, and yet it is the infinitude of this justice which renders every act inadequate to the concept of democracy (Derrida, 2002, p.57).

New media technologies are indispensable in the constitution of democracy to-come, where justice is always due, if not long overdue. Summoning the demand for justice is effectively accomplished by the iterative capacity of these technologies. They also inscribe the “possibility of the reference to the ‘other’,” which means acknowledging the latter’s unconditional alterity that has to be attended to, if democracy, as a responsibility, is fulfilled (Derrida, 1994, p.94). The mediation of new media technologies brings uncertainties to democracy because representation is an appropriation that always exceeds what is presupposed, prescribed and enforced. In other words, as the link between democracy and justice is established by new media technologies, democracy to-come becomes a struggle for the realization of justice. Much of the memory of inequality has been collected and stored in technological systems of inscription, and so the return of spectres is a way of recalling a promise to be heard and viewed in a new light.

Overall, Derrida’s reformulation of Marx’s spectres does not offer any qualified prospects for emancipation – no structures, no rules for discourse, and none of those goals of communication to orient action and act as supports for undemocratic practices. What Derrida offered are the possibilities of deconstruction. Deconstruction is an essential process of illumination and actualizing a future; it pays attention to the inconsequential, the irrational,

and the “other” that the structures of thought and power have ignored for so long. It solicits resistance that is creative enough to fulfill its own potential out of the available mediating mechanisms for cognition and representation. Thus, as it supplies new vistas for freedom, deconstruction then offers the chance for subalterns to resist their subjection.

Conclusion

I opened this chapter with a discussion on postcolonial theorizing. I have also constructed a genealogy of spectres, in the theories of Marx, Habermas, Adorno, and Derrida, to elucidate their ontology and the aporias that they bring. Aporia means the way in which spectres are oriented to fulfill a promise of the future that is worked out within constricting structures of thought and power. That said, I will return to the issue I raised, that is, my right to theory as a postcolonial subject. In writing the genealogy of spectres, I have joined those who found their voices by engaging with transgressive Western theories. However, rather than seeing it as a kind of writing that departs from a tradition, it seems more like retracing one’s steps, where writing is a return journey that trespasses on everybody else’s field – the theories and their theorists, along with their acolytes and enemies. Along the way, writing has crisscrossed epistemological paths, located history, and traversed territories. In the closing pages of *Beginnings*, Said acknowledges the radical writings that shaped his own and highlights its spectrality when he notes: “Writing is an act of taking hold of language (*prende la parole*) in order to do something, not merely in order to repeat an idea verbatim” (Said, 1975, p.378). For Said, it is not just any writing but an “aggressive sense of writing,” the kind that take(s) the floor, to occupy the foreground” (Said, 1975, p.379). Put in another way, writing is both mutation and subversion of meanings, and, for Derrida, this “rupture of symmetry must propagate its effects in the entire chain of discourse” (Derrida, 1978, p.344). Writing and, by

extension, taking hold of postcolonial discourse, are acts of serial subversion. Therefore, postcolonial theorizing, as a way of “writing-back,” necessarily appropriates a tradition or language, in the same way that it could stand apart from a language or tradition of which it is a part, in order to open up possibilities for itself and for “others” (Said, 1975, p.380).

CHAPTER 2

DEMOCRATIC POSSIBILITIES OF NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Introduction

The genealogy of spectres, in the previous chapter, suggests an approach to understanding a postcolonial society in which new media technologies are coeval to its development. The theories threw light on the concept of spectres, as effects of new media technologies, and also suggested the ways that they can be perceived, incarnated, and assigned a role in history. The context of the narrative is the Philippines, which experienced more than three centuries of colonization and, to date, some six decades of post-independence rule. Since colonial times, new media technologies, as mechanisms of representation, played ambivalent roles in the political scene, and yet, at certain moments in history, they have been regarded as emancipatory because they helped install democracy, even in the most unfavourable of conditions. This chapter extends the genealogical work in Chapter One, by examining theories of the relationship between technology and politics, particularly the effects of techno-representation on society. It also explores theories that foreground the distinctive function of new media technologies as mechanisms of representation.

The relationship between technology and culture has been extensively debated, particularly the latter's ability to sustain its independence from media-techno-scientific organization of modern society (Street, 1992; Barney, 2000; Dean, 2009; Feenberg, 2010; Lovink, 2011). For Marx, technologies are forces of production that embody not only the material activity of a

society but also its prevailing consciousness, including the ideas and representations that make up culture (Marx, 1976, p.492). Technologies comprise machinery, human labour, knowledge, and skills, but they are also shaped by social relations that crystallize around the notion of class (Marx, 1976, p. 493, footnote 4). Thinking about class is to stress its influence upon social agency, or the way in which its consciousness has shaped reality according to particular interests (Wayne, 2003, p.10). Class, along with its concomitant power in society, is a crucial dynamic that is key to the ambivalent effects of technological innovation. It is also where academic debates converge to interrogate the extent to which technology has affirmed or undermined its connection with the social relations of capital (Wayne, 2003, p.39). This suggests that technologies participate in the construction of a consciousness that they constitute.

My aim in this chapter is to come up with a framework to analyze the effects of new media technologies. I will argue that new media technologies offer ways of understanding a particular society in relation to how capitalism has developed. New media technologies relate to the process of rationalization or, more specifically, the reconfiguration of the interaction between machines and humans. They directly impact on culture due to their communicative role in the production and transmission of texts, images, and sounds. Walter Benjamin's famous essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," is a roadmap in theorising new media technologies in a culture that is, as Derrida says, always "in representation" (Derrida, 2007, p.96). Not only does Benjamin look at the shifts in the function of art, he also considers its effects on time, space, audience, and politics (Benjamin, 1968). Benjamin's notion of "aura" is essentially a spatial and temporal relation, but it is also necessarily political. Auratic art expresses a "unique phenomenon of a distance," but this is also undermined by technologies of mass reproduction that are inseparable from the logic of

capitalism, which enforces mass uniformity and equivalence (Benjamin, 1968, p.222-223). In his account of photography, Benjamin showed the way to analyze a composite medium, with its medley of genres and effects, and without losing sight of the specificities and history that instantiate it (Hansen, 2004, p.1; Benjamin, 1968, p.225-228). Benjamin's influence extends throughout the terms and categories of my analysis, particularly his account of the transformation of the image, the messianic potential of mass culture, and the contingency of technological effects.

My use of the term "new" in new media technologies connotes newness as a historical artefact, not a fundamental reality; it designates the characteristic renewability of the media that digital technology shares with all forms of representation. For example, writing, along with the conditions of its possibility, can never be "old" because it is presupposed in all acts of inscription: human expressions, ideas, and technologies of representation. In relation to Benjamin's thoughts, Peters said: "In the beginning, media was new. History came only later" (Peters, 2009, p.26). The word "media" is generally linked to "mass media," with a presumed "publicness," because the media place arguments and representations in the public sphere. However, this sense of "mass" as being public and transparent should be enlarged, to reflect other forms of "publicness." The term media also presupposes technical mediation, which conveys modification, alteration, and repetition to bring a plenitude that signifies accessibility and ubiquity. This suggests that mediation is a process that is both technological and cultural. Lastly, the term "technologies," in its plural form, defines a set of artefacts and practices that humans produce according to certain plans and goals (Feenberg, 2005; Marx, 1976). As emblems of modernity, technologies are assumed to be instrumental, as a result of the commingling of science and capital that both share the logic of rationalization and objectification (Heidegger, 1997, p.25-30; Marx, 1976, p.497, 505-506). For Adorno and

Horkheimer, technologies represent the reduction of reason to instrumentalism, leading to a state of reification, while Habermas confines a technologically useful knowledge within the process of production, thus separating it from moral-practical consciousness in the realm of human interaction (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979 p.120-121, 131; Habermas, 1979, p.147-148).

Common to the work of Marx, Heidegger, Habermas, Adorno, Horkheimer, and Marcuse, is the idea that technologies have presence, which means that machines have material constitution, are overdetermined, and have determining effects on society, and thus are capable of producing new forms of consciousness and practices (Marx, 1976; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979; Habermas, 1979; Heidegger, 1977; Marcuse, 1964). In other words, the presence embodied by new media technologies conveys a rationality infused with the idea of self-identity, self-continuity, and the self-sufficiency of existence. Presence is at the heart of metaphysics; the latter is a system of thinking that builds concepts around an ideal, in an opposition to a subordinate and secondary “other,” that carries the burden of being inferior, lowly, and subsidiary (Derrida, 1997, p. 101-102; Derrida in Ryan, 1982, p.10). Derrida, as I have said, contends that presence exercises domination by positing superiority thus suppressing difference. However, it is also through presence that difference is solicited and presence is subverted. Thus, if technologies are set in the contexts of politics and democracy in society, they establish a presence that is a condition of possibility, becoming at once the force of domination and the matrix of new forms of political expression.

Technologies and society reference each other, not in a relation of opposition but one of infinitely constitutive solicitation. First, the relationship determines their concrete manifestation, or being empirical, and second, it brings the possibility of transcendence. As

mentioned, the term “new media technologies,” is a composite concept but its effects cannot be subject to synthesis or stipulative definition that might diminish the lexical and conceptual value of either term. Instead of fixing the meaning, the tension of the combined terms should be allowed to surface. In other words the irreducibility of the concept—to political, technical, discursive, and social imperatives -- has to be recognized in any account of new media technologies in society. The tension is called *aporia*, which refers to a concept or condition overdetermined by language and social practices (Derrida, 1993, p.7). In *Aporia*, Derrida designates “aporia” as “untranslatable sentence” experiencing an “unstable multiplicity” (Derrida, 1993, p.9). Given this semantic seriality, the *aporia* designates what is not identical, or “other,” to itself, and “always exceeds meaning and the pure discursivity of meaning” as it opens itself up to the “hospitality of difference from itself or of a difference with itself” (Derrida, 1993, p.10). Meanings, as concepts, hint at tension or dilemma, but the thought that the same meanings also reorient the concepts is crucial, as this is a condition of traversal and transgression of borders and demarcations (Derrida, 1993, p.14-15). *Aporia* is a way of thinking about the political, while its impossibility is a condition of political judgment (Beardsworth, 2006, p.4). An *aporia* interrupts and suspends rules, practices, and discourses of hierarchical order so that a new decision may take place (Wortham, 2010, p.14). What makes translatability in *aporia* difficult is the condition of responsibility and decision that is required. To be responsible is to follow the rules but to decide, as a matter of duty, is to break the rules, or to be without rules (Derrida, 1993, p.17). Thus, an *aporia* in the discourse of technology at once sets the limit and undermines such a limit, leading to a condition that precipitates political judgment (Beardsworth, 1996, p.xiv; Street, 1992, p.9).

There are several *aporias* that can be thought about in the relationship between technology and culture in the Philippines that will be highlighted in the following chapters. The first

aporia has to do with negotiating the complexity and specificity of technologically mediated representations within the context of the totalizing axioms of communicative democracy. The tension exists in the public sphere that imposes the criteria of rationality among the interlocutors, and this is likely to exclude those considered “irrational.” The second aporia resides in the forces of production that set the course of transforming society. Within a postcolonial context, this refers to the project of modernization with a promise of progress but having deleterious and reifying consequences arising from a particular deployment of technology, political power, and the exploitation of human labour. The third aporia is about the global dimension of this exploitation and reification, which reflects the hierarchies and power differentials of countries within a capitalist order. There is a danger that cosmopolitanism and the discourse of global village, with their promise of connectivity, will supply exploitation, immiseration and commodification of subordinate cultures. The question now is this: why is the relationship between culture and technology aporetic?

In his interpretative work on deconstruction and technology, Bernard Stiegler contends that human societies are founded on the constitutive instability of the relationship between technologies and culture (Stiegler, 1998). In *Technics and Time I*, Stiegler argues that culture, as the mediation of human experience, is radically transformed by mediatic technology that alters the experience of time and space. The heart of technology is technicization, which is a process that enables the abstraction, calculation, and proliferation of symbols. Technicization, according to Stiegler, results in the demise of memory, loss of spontaneity, and the decline of eidetic intentionality (Stiegler, 1998, p.2-3). However it is also through technicization that societies have materially developed, as rationalization underlies the growth of capitalism and the accompanying political structures. Up to this point, many theories have analyzed technicization as domination and the perversion of human freedom. Derrida and Stiegler did

not deny this reification. However, as far as deconstruction is concerned, this understanding of technology appears limited to seeing only the ends and means, or the instrumentality that has marked technology's evolution and function. What is missed out are the social factors, which have been increasingly difficult to determine, in the light of recent techno-scientific growth (Stiegler, 1998, p.14). Stiegler locates a tension between technology and culture in the speed of technological growth that is not the same as the rhythm of cultural evolution. A tension ensues in this "advance and delay," anticipating disjuncture, breakdown, and undecidability that could lead to the disruption of the experience of space and time. What prevents Stiegler's analysis from falling into technological determinism is his adherence to deconstruction, as shown by his recognition that social relations are behind the territorialisation and temporalization arising from a relationship between technology and culture (Stiegler, 1998, p.17). Stiegler acknowledges Derrida's notion of undecidability, presupposed in an aporia, which makes full fidelity, to either technology or culture, impossible. The notion of undecidability frees technological analysis from being limited to the empirical or transcendental. Stiegler, however, executes a subtle turn from Derrida, when he says that aporia could release a new form of intelligibility and reflexivity from historically specific technological mediation (Stiegler, 2002, p.161-163). While Derrida allows an aporia to remain open to the possibility of the future, Stiegler sees the aporia in terms of how technology alters society's relation to time and space, the future, the past, and present (Stiegler, 2002, p.151). Coupled with a "political will," technology has the capacity to initiate some forms of political intervention. Richard Beardsworth, who followed Stiegler's arguments, notes that the latter argues for certain "specificity" of technology, which means a "necessary political dimension" to the undecidable future (Beardsworth, 2006, p.14; Stiegler, 2002, p.151-153). Stiegler pursues the same proposition in *Technics and Time 2*, where he

said that technicization enables the massive reproduction of temporal objects, and this allows the synchronization of consciousness of the multitude (Stiegler, 2009, p.241). In *Technics and Time 3*, Stiegler returns to the same argument when he wrote about the far-reaching effects of “hyper-reproducibility” through digitization. He says “. . . to describe is to reproduce, the result would be that a description would always also be a transformation: there is no such thing as constativity; there is always, in some respect, performativity” (Stiegler, 2011, p.218).

Derrida’s work on new media technologies is prescient and insightful, as he brings together the reciprocal tension of their material constitution and transcendental orientation. Recall that in *Spectres of Marx* Derrida talks about deconstruction in the light of an unprecedented growth in the use of new media technologies in the world, as part of the accelerated expansion of capitalism, otherwise known as globalization (Derrida, 1994, p.98). Derrida considers technological mediation as representation of freedom, political recognition and desire when he explored the relationship between technologies and political emancipation as an aporia. This spectral logic extends time and space in order to exceed the reality of the present. It also mobilizes the metaphorical capacity of spectres to communicate meanings – as a frame or context in itself. Derrida is not keen to bind technology to any political orientation but allows it to give rise to its own aporias, messianic possibilities, and spectres. On the other hand, Stiegler explicitly entertains an emancipatory impulse in new media technologies through a technical reduction of spectres (Stiegler, 2009, p.6; Bradley, 2006, p.25-26). In this sense, the power of spectres, as technical effects of representation, lies in their capacity to induce political judgement, or articulate a certain political orientation in aporia. As Richard Beardsworth puts it: “. . . aporia is the very locus in which the political force of deconstruction is to be found” (Beardsworth, 1996, p.xiv). Aporias, which resonate with what Stiegler called disorientation and malaise, solicit political reflection that comes after an

engagement with a technologically mediated process, or with the logic of the technical process, that, by itself, expresses an irreducible tension between technology and society (Stiegler, 2009, p.7). This tension opens up a space of difference between technology and society, where modification and transformation are possible. This space functions as a realm of promise that haunts speaking positions and political practices. The haunting has figured separately in Derrida and Stiegler's theories on new media technologies, albeit with subtle variations that I will negotiate as I move along. The common ground between them is that an aporia anticipates technical intervention as it introduces an impasse, indecision, and doubts over an event or an idea, thus undermining the ideologies of techno-scientific progress. However, I will also argue that it is useful to examine aporias within an identifiable context as a starting point in an analysis of technology, because the spectres' existence demands the articulation of a certain persistent demand. Moreover, a particular historical period generates its own spectres, and conjures up spectres from the past. This chapter will look at the spectral possibilities of new media technologies, particularly how they provoke and disrupt certain interpretations of a reality. The account foreshadows the following chapter while the fundamental questions are: What are the political possibilities of new media technologies? What are the effects of new media technologies when they confront the aporias of postcolonial modernization, democracy, justice, and identity?

2.1 Spectro-analysis of New Media Technologies in the Public Sphere

This section will look at the effects of new media technologies on the democratic orientation of the public sphere. These effects will be seen through the notion of spectrality that was discussed in the previous chapter, in the work of Habermas, Adorno, and Derrida. As I will argue, there is no clear-cut association between information and democracy, technology and

culture, discourse and freedom in the analysis of technological representation in the public sphere. Any theoretical account of new media technologies has to explore the limits and the potential that the relationship brings. In the discussion that follows, I will refer back to the spectres that have the capacity to transform the public sphere. The latter will also be discussed as to how it could become a matrix for spectres. Overall, this section seeks an answer to the question: Given the aporetic nature of their effects, how might new media technologies bring about a democratic transformation of the public sphere?

The public sphere is a democratic ideal invoked in debates around nation, democracy and new media technologies. Thus attention has been given to the ways that it has established a political culture that considers the public sphere as a space where subalterns can speak and represent themselves (Sassi, 2001, p.100-101). A democratic culture requires a public, or people that come together, discuss issues, and hold the government in check. In Western democracies, this chance is sustained by mediation of new media technologies that are considered “infrastructures” of the public sphere (Butsch, 2007, p.9). The nature of infrastructures is often thought as facilitative and apparent but, in deconstruction, infrastructures represent the unaccounted and hidden concepts and meanings that support a larger idea (Gasche, 1986, p.147). The public sphere is primarily viewed from a rationalist standpoint, from the position that Habermas regarded as a space to exercise the public use of reason. This notion of publicness has its roots in the Enlightenment and in Habermas’s depiction of eighteenth century Europe, where the bourgeoisie was consolidating its class rule to counter the feudalistic aristocracy and thus needed institutional support to strengthen the new hegemony (Habermas, 1989, p.102-129). With the emergence of agonistic publics and globalizing markets, Habermas tried to redefine the parameters of the public sphere but he remains cautious of speaking positions that refuse to admit rationalizing goals. The

democratic culture of the public sphere, as defined by Habermas, demands the recognition of reasonable claims of others that have to be rendered with transparent sincerity. If the claims are opaque, due to ambiguous language and concealed purpose, which Habermas has indicated deconstruction with, then there is a breakdown of communication that could ignite resentment, miscommunication, and political extremism (Habermas, 1987, p.183-184). Habermas thinks that deconstruction's disregard of intersubjective consensus, by allowing *all* difference to come into play, risks spawning deep social tension and destructiveness.

Habermas's admonition is uncharitable. Derrida's solicitation of difference is not an implicit assent to anarchy or totalitarianism that could tame the volatility of differences, nor is it simply a privileging of difference for its own sake. Rather, it is a critique of the exclusiveness that clings to procedural rationality, which is exemplified by Habermas's notion of the institutional organization of the public sphere. In *The Other Heading*, Derrida indirectly examines exclusion in the public sphere when he expounded the formation of public opinion. Derrida termed public opinion the "silhouette of a phantom," which speaks for someone, and is also its own representation (Derrida, 1992, p.84-85). However an opinion is never sufficient to itself because it "breathes, deliberates and decides" according to other "rhythms" and exceeds what it delimits and claims. With new media technologies as purveyors of public opinion, there is a chance that the latter would generate "other" views and opinions (Derrida, 1992, p.97-98). Thus the technological mediation of public opinion expands the space in which the publicness of an opinion can be formed, and this allows the articulation of voices that are excluded from institutional representation. Habermas, however, is distrustful of new media technologies' role in the formation of public opinion. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas argues: "The world fashioned by the mass media is a public sphere in appearance only" (Habermas, 1989, p.171). This remark hints at

Habermas's misgivings about mediated representation, because he placed primacy upon face-to-face interaction in the public sphere and procedural representation in politics. It also betrays his distrust of radical democracy and his fear of the irrational "other." Locked in its Habermasian ideal, politics in the public sphere could only be exclusionary and circumscribed. A similar orientation of 'rational' reason is found in Habermas's theory of communicative action where universal pragmatics is at work. In this case, communication has to be free of distortion, competent, mutually understood, and generative of intersubjectivity (Habermas, 1984). This communication process tends to privilege direct and unmediated interaction, or the discursive analogues of such dialogical exchange like the book or letter. However public spheres, in various contexts where they have been applied, have largely been technologically mediated realms, where representational technologies are deployed to reach the intended publics and to foster their rational interactions (Butsch, 2007, p.2). Communicative action, even if limited to the quotidian, is not wholly dyadic and face-to-face. As publicness is also presumed in new media technologies, they also can respond to diverse public and give voice to the unrepresented. It is not that these technologies are better than face-to-face interaction; rather they are "radically different" and have unknowable effects on the politics in the public sphere (Sassi, 2001, p.102).

What now needs elucidation is how new media technologies correspond to or diverge from the democratic culture of the public sphere, and how their practice leads to other ways of imagining a public sphere. In the previous chapter, I argued that the public sphere solicits spectres, in the same manner that new media technologies do, through an engagement with, and the process of articulation of, persistent and ineffaceable demands. In the introduction to *The Phantom Public Sphere*, Bruce Robbins underlines the spectral impulse of the public sphere and proposes to address the aporia of representation in the public sphere. Spectrality

occurs through expansion of deliberative spaces, discourses and representation in order to address the “unfinished business of imagining postmodern democracy” that responds to the “irreducible diversity (and new connectedness) of identity politics” (Robbins, 1993, p.xiii). The phrase “unfinished business” alludes to the spectral metaphor, in which the communicative function of a ghost is to speak to the living (Davis, 2007, p.1-2). In deconstruction, spectral intervention functions as a frame of reference and a hypothetical way of reading in order to destabilize the public sphere (Davis, 2007, p.1-2). It also signals the technological turn in the discourse of the public sphere, as the metaphor of spectres designates the effects of new media technologies. These effects destabilize deliberation in the public sphere and undermine its politics. While this hints at political agency, I will offer a slightly different intervention in the spectralization of the public sphere by registering the crucial issue of representation. This intervention aims to foreground the function of the public sphere in colonial and postcolonial epochs that are many times removed from the democratic contexts that Habermas had in mind.

“One might say then that we are in representation. I repeat. One might say then that we are in representation.” Thus, said Derrida, in his introductory remarks in *Envoi*, the repetition being the double “yeses” that not only conveys an infinite affirmation but the sense that second “yes” summons the first, thus underscoring the logic of iteration in representation (Derrida, 2007, p.95). Whether a process or a product of a process, representation is all about positing a presence, or standing in for something that is absent but could be rendered present in the here and now (Webb, 2009; Derrida, 2007; Thomassen, 2006; Pitkin, 1967). Representation operates in the logic of iteration, which is simultaneously reiteration and alteration (Derrida, 2007, p.106). In deconstruction, iteration is what undermines Western metaphysics, which privileges presence over absence, and disavows the secondary term in favour of the first one

within a binary, and which, most of the time, has suppositions and formulations that are almost unquestioned (Ryan, 1982, p.11-12). When a representation is built around the principles of Western metaphysics, it perpetuates the rationality, repressions, and domination that are derived from a certain conceptual order, or ideology (Derrida, 1997, p.131). However the effects of repeating codes, categories, or convention render a representation entirely different (Ryan, 1982, p.30). In a condition where representation dominates and excludes an individual, group, or discourse, the effects of iteration have the capacity to solicit specific subjectivities and agencies.

The important, if not radical, point that Derrida's notion of representation posits is that presence, either as thought or as being, cannot be primordial or stable, because it is an effect of differentiation. In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida contends that meanings are produced through infinite differentiation, and not the difference between two terms. This differentiation is a parallel relation that creates a space in which other senses of the term or thing can be thought anew (Derrida, 1997, 62-64). With difference, new meanings emerge because the binary, in which one term or category subordinates the other, is abandoned when the relation of domination is brought to light by the very process of meaning making. Derrida extrapolates the tension between speech and writing, and applies it to the concept of sign, which consists of the signified and signifier. Signs can never be pure and stable because they emerged out of difference and are contaminated by what preceded them (Spivak, 1997, xi-xii). This means that binaries, hierarchies, and origination of meanings can be undermined by the process that sustains them, that is, by the multiplication of meanings that could exceed or overrun semantic strongholds (Derrida, 1997, p.7). Differentiation is made possible by redoubling, repetition, and alterity, which are also forms of representation. With iteration, representation can give rise to something which is no longer what it originally represents, hence posing a

challenge to conventional modes of representation supported by structures of power (Spivak, 1997, p.xii-xiii). Thus representation, which frames interaction in the public sphere, presents a challenge to democratic practice. For in conditions where the privileging of presence translates to exclusion in a narrower sense and domination in a larger sense, the seemingly inconsequential gesture of iteration constantly interrupts the discursive monologue of hegemony.

Iteration does not affirm; it subverts. In *Derridabase*, Geoffrey Bennington notes that, for Derrida, feminism is a term not insulated from “debasement and idealization,” and it also tends to homogenize women’s struggles and neglect particular experiences (Bennington, 1993, p.205; Deutscher, 2005, p.50). Femininity becomes the etymological basis of feminism, and the two concepts respectively reflect the empirical and transcendental as co-dependent terms that function almost like binaries (Bennington, 1993, p.205-206). For Derrida, feminism repeats the implicit effects of femininity within the confines of an extended, but almost imperceptible, polar opposition. It is not that feminism cannot claim validity as a concept; rather, “femininity” remains to be the controlling idea that keeps the second term beholden to the first. To deconstruct this relationship, one does not simply negate the difference of the first term (femininity) but to expose the sense of dependence, exclusion and violence that sustained the binary (Bennington, 1993, p.206, 213). Moreover, deconstruction also homes in on “femininity,” which certainly exceeds what has been defined by what Derrida termed “phallogocentric” discourse (Bennington, 1993, p.207). The feminine is not a predetermined representation but, in fact, overdetermined as it is contaminated by traces, differences, and spectres of its origination. Thus, the “feminine,” like feminism, always risks returning to the hermeneutical organization of sexual differences, and so every time it is invoked and

enunciated, it undermines its own meaning and betrays its fallibility (as, of course, does patriarchy). Deconstruction, in this sense, is relentless, sparing no category in its inquiry.

Bennington's interrogation of feminism corresponds to the construction of racism that will be discussed in the account of colonialism in the next chapter. Racism is structurally analogous to feminism, that is, a social construction in which representations are assigned with anthropological and historical justifications. Race is a binary in which categories rely on the presumption of superiority that is also maintained as a universal ideology. Racism, as a discourse, is rooted in domination expressed in the language of universality, where race transcends various forms of domination and social formation, to become an essentialist discourse (San Juan, 2007, p.48). The latter is what underlies racial and racist stereotypes whose function is to generalize and categorize humans and their history. Said's notion of Orientalism encapsulates the damaging xenophobic judgments and taxonomic stereotypes imposed on certain peoples and their culture that, when repeated, multiply themselves. Etienne Balibar posits that in the construction of race, "culture can also function like a nature," that purports racial belonging and naturalizes racial prejudices (Balibar, 1991, p.22). This construction appears as a self-validating and perpetuating account of the universalizing racial categories that mark the "other." However, as with feminism, the reiteration of racist categories and racial stereotypes presupposes aporia, which is a space of conjecture that carries the tension of racial claims. The latter, when retold and repeated, are destined to undermine their claim of authenticity.

Discourses, which are structurally analogous to feminism and racism, have aporetic effects on the public sphere. The Habermasian public sphere is a realm of representation where presence has to conform to criticisable points of appropriateness, truthfulness and sincerity, and should

aim to reach consensus. The assurance of deliberation somehow provides a chance to register criticism. However while the boundaries of criticism and deliberation are not established in terms of content, their universal goal, which is rational consensus, is a priority. Thus critical convergence is limited to validity claims, or the criticisable points of particular representations, and so the language and structures of power that are articulated have remained unchallenged (Goode, 2006, p.136). In a colonial context, for instance, the dominant representation presupposes the assimilation of identities to a single culture that of the colonizer's that posits a prior claim over meaning and identity. Arguing over the validity claims of colonial domination may have its merits but the nature of originary presence, being hegemonic and manipulative, contrives to make the oppression bearable, if not invisible. The goal of consensus in a colonial context is generally secured through deception or repression. Thus communicative action cannot be the only route to democratic representation in the public sphere.

Derrida's deconstructive politics guarantees nothing by way of democracy or rational consensus, but simply opens up the public sphere to all possible modes and mechanisms of representation by not privileging any discourse, conceptual order, or procedures of deliberation. There is a better chance for democracy to flourish when it is not driven to reach formal consensus and observe speech rules, but is allowed to stage myriad representations, even those that are what Habermas would regard as simply irrational. Certainly, the public sphere will be vulnerable to disruptions and aporias but these gestures, by themselves, are also forms of representation. New media technologies are mechanisms that could accommodate immense possibilities of representation as their logic is also that of iteration. They open up the chance to transmit the representations that Stigler calls "tertiary memory," which is a memory beyond the lifeworld and intersubjectivity but is still part of the past although one can

experience it vicariously (Stiegler, 2011, p.206). With new media technologies, the public sphere becomes crucial to the scene of representation because it permits the practice of democratic culture. New media technologies expand the virtual frontiers of the public sphere, in the sense that the public sphere overcomes spatial, temporal, and representational limitations. In other words, the public sphere, as a realm of representation, is radically transformed by the mediative function of new media technologies.

Mediation, which is inherent to the convention of new media technologies, is replete with possibilities to modify representation. This has been examined by critical theorists like Walter Benjamin, in his work on technological production and reception of art, and Theodor Adorno and Marx Horkheimer in their work on the culture industry, which is a shorthand for new media technologies that embody the ideology, myths and illusions of capitalism. Mediation is the central theme in Walter Benjamin's interpretation of photography, film and the visual arts, especially in his essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. The essay shows the way to interpret simulation and replication in new media technologies that have profound effects on social consciousness and relations (Benjamin, 2008, p.14). Auratic art, because of its sense of distance and detachment, exerts a mysterious, hegemonic power over its audience (Benjamin, 2008, p.23). However the technologies of production and reproduction of artistic genres shatter the elitist and fetishist regard over a work of art by detaching it from the sphere of tradition to be viewed in other ways – spatially and epistemologically (Benjamin, 2008, p.22; Jennings, 2008, p.15). The techniques of cultural reproduction annul the spatio-temporal barriers of uniqueness thus subverting traditional and restrictive functions (Benjamin, 1968, p.244). The technological mediation of auratic objects of art and the emergence of film as a kinaesthetic mode of representation, yields emancipatory potential that could be seized by human agency (Benjamin, 2008, p.23). Mediation also leaves

an imprint on the work of art, in the manner that new media technologies reveal the historical epoch in which art exists. It also discloses a “mode of perception” that arises from a certain period, particularly the historical basis of the aura (Benjamin, 2008, p.24). Benjamin sees the superimposition of the past and present in new media technologies in repetition and replication, which re-store the past in the present, creating cinematic-like effects, where time is in flux and memory is spectral (Benjamin, 1968, p.23, 221). Indeed this mediation is caught up in the complexities of technological codes and capitalism’s logic but, for Benjamin, it is the principal site of representational strategies, the reason why he sees in popular representational technologies, photography among them, a canvas of political possibilities (Benjamin, 2008, p.24; Caygill, 1998, p.93-94).

What the preceding arguments have shown is that these are possibilities of transforming the public sphere through the process of representation that supplies presence, meanings, and mediation, in which new media technologies are crucial to their staging. New media technologies are more than technical means to realize representation, as they also constitute the ideology of representation. In the public sphere, issues of political representation can be treated as technological issues in terms of their logic of iteration. With the latter, I mean that technological rationality operates in the process of political representation and negotiates the aporia of spontaneity and agency. However there is a danger that representation, being ideological, serves to maintain hegemony and curtails the process of representation in the public sphere. It is to these antinomies of transformation that I will turn to in the next section.

2.2 Reification and Representation

The previous section sets up an argument about the contradictory ways in which new media technologies function as mechanisms of representation that could open up possibilities for political action and new modes of sociality. The question now is this: what are the ways in which the transformative possibilities, offered by new media technologies within the public sphere, could be blocked? The question will be of particular importance when I come to look at the effects of new media technologies in the postcolonial context. This section highlights the nature of domination in representation and the structures of power in language and communication that impose relations of subordination. These conditions manifest in the public sphere when it is colonized by a dominant ideology, economic control, and a rationality that is oriented toward functional politics. The following arguments will address how the relationship between new media technologies and socio-economic relations prevent individuals from enjoying the material rewards of their labours and realizing their potential. In a collectivity, this means the absence of democracy and of the chance of representation for subalterns. However, I will also argue that the reproduction of hegemony provokes spectres and the chance of democracy to come.

Habermas's theory of the public sphere gave the latter rational grounding, by making it a rule-governed space for democratic action. The public sphere functions alongside institutions of formal representation. It operates on the premise of general neutrality in which various particular interests and concerns can be discussed democratically. In other words, specific demands have to connect with universalized interests so that social cohesion is maintained. In this regard, Habermas assigned new media technologies the regulative function of connecting the desires and ethical resources of each individual with the rational desire of others (Sassi,

2001, p.102). This is a Kantian postulation that runs in practically all of Habermas's work, but especially in his theory of the public sphere. It holds that intuitions, sensations and desires must be conjoined with claims that are common to all. Representations, which operate in the public sphere, are seen as acts of practical reason responding to an independent sphere, which is grounded on intersubjective categories that supply logical judgments. The reasoning mind relies not on contingent facts but on frameworks available to everyone. For Kant, the primacy of reason bears on the moral outlook, or the common good, from which political actions proceed, and from where the notion of freedom emanates (Kant, 1998, p.575-578).

Habermas, however, stood Kant's idea of universality on its head when he sketched his theory of communicative action (Regh, 1994, p.1; Habermas, 1993, p.326). Communicative action has superseded the historical construction of the public sphere by providing a transhistorical grounding through which individuals can find moral bases for working together (Regh, 1994, p.1). Unlike Kant's monological approach, wherein maxims are tested through reflection, Habermas's universality is expressed through rational consensus forged out of interaction that promotes shared understanding through rational discourse (Habermas, 1993, p.323-326). Communicative rationality is premised on the idea that truth, freedom and justice are anticipated in every discursive interaction (Habermas in McCarthy, 1984, p.308). What Habermas termed communicative action is a process wherein individuals coordinate their actions consensually through an agreement that they have reached intersubjectively (Habermas, 1990, p.58). Communicative action has a regulative element because it binds individuals to take part in a discourse that presupposes a consensus (Habermas, 1990, p.53; Thomassen, 2010 p.89). Truth, according to Habermas, invariably springs from rational consensus; it is not dependent on the assertion that something is true but on a claim that has to be redeemed discursively. Truth, in communicative action, relies on argumentative reasoning

that considers rational consensus as the immanent purpose of the social. In this way, consensus forged out of a discourse is also a procedure to attain universality in interaction. Habermas believes in the capacity of individuals to reach a rationally motivated agreement while the flexibility of the rules of discourse can accommodate and modify individual perspectives. Thus, it can be argued that Habermas's undue belief in the predominance of reason precludes adequate recognition of technological and ideological constraints to free communication in the public sphere. There are effects of universalizing interactions that remain unaccounted for in the theory of the public sphere and which are inseparable from existing social relations. Spectres are among those unexamined effects.

The problem of universality in communicative action arises when there are irreconcilable interests that make agreements contingent or forced to foster harmony. Dissension, in fact, strengthens the argument for rational discourse that presupposes consensus in every interaction (Mouffe, 1996, p.2, 9). Habermas himself appears to have recognized the difficulty of resolving disputes among participants in a discourse whose positions are divergent, if not "irrational" (Habermas, 1996, p.427-30). This raises the question of the extent to which such "irrationality" is recognized in Habermas's version of democracy, and of how it responds to questions of inclusion, representation, and difference – the issues that Adorno's negative dialectics and Derrida's deconstructive politics are oriented to. Through his critique of identity thinking, Adorno creates a paradigm of how a concept or an ideal, like democracy, is restricted by the historical process, whose contradictions it has also reproduced. Democracy, for Adorno, is about people making decisions about their world, and yet it appears that the practice of democracy also prevents them from doing so. This is a result of what Adorno termed "self-alienation," which describes the process where "people, in their societal role, are not identical with what they are as immediate, living people" (Adorno, 1998, p.296).

Alienation, for Adorno, is an outgrowth of reification, but it is more than just a disquieting condition in a capitalist society.

Reification names a pathological and coercive condition that arises from the realm of exchange value, in which objects are cut off from the sociohistorical process of their production, as they take on abstract exchange value (Adorno, 2005, p.200; Cook, 2004, p.40; Marx, 1976, 160-164). As a mode of identity thinking, reification broadly refers to the effacement of heterogeneity, a condition wherein incommensurable objects and individuals become identical when subjected to relations of exchange (Adorno, 1973 p.148-151; Jay, 1984, p.68; Buck-Morss, 1977, p.26). Standardization and sameness are also at work in this mode of domination. The underlying principle is imputed equivalence, which extends to all aspects of the social, thereby restraining autonomy, spontaneity and asymmetry. For Adorno, discussion of the public sphere reflects the instrumental organization of the social totality as this is structured by the relations of production that served to justify the economy of violence imposed upon individuals (Adorno, 1998, p.119, 120).

If an object is abstracted from the conditions of its production as exchange value, this does not only deprive the object of its specificity (use value) but also hides from the buyer the real conditions of its production (Marx, 1976, 164-165). Applied analogically to the communicative action of individuals in the public sphere, this form of reification leads to a divorce of the signifier (communicative action) from the signified (democracy), a process in which the signifier overwhelms and moves independently from the signified. The irony cannot be missed here – that the very same guarantee of free expression actually cancels such freedom. Adorno sums it up: “The right to freely express one’s opinion presumes an identity of the individual and his consciousness with the rational general interest, an identity that is

hindered in the very world in which it is formally viewed as a given” (Adorno, 1998, p.119). Adorno’s critique of reification demonstrates the valorization of the universal interest in economy, politics and subjective domains, and the negation of particular (Adorno, 1998, p.121-122). Since identity thinking is central to human experience, and ingrained in the consciousness that uses it, reification is present in the everydayness of human transactions. Thus, Adorno’s thoughts on reification bring up a condition of unremitting regression because certain determinations of power are always there to counteract the emancipatory imagination.

Although he did not directly engage with the concept of reification, Derrida echoes Adorno’s assessment of democratic politics’ ruination when it is caught up with totalizing values and idealized patterns of representation. Timothy Bewes remarked that this non-engagement stems from Derrida’s fear of binaries and dominant discourses lurking within the term (Bewes, 2002, p.10-11). However I agree with Bewes’s observation that reification is actually as nuanced as any deconstructive term because it has an “arsenal of elaborate metaphors and concepts” (Bewes, 2002, p.11). What could be reification for Derrida is the condition of democracy, formed around a regulative idea, which operates through a homogenizing calculability that reduces people to numbers and sameness (Derrida, 1997, p.105-6). Reification can also be deduced from Derrida’s designation of restricted economy in *Writing and Difference*. Restricted economy names a condition of existence which is not unlike the instrumental logic of commodification that mainly concerns itself with the value of commodities and their circulation (Derrida, 1978, p.343). In other words, it is an economy reducible to calculation of costs and risks (Cazeaux, 2007, p.4; Derrida, 2002, p.85-87). What is being circulated in this economy is knowledge that is absolute, homogenizing and intolerant of excess; what it aims for is the preservation of formal procedures and unquestioned unities (Derrida, 1978, p. 344 -345). Another feature of a restricted economy is the neutrality

expressed as part of the sovereign will, which actually masks a refusal to deal with diversity and specificities (Derrida, 1978, p.346). Thus the discourse of normativity that arises from a restricted economy is not only limiting but also intolerant of heterogeneity (Derrida, 1978, p.348-350). In all, restricted economy is the underside of democracy's ethical demand, because it privileges closure over openness.

What then is the fate of democracy in the mediated public sphere if reification reigns and constantly denigrates the multiplicity of things? Or stated differently, is reification a transcendental feature of all social relations? The Habermasian solution to damaged sociality is to appeal to laws that derived their legitimacy from the presumed rationality of intersubjective action. Laws are considered products of rational deliberation, or expressive of reason and the will of citizens themselves. Discourse has to acquire some consistency and stability; it should be rooted in the established rationally that the laws express (Thomassen, 2010, p.120-5). However, Habermas does not concede that reification has come to dominate the public sphere, even though interlocutors may or may not be aware of the controlling ideology.

Reification, according to Habermas, is the penetration of the system imperatives of money and power into the symbolic realm, which is the lifeworld, where individuals are treated as a passive audience rather than a deliberative public. This condition gives rise to a fragmented consciousness in which individuals cannot discern their own alienation and they have to rely on the pronouncements of experts (Habermas, 1987, p.355-356). By this route, Habermas is not giving in to the total command of reification, although his theory is unclear about who should be the agents of resistance. New media technologies would not fit that role because of the ambivalence of their purpose. This stance once more reveals Habermas's predilection for

institutionalized or formal representation and the effectiveness of the public sphere to preside over discussions and consensus formation. He retains a reformist's disposition in his belief that society can still function and undergo differentiation without the need to end capitalism because, after all, freedom inheres in every communicative attempt to secure mutual understanding (Habermas, 2006, p.122-123). However, I maintain that one can never be optimistic about the possibility of a genuinely dialogical interaction, under conditions of technological mediation, which retained their complicity with the imperatives of capital accumulation.

Unlike Habermas, Adorno's politics is not directly associated with democratic practice and yet his theories are replete with "change-causing gestures," befitting the Frankfurt School's critical tradition (Buck-Morss, 1977, p.33,36). Adorno's negative dialectic demystifies ideological representation by drawing attention to its false equivalence, thus exposing reification (Buck-Morss, 1977, p. 36). Negative dialectic reveals falsely derived consensus and inspires a way of overcoming worn-out, exclusionary, and determinate concepts (Morris, 2001, p.42). Thus, a critical tension emerges from rethinking the relationship of opposites and equivalents. Adorno's negative dialectics is a critical force in itself, and yet we are not quite clear how the reversals in negative dialectics could become something like a politically transformative gesture aimed at dissolving reified categories. For one, the reified categories are stripped of their utopian impulse, and would remain reified for as long as the societal structures that occasioned them are intact. However, I would like to offer a deconstructive gesture in analysing reified categories, in a way foreshadowing my use of Derrida's thought to make sense of the Philippines' experience of colonial and postcolonial domination. I believe that reified categories, that signify empirical and transcendental states, undergo a sort of sedimentation, leaving in their wake the traces and spectres of themselves, embodied in

meanings, experiences, and history. These spectres are capable of revealing the suppressed utopian imagination in them, when summoned to re-present themselves.

I mentioned in the previous chapter that Derrida extends Adorno's negative dialectics to bear on democratic practice, and that this proved useful for showing the limits of Habermas's normative politics. This critical strategy emerges in Derrida's account of justice and representation, and his idea of the spectral presence of the unrepresentable that is considered irrational by Habermasian standards. Derrida's spectre was inspired by Marx's spectre of communism that haunts the capitalist order, but Derrida also used the term to affirm what is empirical and transcendental in new media technologies. The empirical element refers to the mechanical constitution of the media while the transcendental signifies their representational potential. The dual possibilities of the effects of new media technologies define their spectrality. These possibilities converge in a form of representation that has undergone the process of technicization, where it becomes complex, accessible and ubiquitous. Both are forms of inscription, or the expressions of writing and the conditions of their possibility. What spectrality brings to the scene is the idea that the technical and symbolic senses of representation exhibit effects replete with transformative possibilities.

In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida's literary allusion to *Hamlet* in the phrase "the time is out of joint," signals two things relevant to effects of new media technologies: first, the disruption of temporality, second, the attention to an ethico-political responsibility (Derrida, 1994, p.10-19). In Chapter 1, I argued that spectres are technological effects of representation. However, the effects are not merely mechanical, they are also subjective. This means that spectres are inseparable from the logic of new media technologies, as they also discharge representational function. Spectres are irreducible to their technical determination because they arise from the

consciousness, knowledge and ethical demands of their time. The spectral moment inheres in the practice of efficiency and repeatability. These values are what underlie the acceleration in production, transmission, and consumption of meanings that are instantiated in new media technologies (Derrida, 1978). Spectres are solicited through iteration, which aims to produce uniformity and stability but, ironically, engenders instability, ambiguity, and differentiation (Derrida, 1994, p.212-3; Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.72; Stiegler, 2011, p.215). Derrida talks about spectres as having a “visor effect,” which suggests that they haunt the living as the trace of a forgotten violence that has to be set right (Derrida, 1994, p.6). Derrida highlighted this spectral mission when he said: “the ghost looks at or watches us, the ghost concerns us . . . not simply someone we see coming back, it is someone by whom we feel ourselves watched, observed and surveyed . . .” (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.120). The “visor effect” also refers to spectres’ capacity to be among institutions, cultures, technologies and politics. This capacity signifies the radical iteration and simulation that accompany representation. Spectres bring deterritorialization, dislocation, and dispossession (Derrida, 2002, p.80; Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.79).

With iteration as the underlying logic of spectres, representation becomes a process of deciding and thinking about the future, or what is to come. This chance of the future is what Derrida calls as “messianicity without a messiah,” to describe the political possibilities residing in a conscious collectivity (Derrida, 2006, p.269). What this economy of redemption introduces is, in Derrida’s words, “an opening to the future or to the coming of the other as the advent of justice but without the horizon of expectation and without prophetic prefiguration” (Derrida, 2002, p. 56). Derrida’s turn to theology, in his concept of messianicity, reveals his preference for an aporia, which is a particular form of messianism that cannot be reduced to an empirical event or context, and to an absolute and final futurity

(Derrida, 2002, p.98). Derrida's notion of messianicity is derived from the Judaeo-Christian tradition of anticipating the Messiah that is analogous to the secular act of unconditionally welcoming a stranger (Derrida, 2002, p.57, 79). This allusion knits the ideas of a promise and of justice. It is a form of hospitality that anticipates radical gestures, including irrationality and violence (Derrida, 2002, p.268-269). Derrida considers spectrality as an effect of technicization, although it is not reducible to the technical (Derrida, 1994; Beardsworth, 1996, p.147). In *Faith and Knowledge*, Derrida remains committed to thinking about an event in terms of the technical, historical, and empirical, but the event is also couched in transcendental terms as a "promise" or "messianic time" (Derrida, 2002, p.83). Derrida stayed faithful to the spirit of deconstruction, in which a response is simultaneously material and ethical, hence exceeding its determination. On one hand, the concept of messianism demonstrates how pliant deconstruction is, with its ability to simultaneously negotiate its meaning between the technological and theological, the empirical and transcendental, and the religious and the secular while, on the other hand, it acknowledges the historical context of an event, concept, or representation, as the point from which to proceed. However, I interpose that the two-sense of deconstruction is once more vulnerable to the charge of conservatism and relativism because of the ambiguous politics it advocates. Thus, if Derrida's concept of the messianic is essentially an ethical gesture, then it should be all the more sensitive to various goals of realizing justice and their means of emancipation. In other words, messianism has to leave room for immanence and secularization of political demands.

Stiegler's stress on the specificity of new media technologies accommodates the transcendental focus of Derrida's thought although he was keen to underscore the "technical possibility of sedimentation" which is likely to be expressed as a "programmatic iterability" that lends itself to the "destruction of its sediments"(Stiegler, 2001, p.247, 251). In other

words, the future has to be thought through a certain technicity, and this means that messianism, as a promise, can never be insulated from calculation. This is because a promise, which is something of the past that is being accessed in the present and fulfilled in the future, can be witnessed through new media technologies, a process that Stiegler calls “tertiary memory” that is another name for the “industrialization of memory” (Stiegler, 2009, p.3; Stiegler, 2001, p.258). Stiegler grants that the future cannot be reduced to the past and present because it is always already there, but this condition expresses a process of difference in which technicization is at work. Derrida situates this “chance” in the convention of new media technologies, noticeable in the reproduction of cultural products such as news, photographs, live and taped interviews, and the like. These experiences require judgment that either leans toward generality or variability, an intervention that can be considered as a moment of hesitation, thus a spectral moment, which then grants the opportunity for one to act radically despite the limits set by convention (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.5). Messianicity is inseparable from judgements bound up with the acceleration of virtual communication, whose effects are spectral. In the following chapters, I will restage this retrospective dialogue between Derrida and Stiegler.

What was considered in the preceding discussion is how reification solicits spectres, which are prefigurative elements that are summoned from the past in order to create the future in the present. This makes spectres relevant to the concept of subaltern history. Spectres provoke rather than react, or at least they strive toward a rethinking of the present that offers a chance for representation to be radically different from what was laid out by established politics, ideologies, or political programmes. In what follows, I will provide the arguments for how spectres configure democratic representation even in inhospitable conditions, and also bring a sense that it is possible to salvage ‘the future’ even in situations of utmost subjection.

Meanwhile, these questions remain: How does this messianicity, as a chance of change, find expression in new media technologies? And how might this messianicity manifest itself in the postcolonial context?

2.3 The Spectres and Regimes of Domination

I have noted in the previous chapter that historical epochs solicited spectres as consequences of rationalization but the spectres also undermine these attempts at regulation. In this section, I will introduce an argument that colonialism, the postcolonial period, authoritarian rule, and the regimes of neoliberal ideology are solicitations of spectres that are both of the past and immanent to a particular historical period. These spectres are a response to two modes of reification – technological orientalism and technological messianism.

Colonialism and postcolonialism manifest rationalization, in which new media technologies are crucial to their functioning. The technologies are ideological apparatuses and the means for capital to expand by stimulating illusions, desires and impulses of consumption. The patterns of domination and consumption are linked up to the global system of control and accumulation underpinned by the values of progress and instrumental rationality. These values point the way in which the enjoyment of the material products of modernization and the realization of human potential are made possible. In the Philippines, the general forms of domination undergo differentiation and modification when they are inserted into terrains with discrepant modes of production and notions of power. The spatial and temporal overlay gives rise to complex structures emanating from contradictions among several modes of production and intercultural exchanges premised on incommensurability between the colonizer and the colonized. The differentiations explain the inflection, violence, marginality, and caesura that

the Philippines had experienced as a colony (San Juan, 2003; San Juan, 2007). The colonial conquests by Spain and the United States and the spread of capitalism through colonization were arguably fueled by the objective of technological dominance. While it is true that technological diffusion was not the direct cause of colonialism, the expansion of the latter was possible only because production and representational technologies have accompanied it. Territorial conquests are forms of inscription, in a material and ideological sense, in which new media technologies play an important role in encoding. Attending to the presence of spectres provides an insight into how a particular form of domination that evolves out of the colonial experience, and its aftermath, also embodies the possibility of their termination.

One way of looking at how new media technologies are complicit with colonial domination is seeing them as an assemblage of technological codes that are not unlike racial and racist stereotypes. One form of these is technological orientalism. The latter can be thought as a racially charged thinking that uses technologies in order to discipline and integrate the strange and irrational practices of the “other,” with the overall goal of expanding the reach of capitalism and Eurocentric thinking. Edward Said’s notion of Orientalism prefigures technological orientalism. He designates Orientalism as the representation of the “Orient” that renders little about the Orient, but more on how its institutions, traditions, conventions and knowledge are imagined in the Occident (Said, 1978, p.21-2). The West has a presumed privilege of defining the Orient as an “exercise of cultural strength” and this is rooted in colonization and achieved through the double tactic of co-optation and violence (Said, 1978, p.39-40). Technological orientalism reveals the way in which new media technologies have evolved and deployed by the machinery of colonialism. It is a justificatory discourse that purports that the colonized benefit from foreign control because their society is in a state of chaos, superstition, and varying conditions of backwardness; and so colonial subjects have to

submit to a political order that institutes discipline, reason, and civility (Brody, 2010, p. 3-5). The underlying claim is that deployment of technologies of colonial representation will pave the way for a civilized and democratic culture. It was through new media technologies that colonizers controlled formal and aesthetic representation, and it was also through them that the colonized formed their identity and coped with their subaltern position (Brody, 2010). Orientalism is an example of what Said calls ‘mimetic representation,’ which “refers back doubly” to an idea that designates it (Said, 1975, p.11-12). This kind of representation maintains that there is an original and dominant subject, which is the colonizer, that could be disclosed, interpreted, and copied by the colonized, but whose derivation is considered mimicry and a poor imitation of the original (Said, 1975, p.16). Technological orientalism is essential to the patterns of colonial exploitation, political practices, and cultural impositions that refer back to Eurocentric logic for their derivation. In all, it amounts to a form of representation that is calculable and hegemonic. Technological orientalism outlives its colonial provenance in the Philippines, and its traces remained visible to this day. I will provide an account of its persistence when discussing colonialism and postcolonialism in the following chapters.

Another reified discourse of technology is technological messianism. The latter is an imaginary that grants redemptive power to new media technologies. The discourse considers new media technologies as having the capacity to determine the social because they inaugurate new forms of agency, subjectivity, and recognition (Wayne, 2003; Street, 1992, Lovink, 2011). Simply put, if the masses are given access to new media technologies, they will be able to install democracy (Morozov, 2011, p.ix-xi). Two things are at work in technological messianism – first, it presupposes universality, or the assimilation of categories within a single experience, and second, it is a compensatory attitude toward irreconcilable

binaries. In *The Political Unconscious*, Fredric Jameson's arguments on reification can help frame the suppositions of technological messianism as his justification of the use of "utopia," and other religious concepts, is relevant to my appropriation of "messianism" in this context. Jameson argues for a semantic strategy that reinterprets the sacred into the secular so that the term can have meanings beyond the ideological and anagogical (Jameson, 1981, p.275 -276). Technological messianism presupposes binaries and an originary presence: the imagined condition of redemption counteracts a degenerated state that has to be effaced by technological progress. In this binary relationship, the undesirable category is displaced and subsumed under a defining, dominant principle. Jameson's views on reification cast technological messianism as a totalizing discourse. He notes that in reification, categories are subjected to a "process of abstraction and rationalisation which strips the experience of the concrete, " a phenomenon that is so associated with capitalism (Jameson, 1981, p.48). Technological messianism is also an attempt to gloss over inequalities by introducing technologies to bring about a synthesis. It is a scheme that privileges machines over labour power, technologies over human, and objectivity as opposed to subjectivity. This Manichean strategy, with its religious flavour, accounts for the discourse behind the deployment and adaption of technologies in colonial and authoritarian regimes. Therefore, like technological orientalism, technological messianism is a form of reification because it incorporates everything toward a single telos of history, that is, the civilizing mission and pre-eminence of a certain reality expressed in the logic and materiality of technologies.

The two modes of technological reification – technological orientalism and technological messianism – are phenomena rooted in capitalism and its justifying regimes. They are implied in discourses of democracy and the public sphere. It is not that these ideals have no applicability to social formations; it is just that as elements that make up formal and aesthetic

representation, they fall short of what they signify, thus not only can they not represent the lives of subordinated classes, they are complicit with dominant regimes of representation (Said, 1993, p.291). They are what Said would refer to in *Culture and Imperialism* as discourses having the “residue of imperialism” (Said, 1993, 20-21). However, as I will point out in the following chapters, representation presupposes a “return,” not a mimesis or a closure. Representation is a condition of possibility that is bound up with repetition that is not remote from intervention and subversion. This suggests that technological orientalism and technological messianism are undermined by the binary logic that programmed them.

Conclusion

My thesis is an intervention in postcolonial theory through a critique of new media technologies in the context of the Philippines. It examines the effects and political possibilities of new media technologies in the public sphere, whose transformation indexed the political resistance of subalterns from colonial period onwards. The critique is grounded on the analysis of the growth of capitalism with a syncretic mode of production characterized by uneven development of the production system. Capitalism is key to understanding the growth of new media technologies in relation to the latter’s interaction with culture that, at different historical periods, has given rise to aporias, reification, and spectres. I have argued that spectres are the effects of new media technologies, which are the mechanisms or interfaces of representations. Spectres function as an analytical approach and semantic device for discussing the possibilities of new media technologies. The effects manifest the persistent and inefaceable political and economic demands in the Philippines. My discussion of the public sphere, representation, and reification intends to provide a framework through which new media technologies can be understood as hope for democracy among subalterns. I have

earlier argued that spectres are solicited by the articulation of the enduring demand for justice, and this is also a form of representation.

The genealogy of spectres in Chapter One lays down the theoretical basis for understanding the emergence of new media technologies and their effects on the social, economic, and political situation of the Philippines. Colonialism was a direct force of exploitation and brutalization that also introduced capitalism, starting with the rise of merchant capital and then the production of export crops that linked the colony to the global system of production for market. The economic integration reconfigured the mode of production and cultural practices, but not without tragic consequences for the colonized, whose labour power, products of labour, and labouring bodies were measured through the exchange value imposed by the colonizer. The systematic violence that emanated from the logic of capitalist accumulation, which turned colonial subjects into compliant and commodified forces of labour, also formed the basis of social authority. Control was presupposed in other spheres of sociality, defining what should be remembered and spoken while those considered irrational or defiant of the instrumental order were excluded, or erased from social memory, which is then left only with traces of the “other” consciousness. However, the latter, when summoned or articulated, generates spectral effects. Thus, here in Chapter Two, I looked at theories, principally Habermas, Adorno, and Derrida. Each suggests that technicization results in disorientation and uncertainty, whose effects open up new ways of thinking and acting. The logic of spectres is iteration, which informs representation either as a process or object of representation. It is through the concept of spectrality, however, that I have sought to explicate the radical break in the concept of democratic inclusion that is articulated in deconstruction. The specificity of spectres resides in the mechanisms or interfaces of

representation that I have referred to as new media technologies. The public sphere is the matrix of spectres, and where hegemonic representation gives rise to consequences.

Chapter Three examines the colonial history of the Philippines and looks at the emergence of new media technologies along with the colonial conquest. The historical account does not offer an inventory of new media technologies but a speculative account of their effects. What is apparent during the colonial period is the inscriptive technology of the printing press, which saw the emergence of books and newspapers that were used in the anti-colonial struggle against the colonisers – Spain and the United States. The medium enabled the convergence of political subjectivities in print that became the objective basis of the memory. For example, the anti-colonial writings, launched by the native elite and intelligentsia, allowed the colonial subjects to imagine a condition that is different from their reality, an idea that became more plausible in its repeatability. The same possibility within dissident writing existed under the American colonial period, where technocratic modernization was in force. Chapter Four focuses on the period after the end of colonial rule, when the structures of power were taken over by the native elites. The post-independence years were a time of repression and economic control through the intensification of class rule, which accommodated the demands of advanced capitalism in the U.S. and Europe. This modes of domination saw the return of repressed subjectivities, among them the millenarian movements among peasants, the most exploited class in Philippine society. Mixing folk piety with messianic imaginary, these groups personified the spectres that exhibited the consequences of reification and rationalization. They replayed the anti-colonial struggles and rehearsed the trauma of exploitation in their daily lives. They also gave the spectres the chance to demonstrate their haunting and iterative power. However, by allowing the technicization of their presence, these groups were also reduced to spectacles that intensified their reification. Chapter Four also

analyzes the relationship between new media technologies and the post-independence task of building a nation-state oriented toward modernization. The latter simply means allowing capitalism to expand unhampered. This endeavour included the installation of the public sphere that reflected the liberal elite version of postcolonial democracy. The narrative in this chapter recounts the tension between the public sphere and the culture industry that have separately and jointly solicited colonial spectres. One area that deserves particular attention is the relationship between elite rule and the culture industry that brought reification, as similarly experienced in advanced capitalist countries but in a condition of postcoloniality, the alienation is arguably more acute.

Chapter Five looks at the shifts in orientation and convention of new media technologies in the period of authoritarian rule in the Philippines. What will be underscored is their emancipatory potential in a time of censorship and the logic of iteration that functioned to provide a space for the articulation of dissident views. In this period of repression, new media technologies have been creatively shaped by political forces to outwit dictatorial control. In this scenario, one can deduce that the flow of images, texts, or sounds is inconsequential unless they undergo disruption, mediation and iteration, in technological and political terms. This link suggests the dynamism of representation when tied to a project of social transformation. Chapter Six brings the analysis to bear on the contemporary networked world, particularly how digital technology emerges with the neoliberal ideology of free market economy and the globalization of financial capital that has dictated the terms of labour, market, and representation. This trend, popularly known as globalization, has the capacity to synthesize representations around new media technologies that also make possible their modification, calculation, transmission, and determination. The supposed boundaries no longer hold between opposites, as between private and public, past and present, and local and

global, and yet this blurring of lines also brings more interpretations, repetitions, meanings, and spectres. In this epoch, almost everything has to pass through new media technologies, to be disrupted, re-produced, and re-presented according to imperatives of the market.

CHAPTER 3

COLONIALISM: TERRITORIAL EXPANSION, CONQUEST AND THE INFINITY OF INJUSTICE

Introduction

The Philippines's experience of being a colony of Spain and the United States for three hundred fifty years follows an archetypal colonial plot; the colony was a source of wealth, power, and prestige for the colonizers, and these gains were worth more than the adversities and resistance they encountered (Said, 1994, p. 10-11; Scott, 1982, p.3-4). The colonizers introduced the artefacts of civilization – weapons, machines, ways of thinking, and so forth – that were not only vital to the function of a colonial regime. Importantly, they projected superiority onto a society that is deemed backward, superstitious, and obscure – hence it had to be integrated into the civilized world at large.

The link between power and civilizing artefacts is more compelling when seen through technologies of representation that are crucial to the instrumentality of colonialism in the Philippines. These technologies intend to rationalize the colonized subjectivities but, in retrospect, they are primarily tools for domination. It is a fact that the two colonial regimes in the Philippines controlled the representational technologies to induce subservience among colonial subjects. Starting with the printing press in the Spanish colonial era and continuing with newspapers and radio during the American rule, censorship and repression attended the use of new media technologies all throughout the colonial period. It appears that the colonial regimes paid less attention to technologies that improve labour power and more to those that

shaped the “labouring bodies,” because while the former are primarily concerned with material production, the latter dealt mainly with capacities to think and reflect. Thus, corporeal repression was effective to the extent that it was accompanied by the suppression of mechanisms through which repression and its consequences can be known.

The control of technologies of representation was meant to eliminate the unknowable condition that these technologies could give rise to, a condition that Derrida termed iteration (Derrida, 1994, p.10-11). The latter designates more than just the repetition of sameness, resulting in the plurality of meanings. Iteration is a condition of possibility, or the possibility of the emergence of something unknowable and indeterminable. Iteration also suggests the irreducibility of representation to a singular interpretation, or the capacity of representation to generate infinite meanings. At the same time, the indeterminacy of iteration is constitutive of the logic of new media technologies where repetition and differentiation are both inherent in the technical and discursive effects of their genres and conventions. The subversive possibility of iteration in new media technologies in the Philippines will be the focus of this chapter.

In revisiting colonialism in the Philippines through a critique of new media technologies, I will deal with the concept of history that is constituted through a relation to the “other.” By this I mean not the history that references the “other” but one that constructs itself through the possibility of being “other.” An important aspect in the latter is the notion that there can be no single or arche-history, only “differentiated histories” attuned to certain “types, rhythm and modes of inscription” (Derrida, 1981, p.57-8). This Derridean notion of history builds on the existing yet neglected specifics and particularities; however their interpretation is not meant to designate the truth, or what he termed the “finished signified,” but rather to look for the possibilities underlying unforeseen events (Derrida, 1981, p.63). Adorno posed a similar

challenge to “rectilinear” history, written from the standpoint of the dominant order, which could result in “blind spots” and overlooked intervals because it only privileged the victory-defeat narrative that often excludes the silenced (Adorno, 1974, p.151). Adorno and Derrida separately endorsed a material and messianic concept of history, which addresses the encounter and anticipation of alterity that, when applied in postcolonial theory, could account for certain singularities within a structured and totalizing experience (Syrotinski, 2007, p.12). By attending to the “other” of history, I hope to retrospectively bring new insights on contestable circumstances that commence with the colonial conquest of the Philippines.

In the three sections of this chapter, I will examine the colonial history of the Philippines to reveal the transformative possibilities of new media technologies. Of interest here is the way that new media technologies intensify the logic of iteration that simultaneously brings coherence and instability to a colonial society. The first section provides a historical sketch of the Spanish and American regimes that were actualized through conditions that contributed to the technicization of the colonized society. In other words, this section is about how new media technologies formed part of the territorial conquests of colonial powers as well as the possibility of their destabilization. The second section explores colonialist claims of colonialism that perpetuate the idea of universal progress through Western Enlightenment and the unquestioned instrumentalism of capitalism. Colonial control, which includes social, legal and political functions, corresponds to the imperatives of capitalist production in the colony. I will argue that the complexity and variability of the mode of production that capitalism transformed have a connection with the way that social hierarchies were formed out of class, racism, racial stereotypes, and control over representational technologies. The third and last section of the chapter focuses on the transformative possibilities of new media technologies, particularly their capacity to interrupt the reproduction of colonial subjection, and the way this

is actualized through the logic of iteration that, ironically, is also the process through which the colonial regimes were undermined.

3.1 Revisiting the Colonial Past

The Philippines reveals capitalism's growth as it came under the colonial rule of Spain for three hundred years and under the United States for nearly half a century. The economic shifts that took place in Europe and America resonated in colonial Philippines as the object of capitalism's expansion. The beginning of the Spanish conquest in 1521 occurred in an era of primitive accumulation in Europe marked by the dispossession of domestic peasants and, in the colonies, through plunder, slave trading, exaction of tributes and long distance commerce to support the theocratic and feudal rulers of Spain. This mercantilist commerce accelerated the circulation of commodities needed by industrial capital in Europe (Constantino, 1975, p.17; Abbinnett, 2007, p.117-118). When the U.S. annexed the Philippines in 1898, the former was a young industrial giant in its imperialist stage, noted for its dominance on financial capital and aggressiveness in finding new markets and raw material sources (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.5). Whether under Spain or the U.S., the Philippines colonial history is bound up with the growth of capitalism, where political, cultural and technological dominance were crucial to the process of colonization.

3.1.1 The Spanish Conquest

The Philippines was a Spanish colony from 1565 to 1898, but the islands had been claimed for Spain since 1521 by Ferdinand Magellan. The Spanish conquest was fuelled by the goals of commerce rather than religious zeal; the long voyages were outfitted for trading, while the colonial settlements were built with the intention to amass wealth for the Spanish sovereign

(Constantino, 1975, p.12-25; Scott, 1982, p.42-3). Under Spain, the Philippines became an entrepot and the staging ground for military and missionary work in Asia (Constantino, 1975, p.28, 56). Manila, the capital, became a transshipment point in the lucrative trade between China and Mexico where the latter traded silver for Chinese silk and porcelain. This long distance commerce persisted until the 1800s when the colonial administration shifted to growing sugar, hemp, tobacco and coffee for export that consequently sealed the Philippines' peripheral position in the global capitalist production, that is, as a source of raw materials for industrial manufacturing centres of the West.

The two feudal institutions established by Spain in the Philippines, namely the *encomienda* and *hacienda*, mirrored the shifts in capitalism's growth (Constantino, 1978, p.48-9). The *encomienda* collected tribute in cash and kind to finance the colonial administration and the friars; it placed a group of people under one administrator for whom they are rendered free labour to build ships, houses, cut timber and produce food, in slave-like fashion (Constantino, 1975, p.22-23). The exaction of tribute was accompanied by overt cruelty. In 1700s, the *encomienda* was on a decline, but by then it left an imprint on the syncretistic modes of production in precolonial Philippines that ranged from primitive communalism, subsistence settlements and some feudal communities in southern areas, all characterized by differing labour productivity, limited access to technology (Scott, 1982, p.112-119; 143-147). The *hacienda* is a production system established in vast private estates where crops are grown for export. The exploitation in the *haciendas* rested on feudal relations, but the system is an offshoot of capitalism's dominance, where surplus accumulation served to facilitate growth in the general rate of profit (Constantino, 1975, p.130; Abbinnett, 2006, p.118). These two production systems expressed configurations of capitalism in a colonial society.

In the third volume of *Capital*, Marx's account on land rent has similarities with the production system in *hacienda*, where the flow of capital to land property ensured accumulation of surplus through the use of land as the means of production, the exploitation of workers through the payment of low wages, and rationalization of production in line with world markets. This system presupposed other developments in the colony: circulation of money and availability of credit, improved transportation, global commerce, and access to technology and information. Whereas in the *encomienda* exploitation came from the exaction of tribute that is direct and coercive, the *hacienda* was subtler as it was not always with force and compulsion but also with specious consent and reciprocity (McCoy, 1991, p.4). However both the *encomienda* and *hacienda*, typified Marx's account of primitive accumulation that David Harvey modified as "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey, 2005, p.160, 178-179). Both involved peasants losing their lands and designate their exploitation through forced labour, tribute, and the onerous rent or low wages that are integral to the expansion of capitalism in the colony.

Marx termed primitive accumulation as an inhuman process "written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire," while Harvey posited that it varies across places and in the ways it "attacks, erodes, dissolves and transforms" pre-capitalist societies (Marx, 1976, p.875; Harvey, 2006, p.416). Primitive accumulation is also the process of capital's subsumption of labour power. The violence that accompanied this drive for surplus value, such as pillage, looting, corporal punishment, and killings of recalcitrant natives, reminded us that the expansion of capitalism cannot be smooth that it has to be accompanied by the extra-economic means. I argue that throughout the colonial era in the Philippines, primitive accumulation foreclosed possibilities for the full growth of domestic capitalism through the development of the forces of production. In the case of *hacienda*, colonialism strengthened

the feudal relations so to sustain the export crop production that eventually imparted to the colony its overall value within the global circuits of capitalism. The *hacienda* has outlived colonial times and survived to this day; it testifies to its effectiveness in securing surplus value.

The integration of the Philippines in the global capital market unified the country for the ease of the Spanish colonial administration. It had made export-crop production its major economic activity, treating other economic activities as ancillaries. But the harmonization of production toward the world market also brought disruptive breaks that destabilized the colonial rule as evidenced by hundreds of peasant rebellions that erupted due to loss of land, food shortage, and the cruelty of landlords (Constantino, 1978, p.43-46). The import of huge volumes of cotton from England, as return cargo for Philippine sugar, had caused the demise of the thriving weaving industry in central Philippines and the proletarianisation of peasants. The colonial trade monopoly of tobacco, for instance, only benefitted the few that the scheme eventually collapsed due to the resentment of growers (Constantino, 1975, p.134-5). Underlying the colonial trade pattern were violence, immiseration, backwardness, and exploitation of the peasantry that all had to be contained by patronage, passivity, and subservience that were taught by the Catholic church, the chief propagator of colonial culture.

Colonialism also shaped its prerogatives through racism. Often seen as a symptom of Eurocentric universalism, racism, however, has its roots deep in the existing social relations and practices of reproducing meanings, or representation. Racism, I will argue, relates to class and the politics of representation more than simply as the idea of an “other” assigned by the colonizer. I maintain that race prefigured class but both have a role to play in the growth of capitalism in the Philippines. As such, racism remains the central issue in discussing

colonialism, not only because of how racial assumptions justify colonial conquest, but also because racism is inseparable from the growth of capitalism in the country. In the Philippines, as in other Spanish colonies, the natives were classified along racial lines (Taylor, 2007, p.52). It is not that the precolonial Philippines did not have any form of social hierarchy; rather, colonialism reconfigured the economic base of the indigenous social categorization and transplanted its notion of racial superiority into colonial subjects. At the apex are the *peninsulares*, or Spaniards born in Spain, next to them are the *insulares*, or those born in the colony, then the *mestizos*, or those of mixed race, and below them, or at the bottom, were the *indios* or natives. Political, cultural, and economic power were obtained, used and controlled around these social divisions that also manifested forms of horizontal oppression among natives, for example the importance attached to physical features and gradient of skin colour (Constantino, 1975; Shohat and Stam, 1994, p.19). However, the racial exclusivity was steadily breached by the growing population of *mestizos*, who were products of intermarriages between the Spanish, Chinese, and the natives. This made possible the rethinking of racial division and miscegenation on the part of the colonizer. The *mestizos* vied to become a progressive force, aided by their access to education and strong presence in the economy as big landlords, traders, and commercial agents, the opportunities that were denied to the natives. Some of them studied in elite learning institutions in the Philippines and in Spain, and became propagators of European culture and liberal ideas that consequently invited prosecution from colonial authorities and the Catholic church (Constantino, 1975, p.143-5). The Church played a major role in the maintenance of racist policies, class divisions and reifying cultural practices while feudalism flourished in the vast friar estates.

The subordinate classes – peasant, small landowners and farm and urban labourers— bore the brunt of exploitation and predation of the Spanish colonial rule. Unlike the *mestizos* who had

a sense of belonging to the colonial system, the subalterns were considered the “other” and denied representation. In all, the way in which classes emerged from racial differentiation is attributed to the Spanish colonial regime and the growth of international capitalism. The interplay of race and class resulted in the reproduction of racial hierarchy based upon, and also intensified by, class differentiation. Thus, the class antagonisms that developed implicated the colonial racial hierarchy but this does not mean that by eliminating racist practices class oppression would have ended.

Given the colonial class structure, there was little or no chance for formal and public reforms in the colony. The Church and colonial administration resorted to censorship and open persecution of anti-colonial sentiments. It was no surprise that waves of anti-colonial resistance came from peasant-based millenarian or nativist groups. These movements were generally linked to agrarian unrest, launched against land grabbing, collection of tribute, forced labour, and abuses of Spanish friars (Ileto, 1979; Constantino, 1975, p.89). The plebeian revolts were distinguished for the use of animism, indigenous rituals and emergence of self-styled leaders who promised their followers a utopian future. They attempted the revival of pre-Christian beliefs to challenge the imposed religion and Hispanization. I argued that these subaltern rebellions were primarily solicited by primitive accumulation, which is a form of reification, in the colonial regime.

The bourgeois and *mestizos*’ rebellion came much later, through what is known as the Propaganda Movement, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and was initiated by Filipino exiles in Spain called *ilustrados*, or “the enlightened” ones. They pushed for political and economic reforms in the colony and demanded formal representation in the Spanish legislature. However they were more effective through their writings. Their books, periodicals

and other printed tracts, which were smuggled into the Philippines, articulated the concepts of formal rights and freedoms, and exposed the obscurantism of Spanish friars. What Derrida said about writing as iteration was true in the case of the *ilustrados*, that is, writing is an event, marked by its iterability, which not only multiplies to the plurality of interpretations, it also brings various speaking positions together which anticipate various reactions to ‘the event’ (Glendinning, 1998, p.113). Iteration, as a condition of possibility, was evident when the propaganda movement inspired the formation of a plebeian-led revolutionary group called *Katipunan*, which staged armed uprisings. Later, the enlightened bourgeoisie were at the helm of the revolution but this leadership was not without intrigues, vacillations, and betrayals of revolutionary goals. The armed resistance proved too much for the moribund Spanish empire, and soon victory was within the revolutionaries’ grasp. However, Spain chose to surrender to the United States in 1898, ceding the Philippines to the later for twenty million dollars. Thus, another chapter in the Philippines’s colonial history unfolded.

3.1.2 American Imperialism

The Philippines’s colonial experience under the United States, from 1899 until its nominal independence in 1946, happened during the imperialist phase of capitalism. As sketched by Lenin, imperialism names the dominance of financial capital and intense rivalry between centres of capitalism over markets and raw material sources (Lenin, 2005, online). At this stage, there was an “accelerated penetration” of non-capitalist zones by developed capitalist economies that consolidated the global capitalist system (Parry, 2004, p.108). Aside from intensification of capital’s growth in the colony, what distinguishes the U.S. rule from that of Spain is the dominance of cultural production through the culture industry, which, arguably, was the necessary component of its economic exploitation and a signifier of U.S. imperialism.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the U.S. emerged as a powerful industrial nation evidenced by the rise of huge corporations and the growth of monopolies (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.5-6). No sooner, it experienced a crisis of overproduction and underconsumption that threw millions of workers out of work, severely affecting industrial and agricultural production. American capitalists believed that the way out of the crisis was the expansion of foreign markets and thus the U.S. eyed the vulnerable Spanish colonies in its backyard, including the Philippines, which could become its gateway to Asian markets like China (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.5; Constantino, 1975, p.289). The U.S aided the Cubans in a revolt against Spain and proceeded to the Philippines where Spain was considerably weakened by Filipino revolutionaries. American rule in the Philippines was formalized through the Treaty of Paris on October 1898, thus commencing what the Americans called “Benevolent Assimilation,” which is carried out through systematic use of violence and co-optation.

What the Philippines granted the American capitalists is its relative advantage as the source of cheap labour power and raw materials. However, the U.S. ensured that what the colony produced did not compete with American industries hence there was no push for industrialization in the Philippines while exploitation remained consistent with Marx’s analysis of primitive accumulation. The U.S. also tried to eliminate competitions from Spanish, British and other European traders in the Philippines by reorienting the market toward the American economy. The trade imbalance between the two countries expressed the reification of value: the colony’s agricultural products had to measure up to the value of imported industrial commodities, a disparity that can only be superficially harmonized by money. This unequal exchange was underpinned by capital’s imperative to situate itself in places where the rate of profit is highest.

The U.S. considered it profitable to maintain the feudal relations in *haciendas* that produced sugar to meet the U.S. export quota (Constantino, 1975, p.306). More lands were opened for this purpose, including those seized from Spanish friars. Under American rule, the *mestizos*, who once sided with the subaltern, enjoyed the opportunities for employment, higher education and position under the American colonial government. Class, this time, has less to do with lineage but more with access and control of economic power from where political influence proceeds. Social relations were shaped around the control of the means of production. However it was also true that the Americans reconfigured the existing class structure to fit with the surplus-oriented and utilitarian rationality.

No class, however, was spared from the U.S. hegemony that corresponded to the logic of the market. The flood of imports changed the consumption habits of Filipinos while the culture industry - films, music magazines, radio, newspapers, and so forth “Americanized” the colony (Constantino, 1978, p.68, 78). The cultural invasion was premised on the notion that the U.S. brought “progress” to the colony and consumption of commodities meant self-actualization, autonomy, and being modern. It was an ideological strategy to blur the differences between the colonized and the colonizer, as it appeared that they shared identical interests and desires (Constantino, 1978, p.80).

Racism and the myth of white supremacy were constitutive assumptions of the U.S. colonial policy in the Philippines. The point of examining racism is to bring out its intensification that is crucial to the hegemony of the U.S. colonial rule premised on equivalence, abstraction and hierarchy of values. Racism manifested systematic violence in the early years of U.S. colonial rule, particularly during the Filipino-American War (1899-1902) when American troops resorted to torture, killing of prisoners and civilians, and applying the scorched earth policy –

acts that foreshadowed the atrocities in Vietnam (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.7; Constantino, 1975, p. 247). With their superior firepower, the Americans defeated the Filipinos but when the latter resorted to guerrilla warfare, the Americans retaliated with impunity. To this day, the number of Filipinos killed in the war was unsettled but historians estimated it to be between 300,000 to one million while the American casualties were about 7,000 out of the 30,000 troops sent to the Philippines (San Juan, 1999, 61-2; Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.19). Rosa Luxemburg did not miss the brutalities of American rule in the Philippines when she wrote in 1902: “On the Asiatic coast, washed by the waves of the ocean, lie the smiling Philippines . . . there, American rifles mowed down human lives in heaps . . . “(Luxemburg, n.d. online).

Race is crucial to the examination of American imperialism because the latter used racial assumptions to argue against granting the Philippines its independence. Racism was behind the portrayal that Filipinos were unfit to govern themselves. This infantilization posited that Filipinos were politically immature, they had no concept of democracy and equality, and it is necessary for them to have a “long period of tutelage in self-government” (Zwick, 2007, p.36; Shohat and Stam, 2004, p.140; Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.25). Thus, the Philippine Assembly, established by the Americans in 1907, brought together men from the elite, educated, and property-owning class to be trained to represent themselves. As well, the successive presidents, who were elected during the American colonial period and onwards, were judged by their loyalty to the Americans’ interests. Altruism also cloaked the racism of colonial education that saw the establishment of the universal public school system, which was the centrepiece of the pacification campaign. It commenced with the arrival of hundreds of American teachers to teach English and civics, the aim of which was to produce compliant colonial subjects (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.45; Constantino, 1975, p.314).

The Americans also tried to restrict mechanisms of representation, among them newspapers, through harsh censorship laws and by establishing American-owned newspapers in the Philippines in the first decade of the U.S. colonial rule (Lent, 1973, p. 9). The censorship intended to blunt colonial resistance and the clamour for independence (Lent, 1973, p.10). The American press primarily portrayed the colony in an Orientalist light and also justified colonial rule (Brody, 2010, p.6). Local periodicals devoted substantial pages to advertising and literary pursuits that popularize the English language. The availability of newspapers, along with the rise of the literacy rate, expanded the reach of the culture industry. The popularity of print media occasioned Filipino journalists to push the limits of censorship laws by publishing anti-colonial pieces that unmasked deceptive rhetoric of American democracy and free trade, and advocated for self-rule (Lent, 1973, p. 10). In the 1920s, radio started its test broadcasts in the Philippines but in ten years it became a vehicle for entertainment and spread of consumerism (Lent, 1973, p.15). I will say more about the ambivalence of new media technologies in the last section of this chapter but for now, it is suffice to say that representational technologies provided the conditions for the institutionalization of racism, Orientalism, and consumerism.

The exponential growth of the culture industry did not end the censorship; it only provided more opportunities to expand the American hegemony at a time when anti-colonial sentiments were growing among marginalized classes, foremost among them was the peasant class whose conditions revealed alienating consequences from its confrontation with the logic of capitalism. Millenarian and nativist groups reprised their uprising against U.S. colonial rule, retaining their religious garb, folk Christianity rituals, and utopian longing (Constantino, p.349). Unlike during the Spanish colonial period when these groups were seen as threats to Catholicism, this time they were considered as bandits and fanatics, or threats to law and

order. Thus, their resistance resulted in mass arrests, killings, and land evictions while their demands for land and jobs were largely ignored (San Juan, 1999, p.78). These occurred in the 1930s when the U.S. Depression seriously affected Philippine exports. The radicalization of peasants and workers was also attributed to the emergence of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which took political positions on self-rule and international solidarity against imperialism. Political restiveness continued until the eve of World War II, when the struggle against fascism and Japanese invasion saw the organization of the “People’s Army to Fight Japan,” *Huk* for short, a peasant-based guerrilla force that fought alongside American and regular Filipino soldiers against Japanese troops. However, after the war, *Huk* members were persecuted for espousing communist views. The witch-hunt continued well into the Cold War era after the formal independence of the Philippines from the U.S. in 1946, when landlords and the elite took over.

In sum, the colonial rule of Spain and the U.S. was exercised through racism and economic exploitation, and this double oppression was accomplished through the use of overt violence and co-optation. Racism manifested a plethora of ethnocentric, altruistic and infantilizing discourses, in which the mechanisms of colonial representations were complicit. The economic exploitation in the Philippines echoes Marx’s description of primitive accumulation that secured the conditions for the growth of capitalism in the country. The mode of production that emerged was uneven and syncretistic, one in which feudalism and other pre-capitalist modes of production reinforced capitalism’s strategy of surplus accumulation and appropriation in the colony. The shifts in the modes of production, however uneven these were, also brought change to social processes of production, to include realms of formal and symbolic representation (Harvey, 1982, p.120-121; Marx, 1976, p. 383-384). The changes, however, cannot be subordinated to economic forces because the process of rationalization,

along with its iteration, disrupts and modifies the horizon of experience and meaning (Stiegler, 2009, p.2-3). Rationalization is inseparable from the use of new media technologies through which colonial hegemony was exercised. Under the Spanish colonial period, this condition translated to a regime that privileged control and secrecy while under American rule, this corresponded to uniformity and multiplication of consumerist desires. The latter was accomplished through technological mediation of representation. In the next section, I will elucidate the reification of this mediatic process that solicits spectres.

3.2 Colonialism as Restricted Economy

The previous section showed how a reconfigured mode of production gave rise to various forms of representation enabled by new media technologies. Representation was a response to reification in economic, political, and social domains under colonial rule. This suggests that representation is a catalytic action while reification is also a condition that reveals the possibility of its termination. In what follows, I will discuss how the hermetic injustice of a colonial regime could undermine its own legitimacy and open up spaces for its impermanence. In other words, it will be an account of how the programmatic conditions that close off possibilities actually solicit spectres.

Franz Fanon considered colonialism a violent act of colonizers that divides the colony into two-zones -- the dominant and the dominated or the uncivilized and the civilized (Fanon, 1963, p.27-29). Violence, for Fanon, arises from the estrangement of the symbolic from the economic system that predominates (Fanon, 1963, p.30). The objective, he notes, is to obliterate the colonial subjects' capacity to remember and enact their old ways, and what better way to facilitate this than to disparage their culture as inferior. The erasure of memory

is a form of violence, where memory is a weapon to hone one's subjectivity and judgment. Marx's notion of primitive accumulation serves to underpin the violence that Fanon names. Violence, to recall Marx, is inseparable from the ways in which primitive accumulation was introduced (Marx, 1976, p.927). Primitive accumulation is the route through which colonialism and capitalism were embedded in the Philippines. It provides the condition for surplus production in order to accelerate the growth of money capital in the centres of capitalism. In *Capital*, Marx described this process of surplus accumulation as having brutal consequences in its use of "forcible methods" of "thievery, predation, violence and abuse of power" (Marx, 1976, p.927-30; Harvey, 2010, p.291). These methods indicate the separation of peasants from their land through land grabbing, enclosures, exaction of tribute, usury, proletarianisation, and other extra-economic means. Primitive accumulation thus marks the long, uneven, and indentured process of subordinating people to capital that necessarily involved the denial of their distinctive subjectivities, in order to maximize the production of surplus value.

Although this is an argument contrary to the fact, still it is worth asking, hypothetically: is it possible for primitive accumulation to bypass the brutalities when installing capitalism? Rosa Luxemburg's account of the expansion of capital noted the importance of non-capitalist areas for the accumulation of surplus as one way in which capitalism works. In *The Accumulation of Capital*, Luxemburg argues that capital will saturate and dominate countries where the mode of production is not predominantly capitalist, while the conditions of exploitation installed there are more ruthless than what could be tolerated under purely capitalist conditions (Luxemburg, 1951, p.366-374). By pointing out that capitalism requires an "other," Luxemburg has amplified Marx's notion of primitive accumulation and brought it to bear on colonialism as the means to secure markets in order to stave off the structural crisis of

capitalism (Luxemburg, 1951, p.350). However, while Luxemburg notes the possibility of change arising from the economic crises inherent in capitalism, that is, the tendency to expand and the limited capacity of consumption, she, like Marx, confined this chance to centres of capitalism in Europe and America, where capitalism is advanced and with a more defined working class (Cliff, 1983, p. 56). And yet she was aware of the complexities of various forms of resistance against capitalism, as a consequence of the lopsided and hierarchical division of labour that allowed the plunder and direct expropriation of resources (Luxemburg, 1951, p.375-98). The limited growth of the forces of production in the colony resulted in the inchoate presence of the proletariat, but the struggle for self-determination enlisted an admixture of subaltern classes and groups, thereby providing class character to the anti-colonial struggle.

A colonial economy may appear peripheral to overall capitalist production but its position invariably extends the parameters and opportunities for capitalism. I contend that these conditions do not invalidate Marx's notion of primitive accumulation, or Luxemburg's idea of capitalism's "other," but, in fact, recognize the crucial role of technicization in structuring the economic and social power of capitalism. The reconfiguration offered by technicization, by itself, does not guarantee an outright alteration of class structures and ownership of the means of production. But what it offers is the possibility of instantiating difference and radical shifts as a result of repetition, simulation and dissemination within a differentiated reality. What primitive accumulation in colonial Philippines reveals for new media technologies is an unevenness of growth; new media technologies can be subordinate to or decisive in the development of productive forces but nonetheless constitutive of the evolving social relations and consciousness. In them, one can read the embodied techniques and symbolic forms that make up the lifeworld, as well as the social relations and the possibilities for new media

technologies. Shifts also take place as a result of their mutual interaction thus making new media technologies in consonant with and exceeding the demands of surplus accumulation. In this manner, the condition of possibility gets transfigured in technologies even in conditions of repression.

In his reading of Marx's *Capital*, Harvey, who echoed Luxemburg's points on the expansion of production, posits that technologies are subject to the logic of production and judgment rendered in consumption and reproduction of life (Harvey, 2010, p.209). For Harvey, technologies perform the repetitive, mechanical tasks that undermine variable capital. They simulate the capacity of labour power and stimulate the need to lengthen the working day. At the same time, technologies were made to come to terms with whoever takes hold and deploys them, along with the consequences that such access and control could bring. The intensification of struggle over access and dominance over technologies brings them to a point where they either alienate or uplift humanity. However, I argued at the outset that the conditions of alterity and repetition reproduced by technologies pave the way for unknowable political contingencies to emerge. Hence, if we map out the consequences of new media technologies in the uneven terrain of capital growth in a colonial regime, we can infer that capital's operation subsumes and centralizes whatever it is that generates surplus value. However this sphere of exchange, where forcible ways of expropriation occur, could also pose a challenge to homogenization.

Colonialism, I contend, can be examined as a theory of modernity where the notion of progress is central to its conceptualization. Progress is associated with rationalism, technological advances in the process of production and belief in universal ideals and truths. Colonialism is bound up with capitalism, which is presented as the project of modernity

rooted in the Enlightenment. The latter names an eighteenth century movement in Europe that encouraged individuals to take a critical attitude towards any form of dogma and political authority, through the exercise of reason (Kant, 1991, p.54-55). In his essay, "What is Enlightenment," Immanuel Kant did not fix the age of Enlightenment to a particular time but sees it as a movement toward its fruition (Kant, 1991, p.58-59). In *The Origin of Capitalism*, Ellen Meiksins Wood argues that the Enlightenment transcends the historical specificity of capitalism and while rationalization and modernity are what Enlightenment shares with capitalism, they can also be historically located in non-capitalist society just as in pre-capitalist society (Wood, 2002, p. 182-183). In other words, Wood cautions against the facile conflation of Enlightenment with capitalism or modernity because this may "disguise the specificity of a non-capitalist modernity" (Wood, 2002, p.182). While Wood's warning is helpful in delineating the historical paths of modernity in Europe, it cannot sufficiently account for other forms of modernity when the rationale of capitalism is also the premise of modernity as domination. In other words, the connection between capitalism and colonial conquest are complex that the economic system, imposed upon non-capitalist society, pulls everything to its advantage. Granted that the Enlightenment was historically rooted in non-capitalist society and social relations, Adorno and Horkheimer however maintain that the orientation of reason, which includes rational autonomy and the crucial role of technology in the dissemination of knowledge, stages the logic of capitalism (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997, p.3-4). Adorno did not view reason evolving toward that which enables humans to act morally and live an ethical life but, in fact, towards instrumentality. Surplus accumulation and the expansion of the market nullify the exercise of rational autonomy, which has less to do with the struggle against nature and more to do with control of individuals. Hence, if on one hand, freedom and reason are at the core of Enlightenment's goals, the historic forms that

represented them have brought out their destructive elements on the other hand (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997, p.90). The idea of modernity as regression was examined in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* where it is argued that economic productivity that indicated progress did not liberate humanity but instead brought forth “a new kind of barbarism” (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997, p.xi).

The Enlightenment has secularised the idea of progress when it is posited that history advances primarily due to humanity’s effort and not through a universalistic principle of free reason (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997, p.xiv). Science, at the helm of progress, leads to the path of calculability and instrumentalism that, for Adorno, demands the submission of subjectivities and nature to a compulsion of equivalence (Adorno, 1998, p.148-9). The reification of progress is a function of identity-thinking that effaces singularities and constrains categories, and whose origin is inseparable from the history of domination (Adorno, 1998, p.149). Thus, if colonization is a “civilizing mission,” which aims to transplant modernity into other lands, it does not arrive with an agenda to install positive rights and recognize agency. In fact this colonization is maintained by the dual operation of capitalism and racism. Concretely, the colonial subjects are twice dominated, in the relations of exchange that bear on production and consumption, and in the process of representation where meanings become manipulable and commensurable with the myths of egoistic individualism. For Adorno, these myths find expression in structures and mechanisms that render the subject passive and yielding to the goals of domination that became even more entrenched as the capitalism expands. He adds that the evolution of rationality is coeval with the transformation of capitalism in which the culture industry is part of what sustains domination. Adorno and Horkheimer wrote that the culture industry bears an imprint of their degradation in their “calculation of effectiveness and of the techniques of production and

distribution” (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979, p.xvi). What they articulate for colonialism is that the underlying logic of intensification, centralization and standardization, which are intrinsic to the expansion of capital and the instrumental conventions of new media technologies, are what constitute domination. As these reached down to the society’s aesthetic sensibilities, individuals became incapable of taking a critical stance toward their own society.

The conditions of the colonial Philippines and Adorno’s Europe in modern technocratic capitalism fundamentally differ, if we grant the dissimilarity between primitive accumulation in a colonial context and flexible production of industrial capitalism. One of the salient issues in the former, and which has the potential to be critiqued through Adorno’s negative dialectics, is racism. I have argued that racism, which emerges alongside colonial domination, can be teased out of Adorno’s notion of progress as regression and theory of negative dialectics. Adorno’s engagement with the problematic of race was eloquent in the essay that he co-wrote with Horkheimer, “The Elements of Anti-Semitism: The Limits on Enlightenment,” in which anti-semitism is woven into racist thinking and the values of fascist and racist groups. Adorno and Horkheimer argued that racism is rooted in fetishism as a false projection that through fascist rationalization converts the “ambient world into a diabolical system” (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979, p.187). False projection is a thinking that ascribes negativity to the “other,” who is likewise blamed as the source of a social pathology, and in this case, racism. Adorno and Horkheimer maintain that false projection is more of a cover-up for self-preservation as it is premised on incommensurability arising from racist assumptions (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979, p.195-6). Thus, while the comparison yields something that is taken to be objective, (i.e. on the basis of physiognomy) false association is a sinister ground used to assess racial superiority (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979, p.196; San Juan, 1999, p.129). Analogous to Adorno and Horkheimer’s treatment of fascism and anti-

Semitism, racism is reification because it renders judgment based on “blind subsumption” and “hasty distinctions” that came to be regarded as normal, legal and moral (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979, p.201). Their idea of racism could help explain why colonial racism is abhorrent to the extent that force is applied to quell and eliminate the racially “other,” in the colonial history of the Philippines (San Juan, 2007, p.xv). What makes Adorno and Horkheimer’s analysis of racism useful is that not only did they indict capitalism as complicit with racism, they also paid attention to the psychological processes, irrationality and cultural modalities of race when they argued that racism arises from social relations, which are consistent with domination.

Adorno’s negative dialectic can elucidate racism, when the latter is analysed as value that inscribes itself on the “other.” Racism is regarded as a condition that is analogous to the workings of commodity fetishism. In other words, value, which is quantitatively calculable in a commodity, can be projected onto race, wherein one commodity stands for and determines the value of the other. Commodity fetishism is peculiar to capitalism and the societies that it dominates. The process of reflecting or projecting value not only erases the worth of the other but also creates new meanings, forced equivalences and tensions within social relations. In identity thinking, Adorno sees the conceptual unification as reification because the idea of equivalence suppresses difference and diversity. The repressive parity is not only characteristic of concepts but it is also evident in convention, tradition, perspectives, and representations in society. Racism ranges such contexts in order to construct and legitimize the way it classifies and excludes people on the basis of presumptive claims that moulds thinking to its representation of reality (Adorno, 1998, p.253). This naturalization is analogous to the enigmatic mediations of commodity fetishism described in Marx’s *Capital*, in which commodities can be exchanged with each other on the basis of measurable abstract

human labour, which is the source of value in capitalist production. The commodity form and the value relation between products of labour have no connection with physical properties; it is the social relations that assume the “fantastic form” of relations between things. Thus, commodities acquire a life of their own when value is projected on them. What mediates this exchange is money, the universal equivalent that subsumes use value into exchange value and concrete labour into abstract labour, as if they were commensurable. Exchange value prevails in this scheme of synonymy, so that it then transforms relationships between producers of commodities into one of mutual indifference to all content.

Racism is that property of the dominance between humans or groups in a similar way the commodity exchange functions by inflecting the social into the natural through a preoccupation with imputed resemblance (San Juan, 1999, p.129-131). In other words, it is an imaginary system of representation arising from the process of negation and inscription. However, Adorno sees the process not as unity over likeness or opposition but subsumption, because the subject projects itself onto an object and, in the process, reduces the object to its likeness. Thus, an object is understood in relation to the subject and yet the latter is also infected by the reified resemblance, so that the subject is “condemned to nothingness,” a hypostasis they both have to suffer simultaneously (Adorno, 1998, p.256). In Adorno’s terms, no antithesis could prevail over the universal and particular, or the subject and object, as both are attenuated in their reification (Adorno, 1998, p.257).

Thus Adorno’s submerged arguments on racism via identity-thinking can be posited in this way: the moment the “other” is acknowledged, it is also naturalized and imbued with attributes necessary for exchange, and then “other” embodies the values of exchange it is assigned with; the “other” is deemed inferior and subordinate to a dominant category on the

basis of certain claims to difference. The underlying goal of racism is to preserve the social relations that guarantee the conditions for exploitation of labour power and the reproduction of a resigned and malleable consciousness. Following Adorno's examination of the parameters of modernity, it can be argued that racism is constituted by dual eventualities in accordance with the development of capitalism – the marginalization of the colonized by virtue of their exploitation of their labour power and the destruction of the colonial subjects' sense of what they are. This unilateral coercion has inhuman elements that are different to those of Western capitalist societies. I do not intend to trivialize the effects of capitalism in the colonizer's homeland and disregard the solidarity that could be forged among exploited classes, but the colonial violence has to be seen in a different historical register. Primitive accumulation coupled with a "civilizing mission," enabled both overt and, what San Juan calls "tributary barbarism," to designate an official "monopoly of violence and coercive means" that keeps the colonized in check, given the absence of legal and civil guarantees enjoyed in Western capitalist societies (San Juan, 2009, p.5). In other words, the reification generated by racism in an uneven mode of production is not identical in its disparities with that of the centres of capitalism where no colonizing power dictates the pace of modernization.

A similar reified schematization emerged in Derrida's discussion of restricted economy. The latter, I argue, could be analogically designated as capitalism as evinced by Derrida's reading of Marx's theory of value. In *Writing and Difference*, Derrida's assessment of restricted economy is not confined to the primacy given to value but on what is expended, missed or lost because of such valorisation. A restricted economy falls within the logic of identity and non-contradiction. It unifies value and meaning and then represses them by denying them their alterity. Thus while value and meaning circulate, they do so within the constrained condition of their utilization, tied to a particular system of absolute knowledge and

determining judgment (Derrida, 1978, p.342-5). Such an economy suppresses the very thing that revitalizes it -- the circulation of difference that supplies meaning and accounts for hidden values. Restricted economy's maintenance of stability of meanings and interpretations is also maintained through forms of violence. Applied to the double oppression of racism and primitive accumulation in a colonial context, a restricted economy constitutes a bias for the stability of representations in accordance with dominant norms and political ends. Thus Derrida argues for the presence of a general economy that marks and exceeds the limits of representation, and transforms interpretive domains and forms of political actions (Derrida, 1978, p. 345-7). Through the notion of a restricted economy, Derrida reaffirms the importance of the "other" as a politico-economic responsibility disavowed by capitalism. The inverse of restricted economy is general economy that, for Derrida, transcends the former because it solicits possibilities of reinterpretation which displaces, disjoins, and suffuses all ontological determinations. The connection between a restricted economy and colonialism is simply this: if a society exhibits such "restrictions," it is essentially colonial, or such an economy is structurally analogous to a colonial society. However, the specificities have to be spelled out. Derrida's notion of restricted economy is comparable to Adorno's reification but when explicating racism, Adorno's concept translates to a determination that is still situated in the context of a certain form of capitalism that is caught up with identity thinking. In other words, racism is confined to a negativity that operates along with a particular rhythm of capitalism. However, with Derrida, racism can neither be reduced to a specific condition of capitalism nor does its end come with the downfall of capitalism. He refuses to associate the violence of racism's presence to particular historical determination. For as long as a particular presence symptomatic of race asserts its dominance and limits the forms of representation possible,

racism is at once inevitable and unrealizable, and so are the kinds of exploitation that it enables.

The preceding discussion on modernity and racism in the context of colonial Philippines suggest that their conceptions are to be seen as crucially distinct. Modernity is associated with the rule of reason but it turned out to be a political domination in the name of reason. We can also conclude now that racism is beyond the spurious consideration of colour, clash of culture, and the concern for profit. It is all these and much more while acquiring some uncanny instrumentality within a colonial order. Thus racism is a thinking that recognizes difference but uses it to the advantage of the dominant, and a representation that imposes a dual strategy of inclusion and exclusion (San Juan, 1999, p.130-1). Like modernity, racism is also installed in the name of reason. In the next section, I will examine the ways how these historically-encoded contingencies encounter a chance for their undoing through new media technologies.

3.3 New Media Technologies and the Redress of Colonial Injustice

Adorno's critique of instrumental reason would admit an argument that the logic of technicization, which allows simulation, repetition and dissemination of representation, supports one-dimensionality, depoliticization and infinite injustice. However, technicization, if we go by Derrida's account of the spectre, also permits ethico-political judgment because it pries open the determinations, closures, and unquestioned ideals to reveal a gap -- a space of contingency. Unlike Adorno, Derrida contends that the intensification and reiteration of authority brings possibilities for transformation. The latter is a chance offered by the new media technologies that summon spectres. In what follows, I will provide an account of their interruptive power in a postcolonial context.

In the previous chapters, I have argued that the logic of technicity, which is constitutive of the dual movement of iteration and alterity, is inscribed in the epoch of colonization. Representation, understood in both a formal and an aesthetic sense, carries a different historical weight in the colonial period, which also coincides with the adaption of new media technologies as mechanisms of representation. Whereas in societies where these technologies have originated, representations are coeval with the growth of capitalism and the emergence of a public sphere where less-constrained interaction is possible, the colonial context into which they are transplanted has a very limited distribution of control, power and reason. The double oppression of economic exploitation and racism brought an inhuman dimension to capitalism's domination and manifested in the way representations are instrumentalized, mediated and technicized to serve the colonizers' interests.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* dwelt extensively on colonial representations through which the Orient's identity is shaped by the presumed superiority of the Occident, such that the Orient is depicted as the irrational, childlike, and depraved "other" of the West (Said, 1978, p.20-3; 40-41). These reified representations repeat the violence of racism that I discussed earlier, such that while racism acknowledges difference, it also disavows it in order to preserve the inequality of power and material resources. Said notes that the power of Orientalism lies in the way that it represents the Orient, not on the basis of its reality but through the elaboration of mythologies. In time, this representation appears to have been derived from and justified by Orientalism itself. The Philippines, under colonial rule, endured similar representations, where colonial subjects were portrayed as menacing, backward and indolent (Brody, 2010, p.4). And yet, the same colonial subjects provided the labour power crucial for the accumulation of profit in the colony and the global system of accumulation. Said's Orientalism, which is structured by an oppositional logic, bears on new media technologies

because it is through them that representations are stored and shaped by dominant frameworks (Said, 1978, p.40-1). New media technologies have intensified rather than altered Orientalism; they even reinforced the latter through their capacity to encode the “reality” of cultural difference. This fetishism also leads to technological orientalism, which is the idea that technologies and infrastructure bring irresistible change and democracy (Brody, 2010, p.76). Technological orientalism was key to the establishment of control in the colony. Not only did it introduce advances in science in otherwise backward societies, it also demonstrated the colonizer’s capacity to reconfigure the colony into something familiar and resembling home. This scheme includes the designs of cities, transportation system, road networks, schools and entertainment areas that were intended to emphasize and tame the “savage nature of (an) Oriental culture” (Brody, 2010, p.79). Technological orientalism also strengthened capitalism’s hold over the colony as it facilitates commerce and the creation of market for commodities (Brody, 2010, p.80). Likewise, new media technologies presented the colonized with aesthetic representations that signify a colonial culture that they should try to mimic. Technological orientalism is a form of reified thinking because change, which is associated with bourgeois freedom expressed in rights and access to the public sphere, is primarily seen in terms of how society embraces technologies and their accompanying control. Technological orientalism also echoes Marcuse’s notion of technological fetishism, which works by projecting the power of technology onto humans and institutions to establish mastery over nature, social relations and consciousness (Marcuse, 1964, p.235). For Marcuse, technologies can be invested with instrumental values that neutralize those considered traditional and irrational, or make them submit to the imperatives of market and power (Feenberg, 2005). Thus, complicit with colonialism, new media technologies articulated such

alienating portrayal of the Orient – as a place that lacks civilization and which would benefit from adopting a civilized capitalist culture.

While Said's arguments on Orientalism as a mode of representation remains mainly on the level of the symbolic, they also shed light on the way in which they are mediated by technologies. I argue that Said's critique is resonant of spectres that attend colonial representations and the growth of new media technologies. Orientalism, as a logocentric discourse, is an erasure of difference that is achieved within the context of colonial domination (Syrotinski, 2007, p.10). However, this reifying condition can be annulled, not through a reverse discourse of Orientalism but through the disruption of its continuity (Syrotinski, 2007, p.20). Disruption does not aim to reproduce reifying categories within a binary; instead the impossibility of thinking beyond the binary brings other ways of imagining another reality. This disruption connotes more than just an interruption of preset conditions because it allows mediation, alteration, reconstitution, and re-presentation to simultaneously occur with destabilization and subversion. Disruption resonates with iteration or iterability, where an intervention solicits new meanings and other ways of acting. Disruption, as iteration, is the privilege of spectres that, to recall, refer to ghostlike effects, or traces, that is both present and absent, past and future, and lasting and ephemeral (Gasche, 1986, p.186). Like value abiding in a commodity, spectres can be suppressed or reconfigured – but whatever the conditions, these effects still traverse prohibitions. Spectres are summoned by prohibitions of their arrival such as rules, codes, and formulas. These prohibitions are presupposed in a colonial society but, at the same time, the very control they imposed invites a provocation that allows a space to exceed calculability and programmable effects. With spectres, and the undecidable effects they emit, colonialism is undermined, while its laws and codes are exposed to constant questioning and threats of dissolution. A dominant

representation, like Orientalism, exhibits spectrality, thus it cannot remain as an uninterrupted totalizing discourse.

In concrete terms, spectres represent the effects of new media technologies during the Spanish and American colonial period, where print and broadcast media provided the chance for the articulation of anti-colonial sentiments, in conditions of censorship and repression. The clandestine circulation of banned books, newspapers and other tracts undermined the colonial authority and the Catholic church, the two institutions that were behind the maintenance of Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines. New media technologies breached the seemingly unilateral hold of colonizers over the consciousness of the natives who can then imagine an end to centuries of subjection. The role of the *ilustrado*, or the emerging bourgeoisie, was crucial to the technicization and mediation of representation. Their depiction of the abuses in the colony was intended to demand colonial reforms but the fiery writings led to a revolution that drew on the previous and enduring demands of colonial subalterns. The effects of the writing is the function of iteration, where writing is a technique that re-presents something that is absent and communicates to readers who are also absent but can be imagined or represented in the here and now. Iteration was also behind the emergence of oppositional new media technologies during the American colonial period, where censorship and the flood of cultural industry products were meant to drown out anti-colonial sentiments. However, technological advances in printing, photography, film and broadcasting enabled mass reproduction of representations. The latter exhibited aberrant interpretations of the American colonial rule that claimed to be a harbinger of progress and democracy. The pro-independence sentiments turned the American claims against themselves to expose their duplicity and misrepresentation. Once again, these forms of subversion resonated with the logic of spectres. In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida argues that new media technologies have both presence and

absence, and induce certain apparitions that disturb the living present (Derrida, 1994, p.125-6). The spectres work in two troubling ways – first, it reprograms an event to become technologically compliant to its convention, and second, it opens up the event for unforeseeable judgments. The haunting occurs in two modes – as techno-logical presence, or simulacrum, and re-presentation as ethico-political responsibility. By allowing near-infinite variations of the two spectral modes, other representations can be possible (Derrida, 1994, p.212; Kamuf, 1996, p.208-10). For Derrida, this allows us to imagine “another space for democracy,” (Derrida, 1994, p.212).

In *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas rendered the bourgeoisie as the class behind the installation of the public sphere that is crucial to their economic and political interests (Habermas, 1989, p.31). No such space is allowed in a colonial society in the Philippines but new media technologies have prefigured the public sphere through their effects that allowed the possibility of diverse anti-colonial and utopian demands to be articulated. In other words, while the public sphere was absent in the colony, it was anticipated in new media technologies. This means that representation becomes a condition of possibility because it allows an articulation that reaches back into the past, so that those who cannot be physically present can nevertheless speak (Glendinning, 1998, p.116). Iteration undermines dominant and prior presence while memory is enlarged to include events and subjectivities that are erased.

The same alterity was present in the use of radio in the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria in the 1950s. In *A Dying Colonialism*, Frantz Fanon discussed how radio, which was introduced in Algeria to strengthen the French colonial hegemony, became a tool and a site to fight for independence (Fanon, 1965). *Radio Alger* was the mouthpiece of colonial authority but the

proliferation of transistor radio, the emergence of clandestine radio stations, and the variety of news and programming available had rendered it impossible for the French to fix the reception of the broadcasts. Radio sets, in the context of Algerian colonial struggle, were not considered modern gadgets for news but, according to Fanon, they became “. . . the only means of entering into communication with the Revolution, of living with it” (Fanon, 1965, p.85). Fanon’s account of the radio brings to light the political spectrality inherent in media technologies. This spectrality was evident when the French jammed the revolutionary broadcasts. The iteration of the broadcasts came in other forms – through relays, the change of radio bands, or through an interpreter who repeats the message before a group that also discusses it. In the end, the French strategy failed. Fanon notes that even if the rebel station, *Voice of Algeria* was off-air, it represented the spectre of Algerian independence (Fanon, 1965, p.87). Thus, the logic of spectres was at work in the clandestine radio in Algeria, to undermine colonial control, even in difficult conditions, and presaged a “free” public sphere. The messianic element of the enduring anti-colonial demand for independence was also suggested by Fanon who noted that listening to the rebel broadcasts is like “hearing the first words of the nation.”

Conclusion

In the accounts of the anti-colonial resistance in the Philippine, the possibilities of response to domination were propelled by a prefigured public sphere, which was conceived to reflect and represent anti-colonial sentiments. While new media technologies were regarded as ideological tools for the articulation of a civilizing mission, they were also seen as vehicles to undermine colonial hegemony. With new media technologies present in the public sphere, it was possible to imagine a postcolonial order. The possibilities that await actualizations were

found less in harmonized representations and more in discrepant and volatile ones that manifest alterity. This alterity haunts representations as a spectre that disturbs the connection – time, history, and democracy. By rendering regulations out of synch, spectres render democracy as a desirable future. If reconciled to the enforcement of consensus and mutual understanding, representation can only be dominating because it overrides other voices, actions, and differentiations. In *The Other Heading*, Derrida provides the given in democracy: iterability, or having the grounds for repetition and continuity, and it is alterable (Derrida, 1992, p.15; 41-3). This idea supplies a radical praxis to Derrida's spectres.

The spectres of violence that haunt the colonial Philippines were induced from the economic and material effects of colonial rule as well as the effects of representation, that is, the iteration and alterity that can be summoned by new media technologies. The deconstructive remembering, which is attempted in this chapter, aims to highlight the spectres at work in a colonial context, something that is often missed in the discussion of anti-colonial struggles in the Philippines. Bringing them to the fore might inspire a second look at their emancipatory and messianic potentials. Likewise, revisiting the colonial history of the Philippines intends to bring out new ways of understanding its inroads, inflections and resources in order to prepare the theoretical groundwork for the postcolonial milieu discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

POSTCOLONIALISM, THE PUBLIC SPHERE, AND NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

Introduction

The Philippines, according to cultural theorist E. San Juan, is bound up with two historical narratives; the “archetypal colonial experience” and the “plot of self-determination” (San Juan, 1996, p.3). Having written about issues that can be rightly traced back, even at the subtle level, to these twin accounts of the nation – for instance, the permanence of patronage and celebrity politics, the phenomenon of Filipino diaspora, and right down to the popularity of skin whitening products – I agree that it is these narratives that haunt almost every story that Filipinos tell themselves and others.

Consider the fascination for fair skin. I argue that it is symptomatic of a belief that equates superiority with white skin and wealth, traceable to racial stereotypes and class construction in colonial times. Stated otherwise, you are dark skinned because you are a subaltern – you are neither of mixed race nor have the money to prevent yourself from working in the fields. I believe that skin whiteners are popular among the masses, partly because they allow them to mimic those with power, and equally because it is a way of redressing the difference, a sort of perverse plot of self-determination. These ways of imagining are essentially part of the subalterns’ history that originate from colonial institutions of power and mechanisms of representation that were once deployed to ensure that certain ideas are transmitted in society, regardless of their political consequences. That they have persisted to this day testifies to the

capacity of their re-presentation as sets of beliefs that are innocuous, despite their obvious exclusionary intent and complicity with the white mythology of capital.

In the Introduction, I mentioned about the terminological tension that “new media technologies” brings, owing to the interplay of technical, communicative and social conventions that the term discharges as well as the unforeseeable consequences that it provokes. This chapter will examine the possibilities of new media technologies in a postcolonial society that is generative of spectres. This will be discussed in the first section where I revisit the growth of new media technologies after the end of colonial rule, or during the period of building a nation. One of the concerns of this period was the construction of the public sphere where new media technologies were drawn in to various interests – politico-legal, economic and cultural. The years after the end of colonial rule in the Philippines were also a time for the unprecedented growth of new media technologies, due to advances in post-war science and engineering as well as the rise in the literacy rate and the relative freedom of expression that new media technologies enjoyed. However, I will emphasize not only the advances of technologies, particularly their spectrality, but also their renewability, or their ability to precipitate new engagements of existing social forces (Peters, 2009, p.22). Consider that when Adorno theorized about the culture industry, he did not focus on technology per se but highlighted the ideology behind the technology, to mean its power to subject mass consciousness to codes of conformity (Adorno, 1991, p.103 - 104). While advances in particular technologies anchored the culture industry, its schema lies in the accompanying aesthetics, or the way that they are oriented to deal with the styles and rationalisations of representations of their time (Adorno, 1991, p.101).

I argue that this orientation of the culture industry similarly designates an aporia for new media technologies, which were seen as instruments of nation building that, for Benedict Anderson, is a process of “imagining a political community” (Anderson, 1983, p.5-6). The latter refers to the formation of a “national consciousness” that stitches together disparate interests, languages and representations through a form in which they can be imagined (Anderson, 1983, p.6). This process is crucial to a nation that is barely out of the colonial stronghold because of the anxiety it elicits. Anderson posits that the emergence of print capitalism, or “print-as-commodity,” enables horizontal unity through the codification of meanings and circulation of homogenous ideas (Anderson, 1983, p.42-44). However, I will argue that technological effects are far diverse and volatile than Anderson suggests (Anderson, 1983, p.43-6). I agree that new media technologies provide a space for disseminating meanings by recalling and representing a variety of discourses of a nation. However, I contend that Anderson missed out on the spectrality that is inherent in technologically mediated forms of representation that allow the differentiation and disruption of centralized and dominant representations. In the end, there could be not just one “imagined community” but a profusion of inventive or imagining communities.

New media technologies are essentially related to the compelling issues of nation building and modernization, which are twin goals of a consolidating nation-state. The intention behind the consolidation was to make way for new arrangements, imaginaries and emblems of belonging to secure national cohesion. New media technologies are involved in modification of the lifeworld as the new regimes assert their own mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion that have to gain some public approval. Habermas has faith in this exercise of forging social consensus. For example, he believes that the popular acceptance of certain beliefs, values and suppositions offers the best chance for stability amidst the increasing complexity and diversity

of society (Habermas, 1987, p.81-2). He claims that interaction, which revolves around reason, is the rallying point of a linguistically mediated society and the vehicle through which social goals are achieved (Habermas, 1987, p.110-11). Progress, in other words, would not be realized if the *telos* of communication, which is mutual agreement and consensus, is either blocked or deflected. Nation building and progress are dependent upon rational communication that has the potential to eliminate ignorance, fatalism and prejudices (Habermas, 1987, p.55-7). For this, Habermas was also criticized for his strong idealization that accompanies his account of consensus and intersubjective understanding that translates into a neglect of other modes of communication that are not considered rational, sensible and obliging (Thomassen, 2010, p.67-75).

Adorno's engagement with the concepts of modernity or progress diverges from Habermas's concept of rational interaction because Adorno maintains that the idea of progress stands on its head (Adorno, 1998, p.147). Equated with certain rationality, progress is reified and reconciled with an "imperious spirit," rather than freed from control (Adorno, 1998, p.148-9). In other words, when progress, as a universal ideal, is made compatible with the existing relations of domination, the concept contradicts itself (Adorno, 1998, p.149; Morris, 2001, p.50). In *Minima Moralia*, Adorno termed universal harmonization as a perversion of the motif of public enlightenment for its disregard of expressions of free will and heterogeneity (Adorno, 1974, p. 114.). Thus, it is only by opening itself to difference and heterogeneity that social interaction becomes invigorated and dynamic because it unconditionally welcomes critiques, contestations and aporias, revealing not only the points of disagreement but also the insufficiency of reified concepts to fulfil what they promised, and account for the complex reality that they designate (Morris, 2001, p.44-5). Hence the relevance of Adorno, when thinking about the bonds that make up the nation, lies in his supposition that the decision to

subsume and incorporate concepts under encompassing ideals, be it nation, modernization or nationalism, renders them complicit with the structures and discourses of power (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1997, p.12-13).

This chapter also concerns itself with the relationship of modernization and the discourse of nationalism in the Philippines (Constantino, 1978b, p.269-301). The latter is a contentious construct that emerged alongside the pursuit of nation building, with progress as its goal. While this modernist orientation of nationalism is not exclusive to the postcolonial condition, the politico-economic determinants of the postcolonial regime make nationalism a problematic enterprise. Nationalism inscribes an ideology of exclusion and exploitation on the nation state; it becomes a justification for the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the few and the suppression of dissent. I will argue that the process of postcolonial nation building is a time and place of extreme spectrality. Postcolonialism here refers to the aporetic condition after the actual presence of colonial rule as well as the ethico-political issues engendered during and after its formal end (Hiddleston, 2009, p.4). One such issue is how colonialism lingers in discourses, and also how the attempts to construct new modes of representation of a nation have re-established hierarchy and inequality. The difficulty of apprehending these reified beliefs resides, in part, in the acceleration of their reproduction and transmission that makes them commonplace. The reified constructs are ubiquitously presented as essential to the expansion of knowledge, progress and participation, not as thoughts complicit with former colonizers and the new rulers. In this case, the nation becomes a frontier in which new media technologies are harnessed to the task of governing. Technicization, per se, is integral to the project of unifying a nation as it provides access to modern knowledge, new modes of representation and political participation. New media technologies are vital in the creation of an enlarged public sphere, wherein the exercise of

their techno-mediation power overwhelms the sphere of inclusive interaction. Conversely, new media technologies are employed as hegemonic tools by the new rulers to reach the masses. However, I will argue that the same technical function can supply other transformative resonances. In relation to the postcolonial agenda, spectres open up a space between political goals and their hegemonic representations (Derrida, 1994, p.79). The space yields to ambivalence and contingencies thus allowing an expansion of ethico-political choices that veers from the fixed and homogenizing points of prevailing narratives.

The spectral possibilities of new media technologies in a postcolonial context will be explored in this chapter. The first section provides historical overview of the postcolonial conditions in the Philippines and the events that followed in the aftermath of colonial rule, together with an account of the theoretical debates they have provoked. The retelling will pay close attention to the ways in which the technological process, through the accelerated transmission of representations, has produced effects that interrupt and undermine postcolonial regimes, which have grown reliant on new media technologies. This periodization intends to bring out the elements that solicited the Derridean spectres in the public sphere. The second section of the chapter surveys the discourses of nationalism that emerged from the project of postcolonial nation building. Nationalism, which was part of the basis of anti-colonial resistance, has acquired a plurality of meanings and articulations derived from various propositions of what could constitute a nation. For instance, nationalism has been reworked to justify the silencing of minorities, the turn to utilitarian calculation to exclude the “other,” and the assignment of reified representations. In this process, which includes the practice of governance and installation of material and discursive means of democratization, the deployment of new media technologies is complicit with the constitution of hegemony. What I offer in this account is an examination of the diversity of conceptual modes of nationalism

as the paradigm of a particular postcolonial politics. I will look at how the construal of a nation feeds into the structures of authority and domination as well as the dynamics of resistance and self-determination. The third section deals with how new media technologies disrupt the hegemonic order in the public sphere as their varied technological effects threaten attempts to dissolve differences in favour of decreed unanimity and harmonization. Hence, in this case, a representation can never be discursively enclosed so as to exclude simulacra, spins of information, burlesques of esteemed truths, and simulations. The appropriations afforded by new media technologies can open up perceptions and experiences to other ways of framing and contextualization. Overall this chapter aims to explore the possibilities of new media technologies in conditions of postcoloniality or, simply put, the deployment and use of new media technologies in relation to the construction of a nation and the public sphere, but paying attention to what they reveal and create from what were not there before.

4.1 The Postcolonial Nation

In the dominant historiography, the postcolonial era in the Philippines commenced in 1946, in a fourth of July ceremony, which was marked by the dramatic lowering of the United States' flag, while that of the Philippines was flown free for the first time. The event was dubbed the Philippine-American Friendship Day in a move to represent the transformation of a colonial relation from one of subjection and exploitation to that of fraternity and mutual respect. This unpromising discourse on friendship conveyed that despite the dreadful acts of colonisation in the past, the two nations could part as friends even though US hegemonic interests, in the form of trade agreements, military pacts and geo-political agenda, were secured and preserved long after the ceremonial independence.

In the historical timeline of the Philippines, the postcolonial period meant the incipience of modernization. The latter means the pursuit of progress through science, accumulation of wealth through industry, democracy through representation and the construction of national identity. These goals have universalistic *telos*, that is meant to encompass the many rather than particular political standpoints. In other words, they seek to unify a post-independence nation while downplaying discord and difference. These larger goals betrayed a type of thinking that favours instrumental rationality, uniformity and stability, which are values aligned with modernism and capitalism. They coincided with the expansion of commodity markets and technological progress in the 1950s and the decade that followed. In all these preoccupations with economic and political shifts, new media technologies have been indispensable for the mass generation of discourses to construct identity and coordinate social relations. It is not for nothing that the growth of communications infrastructure in the Philippines has been presented as an index modernization, as shown by statistics on the number of transistor radios owned and newspapers in circulation (Lent, 1977). The ease of the circulation of information supports the growth of domestic capitalism, as it is supposed that the simultaneous access to messages stimulates consumption and the exercise of personal choice.

My examination of postcolonialism as a historical period necessarily raises questions about colonisation and its aftermath. Postcolonialism expands the inquiry by dealing with the larger structure of the economic, political, cultural and philosophical issues arising from the colonial experience and after. In this sense, postcolonialism problematizes the historiography of colonialism as well as the determinants of its persistence, and this includes the agency of the colonial subjects and their struggles. With the colonial legacy as the starting point, postcolonialism interrogates the attempts to break from the colonial past, and how this would

be possible given that the exploitative structure of capitalism is still a fact. The condition of postcoloniality is one in which the political and technological processes of colonialism have simply not gone away. Frantz Fanon, in his critique of decolonization, notes that the transition from being a colony to an independent state is not a reversal of the colonial order but the preservation of its production relations, trade pattern, and political system in which the native bourgeoisie became the beneficiaries and intermediaries of the former colonialists (Fanon, 1963, p.122-3).

Fanon's argument is cogent when examining the Philippines' ties with the United States. The relationship was shaped by the growth of capitalism and the Americans' geo-political interest. The Philippines stood as a staunch ally of the U.S. in the Cold War era. The years after World War II saw the further rise of U.S. hegemony globally. The U.S. became the major source of investments and reconstruction funds even as it aggressively searched for new markets, having learned lessons from limited foreign economic policy during the Depression years (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.87). The Cold War further guaranteed the expansion of U.S. strategic interests. When the U.S. established its network of military bases around the world, especially in the Philippines, not only did these serve as deterrence to the Soviet Union and liberation movements in Asia, they also worked to protect American investments. On the other hand, the American culture industry was also crucial in moulding the Philippines' postcolonial consciousness, something that was inevitable, given the proliferation of imported films, magazines, canned television shows and radio broadcasts (Pineda-Ofreneo, 1986, p.14-6; Lent, 1977). These cultural products not only exhibited their technological superiority, they also registered their ability to sustain dependency. In all, the policies of the U. S. over its former colony rested on its post war economic advantage, cultural hegemony and military power.

The United States' postcolonial dominance in the Philippines manifests in four ways: cultural dominance, economic and trade agreements, military pacts, and political interference. Cultural dominance is one of the ways in which U.S. imperialism exerts control in the Philippines. One aspect of this control is exercised through the presence of the cultural commodities presented by the American culture industry. By the manner that these strategic and economic interests were communicated culturally, one can say that a Hollywood movie can easily encapsulate the ideology, fantasy, and anxiety of U.S. supremacy. The influence of the American culture industry continued with the abundance of imported magazines, books, news, music and other cultural products, exposing Filipinos to American fantasies in various guises (Ofreneo, 1986, p.218-220). English continued to be the language used in major Philippine newspapers, schools, and the government bureaucracy, and thus retaining its status as a signifier of Filipino identity, aside from being the language of reflexion (San Juan, 2009, p.37-9). Cultural dominance was based on the erstwhile colonial belief that technologies and modern culture could bring material and cultural development as well as liberate people from the bounds of traditions and excessive piety. In other words, the case of the Philippines demonstrates the furtherance of U.S. imperialism, justified by discourses of orientalism and technological messianism that perpetuate the exploitation and racism of the colonial period. The following discussion will take into account the complex interplay of economic, political and cultural elements that make up the overall communicative process from which technological messianism emanates.

The narrative of technological messianism sustained the postcolonial project of modernization in the Philippines, and the underlying premise is this: adopting a superior technology leads to progress. With U.S. capital predominating in the local economy, Filipino elites were acting as the financial agents, go-betweens and middlemen of American business (Ofreneo, 1984, p.5).

American investments are located in strategic industries like communication, military installations, construction, export trading, and hospitality. Except for communication where diffusion was the norm, the technological and economic ventures were confined to specific sectors and urban centers. The economy of the Philippines remained predominantly agricultural, with production tied to export of crops like sugar, hemp, tobacco, coconut, and timber. The unevenness of capitalism's growth ensures that the economic activities posed no competition to imported commodities and U.S. investments. Trade agreements between the Philippines and the U.S. came with disadvantageous provisions, as indicated by quotas set for Philippine products as well as the preference and protection of American investments (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.88-9). The domestic and foreign trade, and the fiscal policies of the Philippines were also increasingly steered by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, two institutions that have been setting the terms of global economic reconstruction and fiscal regulation (Constantino, 1978b, p.311-17).

The ties that best served the U.S. military agenda were the military agreements for the establishment and unhampered use of 23 American military installations in the Philippines. The major facilities were Subic Naval Base and Clark Air Base that were used in military campaigns in Korea, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.140). Up to 1991, the bases were the largest in the world outside the U.S. territory. The military assistance safeguarded the U.S. interests and conveyed the U.S. military presence in Asia (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.96-7). U.S military assistance, in the form of weapons, funds, and advisers, helped suppress the communist rebellion in the Philippines (Constantino, 1978b, p.267-8). The United States also showed an "undisguised interference" in politics -- from the election of presidents to the establishment of foreign relations and policies (Constantino, 1978b, p.269). For example, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) personnel and

funds ensured the election of Ramon Magsaysay as president who rode on a populist and anti-communist platform backed by American businesses in the Philippines (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.120-3; Constantino, 1978, p.257). The CIA-sponsored anti-communist hysteria and smear campaigns targeted politicians and groups critical of U.S. policies in the Philippines, easily circulated in the media (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.111-18).

The successive of postcolonial administrations in the Philippines maintained the colonial trade relations with the United States. However from 1950 to 1960, the country attempted to industrialize and protect local manufacturers by minimizing imports (Constantino, 1978b, p.312-14). But lacking requisites like the steel industry, the country had relied heavily on imported machinery and industrial components. Indeed, the policy had established some light manufacturing industries but it was later abandoned to return to a strategy of export-oriented growth. The brief period with domestic industrialization did not significantly affect the prevailing mode of production but it had, to some extent, introduced the idea of economic self-determination. The uneven growth of productive forces within the expanding contours of capitalism defies a simple designation of the country's mode of production as pre-capitalist or semi-capitalist. In fact, the mode of production is neither capitalist nor feudal: it is not predominantly feudal despite the feudal relations in the countryside, nor principally capitalist because commodity production is not the principal activity where surplus value is derived (Sison and De Lima, 1998, p.9). The mode of production is a specific configuration of its own, from the pattern of exporting agricultural products and importing commodities wherein the latter was assigned an exchange value greater than the former's use value. The extraction of surplus labour and exchange value were also shaped by class struggles and political circumstances that have all encoded the bases of the asymmetrical relations of exchange. In this peculiar mode of production, the development of new media technologies is similarly

uneven but open-ended in their convention, their tempo driven both by the material conditions, technological processes and the possibilities of representation. The latter inhered in the way in which these technologies are harnessed -- in consonance with the drive for profit, installation of hegemony, and entertainment.

When Filipino elites took over the reins of power from the colonizer, they came up with an exclusivist rule with the trappings of liberal democracy. This type of authority resonates with David Held's idea of "competitive elite democracy" where factions of the ruling class dominate the centralized government through party politics that is sustained by keeping the masses uninformed but beguiled by the technocratic expertise and charisma of their elected leaders (Held, 2006, p.157). Political participation is mainly through the ballot while public discussions are constrained by limited access to resources of reflexion and the lack of avenues for critical engagement. Competitive elite politics is reflected in the manner that factions of the Filipino elite used their position to their economic advantage by helping themselves to licenses and franchises, land grants, lease agreements, timber and mining concessions, among others, either as owners or intermediaries. Inevitably corruption seeped into the levels of the bureaucracy. In the national legislature, laws were shaped around the economic interests of politicians, many of whom are from the landed class (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.126). Hence land distribution was never legislated seriously. It is a fact that in the provinces, landowners' economic influence extends to politics, a leverage used to gain favours from the central government. As election choices were not determined by political platforms but mainly popularity, landlords easily delivered command votes. In this sense, elections, as formal or direct political forms of representation, not only legitimated the rule of the elite, but also became the mechanism to secure, in hegemonic fashion, the acceptance of the elite's economic and cultural positions.

Some historians described this post-independence Philippine politics as the dominance of two parties, secured by kinship and ritual ties that value reciprocity and debts of gratitude (McCoy, 1994; Schirmer and Shalom, 1987; Kervliet and Mojares, 1991). They point to the presence of the two major and ideologically indistinguishable parties -- *Liberal* and *Nacionalista* — whose frontrunners and stalwarts came mainly from landowning and comprador classes. But while political families are vehicles for ascent to power, I agree with postcolonial theorist San Juan that such political dynamic offers a delimiting analysis of the calculating and, at times, violent Philippine politics. Privileging clan and factions masked the nature of class politics that shaped the condition of subalternity (San Juan, 1998, p.63-4). I argue that while clan politics thrives on filial ties, power has remained class-based, derived from the ownership of the means of production, unequal social relations, and efficacy of hegemony. As San Juan has pointed out, control is possible because subalterns are relegated to the fringes of politics and civil society where the elites easily propagated their ideology, values, beliefs, way of life, and morality upon those whose autonomy are circumscribed (San Juan, 2009, p.177). At the grassroots, politics rests on relations of production and political representation that sustain a condition characterized by the absence of free will on the part of the masses to reach, what San Juan calls the “integral, organic and critical self-consciousness” (San Juan, 1999, p. 95). In a sense, the dynamism and diffusion of new media technologies neither guarantee shared enlightenment nor dissolution of the dominating representations serving the instrumental rule of the elites.

If politics supplies the avenues for formal representation, then this elitist post-war politics in the Philippines had fallen short of providing formal and symbolic representation befitting the idea of representative government (Held, 2006, p.64). The presence of a nation is premised upon a prejudiced exclusion of some groups or classes. Its consequence is the denial of

“publicness,” in a Habermasian sense, that implies the curtailment of interaction in the public sphere. In other words, exclusion inheres in the process of forging a Filipino nation, the basis of which reached back to the interplay of class and racism during the colonial times. This disavowal of presence resonates with Spivak’s analysis of subalterns and representation wherein the former are incapable of representing themselves, formally and aesthetically, thus politically (Spivak, 1988). For Spivak, the subalterns are excluded in the double sense of representation, the direct and aesthetic forms, and therefore such a condition defined them as unrepresentable. This exclusionary regime conveys a deep but larger sense of proscription that implicates representations tied to the genealogies, colour, and other indicators of difference. What this implies is that the ideology of nation building has re-inscribed the colonial forms of racism and consequently it is this which framed the reprisals taken against groups exhibiting some forms of resistance to the postcolonial state. In the Philippines, they include workers, peasants, and millenarian movements that altogether became the radical faces of subaltern resistance against elite rule, U.S. hegemony, and capitalist exploitation. Their various struggles can be thought as a form of direct representation that also prefigured an inclusionary public sphere (San Juan, 1998, p.51).

The repressive policies of postcolonial regimes solicited spectres of violence and various modes of resistance of intransigent groups. The peasant and workers’ movement grew strong with the merger of the communist and socialist parties in the 1930s but the alliance was short-lived because the leaders were arrested and imprisoned. In the 1950s, with U.S. military aid and CIA advisers, the Philippine government broke the backbone of the communist-led struggle for land, jobs and representation, with the leaders and followers arrested *en masse* (Constantino, 1978b, p.231-40). As a result, communists abandoned armed resistance in favour of parliamentary means and this occasioned the U.S. to claim credit for crushing

communism in its former colony (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.118). However, an even more brutal suppression was inflicted upon the peasant-based millenarian groups that staged sporadic uprisings in the 1950s. Among them was the *Sakdal*, whose actions bore an insurrectionary legacy from the colonial times (San Juan, 1999, p.78). In the previous chapter I have pointed out that millenarian movements' during the colonial period are mechanisms of representation that, through rituals and mystical beliefs, articulated politico-ethical demands. Under Spain's rule, such representations were seen as a defiance of Catholicism while under the Americans, and in postcolonial regimes, these were regarded as bandits, outlaws, and subversives, while their uprisings were considered irrational acts (Ileto, 1979, p.1). Filipino historian Renato Constantino stopped short of recognizing this strand of subaltern politics as "political" because he believed that the attained self-consciousness of the participants failed to grasp the connection between poverty and capitalism's penetration of the countryside via the hegemonic devices of the US and the local elites (Constantino, 1978b, p.5). However, Rafael Ileto, in his path-breaking study of millenarian groups in the Philippines, argues that their rites and mysticism, which are suffused with idioms of equality and messianism, had sufficiently challenged the formal representation denied to subalterns (Ileto, 1979, p.19). What is salient about Constantino's argument on the limits of millenarian consciousness, and Ileto's examination of the groups' apocalyptic but barely perceptible political tones, are their recognition of the movement's possibilities to directly represent the subaltern's politics within the confines of the nation, and thus undermine the hegemonic devices of the elite.

Gramsci's notion of the subaltern's transformation can explain why political ideas of peasant-based millenarian and messianic groups in the Philippines were inchoate. What can be drawn from Gramsci is that these groups go through phases and changes within the milieu that frames their marginalization and yet the same condition also provides the ingredients with

which to expand their social consciousness, and overcome their subordination and exploitation of their labour power (Gramsci, 2000, p.196-7; Green, 2002, p.15). While Gramsci notes that the subaltern's transformation exhibits a commitment to an ethico-political society, this idea does have difficulty with mimetic practice, or the recurring presence of these millenarian groups at certain periods in history. This recurrence, I believe, should not be dismissed as an epiphenomenon in response to the lack of representation, which then would be remedied by representation. Rather, the "return" is inhabited by a certain faith in the promise of an end, by a sense of justice, by some inheritance. I will argue that this subaltern consciousness can be summoned by the very thing that prevents its staging, and just when it was thought that it has been effaced and emptied, it springs a presence or, as Derrida would say, it is always already representation (Derrida, 2007). However, this process goes beyond restoring equivalence and balance in representation, and gestures toward transforming the context in which representation operates. This means that subaltern politics simultaneously installs and disrupts the construction of a postcolonial nation as it engenders a narrative that is both symbolic and irrational, something that Derrida termed "rogue," which is an "other" of democracy. The rogue is permeated by dilemmas and possibilities despite the decision to render it stable (Derrida, 2005, p. 81-92). To return to the historical account of the subaltern politics in the Philippines, I argue that the inscrutable consciousness of millenarian groups is characteristic and an expression of a condition of postcoloniality, one of the many that manifested their presence in the public sphere, and challenged the authority that considered these groups incompatible with a rational order.

The presence of new media technologies requires a rethinking along the promise of spectres not as a recurring phenomena or mimesis. Neither should it be regarded as playing a support role to politics and popular movements. New media technologies exhibit spectral effects the

moment they reconfigure representations, be these epistemological reconfigurations, recursive paradoxes, or persistent discourses. These effects come across as ghostly apparitions with multiple evocations, essentially marked by discrepancies and unpredictability. But what is often missed is how they supply political impulses that are unknowable and beyond absolutes. New media technologies have the capacity to summon representations that have been effaced. This aspect of summoning finds relevance in the Philippines, in so far as it marked its bid for modernization by relying on new media technologies' capacity to enable interaction and representation that overtook the traditional forms of communication.

The postcolonial period in the Philippines saw the unprecedented growth of new media technologies – print publication, radio, television, magazines and films. Between the 1950s to the early part of the 1960s, fifteen big English language newspapers circulated in Manila, four of them owned by Americans. The biggest was the “Manila Times,” with 200,000 copies daily while the combined circulation of 50 weeklies in the provinces was estimated at 300,000 (Lent, 1977, p. 14-15). Some newspaper owners also expanded their media holdings to radio and television. Radio grew to become the popular medium for mass entertainment and public information in the rural areas while television's reach was limited to the cities and a middle-class audience who were then exposed to predominantly canned American shows (Lent, 1977, p.45). Newspapers continued to be the main source of news in urban areas. Three visible factors were noted for the boost of print media – the use of modern printing presses, the printing paper quota from the U.S. and revenues from advertising. In terms of ownership, editorial independence was suspect because newspaper owners had interests ranging from shipping, airline, trading, and public utilities, and this can explain why newspapers aired anti-communist views, overtly partisan, and resorted to self-censorship (Ofreneo, 1984, p.69-73). Moreover, they accommodated much of the U.S. Cold War propaganda (Ofreneo, 1984, p.75).

In the 1950s, the aesthetics of the culture industry transformed the public sphere in paradoxical ways. New media technologies allowed unlimited access to information, drawing people from private into the public realm, and yet this also brought cultural alienation. The relative freedom enjoyed by new media technologies, which was responsible for their growth and proliferation, also reined them in as they were within the reach of the state's mechanisms of control, and money, or the class interests of their owners. Gramsci's notion of civil society explains how non-judicial elements like churches, schools, voluntary organizations and the media produce and disseminate representations that are congruent or supportive of the hegemonic power. Civil society, along with the public sphere, is a "realm of hegemony," not of freedom because it enables the reproduction and transmission of the dominant ideas and representations (Green, 2002, p.7). The Philippine elite's concern was primarily with how new media technologies contribute to normalcy and stability, which indicates their political and economic interests. Not only should meanings be fixed, the repetition should also secure a constancy when reinterpreted in various contexts. In the period of class and identity consolidation, unity is accomplished by exposure to more or less the same accounts and sources of news. It was erroneously surmised that access to new media technologies is equivalent to civic participation, which styled the exercise of critical reason. The latter is propitious to the elite that tried to preserve a reified notion of unity, underpinned by an exclusionary version of nationhood.

There were, of course, other critical voices that challenged the hegemony of the U.S. and the political elites. Their emergence signified the growth of political consciousness among subaltern groups – peasants, farm workers, the urban poor and petty bourgeois – who were conscious of their subordination. There were some enlightened elite politicians who deplored American intervention in politics and economy of the Philippines in the 1950s (Constantino,

1978b, p.288-292). Added to that was an upsurge of the radical student movement in the 1960s that criticized the Philippine government and elites' complicity with the U.S. economic and Cold War agenda, the pervasive corruption in the bureaucracy, and harsh feudal relations in the countryside. The founding of the new Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed group, the New People's Army, in 1968 infused a revolutionary agenda to the popular movements of workers, peasants, students, middle-class intellectuals and the religious. The new communist party presented a countervailing analysis of the postcolonial Philippines, which is a society constituted by classes having differing interests and where the dominant ideology is at work (San Juan, 1996, p.198; Sison and De Lima, 1998, p.3). In all, the presence of these groups, along with their various political subjectivities, gestures toward an aporia, which Derrida describes "time (is) out of joint," marked by dislocation and inordinate variation of representations (Derrida, 1994, p.20-21).

The preceding account of the postcolonial condition sketched a socio-historical reference of the Philippines through a selective and deconstructive reading of history. I have shown that the reconfigured political formation became the precursor of new contradictions and aporias. I provided an account of the conditions in which the spectres of colonialism are solicited. My intent was to demonstrate that deconstruction, which has been accused of avoiding ethico-political responsibility in favour of indecision and textual indulgence, actually has the capacity to address the "real" promise of emancipation and messianic justice, in a specific historical context. I contend that justice is possible through the exercise of communicative reason cognizant of alterity and iteration. Alterity suggests the redress of the injustice while iterations links that possibility to the process of technicization that enables the infinite repetition of such a possibility. In what follows, I will give an account of how the attempts to confine the ways of constructing a nation rendered them incompatible to the spectral

possibilities solicited by new media technologies. The spectrality of the latter, in terms of the speed and breadth of its effects, can no longer be confined to a homogenous imagining of a nation. This teleology gave rise to a paradox, such that the hegemonic discourse actually enables reconfigurations that disrupt the attempts to constitute a fixed memory of the nation.

4.2 Spectral Nationalism and Postcolonial Democracy

If nationalism is a spirit, it is a ghost dragging along a chain that bears the weight of the past and the present's ambiguities that, from Balibar's list, include "civic spirit, patriotism, populism, ethnicism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, chauvinism, imperialism . . ." and so forth (Balibar, 1991, p.46). Nationalism is a social imaginary that animates the task of building a nation. Nationalism supplies a framework wherein progress, modernization and democratic practice can be understood. Changes taking place in the nation can be mapped out in the ideal and experience of nationalism, the typology of which will be highlighted here. At the outset, I would argue that variants of nationalism provide clashing directions and dispositions in the public sphere that have the potential to hasten, impede or alter the goals of a nation.

I wish to highlight what I see as the two variants of nationalism that represent the imaginaries of a nation after the end of colonial rule. One kind of nationalism is conceived around an imagined organic unity while another kind is formed around the notions of difference and hospitality. The first one starts with a lofty goal of unifying the people that make up a nation by regulating individual interests, which ends up repressing and effacing anything that challenges the supposed unity. As a collective imaginary, this version of nationalism does not address deep differences and reification in society. The second version affirms unity through difference that were often disavowed, hidden and suppressed in the name of general interest

or common good— but an affirmation that nevertheless leads the way toward an unknowable but conceivably transformative path of a nation. The first kind of nationalism valorises an original identity that conveys purity, self-sufficiency and self-perpetuation; the second one displaces this identity by tracing the constitutive absence that is its condition. From these aporias, I will argue that the second kind of nationalism, which is what Derrida had in mind, would lead to a more radical politics and democracy. Nonetheless these two variants of the nationalist imaginary, with all their political and economic implications, have significantly shaped the allegories of nation building.

In the Philippines, nationalism is the ideal behind the task of promoting participation in civil society and the public sphere. The latter draws its justificatory elements from nationalism too, when, for example, favouring the majority over the few (“others”) or privileging some groups, culture or language as opposed to recognizing their identities. As a consequence, the process of establishing legal and civic institutions out of a colonial foundation in the Philippines was appropriated by the economic and political elites, and while it appears to uphold universal inclusion, it actually narrows the scope of national interests to a fraction of those who stand to benefit from progress and participation in economy and politics (Constantino, 1978, p. 341).

The Philippine elite, who took over the state machinery from the colonizers, approved of the “counting” view of nationalism and democracy (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.126-131). This majoritarian politics was secured through formal and aesthetic modes of representation. Or to put it slightly differently, representation is secured through the ballot and also the dominant discourses in the public sphere and new media technologies. This suggests that the successive postcolonial regimes were keen to bring everyone to accede to the dominant views and agenda, especially those who had no chance to represent their political aspirations. In this

sense, nationalism became the rhetoric to secure consensus, harmony and assent to the goals of those in power; it is also designated as the *sine qua non* of progress. Along the way, the conflicted concept of nationalism delivered the masses to the hegemonic designs of the postcolonial elite (Lumbera, 2008, location 2847, e-book). Nation building was primarily concerned with civic, cultural and political consolidation rather than attending to diverse ethnic or cultural differences.

The shifting discourse of nationalism at work in postcolonial Philippines finds a link with capitalism, Orientalism, political reformism and subaltern politics. First, nationalism accommodated capitalism by appealing to consumers to buy locally produced goods to support Filipino capitalists who were just starting out (Constantino, 1978b, p.312). Nationalism was patriotically reworked to support the local production in lieu of buying imported goods. However there is nothing home grown in the production process because the Philippines's market was penetrated by American firms along light manufacturing, assembly, and packaging industry (Ofreneo, 1984, p.4-5). The local bourgeoisie turned to nationalism as an alibi to accelerate the accumulation of surplus value. In their appeal for support, they have presented their own class interests as the general interest. In this instance, the discourse of nationalism is compliant with capitalism that operates and expands unevenly. The second construction of nationalism exposed the roots of cultural nationalism, as this is conjoined with a bourgeois aesthetics that challenged U.S. cultural imperialism by reviving traditional values, rituals and culture that convey placidity, affective ties and idyllic settings that contrast with the chaos of modern, urban life. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said warned of a similar sentiment wherein cultures are simplified and reduced to caricatures that are easily staged and exploited for profit (Said, 1993, p.36-7). In this case, nationalism cashed in on indigenous aesthetics, turning them into cultural spectacles for the benefit of the touristic gaze. The third

sense of nationalism addressed political reforms initiated by enlightened bourgeois politicians. As a political platform, it draws on anti-colonial elements to criticize the U.S. economic and political hegemony. This political stance recognises the salience of being independent from the political dictates of the U.S. and, as a result, was criticized by the elites and U.S. agents in the Philippines, including CIA operatives. Nationalism, in this case, is inflected with liberal and reformist convictions that summon the anti-colonial sentiments just when it is thought they have been erased by the end of colonial rule. This notion of nationalism unsettles elitist politics that now has to come to terms with its own subversion. This type of nationalism exposes the fissures within the ruling class, showing the fluctuations within the dominant idealization of nationalism.

The fourth signification of nationalism relates to a subaltern politics that perceived the connection between postcolonial control of the U.S. and class-oriented politics in the Philippines. This kind of nationalism reincarnated the political aspirations and needs of groups that are seen as backward, fragmentary, irrational and unrepresentable, and who are left out in the discussion of the modernizing nation. This concept of the nation was built around the idea of inclusion and difference as opposed to preclusion and homogeneity. It emerged from the experience of subjection that persists in the uneven terrain of capitalism and inaccessible juridico-political structures that deny the many the chance of representation. Nationalism, for these groups, carried the questions of justice and representation, where justice translates to having access to the means of production, such as lands and decent jobs, and also political representation in the public sphere. These demands negate the inherently exclusionary nature of dominant nationalism that presents itself as pluralist and rational, resulting in a politics that disregards difference even as it claims to speak for everyone. The much-invoked democratic ideal of rational consensus, as it is applied to condition of

subalternity is, in fact, partial, dissentious, and equivocal. Thus nationalism was a discourse that shaped the struggle for self-determination, the purpose of which was to install justice and increase the chance being heard and seen. This struggle represented an admixture of millenarian, religious, economic, and cultural forms of politics that did not discount the use of violence.

It is useful to revisit the modalities of nationalism to determine their double bind and radical possibilities. The first three notions of nationalism are built around the tacit concepts of territory and “naturalized history” that unify people through an ideology of supposed belonging. They convey a sense of community, in this case, a political community, which both Zygmunt Bauman and Derrida recognized as a conflicted construct. Bauman notes that the narrative of nationalism relates to the construction of the nation-state that needed a basis to override the various self-determining communities, ideologies and interests, whatever ends it strives to attain (Bauman, 2000, p.172-3). Here, nation refers to a group of people who believe they are a part of a political community built by nature, history or ethnic origins. Arising from biological and cultural heritage, this idea of nationalism, as seen through Bauman, embraces a “verdict of fate,” in which people find themselves in or bound up with something that they cannot choose to deny. This suggests that the naturalization of that which binds or unifies takes precedence over differences that can never be larger than the sum total of the unity posited. Bauman’s criticism of nationalism lies in his belief that the preponderance of unity over recognition of differences is far from being a stable bond as when such is sealed by “confrontation, debate, negotiation and compromise”(Bauman, 2000, p.177-8). He sees this kind of nationalism as incompatible with the accelerated expansion and mobility of capitalism, which are among the elements of what he calls “liquid modernity.” The latter, which describes a social condition of uncertainty and ambivalence, demands a

pluralistic approach. Bauman's assessment shows that the narrative of nationalism naturalizes history, culture and democracy from where nationalism also derives its credence (Bauman, 2000, p.173). The circularity of this approach renders the concept closed because it makes the acknowledgement of difference and dissent extremely difficult (Bauman, 2000, p.174).

Bauman's argument supplies a counterpoint to Habermas's idea of the public sphere and his theory of communicative action. Applied in the context of a nation, Habermas's notion of unity is mediated by law and the constitution; with the latter having the capacity to bind disparate political agenda and disagreements into a rational coexistence and mutual respect, aside from providing legitimacy to the constituted state (Habermas, 1996, p.104). However this interpretation of unity should be seen in the context of Habermas's concept of communicative democracy, which finds expression in the interaction in the public sphere. In *Between Facts and Norms*, Habermas is keen to argue that laws and constitutional guarantees, under ideal conditions, can be subject to discussions and deliberations in the public sphere from where they can be subject to an agreement for their validity and relevance to society. By marrying constitutionalism and democracy, in a relation of mutual implication and enabling, Habermas provides a condition from where individual freedom is guaranteed and pluralism, assured (Habermas, 1996, p.128; Thomassen, 2006, p.178). What this holds for the narrative of nationalism is that the legal frameworks can sufficiently unify a nation and ensure the exercise of individual rights and rational interaction, elements that all index a functioning democracy.

Nationalism, in Habermas's sense, is implicit in the presupposed agreements that interactions and representations are oriented to because, in a communicative democracy, what is most important is the rational goal of communication rather than what is being communicated. If

democracy and legal guarantees are not in place, the discourse of nationalism is constrained in the public sphere, or may even be excluded from it. But when considered reflexively, nationalism could stand as a unifying force accomplished through deliberation, indoctrination and calculation. I believe the potential pitfall in Habermas's notion of nationalism lies in the fact that it could countenance constitutional authoritarianism, because it sees nation building goals as the domain of the few who are in-charge of the state machinery. As Bauman has warned, nationalism is wedded to the instrumental goals of democracy.

Bauman and Habermas's idea of forging a nation or political community arises from how they see variations of nationalism in Europe, or generally in the West. Bauman reads a dangerous contingency on the framework of nationalism -- the concept is bound to lose its cachet when it is out of synch with the acceleration of global capitalism that, ironically, has the same goal as nationalism, that is, the erasure of heterogeneity (Bauman, 2000, 187-8). I argue that Bauman's notion of a nation has traces of primordialism, although he maintains that it is a construct built on anterior ties, identities and affiliations that resonate with a group of people who share a particular history (Bauman, 2000, p. 172-5). These ties are prior to the setting in of modernity marked by territorial conquest and colonization. On the other hand, Habermas's communicative democracy implies that nationalism can be channelled intersubjectively, or through the process of reaching common understanding that could preserve the precarious bond of a nation. Nationalism prioritizes a universality that finds expression in the laws, democratic procedures and guarantees of human rights, and which is therefore construed as rational. Habermas's commitment to universalism also brings him to see nationalism as waning in the expansion of global markets that challenge the particularism of the nation-state. In *The Postnational Constellation*, Habermas argues that democracy and self-determination could also be realized beyond the context of the nation-state, and that it is possible to

symbolically construct a collective belonging beyond filiation and common territory (Habermas, 2001). In this sense thinking outside the premises of the institutional form of the nation-state, would help secure cosmopolitan rights and representation for citizens (Habermas, 2001, p.76). This is made possible by networks, which are built to speed up the exchange of commodities, money, persons and information, feeding into a bigger, pluralist and transnational lifeworld built upon universally shared notions of “mutual understanding, intersubjectivity and collective values” (Habermas, 2001, p.82-3). But while Bauman and Habermas advanced the notions of nationalism and democracy beyond the liberal’s discourse of nation-building, they cannot fully account for the subaltern’s views of nationalism, which are solicited by the attempts at consolidation of political and social order, which cannot fulfil the promise of a democratic polity and social equity. In this sense, nationalism, as a mode of collective interpretation that shaped the postcolonial enterprise, remains haunted by binaries that reflect contradictory ontological demands – and it is this haunting that has defined the politics of nationalism in the Philippines after colonialism.

Derrida’s recursive critique of language, which proved relevant for contemporary postcolonial theory, is useful to my argument as it looks at universalising narratives and claims to homogenising unity (Syrotinski, 2007, p.14; Derrida, 1998, p.15). Underscored in the nation-building agenda of postcolonial regimes are bonds based on kinship, shared language, territory and other cultural ties. Not only did Derrida insist that they are arbitrary, but that they are also imbued with “the brutality of unilateral decision” (Derrida, 1998, p.15). In this sense, the nation, which connects together such bonds, inscribes a form of violence when it decides what should be included by reason of numbers, filiations and conformity. In *The Politics of Friendship*, Derrida’s deconstructive politics proposes a departure from notions of primordial origins and binaries that underlie the narrative of nationalism. Origins and

oppositions are more concerned with inclusions and exclusions, and much less, with the “other.” Derrida maintains that the concept of origins tends to naturalize the fiction of “the people,” producing hierarchies and, in the process, subordinating and repressing oppositions, unreasonable strangers and outsiders (Derrida, 1997, p.93-4). Origins and hierarchies make up presence or identity; they preside and determine the value and limits of terms, appearances and relations. Nationalism, Derrida has cautioned, is founded on social bonds that are presumed natural and oriented to origins that are then perpetuated and repeated as fidelity and homage to one’s ancestors (Derrida, 1997, p.99-100). However the ties that bind a nation or a community are synthetic and easily subject to manipulations to render opaque their dispositions. Similarly, the concept of democracy falls into schemas of hierarchy and opposition; it also marked itself mainly by turning to numerical calculation to convey presence (Derrida, 1997, p.101). The turn to numbers can be linked to a problematic of Western democracy that was transposed into postcolonial conditions. It is an idea that actually says more of a predisposed majority than an indication of constraint-free political participation. Hence for Derrida, democracy is irreducible to the force of the greatest number or what he calls as the “approbation of the multitude,” otherwise it could slide to indifference and equivocation thereby sidestepping the responsibility, duty, and hospitality to the “other.”

What Derrida brings to the postcolonial theorising, that would bear on the Philippines’s experience, is the element of defiance in the refusal to accept patently coherent narratives. By unsettling hegemonic discourses, a space is opened up for the reimagining and reformulation of double binds. His strategy is not to supplant the narrative of nation building with a new one; rather it is about providing a strategy of how to think of what might constitute the discourse in its iteration. This set off a chain of reconfigurations, with the caveats, rejoinders, and ripostes, as effects presupposed in representation. The thrust of the replication suggests an

impossibility of fixing and, to return to the concept of nation and democracy, the experience of equality, freedom, and inclusion that always fall short of what they signify. As such, it is always impossible to posit a terminable point of origin or an end point of a condition because, either way, it is an unjust exercise of power. Hence, Derrida's idea of anticipatory democracy, or "democracy to come," is an engagement with a radical future that is unprogrammable. Neither a majoritarian game nor the consilience of interests, this notion of democracy invites questions and unremitting judgments on certain truths, representations and the tyranny to numbers that exert "homogenizing calculability" and forced unity (Derrida, 1997, p.105-6). Democracy, we are then reminded, presents a terrifying possibility that we have to welcome unconditionally.

Subaltern's democracy, in Derrida's terms, recognizes popular impulses beyond the parameters set by authority. Applied in the context of postcolonial Philippines, this democracy emanates from the experience of subordination of classes and communities cut off from genuine social participation. These include peasants losing their lands to transnational agriculture ventures, workers without decent wages, and the mass of urban dwellers left behind by the modernizing growth of the nation. The demands of these classes were often regarded as disruptive of the nation-building agenda because they are mainly expected to cast their votes and acclaim politicians. The hegemonic construction of nationalism renders the subaltern's nationalism proscribed and disavowed, even though it has always existed alongside that of the elites.

I maintain that nationalism is presupposed in subalternity. The subaltern's notion of nationalism is not an "other" but constitutive of the dominant nationalism as a supplement. The impression of subalternity settles in whatever form or arrangement nationalism is brought

to bear upon. Nationalism and democracy, as modes of thought and action, have been part of subalterns' demands for social inclusion and participation all throughout the colonial period and afterwards. While nationalism is regarded as a modern political phenomenon linked to the formation of the postcolonial state, the subalterns' sentiments of belonging to a shared past predated the state machinery and the conceptualizations associated with elite nationalism. In this sense, language, common ancestry and cultural identity, even with their legal mandate, do not suffice to constitute a nation despite their power to universalize identity and naturalize hegemonic nationalism. The interests that prevailed as objectives of nation building are shared by the owners of the means of production. The notion of nationalism that emanates from such social relations was unavoidably exclusionary in its insistence on universalism, consensus, and prescription. However they also give rise to the idea that such condition is not inevitable.

In the Philippines, the triumph of elite nationalism came about alongside the expansion of capitalism that also demarcated democratic practices and spaces. Tied to conditions of nation building and surplus accumulation, democracy became hostage to the privileged territory of formal representation that is far from inclusive in its scope. Differences are regarded as anomalies that needed to be tamed, primarily because civil society is invaded by irrational and sometimes unrepresentable sectors that posed a threat to the system of profit making. As a result, subalterns became the "other" of the dominant nationalism and the omitted component in the narrative of the nation. This idea of the "other" underlies the hegemony that operates through specious consent, and carried out not only directly by the state but also through mechanisms of representation in the realms of the economy, education, culture and new media technologies. Gramsci's theory of hegemony remains valid even if we argue that coercion can also be exercised without an overt display of force, such as through the laws, state institutions and economic relations that allow dominant representations to be naturalized (Landy, 2009,

p.117). Coercion can be disguised as consent. Consent and coercion thus buttressed each other in the service of the ruling group. For Derrida, the law brings secondary violence because it cannot be dissociated from the structure that begets it (Derrida, 1997, p.132-40).

Subaltern nationalism is summoned through what Derrida designates as a “recount,” which is a play on “re-counting” as inventory and retelling that provides a chance for re-presentation (Derrida, 1998, p.44-6). In *Monolingualism of the Other*, Derrida sees iteration as inherent in new media technologies, where such recount could be possible (Derrida, 1994, p.98). For Derrida, new media technologies supply the public sphere with contingencies when they “invent *and* bring up to date, inaugurate *and* reveal, cause to come and bring up to light *at the same time, there were already there without being there*: it is the relation of the concept of *production* to the ghost without being there” (Derrida, 1994, p.98). The reference to a ghostly promise recognizes the precipitation and interplay of representations to include images, texts and their analogues that enable their heterologic shifts. In the next section I will expand on this spectral element of new media technologies, with emphasis on how they enable a space for imagining a nation and instantiating the possibilities of democracy in the public sphere.

4.3 Spectral New Media Technologies and the Fate of the Public Sphere

New media technologies played a crucial role in the production of representations and the installation of the postcolonial public sphere, thus sealing an incontrovertible connection between culture and politics in the construction of a nation. This was evident in the role new media technologies played in the years following the granting of nominal independence from the United States in 1946. What follows is an exploration of the effects of new media

technologies within a constrained postcolonial public sphere where only a modicum of rights and civil liberties were guaranteed.

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson argues that postcolonialism can be understood in relation to how new media technologies developed alongside the growth of capitalism and the construction of rational bureaucratic machinery. The growth parallels the movement of commodities seen in the process of production, distribution and consumption, and has directly contributed to the formation of a national consciousness (Anderson, 1983, p.37-40). His notion of “imagined communities,” is the result of the comingling of the print medium with the system of production and productive relations of capitalism, and the flexibility, diversity and endurance of language (Anderson, 1983, p.43; 5-6). The rationalisation of the dominant ideology is facilitated by the print economy that codifies language, making it more precise, established and efficient (Anderson, 1983, p.44). This resulted in the emergence of dominant languages, a decision which, I contend is more a function of hegemony than convention. However, Anderson’s treatise on print capitalism needs to account for an expanded narrative of new media technologies’ emergence in a postcolonial context like the Philippines. While print capitalism can define an epoch, it has to be linked to other media technologies. The case of the Philippines showed that the latter have as much of a role to play at a time when their pace of growth had been extraordinary. Radio, television and films, which rely on electronic signal, are essentially different from print medium but they are very much part of the culture industry that have been behind both alienating and emancipative postcolonial representations. For example, radio’s growth in the Philippines had been phenomenal, targeting the semi-literate audience with limited purchasing power (Lent, 1977, p.78). A similar case in point is the proliferation of comics: text-based materials that target semi-literate audience (Lent, 1977, p.72).

The difference between print and electronic media is evident in the way that they functioned in the context of nation building. For example, print capitalism is concerned with the material fixing of meanings while electronic media brings intangible forms where meanings are gleaned from particles, signals and sound waves. For ease of comparison, it was common to term the latter as “new media,” to differentiate them from the “old” media of print technology in the form of linear texts found in books, newspapers and other printed formats. This designation is problematic because the material constitution of technologies becomes the basis for this presupposed hierarchy that appears to discount the possibility of their mutual contamination. Simply put, a medium is shaped by its “other” that it excludes hence there can be no conceptual purity (Derrida, 1997, p.62-63). What dissolves the difference between the two mediums is the concept of iterability, which names the condition for the *possibility* of being “new” despite the actuality in history. In other words, “newness,” as a condition of possibility, has marked the media themselves, regardless of their material constitution, with “newness” being presupposed in the conceptual construction. While “newness” is always open to question, this identity conveys more of its renewability rather than the purity of the term. Thus, the term “new” in new media technologies, as it applies here, has less to do with their technical and automated constitution than with how they are renewed when they provide new platforms for engagement.

In the Philippines, new media technologies have an uneven growth, which reflects the social landscape. The diffusion of new media technologies in the Philippines complements the growth in the infrastructure— roads, telecommunications, aviation and shipping. The expansion is not only about the growth of the audience share of new media technologies and consumer markets but also the pool of agents and adherents of comprador capitalism as the vehicle by which modernization is possible. To reiterate a previous point, print capitalism

shared with other forms of media technologies the same postcolonial matrix of uneven capitalism, technological orientation and a common linguistic and cultural pool. Moreover that they have been simultaneously shaped not only by the emerging dominance of national consciousness, but also of other forms of representation that emerged to imagine a nation, points to their simultaneous availability and responsiveness.

In a sense, the cultural, economic and political elements responsible for the presence of new media technologies are hard to distinguish from each other, let alone fix within the project of cultural nationalism. As Derrida's deconstructive politics would remind us, hierarchy or any order of subordination leads to a binarism that privileges one thing over another. He seeks to end that by "displacing" and "overturning" the order of domination to allow more leeway and scope for intervention and transformation (Derrida, 1976, p. 232-4, 252-55). For Derrida, acknowledging other forms and modes of representation, other than the habitation of binaries, allows the recognition of alterity or difference that could bring about new relationships, meanings, and promises of freedom. The modification of relationships with the multiplied possibilities that deconstruction produced for the political, also extends the possibilities of challenging the hegemony of nation building pursued by the dominant class.

The public sphere that grows out of the conditions of postcoloniality in the Philippines is laden with unevenness in terms of access and participation that have all got to do with the process of representation. The tension lies not only in relation to class but also in the deployment of mechanisms of representation. As mentioned, new media technologies are complicit with the ideology of elite politics with concessions to liberal democracy and the free market economy. Thus, print capitalism occupies a hegemonic position in the culture industry of postcolonial Philippine society because of the medium's ability to fix the forms of

representation. There are, however, apparent differences between codified and hegemonic forms of representation that utilized the print medium, and the growing popularity of electronic media in which technical texts and images supply more possibilities for meaning making in the manner of their transmission and simulation. In the context of nation building, print capitalism was conveniently deployed by the ruling class to secure hegemony while assigning to electronic media an entertainment function. As mentioned, this valorization narrows the analysis of new media technologies, but even more problematic is the neglect of their political possibilities.

It is useful to bring back the concept of representation that is relevant to postcolonial suppositions. Derrida brings representation close to his idea of iteration (Derrida, 2007, p.105). Spivak's insight into Derrida's notion of alterity is useful when she notes "every repetition is an alternation" (Spivak, 1996, p.86). This is not about the multiplication of presence but the alteration of presence's repetition. Representation thus suggests a return, or a restoration of an absence, be it a trace, ghost, symbol or a sign, and this is possible through diverse modes or forms (Derrida, 2007, p.106). If representation is the basis of presence, then repetition, which is the basis of representation, alters presence. If we maintain that representation is generally understood as the process of meaning making, then the sense offered by repetition turns the process into the solicitation of myriad meanings. This means that representation can never be a self-contained process in relation to its intention, function and the meanings it offers, and it is impossible for consensus to be preserved in the process of meaning making. Derrida asserts that there is no purity in representation because, in this process, the represented is always already a representation or a simulacrum (Derrida, 1997, p.49-50). If representation solicits several meanings, this multiplicity is irreducible, and, thus, it is impossible to think of a representation as having unitary, determinate meaning without

being transformed. This leaves us to conclude that representation is a radical operation that has the capacity to subvert and displace prohibitions or the supposed prior presence. Hence, applied to the mediatic function of new media technologies in the public sphere in the Philippines, representation as “return” is instantiated by the presence of spectres whose effects –publishing and broadcast discourses, performances, narratives and symbols -- undermined the dominant representation. Thus, while the ruling elite programmed new media technologies to generate consent and legitimacy, spectres defy calculation and prior determinations. Thus, through spectres, which are the effects of new media technologies, there is a chance that representation can be turned against its programmed goals.

Spectres emerged from the representational possibilities of new media technologies along with their homogenizing codes. However, since spectres cannot be separated from the technicization brought by capitalism, their consequences may yield ambivalence. This is unavoidable, considering that the narrow motives of profit and parochial interests were also present in the public sphere. However, among the consequences of spectres are the representations of subalterns, or the articulation of their demands. In the Philippines, this means the public sphere being opened up to counter discourses, contrary voices, and various genres that counteracted the dominance of English language newspapers and magazines, for example (Ofreneo, 1986, p.132-3). These independent media are spectral in nature as they bring in the voice of the missing “other.” As such, new media technologies provided the subalterns with the presence and legitimacy in the spirit of representation. In a way, new media technologies have burst open the boundaries between public and private by allowing the unreasonable “other” to find their “private” voices in the public sphere. In the context of nation building, this enabled the political to think of categories of belonging and self-determination other than being just be counted and made to vote.

I argued that the postcolonial representations, which have developed along with the growth of new media technologies, are constitutive of the process of constructing a nation. Thus, the question of nationalism no longer has to do with citizenship or blood ties in the same way that democracy would have to do with numbers and calculation. The spectrality of new media technologies displaces such determinations by inscribing in their place unexpected impulses that yield to a possibility of their articulation and concretisation (Derrida and Steigler, 2002, p.65). This is because the convention of new media technologies disregards the prescription of means and the direction of ends as well as blurring the lines between inheritance and contingencies. Therefore they could undermine manifestations of hierarchy and state agency of postcolonial order, in the manner that they solicit the spectres of justice, myriad meanings in representation and suppressed voices of the “other” in the Philippines.

Given new media technologies’ capacity to reproduce modes of representation, accelerate the transmission, and multiply technical effects, Derrida wants us to think about “another space for democracy” (Derrida, 1994, p.212). But this gesture of summoning democracy, if it has to respond to the demands of the dominated groups, has to resist a counter-hegemonic thinking that is the obverse of what is negated. Derrida’s consideration of new media technologies’ openness to engender transformation is in keeping with his deconstructive politics that pays attention to the “other” as he advances an idea of opening up to the possibilities of radical politics and avoiding a programmable future. Derrida gave a visual metaphor for these possibilities – a wave, which “rolling up on itself,” “increasingly incalculable,” and “accumulates strength and mass as it accelerates” (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.71). Simply put, he wants us to embrace the spectral contingency of new media technologies, along with the acceleration of their amplitudes, the multiplication of their representation and the myriad meanings they could summon. For Derrida, the acceleration and rhythm of new media

technologies are bound up with the acceleration of the social, thus the latter has to contend with presence-absence of spectres. The process of conjuring up spectres is done through the technicization inherent in new media technologies, where meanings, interpretations and interventions can be other than what is posited (Stiegler, 2011, p.215). In other words, these technologies are capable of outwitting prohibitions and exceeding limits, and thus, according to Stiegler, they are a “launching pad for access to new possibles” (Stiegler, 2011, p.203).

Conclusion

One way of understanding postcolonialism is to consider how a nation constructs itself in relation to new media technologies where representations of discourses of modernization, nationalism, and so forth, are transmitted. It is also through these mechanisms of representation that aporias of constructing a nation are inscribed. Nationalism, as shown in preceding sections, should not be equated with the version of a dominant group where the underlying premise is exclusion of the “other.” As I have shown, the ambivalent effects of the different constructions of nationalism, which exist alongside and confront each other, points to the undecidability of postcolonialism as an event. This undecidability, however, offers the possibility of a decision, suggesting that the experience of impossibility brings the possibility of judgment, a future and an “other.” Thus postcolonialism can be thought of as the passing of colonialism, and yet the strains of the latter continue to exist and shape the narratives of a nation and its idealizations of democracy. Postcolonialism becomes a period when a persistent imagination of nation is evoked to deal with political aporias. The logic of haunting can be located in the convention of new media technologies. In examining the historical and political configurations of the spectral nationalism, I took notice of the unrealized aspect of democracy, that is, the recognition of the alterity, or the otherness of the other.

In this engagement with postcolonialism, I also explored how the field could be different from the ways it was previously known. Postcolonialism was explicated here by looking at other models of resistance. Adorno sets the stage for Habermas and Derrida in declaring the opacity of reason when subjected to the logic of capital, such that its universal promise of freedom became the basis for domination of modern society. Habermas provides hope by highlighting the rational goals of communication that are crucial to the constitution of democracy, through the presence of the public sphere, which citizens also desire along with progress. On the other hand, Derrida's offers an alternative to communicative rationality because not only does it lend itself to domination, but also limits the possibilities of transformation. All three have established the link between representation and communication, or between meanings and new media technologies, but it was Derrida who theorized their transcendence as spectral communicative tools. Following Derrida, I have indicated that the condition of postcoloniality has therefore been opened up to unknowable possibilities, with all the attendant tensions and aporias that would require more than just a rethinking. It simultaneously demands political judgments for and by those who were considered irrational, different, unreasonable and the "other."

The overall discussion of new media technologies in this chapter is an attempt to theorize postcolonialism through the aporia solicited by spectres, or effects of new media technologies. I have argued that this analysis is postcolonial for two reasons: first, it was oriented to issues and methods of postcolonial theories even though my analysis is not "textual;" and second, it demonstrated that by theorizing postcolonialism through new media technologies, I am recasting the former to make it relevant to a particular history and to the age of networks that it foreshadowed. In other words, this is a work on postcolonial theorizing because of its intent and the aporias within the condition of postcoloniality that it examined.

CHAPTER 5

NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES AND THE AUTHORITARIAN REGIME

Introduction

Hannah Arendt's words could best describe the kernel and fate of the authoritarian rule of President Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines when she wrote: "The extreme form of power is All against One, the extreme form of violence is One against All" (Arendt, 1970, p.42). However her statement needs a reorientation: the clauses should switch places to reflect the rise and fall of the Marcos dictatorship, its use of violence and its eventual overthrow in a bloodless uprising. Other than that, Arendt's argument stands because, indeed, power and violence, as well as their materializations and consequences, shaped the narrative of Marcos's authoritarian rule. I will argue that the Marcos authoritarian rule is a form of postcolonial politics that has taken a violent exclusionary route in its disregard for justice and the "other."

By its use of violence alone, the authoritarian rule of President Ferdinand Marcos was often regarded as a reversal and disruption of the country's democratic tradition, and not as a consequence of an existing social order that it affirmed. This is evident in the Marcos regime's human rights abuses – a record of 70,000 arrests, 35,000 cases of torture, and 3,500 killings of which 2,500 were tortured before they died (McCoy, 1994, cited in San Juan, 2009b). Equally stark was the regime's perversion of legal and legislative structures that was also seen as an aberration rather than a logical outgrowth of the country's post-independence politics. Thus, it is easy to miss the parallel between the Marcos dictatorship and that of his

predecessor, because he had flouted the basic political guarantees of the liberal regime such as a free public sphere, suffrage, and the separation of powers in government. More than just a betrayal of liberal tenets, the authoritarian rule was a solicitation of the irrationality that liberalism holds, particularly its preoccupation with overcoming differences whose goal is, according to Marcuse, the “all-encompassing harmony of the whole” (Marcuse, 1968, p.8). The latter conveys a social unity derived from a rational plan that everyone is expected to understand as pre-given, and to submit to, at all costs (Marcuse, 1968, p.13-15). Thus if Marcos easily violated the country’s democratic tradition, this was not because of the fragility of civil institutions that he tore down; rather, it is about how an authoritarian ideology can arise from liberalism’s rationalist underpinnings. Simply put, both elite representative democracy and authoritarian rule belonged to a continuum of the country’s postcolonial politics, sustained by asymmetry of power, wealth and violence.

Marcos was elected president in 1965, he declared martial law in 1972, and remained a dictator until 1986 when he was unseated by an uprising. His authoritarian rule drew its legitimacy from two sources of power – the support of the military and a legal system reconfigured around his dictatorial powers. In the former, civilian rule was infused with military-like thinking, and where every command requires obedience rather than questioning, a logic reminiscent of Hannah Arendt’s description of totalitarian governments (Arendt, 1958, p.370-379). Marcos came up with decrees that sanctioned his exercise of arbitrary power and ignored existing laws. These self-binding commands allowed him to arrest, detain and kill anyone presumed as a threat to his rule. These two sources of authority were conjoined in the declaration of martial law wherein Marcos invoked the power bestowed on him by the Constitution, as the commander in-chief of the armed forces, as the basis for his authority to create laws and edicts, and exercise of “powers and prerogatives appurtenant and incident” to

his position (*Official Gazette*, n.d., online). In other words, the existing laws sanctioned these acts; all that Marcos did was to bring out the full extent of their compulsion.

The strategic violence resorted to by Marcos is part of the controls that other postwar, postcolonial regimes have imposed. The commonalities between them can be made explicit when the Marcos regime is examined in its historic singularity, to prove its cogency as a particular variant of postcolonial authoritarianism. To grasp the authoritarian regime is to delve into its complexities, mindful of the political, ideological and economic forces, including the historical condition of unequal and combined development that shaped the regime's distinctiveness (San Juan, 1996, p.199). This is what this chapter will do: an appraisal of an authoritarian logic, which is discernible from critical perspectives that have examined the contemporary problematic of reification, but in terms of a particular constitution of authoritarianism. Reification, in this sense, is crucial to understanding how domination is sustained and exercised through the political and technological conditions of a postcolonial society.

Often taken as synonymous with alienation, the notion of reification, however, carries a larger theoretical responsibility because it indicts a concept, like society, for instance, with its inability to live up to what it stands for (Rose, 1978, p.27,45). A reified concept presents itself as sufficient to describe an object or a social phenomenon, even though it falls short of representing the substance that constitutes that object. As reification is a social category, it suggests that this way of thinking is shaped by relations of power. Reification is what Adorno meant by "false wholeness," and also when he described a condition where an "individual is subsumed under *the plan*," analogous to how a particular concept is dissolved in a general category (Adorno, 1974, p.50; Held, 1980, p.202, author's italics). A reified consciousness is

misled into thinking that reality can only be known in a certain way while a reified society is one in which social exchanges are constrained so that autonomous and critical consciousness can never emerge at will (Rose, 1978, p.48-49). Consequently, a free public sphere could never exist, in the sense of Habermas's description of a "public" sphere, because what holds sway is authoritarian control, which, in this account, is Marcos's machine of terror.

Surveying the Marcos authoritarian rule from possibilities that Marcuse has opened up, that is, through the idea that authoritarian rule is presupposed in a liberal order, brings a new route of inquiry with several challenges. The first challenge is to elucidate the specificity of Marcos's imposition of martial law, which was regarded as a rupture of democracy, or at least of the Philippines's adherence to democratic practices. However, in the previous chapter, I argued that the post-war regimes were less of an ideal embodiment of democracy than a succession of elite rule, characterized by infighting and competition over the rewards of power. The use of force was built into their administrations and had many times been deployed against the communists, insurgents, and unreasonable "others." All of the tendencies from where the authoritarian administration derived its power, such as intolerance of dissent and exclusionary politics, were already given rational justification by previous regimes. As they are bound up with the class interests of the ruling elite, such regimes did not exemplify an equitable order in the Habermasian sense of communicative democracy (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.125-126; Habermas, 1989). When democracy is more of an afterthought than the central facet of governance, premised on exclusion, fear, and silencing, then the shift to authoritarianism becomes almost inevitable as a strategy to mobilize power (Marcuse, 2009, p.11-13). In fact, Marcos was not the first president to declare martial law or its present-day variant – Jose P. Laurel did the same in 1944 while Gloria Macapagal Arroyo declared a state of national emergency in 2006 (Philippine Gazette, n.d., online). Thus, instead of saying that

martial law was unprecedented, one could argue that the Marcos dictatorship pushed the limits of what can be understood as a form of elite representative democracy, with its recourse to laws and violent means in order to stay in power. This is not to say that the Marcos authoritarian rule was the same as the previous regimes; certainly his was a different kind of governance given, for instance, its record of violence. The point is that they all shared the same positive laws from where their authority to exercise state power emanates, although the execution of the laws varies as to the degree of violence and intimidation were used. In other words, there is no lack of legal and repressive apparatuses for a despot who would want to integrate them into his or her repertoire of authoritarian rule, and this is where Marcos's craftiness stands apart from his predecessors.

The second challenge is to differentiate Marcos's rule from the previous administrations in terms of their postcolonial goals of building a modern nation. This element is significant because martial law was justified as the *sine qua non* to modernization because, according to Marcos, a disciplined order lays the basis for prosperity. The latter is primarily associated with the expansion of markets that strives to attain material measures of growth through the "trickle-down effect" (Constantino, 2007, p.26). In other words, Marcos's authoritarianism is associated with the goals of domestic growth bound up with global capital, a process driven by the logic of surplus accumulation. At first, there were civil society groups that warmed to the idea of progress peddled by Marcos. For instance, as he laid the groundwork for his repressive strategy, a year before he declared martial law, Marcos met with business leaders and academics, apparently to convince them of the rationality of his intention (Official Gazette, n.d, online). The rationality quickly vanished. When Marcos took over private companies, including those of his political rivals, there was no public outcry partly because of the absence of an independent press. However, Marcos easily got the support of foreign

investors whose interests were left untouched. In fact, less than a week after the declaration of martial law, a cable from the American Chamber of Commerce wished Marcos “success . . . to restore peace and order, business confidence, economic growth . . .” and assured him support and “cooperation in achieving these objectives . . .” (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.229-230). In his move to protect American capital and economic interests, Marcos was like his predecessors who believed in the dominant development discourse of that time: foreign aid and investments are vital because the Philippines was without sufficient capital, let alone the managerial skills and technology to modernize (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.230; McCarthy, 2009, p.195). Because he did not threaten the foundation of the capitalist order, which is the private ownership of the means of production, Marcos enjoyed the goodwill of American capitalists who did not mind his strategic use of violence. What made the Marcos regime different from previous administrations was its endorsement of a technocratic rationality, whereas the previous administrations relied more on the appeal of nationalism as the unifying discourse of modernization. Under the tutelage of the U.S. and international financial institutions, Marcos recruited American-educated Filipino technocrats and allowed them to set growth targets, although he did override their decisions to favour his cronies (Kang, 2004, p.81). Technocratic thinking is linked to the idea that economic development is essentially an exercise in problem solving and objective reasoning; it is also a belief that progress is impossible without the use of technologies to overcome nature and anachronistic traditions (Marcuse, 1964; Horkheimer, 1974). This approach to modernization evokes an idealization that is obsessed with carrying out programmatic and calculable means to achieve goals that were not so much economic or technological, as political.

The third challenge to understanding the Marcos authoritarian rule lies in how it produced representations to fit its codes of control, which supplemented the authoritarian strategies of

modernization. I am referring to propaganda as a process of representation, which is mediated by the culture industry. It is not that propaganda was never deployed in the past; rather, under Marcos, it became studied, methodical, and heavily reliant on the culture industry. The regime's propaganda project, under the slogan of "New Society," performed a dual function: it justified the technological rationality that underlay the regime's economic agenda, and attempted a consensus that martial law was legitimate and necessary. The propaganda strategy involved the manipulation of symbols, images, concepts and practices through genres offered by the culture industry: newspapers, magazines, films, art and music. They were absorbed into the authoritarian regime's moves to normalize these representations so that, ideally, no direct coercion is needed. And yet physical violence was ever-present. When martial law was declared, those who bore the brunt of repression were the prominent journalists; many of them were imprisoned, and their news organizations were shutdown. Censorship then came into effect in newspapers that were allowed to operate while radio and television broadcasts were strictly monitored. News criticizing the regime, or Marcos himself, could only be published or broadcasted clandestinely (Pineda-Ofreneo, 1986, p.141-144). However, there was space for independent artistic expression in films, music and art. With Marcos's wife, Imelda, as the self-appointed patroness of the arts, the latter became the showcase of cultural freedom that was used to deflect international criticisms against the dictatorship (David, 2008, location 6717, e-book).

The elements that were enumerated, to differentiate Marcos's rule from the previous administrations, seek to show that while they both developed teleologically along the same lines, which is the pursuit of modernity alongside the consolidation of the ruling class, the authoritarian regime differed in terms of its structure of authority, and the use of violence and culture as disciplinary mechanisms. This particular system of authority was shown in the

manner that Marcos shaped the laws, institutions and representations around his repertoire of power, in which those who were subjected to them had little control over decisions taken on their behalf. In other words, the Marcos regime was different to the degree that it overrode the legal mandates and made a mockery of the structures of accountability. This found expression in the regimes' propaganda techniques, which were obsessed with framing what should be said, seen and known, as was evident in the direct propaganda styles common in the early years of martial law that relied heavily on exaggeration and overstatement. Eventually, this approach gave way to a more subtle and sleek manipulation of messages that was partly accomplished by the use of so-called experts, technocrats among them, who lent an objective and scientific air to their message, and also by the culture industry, which extended the regime's credibility with its positive representations.

In the sections that follow, I will discuss the ways in which the Marcos regime represented the political, economic and cultural imperatives of modernization in the Philippines by its particular style of technocratic logic. Marcuse describes the latter as what underlies "destructive politics," in which technology becomes an instrument of pacification rather than of the freedom that it promises (Marcuse, 1964, p. 234-240). Its goal is the withdrawal of imagination and judgment in favour of authoritarian precepts, in which the relationship between concepts and reality can be described as incongruent, illusory, and opaque (Marcuse, 1964, p.235-236). This is an instance of reification that, for Adorno, is a "determinative social process," wherein meanings are derived from a closed hermeneutic circle, and thus are restrictive, overbearing, and predisposed to misrecognition (Rose, 1978, p.144-145). I will sketch how reification becomes a necessary condition in a specific mode of authority, that is, the Marcos authoritarian regime, which perpetuated the longstanding social inequalities that he also stamped with his brand of terror and deception. Adorno's idea of reification, as an

element of technological rationality, finds expression in Marcos's "New Society," which is designated as the new order to reform the elite-dominated and traditional society. While there is no easy correspondence between reification and instrumental reason, and Marcos's dictatorial politics, they shared a range of meanings that imply an instrumental rationality is behind the violence of an enforced progress. For instance, Marcuse's idea of instrumental rationality comes close to the Marcos regime's ideology of "new society," which was inclined to prescribe rules for political engagement and representation that discouraged judgment and contestation. Marcos had these commands repeated to ensure their saturation and emphasize their immutability. By its disregard of flexibility and the free reign of repetition, the Marcos regime attempted to inhibit the flow of intersubjective meanings that would have allowed free play, subversion, aporia, and the development of their virtual and implicit possibilities. However, this prohibition is untenable in the long run because it had solicited political actions, sometimes in their unforeseeable and unsparing forms.

Technocratic control was behind the Marcos authoritarian regime's hold on power but it was also part of its downfall. As representations and violence have to be repeated, their prescribed interpretations and instilled fear were undercut in the process of their iteration. First, hegemonic representations are increasingly undermined so that even if they are widely circulated, their believability is diminished. Second, the interpretative aspect of representations can never guarantee control over the production of meanings; hence a subversive possibility resides in every process of interpretation. Third, counter-hegemonic representations produced by political groups have emerged to challenge the seemingly monolithic production of meanings. The process of disruption, however, has less to do with contesting the truth of an authoritarian representation, and more to do with exposing the illusion of representation that purports to provide the universal ground for interpreting reality.

The unraveling of the representational codes, commands, and styles of the authoritarian regime culminated in the popular uprising in 1986 that ousted Marcos. Rather than fear, the manipulation of the vehicles of propaganda to posit unitary views of a reality in order to restrict movement and interactions, bred dissent, subversion and other intractable actions resulting from uncontrolled encounters. The latter had drawn in political movements and groups from the underclass, who believed that there is clearly a freer future. The variability of the encounters and actions had undermined the structures and styles of power that, even when these were repeatedly enforced and imposed, they lost so much of their forcefulness and superiority that they ended up being mocked, parodied and dismissed for their absurdity. As Derrida would remind us, the representation of authority is not an operation of exact duplication and equivalence (Derrida, 2007, p.112-113). Destabilization could be thought this way: the meanings were detached – just enough – from determination to provoke questioning and revision.

The logic of iteration and variability, as essential sources of political critique and agency, will anchor the account of the possibilities of new media technologies in the period of authoritarian rule. The first section of this chapter will outline the growth of new media technologies alongside the emergence of the authoritarian rule that employed the culture industry as vehicles for propaganda and control. The second section relates the historical account of authoritarian rule and new media technologies to Adorno, Habermas and Derrida's thoughts on democracy and the public sphere that the Marcos regime tried to eclipse. The third section discusses specters as the effects of new media technologies under an authoritarian order, particularly how the specters breached the limits of representation, and respond to the present impossibility of representing suppressed political and ethical demands, as well as the prospect of exceeding such demands.

5.1 Repression and Representation

The Marcos authoritarian regime lasted for fourteen years, from 1972, when martial law was declared, until 1986 when it was overthrown by a popular uprising. Among its first acts was doing away with the means of formal and aesthetic representations by abolishing the national legislature and closing down the media – the two arenas which demonstrated the country's concession to liberal democracy (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.164; Teodoro, 2005, p.25). Soon after, Marcos imprisoned his political rivals and some prominent journalists. The immediate effects of the crackdown were the silencing and the effacement of the liberal tendencies of elite politics. The violent politics of the Marcos regime can be summed up by its grim human rights record of tortures, arrests, and summary executions in which some bodies were dumped publicly, making death a macabre spectacle that awaits those who challenge authoritarian power (San Juan 2010, p.8-9). The use of force and repressive laws were emblems of a rule distrustful of the representational capacity of bourgeois politicians, students, professionals and journalists. This distrust is not without basis because common among them is their ability to stage modes of representation, which disturb the self-referential power of the Marcos regime. Marcos was aware of the extent to which these groups' articulation of social issues could embolden the political choices of the many.

Marcos was described by historian Alfred McCoy as having “punctilious public concern for legal proprieties and a regular recourse to extra legal violence” (McCoy, 1994, p.16). In other words, the use of force goes along with the legal instruments that Marcos used to secure legitimation for his rule. Ideally, legitimation is the process of deriving authority from citizens that presupposes being challenged by them (Habermas, 1988, p.46-47; Barker, 2001,p.22-24). In Marcos's case, only the first half of the definition holds. Despite the available powers to

install a dictatorship, Marcos rewrote the constitution that set no limit to his powers or stay in office. He also had the constitution approved by hastily assembled village referendums (Schirmer and Shalom, 18987, p.191-193). With his own stable of elite politicians, Marcos created a national legislature in 1978, six years after he abolished the old Congress. By manipulating the national polls, Marcos's political party, the *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan* (New Society Movement), won overwhelmingly and gained the status of a rubber stamp, although the legislature enjoyed some legitimacy because of the token presence of independent members that functioned as a counterweight (Brownlee, 2007, p.115-116). Because of its attention to secure the legal basis of dictatorship, the Marcos regime was designated as a "constitutional authoritarianism," which sounds benign and legitimate because the phrase has "constitutional" as the defining term. The authoritarian regime, as the phrase conveys, occupied an ambiguous political space between authoritarianism and constitutional order as formal freedoms were curtailed by the fear of violence most of the time.

It was said that the widespread indifference to martial rule in the Philippines could be explained by the masses' instrumental disregard of the alienating postcolonial bourgeois politics (Kerkvliet and Mojares, 1991, p.7-8). However, the assessment would only hold if election, which was the main driver of elite politics, is the only agency available for representation, and other mechanisms of contestation, such as the public sphere, new media technologies, and other symbolic modes, are discounted. More importantly, in the early years of martial law, hegemony effectively worked through violence and propaganda to exact some form of consent. Simply put, the conditions left the many with little choice but to submit to authority.

Marcos justified martial law as a response to an imminent communist insurrection and Muslim rebellion, but historians claimed these threats were more imagined than real (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.164; Boudreau, 2004, p.71). At that time, communists and Muslim secessionist rebels did not have enough firepower to threaten the state; rather, it was under the repressive climate that the threat of rebellion grew (Boudreau, 2004, p.71-72). While there was an upsurge of radicalism among students and some sections of the middle class, this could be attributed to the exercise of constitutionally guaranteed bourgeois civil and political rights. The spirited exchange of ideas and debates in the media points to a functioning public sphere. It appears that Marcos played on the anxieties of class war, religious differences and anti-communist hysteria to justify his iron rule (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.165).

Marcos relied heavily on the culture industry to hold on to power. Under authoritarian rule, the culture industry was harnessed for propaganda, but its intent is less of persuasion than the perpetuation of power (Ofreneo, 1986, p. 125). It was basically used to drown out voices that challenged the Marcos' power. In other words, the culture industry, under Marcos, concealed and suppressed the subversive impulses and antagonisms on which it rests. The deployment of the culture industry not only highlighted the extent of state control and the wide-ranging styles of technologically mediated representation available to the Marcos regime, but also the interweaving of the political, ideological, and economic forces that reinforced the authoritarian ideology (David, 2008, location 6732, e-book).

One of the propaganda techniques used by the regime was the use of feudal themes in reconstructing the narratives of beginnings. Marcos did away with the existing imaginary bonds of the nation and came up with an equally fictive narrative of the "New Society," which

claims a break from the “old” institutions, practices and representations. This new order promised a reform-oriented and modern society to replace the “old” one ridden by elite politics, colonial ties, and feudal oppression. However, the fictive construction was not prescient of a new social formation or social order because much of the existing one was intact; rather the so-called new society was only meant to operate on the level of meanings imbued with a disciplinary function (David, 2008, location 6762, e-book). In other words, the so-called “new society” was primarily a discourse of authoritarianism. What was behind the narration of newness is the attempt to control representations of a nation, by unsettling their sense of origin as though the new indigenous “we” had always existed. In Derrida’s terms, such invention is part of the ruse to dominate because it inscribes and delineates the “who” and “what,” or who is a friend and who is an enemy (Derrida, 1997, p.106).

Another propaganda technique of the regime was the use of colossal montage where Marcos and his wife, Imelda, were projected as benevolent rulers rather than the conjugal dictators that they were. The scale of cultural production resonates with what Guy Debord in *The Society of Spectacle* termed as “concentrated spectacle,” which signifies capacity of the propaganda machinery to project control through “scale, magnitude and numbers” (Debord, n.d., p.31). Such construction was also evident in grand parades, murals, edifices, and celebrity events, like the 1975 boxing match between Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazer in Manila that earned the dictatorship favourable global news coverage. Indeed, the cultural productions conformed to a programmable goal of being filmed, photographed and written about in order to confer legitimacy upon Marcos. In Debord’s sense, the bigger and more concentrated the spectacle, the larger is its capacity to alienate and deceive (Debord, n.d. p.117). Analyzed through Benjamin’s concept of aura, the autocratic aesthetics, which collapses distance by its sheer enormity, has nothing to do with giving the masses access

to modes of expression. Rather it had more to do with overwhelming viewers with meanings that have no depth or horizon, thus leaving them no time for critical reflection (Benjamin, 1968, p.222-224). Tied to authoritarian politics, this style of artistic production aims to astound perception to the extent that it induces dread rather than appreciation. In all, the culture industry privileged the passive and compartmentalized consumption of images, ideas and representation. With the absence of a public sphere where interchange is possible, the delusive effects of the simulacra and spectacles were assimilated into the lifeworld, reinforcing the authoritarian modes of thinking and actions that they prescribe.

The authoritarian order's politics, composed around perpetual fear, served the strategic interests of the United States very well. The dictatorship was put at the service of the economic, political and military agendas of the U.S. that benefitted from the Marcos regime (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.165-168; Constantino, 1990, p.93-94). For all its claim to have installed democracy in the Philippines, the U.S. did not repudiate Marcos for declaring martial law. Marcos played his Cold War cards very well when he justified his dictatorship as necessary to eliminate the threat of homegrown communism, which was part of the "red menace" spreading in Asia (Boudreau, 2004, p.81). During the Vietnam War, from 1956 and up to its end in 1975, the U.S. had to maintain its security presence in Asia and the two major military bases in the Philippines proved useful in projecting that military might. In return for guaranteeing the unhampered use of the bases, the Philippines enjoyed an increase in military and economic aid (Constantino, 1990, p.71-74; Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.249-260). There was no capital flight when martial law was declared; American business even approved Marcos's move (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p. 229-30). In 1972, the foreign relations committee in the U.S. Senate claimed that the iron rule will introduce the "needed stability," and that the "familiar government and military bases are more important than the preservation

of democratic institutions which were imperfect at best” (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.168). This policy was consistent with the Orientalist stance of the U.S. who, since colonial times, painted the Philippines’s democratic practice as deficient, chaotic and irrational, and thus requiring a disciplinary model. Equally propitious is the success of the accompanying import of the American culture industry – films, music and print media – that flourished during the martial law years (Constantino, 1990, p.85). The authoritarian regime did not see an intrinsic conflict between the casually liberal values portrayed in the foreign culture industry and its own constrained ones. This may have been because American cultural products were conveyed as exemplars of modernity. They were generally untouched by censors; only local films, books and other reading materials were monitored for their political messages and subtexts.

The modernization mission of the Marcos dictatorship came with the disregard of accountability. Using extra-legal means, Marcos took over a number of strategic businesses, especially those of his political rivals – media, power and utilities, sugar trading, and airline companies, among others – and delivered them to his associates who were assured of loans and bailouts (Rocamora, 1995, p.xv). The state-led modernization was so inflationary and deficit forming that, along with corruption and skewed income distribution, it proved to be economically disastrous. The inflow of foreign aid and loans shored up the economy but saddled the country with repayment of loans funnelled to questionable projects, among them a nuclear power plant that was never operated because it sits on a major earthquake fault (*Bulatlat*, 2004). Marcos hired technocrats to implement his grand visions of progress, but it turned out that many of them either used their position to enrich themselves or failed to perform in office (Rocamora, 1995, p.5; Kang, 2004, p.80). If anything, these technocrats made sure that the fiscal prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund and the World

Bank were followed, especially foreign debt repayments (Constantino, 1990, p.27; Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.261-267). For their role in perpetuating postcolonial dependency, Filipino historian Renato Constantino called these technocrats “comprador intellectuals” (Constantino, 2000, p.134).

Technocratic rationality, however, goes beyond mere motives and allegiance to a political order. Habermas’s treatment of the term tracks its evolution, from a way of understanding the function of technology in society, to its emergence as a matrix for societal control. In *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Habermas roots technological rationality in the ideology that privileges the objectivism of science to the neglect of human interests (Habermas, 1971, p.310-311). Despite professing autonomy and objectivity, this thinking lends itself to the concept of self-preservation that originates from the will to dominate nature (Habermas, 1971, p.311-312). Hence, when this rationality takes hold of work, language and power, it precludes self-reflection and critical questioning (Habermas, 1971, p.314). Applied to Marcos’s authoritarian rule, technocratic rationality’s fixation with its design provides a justification for domination. In other words, its main task is the maintenance of hegemony in the economic realm, for the benefit of Marcos, his associates, and the global system of capitalism.

The Marcos dictatorship was a beneficiary of the post-Cold War programs of the World Bank and IMF, two multilateral institutions that oversaw the growth of former colonies as they were integrated into the global production system of capitalism (Bello, 2004, p.2). These institutions provided loans and economic directions to spur economic growth based on a country’s advantages on labour, land, and technology resources. The IMF and World Bank policies were reflected in the Marcos regime’s growth strategy, which is the export-oriented and import-dependent industrialization apparent in the proliferation of plantations of export

crops and export zones for garments and electronic goods. The industrial enclaves were notorious for giving low wages, banning unions and employing women for their perceived docility. Subcontracting was the norm in the garments industry, while the threat of heightened automation in electronics kept the salaries low in order to preserve jobs (Constantino, 1990, p.15). In 1980, a decade after the entry of multinational corporations, the promised jobs and technology transfer were not realized. Licenses and patents remained with foreign companies and their subsidiaries while outdated and unsuited technologies were sold in the Philippines (Constantino, 1990, p.35). Transnational capital did little to improve the country's productive forces, other than setting up the assembly lines of the export-oriented factories that took advantage of cheap labour and unregulated repatriation of profits. This growth strategy fits a condition described by David Harvey as a "spatio-temporal" fix to ease the crisis of capitalism in the metropolises (Harvey, 2006, p.422-35; Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.232).

Technocratic logic, put to use in areas where capitalist growth is uneven and irregular, brought penury. In rural areas, feudal relations persisted while peasants were subsumed into a flawed modernization project. Marcos came up with a land distribution scheme but did not break up the sugar estates and plantations (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.178-181). The "Green Revolution" attempted to modernize agriculture but tied farmers to chemical products of the U.S. agrochemical industry, pushing them deeper into usury and poverty (Constantino, 1990, p.64-5; Sison and De Lima, 1998 p.49). Technology hardly spurred growth in agriculture as it was beyond the reach of small landowners and peasants (Constantino, 1990, p.68-69). Thus, to ease rural unemployment and avert economic unrest, Marcos encouraged overseas employment that easily assumed a "predominantly female character" – domestics in the Middle East, Hong Kong and Singapore, entertainers in Japan, and nurses in America (Aguilar, 2000, p.8; San Juan, 1996, p.174; Constantino, 1990, p.58-59). This phenomenon of

Filipino women migrant workers, according to postcolonial critic San Juan, expresses an aspect of the “productive consumption of labour power,” in which the latter designates an exchange value of labour differentiated by gender and race (San Juan, 1996, p.180). Overseas employment came with social costs such as the brain drain, cultural alienation, and family breakup; but the dollar remittances of overseas workers shored up the country’s economy and paid the foreign debt. By 1984, two years before the Marcos regime fell, there were 350,000 Filipino workers abroad with combined dollar remittances that outpaced the country’s traditional export earnings (San Juan 1996, p.174).

The Marcos modernization agenda has affected other subalterns who were previously voiceless or at the fringes of the nation’s politics (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.199). Among them are the indigenous people, comprising about twelve percent of the country’s population, who resisted when Marcos allowed dams, logging, mines, and industrial farms in their ancestral lands. The first groups to openly criticize Marcos were the Catholic and mainline Protestant churches, which are known for their solid hierarchy and international links. Priests and pastors, who were radicalized by repression, became revolutionaries and activists. In 1974, a church-backed human rights organization, “Task Force Detainees,” drew international attention for its work in documenting and helping victims of human rights abuses like torture, disappearance, killings, arrest and detention (Boudreau, 2004, p.137; Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.221-3). The paramilitary groups displayed some extant millenarian practices that were exploited in counter-insurgency drives. Known as folk-religious fanatics, they were notorious for gruesome killings.

The strongest organized resistance against Marcos came from ideologically committed groups, namely the Islamic and communist rebels. In the southern Philippines, the Moro

National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) grew when subjected to repression during the martial law years, while the expansion of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its military arm, the New People's Army, was attributed to the radicalization of peasants, trade unions members and students. Even with U.S. military assistance, Marcos failed to break the backbone of the communist-led rebellion in the countryside that, by 1986, communist guerrillas were found in sixty-three out of seventy-five provinces in the country (Sison and De Lima, 1998, p.15). The overall growth of anti-Marcos resistance could be summed up in this manner: repression drove moderates to armed struggle, while the enlargement of democratic space broadened dissent among the middle class and the poor in urban centres (Boudreau, 2004, p.180). Political activities took all sorts of forms to outwit censorship and breach the limits of repressive laws. This also saw the emergence of guerrilla forms of artistic expression -- theatre, songs, humour, and rumours -- the ordinary, common forms that were refashioned to embody political aesthetics.

So, the question now is this -- how can these established forms of representation break the authoritarian modes and bring to the fore their reification, which would then become the matrix of illumination? In his analysis of artistic forms, Walter Benjamin develops an argument about how "insignificant" representations become significant when appropriated by those who recognized their uniqueness. In his essay "The Rigorous Study of Art," Benjamin argues that art can be contemplated in the ordinariness of its form that, even so, supplies a stimulus to its environment (Benjamin, 2008, p.69). Accordingly, the commonplace forms become extraordinary because they are "bound up with their material-content," and this "unexplored marginal realm," if examined, may yield as yet unknown positions -- a process that Benjamin termed as "reciprocal illumination" (Benjamin, 2008, p.70-71). This idea of sensing these neglected elements of representation is useful when looking at how new media

technologies can wrest political momentum from the dominant productions of the culture industry by incorporating into its fold the various contents and techniques that undermine the aura of authoritarian aesthetics. It also provides an insight on how technology, when appropriated, becomes a variant of itself as it experiences the process of historical utilization and contestation; put differently, its newness lies in how it is seen and renewed (Peters, 2009, p.17-18). What is being highlighted here are the shifts taking place in the culture industry, the possibility of its revitalization, or the way that it is opened up to admit the unrecognized aspects of itself – allegories, ambiguities, and spectralities, and the meanings that they hold. This insight is germane to the experience of the Philippines under Marcos, where new media technologies negotiated the range of possibilities within the limited freedom of the public sphere. In what follows, I will provide an account of that possibility.

The Marcos rule is now referred to as the dark era of Philippine media. News media were silenced by the closure of news organizations, the detention of prominent journalists, and censorship (Ofreneo, 1986). With the latter, news had to fit a universal technological logic to be free of value judgments and partialities. For the authoritarian regime, a freewheeling press obstructs modernization goals because it creates discord. Thus, information should be limited to that which maintains public order and a compliant political consciousness. For instance, news is defined around a “national security” dictum, which can mean anything, from the ban on criticizing Marcos and his wife to writing about crimes, cholera outbreaks, and the effects of the curfew on strip joints (Ofreneo, 1986, p.138). Intimidation and harassment continued throughout the Marcos years, even when anti-Marcos protests were spreading, so that in 1985, a year before Marcos was ousted, journalist Antonio Ma. Nieva summed up the condition of the Philippine media as being “under siege,” while men and women in the media were working “under the shadow of death itself” (Nieva, 1985, p.xiv-xv).

The absence of a democratically constituted public sphere highlighted the crisis of representation that perennially placed the Marcos regime's legitimacy in question. The crisis is derived from the sense that the masses were voiceless, despite the presence of an authority that speaks in their name. Rather than demanding better or improved representation, within the parameters set by Marcos, various elements of the protest movement created their own public spaces -- the so-called parliament of the streets, where representation is not delegated but direct, and where a prefigured public sphere allowed subaltern demands to be articulated and repeated. Years of breaching the controls had generated multiple spaces and forms of protest for the growing ranks of dissenters. However, it is within the bounds of the culture industry that an observable shift in political representation took place, wherein existing communication technologies were combined with emerging ones and, together, as new media technologies, they sought new modes of representations.

One such shift in the culture industry was the rise of the "mosquito press." Generally referred to as the anti-Marcos media, the mosquito press, which included weeklies, tabloids, magazines, community-based news desks and newsletters, was so named because it connotes being small but with annoying sting. The mosquito press positioned itself as the alternative to the "crony press," or the censored and controlled mainstream press. In the wake of anti-Marcos protests from 1983 to 1986, the mosquito press enjoyed a substantial readership but, as expected, it experienced raids, confiscation, surveillance and arrests of publishers and writers (Pineda-Ofreneo, 1986, p.166-167). The mosquito press was primarily print-based, and this could explain the convenience, mobility and inconspicuousness afforded by the medium. In contrast, electronic broadcasts were vulnerable to official control, and were jammed and prevented from airing critical news. Owners of the mosquito press included journalists and church groups backed by some opposition personalities and business

organizations. The journalistic and literary genres used were myriad, as were the tactics for survival. But common among them was giving a voice to the anti-Marcos movement; they risked publishing censored stories, views of opposition leaders and releases of international wire agencies that did not see print in mainstream newspapers. The mosquito press functioned almost underground. Despite the limited circulation, the mosquito press enjoyed high pass-on readership. This was partly possible because of the availability of photocopying and photo stencil technology that enabled the electronic multiplication and transmission of facsimiles (Tuazon, 2007, online). The presence of the mosquito press prefigured a public sphere in a condition that prohibits its installation. It also opened up spaces for the articulation of suppressed political sentiments. As a result, the established newspapers, upon seeing the success of the mosquito press, started to publish stories critical of the authoritarian rule, after experiencing the decline of their credibility, readership and advertising revenues (Pineda-Ofreneo, 1986, p.168-169). The economy of the mosquito press presaged the logic of spectres that is presupposed in new media technologies, will be discussed again in the final section of this chapter. What is being highlighted meantime is how the culture industry, through the mosquito press, renewed itself and in so doing reconfigured the terms of representation under the authoritarian regime.

The upsurge of resistance against Marcos's authoritarian rule came after the assassination of Benigno Aquino, a political rival of Marcos. Aquino's death became the rallying point of opposition forces in the Philippines and precipitated the two other events leading to the downfall of Marcos -- the snap presidential elections and a military mutiny that resulted in a popular uprising. Marcos sought a fresh mandate through the polls where he faced off with Aquino's wife, Corazon, who was backed by the Catholic church, business and bourgeois opposition. With the decline of Marcos's popularity, the U.S. saw an alternative in Aquino as

against the communist-backed groups (Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p.333-334). The communist party and the openly Left organizations decided to boycott the presidential election, calling it a sham because they believed that Aquino's platform was incapable of articulating subalterns' demands and resisting U.S. intervention (Brownlee, 2007, p.191). It was a decision that communists regarded as a tactical error; but it could also be thought as a narrow orientation to control the modes and outcomes of representation, a vanguardism of a sort. The election was turned into a nationwide protest, a repudiation of Marcos, which meant that his manipulation of votes backfired. Marcos claimed victory amid the opposition's complaints of massive poll fraud (Brownlee, 2007, p.191-192). At the same time that Aquino called for nationwide civil disobedience, a military mutiny was pre-empted, endangering its leaders who happened to be Marcos's top military and defence officials. The Catholic church called on the public to support the mutineers. In no time, thousands found themselves facing a column of Marcos's tanks, guns and troops. What emerged was the spectacle of a multitude with rosaries and flowers facing the firepower of the dictatorship in outright defiance. On February 25, three days after the start of the uprising, Marcos was spirited away to Hawaii by two U.S. fighter planes, and Corazon Aquino came to power.

The preceding account of the rise and fall of authoritarian rule in the Philippines provided the context for thinking about the possibilities of new media technologies under conditions of repression. New media technologies have created spaces for political intervention and contestation that political groups then seized to render presence, as well as to re-articulate their collective demands. This dual sense of representation, which brings into presence what is absent as well as to "re-cite" an existing hegemony, is a condition of representation that is undecidable or open to the unknown and unforeseeable (Derrida, 2007; Thomassen, 2006). By implication, this duality is inherent in the convention of new media technologies, or the way

in which they indicate the form and content of representation. The possibilities of representation were perceivable among groups in the Philippines that had ranged across all political persuasions, from the bourgeois elite opposition to communists, and also activists, writers and artists. Common among them was the awareness that new media technologies could be a reserve of political power once they are subjected to choices and judgments. In other words, political agency was enabled by the effects of new media technologies, and also by the social interchanges that they had made possible.

In the next section, I will supply the arguments on how authoritarian power subsumes the techniques of representation to convey the appearance of nominality. First, I will revisit Adorno's thoughts on how authoritarian control is revealed in the logic of reification. Secondly, I will look at how the public use of consensual reason, which frames Habermas's theory of communicative action, bears on authoritarian rule. The last part will deal with Derrida's conception of spectro-politics, especially its relationship to the representation of subaltern constituencies in the post-colonial terrain of the Philippines. This politics doubles as a promise to be repeated and cited, an act presupposed in new media technologies, that haunts – which means being nearly absent but also being present everywhere. The backdrop of this discussion is the exploitation for surplus value that has determined the uneven landscape of capitalism's growth in the Philippines. This historical condition affects the ways in which new media technologies have staged inescapable contestation, diffusion and rethinking amid the relentless sea of changes that took place in the period of authoritarian rule.

5.2 Dictatorship and Democracy: Legitimation and Contestation

It needs to be reiterated that despite Marcos's successful seizure of state power, he also made attempts to secure legitimacy for his rule through election and parliamentary means. While these exercises were rigged in his favour, they gave a semblance of legitimacy to his rule. However, the issue needs to be explored further. If legitimation can be secured through the constitution of hegemony via representation and electoral means, why was it necessary to turn to authoritarian control that entails more political costs? The case of Marcos invites more questions about why legitimation, secured through a liberal regime that guarantees some exercise of civil rights and political participation, was supplanted by authoritarianism that constrained democratic practice. Moreover, when he seized power, he could have done away with the legal mandate, as had other dictators of his kind. However, it might have been that Marcos also knew that the absence of open and organized resistance, during the first half of his 14-year rule, does not guarantee legitimacy or translate to political support. In short, his position became untenable. This would explain why the regime had allowed the elite to participate in parliamentary elections, and was mindful of its international image that was increasingly sullied by his human rights record and draconian prerogatives.

Underlying the authoritarian regime's programme of control were the indelible demands of justice and equity. The decades of exposure to the liberal tendencies of elite democracy led to the general acceptance of civil liberties and the parliament as necessary conditions of representation in society. While it was earlier argued that the authoritarian logic is implicit in liberalism, or that the authoritarian order had merely revealed another face of modernity, the gap between them is a condition of possibility. This means that there are elements that cannot be incorporated into the shift of power structures, because they represent a trace of ethical

recognition or that which stands apart from what can be subsumed by certain controlling codes. In concrete terms, while the post-war regimes in the Philippines had mainly secured political gains for the ruling class, the regulative ideas of public good, national interests and accountability have not been lost. The democratic promise and practices made such inroads into the national consciousness that they became the yardstick by which the Marcos regime was measured by the protest movement. The latter, along with conditions of economic deprivation, added mass and momentum to the anti-Marcos resistance, as shown by the rallies and marches that mobilized thousands around the country. While Marcos had won over some factions of the ruling elite, when he revived the parliament, staged elections and granted them economic favours, the absence of democratic spaces for deliberation and dissent had rendered the political concessions hollow.

There were some noticeable equivocations in the authoritarian regime's exercise of control to induce political consensus that, somehow, encouraged the breaching of its limits. Marcos sought legitimation through the use of repressive state instruments, but he deployed them selectively. This was evident in his ambivalent stance toward the Catholic Church, which was the sole institution capable of challenging him, given its established hierarchy, international links and moral ascendancy (Boudreau, 2004, p.137). From within the church, a range of anti-Marcos activities grew, from denunciatory prayers to some priests and nuns joining armed struggle. The church's hierarchy was silent on the latter, but throughout the Marcos rule, the clergy preached about human rights and social justice and provoked a rethinking of the political situation. The bishops may have adopted a centrist position but the community-based church groups tended toward radicalisation. The authoritarian regime did not threaten the church authority's spiritual mission, let alone go after its resources that were used for political organization and mobilization of the faithful (Boudreau, 2004, p.137). In this manner, the

church became a catalyst, gradually forming a mass of believers who disapproved state control. The bourgeois opposition also found support from the church that, in turn, linked them up with other classes, ethnic, and political groups to broaden their political base. This alliance favoured the restoration of the post-war elite representative system of government that Marcos had abolished. But what the bourgeois opposition shared with the church hierarchy is the distrust of the communist's ideology that, in the time of Marcos, was gaining ground in the countryside (Brownlee, 2007, p.191). This distrust, I believe, should be linked to how the Church regarded the infallibility of its teachings; communism, with its promise of emancipation, has stepped onto a soapbox reserved for God. Overall, the stance of the Catholic Church effectively eroded the authoritarian regime's legitimacy while its particular imprint on the anti-Marcos struggle further strengthened its hold on the nation's politics, a privilege that it enjoyed since colonial times.

It was in the cultural sphere where Marcos maintained his grip by ensuring that the culture industry continued to communicate the values of the authoritarian regime. The process of translating these values into the concrete ideological representations of authoritarian thinking, then made to accept the naturalness of repression (Marcuse, 1964, p.106-108). So how was repression naturalized, and, in the case of Marcos, prolonged? The thrust of the argument, to answer the question, lies in the denigration of difference, which is opposed to a universality that makes up the basis of political institutions, practices and representations of modernization under the Marcos regime. In the latter, concepts were devised to disregard paradoxes, differences and incongruities, because no alternatives are allowed to transform reality. This is how the rationality that is behind an authoritarian terror, should be examined. As representation is about presence, the Marcos regime occluded it in two ways. First, it rendered representation static and tied to determinations of power, and, second, representation is denied

the ambiguity that is essential to it. Representation then becomes propaganda, filtered through a cultic aura, which immediately demands submission (Benjamin, 1968, p.241). This means that in authoritarian representation, meanings and associated terms emanate from a single source or subject position, so that they can never become something else. The sense of representation is also defined by its fixity rather than the ability to alter and reposition presence. The intention is for representation to be mirror-like, wherein images embody the exact copies of what they designate hence, the elements collapse into a banality of sameness. What emerges is the opacity of representation on several levels. First, representations are conveyed as universal, pre-established, and oriented toward a particular interest, hence violence and contradiction are left out because what should predominate is reified equivalence (Adorno, 1973, p.4). The intention behind this rigidity is to produce subjects that conform and passively consume representations within a totalizing system of meaning-making (Adorno, 1973, p.5-6). Second, representations under authoritarian order are not opened up for public discussion and criticism; hence they are unable to reach new understandings developed out of consensus (Habermas, 1984, p.398). Without their interpretive conditions, the representations are merely aligned with instrumental reason, and steered with power and money. Third, representation is built around the denial of difference in the course of homogenization and silencing (Derrida, 2007, p.94-95). What authoritarian politics did to representations was to designate them as absolutes, unchangeable essences. This closes the door to the presence-absence of difference, a condition best summed up by Derrida in the phrase “brutality of the unilateral decision” (Derrida, 1998, p.15).

The Marcos authoritarian rule typifies an order distrustful of the ambiguity of representation. Under it, the concepts of nationalism and democracy have their redemptive capacity put into abeyance. As concepts that comprise the ideology of the state to maintain its hold on power,

they were stripped of their recursive aspect to become mechanical parts of the hieratic whole. Nationalism became an admixture of the authoritarian agenda for modernization that intends to mould the national consciousness toward the “acceptance of the existing social order and one’s place in it” (Constantino, 1982b, p.26). Similarly “democracy,” in an authoritarian sense, eliminates the necessity to think, speak and act because to do so resists subservience to authority of any sort (Constantino, 1982a, p.18).

As in politics, Marcos worked out a basis for his rule in the economy by delimiting participation. Areas in the economy were opened up to limited ownership, mostly to Marcos’s associates (Constantino, 1990, p.27). In the competition over economic resources, Marcos has strongly intervened but mainly to lessen competition in favour of his associates. However, Marcos allowed foreign businesses to operate with less restriction, a decision that is more political than economic (Constantino, 1984, p.95). The purported aim of attracting foreign investors was technology transfer, but transnational corporations ignored this responsibility as patents and licensing agreements were confined to their subsidiaries and were not meant for the public domain (Constantino, 1990, p.35). Domestic control was extended to labour which was banned from organizing independent unions and holding strikes especially in export-oriented industries (Constantino, 1990, p.97). In other words, the suppression of workers’ rights was intended to bring efficient outcomes for capitalism that, therefore, made violence the necessary premise of the authoritarian rule.

The inscription of violence in the period of authoritarian rule has to be examined to bring to light its distinctiveness, consequences, and possible subversions. The thoughts of Habermas, Benjamin, Arendt, and Derrida provide some qualified arguments about the violence that accompanied the rise of tyrannies in the West. They have analysed violence and power, two

elements constitutive of an absolutist domination that took on many forms in various contexts. For Habermas, violence occurs as a result of distorted communication, a condition wherein estrangement, misunderstanding and deception become so acute that trust disappears (Borradori, 2003, p.64). He says: “The spiral of violence begins as a spiral of distorted communication that leads through the spiral of uncontrolled reciprocal mistrust, to the breakdown of communication” (Habermas, 2003, p.35). Habermas blames the impossibility of dialogue on unbridled capitalism and social inequality that rationalize not only the economy but also the whole society. Despite the reifying tendency of these conditions however, Habermas believes they are not beyond repair as long as individuals commit themselves to the practice of constraint-free communication (Habermas, 1984, p.100). This value of intersubjective understanding is embodied in Habermas’s idea of the communicative rationality that resides in the promise of modernity, which is built upon the Enlightenment’s call for the public use of reason. Reason, according to Habermas, can be repositioned to commit to the common good of “justice, general welfare and peace” (Habermas, 1974, p.258). In this way, reason rouses human consciousness toward “the direction of emancipation” (Habermas, 1974, p.276). Thus, if reason is divorced from contingency and purged of instrumentality, violence could always be postponed. This can be deduced from Habermas’s concept of a society that is capable of attaining communicative rationality, which is oriented toward consensus and where antagonism is never permanent. This suggests that instrumental reason is a self-correcting mechanism, its maladies are able to stabilize themselves. But it now appears that violence shares the same premise as the process of legitimation, that is, the attention to rules, facts and efficiency for the maintenance of a social order.

If we grant Habermas the belief that reason can triumph over domination, taking the Enlightenment’s promise to have the courage to be rational, we would see less of structural

injustices, only the failures of societal integration and inadequacies of the law. Moreover, this would mean that no control could ever be absolute because representation can decisively mediate the way in which power relations are regulated. While this argument cannot be rejected outright, its interpretive scheme should not go unchallenged. If we go by Habermas's idea of communicative rationality and what it suggests, might we not condone the silencing and invisibility of subalterns? The harshness of the law and the absence of justice under the Marcos authoritarian order can hardly be counteracted by institutional and representational forums that it offered. In addition, the Marcos regime disregarded the demands that challenged its exclusionary policies, which emanated from the coercive legal mechanisms. Under conditions of repression, the idea that laws and constitutional guarantees means relief is illusory. Although it does supply some ideals that social interaction could be oriented to, the reformism of Habermas's theory could offer little in recuperating an administered society, in terms of democratic possibilities that he had in mind.

In "Critique of Violence," Benjamin's reflections on violence and messianism has implicated in the ambiguity of the law itself, which introduces violence every time it seeks to eliminate violence (Benjamin, 1978, p.287-288). Benjamin's analysis of violence went beyond the rationalization of the economy and society; it indicts the authoritarian structure behind it all, while the presence of the technologies of representation, like films and photography for instance, only served to intensify the domination (Buck-Morss, 1977, p.171-172). In Benjamin's terms, violence inheres in a programmatic goal of progress, which is domination concerned within the production and maintenance of laws that repress dissent and frustrate revolution (Benjamin, 1968, p.257; 1978, p.300). His argument supplies hope when it noted the impossibility of maintaining the integrity of the law because the same law justifies violence. However, along with the decay of the law is the emergence of a condition that has

the capacity to annul violent laws by all means possible, including the use of “unalloyed violence” (Benjamin, 1978, p.300). Benjamin’s idea of freedom negates authoritarian violence, which is rationalized, codified and maintained; it moves from a teleological concept of time toward a concept of history which opened up to possibilities from a standpoint of redemption, or a Messianic revelation (Benjamin, 1968, p.297).

Derrida’s ideas on violence can be gleaned in his essay *Force of Law*, where he claims that the external foundation of authority and law brings “violence without ground,” which then suggests the possibility of their being imposed by force that has hollow basis (Derrida, 2002, p.242). It is not that the law and authority are legal or illegal, but that they are “deconstructible,” or “insure the possibility of (their) deconstruction” (Derrida, 2002, p.243). Thus, they are not absolute because they are essentially undermined by the violence of their founding (Derrida, 2002, p.254). Simply put, the law, which affirms an authority, also puts that authority in doubt, by reason of its anterior claim to legitimacy. Violence is always a supplement of the law, whose origin requires some extra-legal means of control to sustain itself. Derrida sees both the law and its supplements as products of a milieu hence they bear the limits, ambiguities and emblems of the order that deploys them. What can transcend their finitude and absoluteness is justice that Derrida designates as a promise that unfolds even though it appears unattainable.

To return to the Marcos regime, particularly its violations of human rights and armed offensives against communist and Moro insurgents, we can say that the state repression represents the violent force of the law. What Derrida’s thoughts about the law would bring to the discussion on democracy, in relation to authoritarian rule, is the idea of justice that has to be addressed in relation to the workings of the law or authority. Unlike the law and authority,

justice does not claim self-presence because it is irreducible to claims of legitimacy. In Derrida's sense, the law is always imperfect and the conditions where it is applied are always far from ideal. However, that does not stop the law from attempting to perfect the kind of justice to which it is oriented. As Derrida says: "Justice is an experience of the impossible. A will, a desire, a demand for justice whose structure wouldn't be an experience of aporia would have no chance to be what it is, namely, a call for justice" (Derrida, 2002, p.244).

This question of justice extends to representation, which is another realm where Marcos's authoritarian rule faced contestation. The imposition of dominant symbolic representations makes the regime's instruments of control just as pernicious as the law and authority. However, unlike law and authority, representation requires no formal legitimation because propaganda can easily be mass-produced and transmitted without the legal groundwork. In this sense, production of propaganda can be understood as the discursive nature of authoritarian repression. The latter is an outcome of a structural organization of power in which representation has ceased to provoke critical responses from the populace, and become a self-legitimizing, repetitive repertoire of images. This is revealed in conditions where representations became the products of questionable fiats divorced from the process of reflexive understanding, an operation that could have been provided by the public sphere. As Habermas thinks that it is through deliberation that individuals can build themselves a democratic order, his theory of the public sphere can provide a basis for the demand of recognizing dignity and autonomy in society.

In *The Politics of Friendship*, Derrida brings another dimension to this argument on repression as "autoimmunitary" violence. The inflexion of autoimmunity refers to something that threatened from within itself (Derrida, 2003, p.94). It is revealed in social institutions and

direct coercive measures but also in representation, which is built upon an ideology exercising some form of control over society (Derrida, 1997, p.80). If representation is the way in which meanings are produced, subtended by the social relations, then it follows that repression is presupposed in the supplied meanings. Thus, representations in times of repression are hegemonic, in the sense that they try to dissolve individual identities in their respective narratives of beginnings, in order mask hierarchies and inequalities. However, Derrida sees this strategy as yet another way of inscribing invented identities, because the simulation of genealogical ties and affinities are similarly constructed for a certain purpose. Derrida termed this set up as “determined politics,” which is calculable and calculating because the beginnings they posit are always open to doubts and misgivings (Derrida, 1997, p.93). However, as the imagined bonds of a nation, friendship and family exist in language, as they are spoken about, passed on, and used to reconstruct the past, they also offer a space for thinking about democracy that goes beyond the dichotomies of friendship and hatred, and inclusion and exclusion. In other words, the conditions of control are fissured by their own rules.

The Marcos regime’s propaganda strategy aims to frustrate differentiated views that could result in the formation of political consensus. The elimination of that possibility to articulate political beliefs retarded democratic practice, which is based on the ability to freely express oneself and hold authorities accountable. The demise of the space also meant the elimination of “publicness” that, in Habermas’s thought, stands against the state that it puts in check (Habermas, 1989, p.5, 25-26). The issue at hand is whether a public sphere existed in the Marcos regime, and, if it did, if it could measure up to its Habermasian model. It is convenient to say that the Marcos regime did away with the public sphere and installed the propaganda machine in its stead. However, such analysis implies that a public sphere is tied to

determinations of power that include an authoritarian order. It also ignores the existence of other spaces of social interaction that should be regarded as oppositional or subaltern public spheres. Hence the answer maybe what kind of public sphere could be installed in a constrained condition such as an authoritarian rule. I argue that Derrida's idea of representation makes the public sphere hospitable to a wider spectrum of citizens with diverse, if not contradictory, views. Representation, in Derrida's sense, is not only being present but also a presence that is open to further representation and articulation (Derrida, 2007). It is giving voice to the voiceless and also the chance to reiterate what is being said and could be said (Thomassen, 2006, p.116).

Thinking about the public sphere, as a space of representation in Derrida's sense, expands the concept and opens it up to more possibilities for participation and contestation. Derrida's idea of representation goes beyond giving a voice; it is about soliciting a presence that is absent, as well as iterating the voices of those present and absent (Derrida, 2007, p.98-99). In other words, the public sphere is more than just a space for voices that might come together to disagree or agree over something; rather, it is also about representing and reiterating disavowed demands. The manner, in which representations bring undecidability, in the sense that meanings are multiplied and deferred so that no closure is expected, makes the public sphere a "space of difference," where clashing and varied perspectives are presupposed. The same idea of the public sphere supports the possibility of its multiple existence over and above the larger public sphere guaranteed by constitutional, legal or civic mechanisms. This can be deduced from the attributes the public sphere can have as a realm of representation: the constitution of unrecognized identities, solicitation of spectres (subalterns, minorities, primitives and the unreasonable "other"), affirmation of difference, and recognition of similar spaces that interrelate or negate each other. In the next section, I will provide an account of

how a subaltern public sphere coalesces with the spectrality of new media technologies to install a public space disavowed by the authoritarian order.

5.3 The Spectres and the Chance of Democracy

The turning points of politics in the Philippines are oftentimes attributed to the presence of a leader or a group possessing charisma or fervour to mobilize people in great numbers. They even alluded to a religious imagery, often that of a messiah who stands up to oppressors. In this section I will show that a particular messianism highlights an inextinguishable chance for change in times of repression. However this messianic strand should not be seen in its millenarian or dichotomous vein, but rather through its productive, hence reproducible, link to the present. This is the concept of messianism as seen by Benjamin and modified by Derrida. In Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, messianism is a consideration of the present that is neither predictable nor detached from its past. The present is an evaluation of the past, and a response that anticipates an unforeseeable future; it is a call connected to the idea of redemption that does not seek divine agency, only humans' responsibility to themselves (Benjamin, 1968, p.254-255; Borradori, 2003, p.80). This suggests that there are unmet needs and promises of the past that have to be re-cited in the present, to orient the future. Benjamin's messianism, therefore, has to be seen within a specific historical conjuncture crisscrossed by reified binaries of exploitation, domination and contestation. Derrida was faithful to this historical proposition of Benjamin's messianism. But what he brought into it was the notion of spectres, or the effects of the technological means of representing and engaging with the social milieu that anticipates the attainment of justice. Derrida argues that the iterative convention of new media technologies provides the promise a chance to be affirmed, negated, re-cited and witnessed, thus making a promise "open to

something other and more than itself,” (Derrida, 2002 p.83, 87). These effects deliver the promise, or the articulation of permanent demands and desires, into contingency, and thereby giving humans the chance to re-think their conditions of life and do something about it (Derrida, 1994, p.212). In what follows, I will provide an analysis of how these conditions unfolded in the Philippines.

The anti-Marcos uprising took place on February 1986 just after the snap presidential election that eventually led to a military mutiny. Marcos decided to seek legitimation after thirteen years in power as the clamour for his overthrow had been growing since 1983 when his political rival, Benigno Aquino, was assassinated when returning home from a three-year exile in United States. Aquino’s death became the rallying point of a massive anti-Marcos movement that openly defied restriction to public assembly and discussion. Protests not only drew huge numbers, they also grew confrontational in their tactics. In the countryside, the clandestine communist party and its armed group mounted attacks against government troops, but the offensives had more propaganda than tactical value. The economic crisis spawned by the Marcos regime spared no one. From 1980 to 1986 the economy hobbled through a series of crises -- from the oil crisis in 1978, the growing trade deficit, inflation and foreign loan repayments. Meanwhile, Marcos’s health was failing to the point that political opposition seized this as an opportunity to raise the issue of succession (Brownlee, 2007, p.193). This initiative came from elite opposition groups who only wanted to replace Marcos and return to the pre-martial representative politics, in contrast to the communists and their allies who wanted to set up a coalition government. It was also a time for the broadening of protests. While before the armed struggle appeared to be only way to topple the dictatorship, the multiplication of the forms of struggle, standpoints and political groups also increased the “return” of representations. The culture industry, which was opened up by the mosquito press,

had assimilated the emergent technologies of communication. Altogether, they embodied the logic of new media technologies. This needs elucidation.

The technological base of the new media technologies has been largely the same as those that existed in the years prior to the authoritarian rule, except that their speed of transmission have intensified further the distribution of texts, images and sounds. However, about this time in the Philippines, duplicating and photo-imaging technologies, such as the photocopier, Telex, photo stencils and, later the fax machine, proliferated, such that they provided novelty to the existing print and electronic media. In such technology, the composition of images and texts was a departure from the existing forms that they provided new ways of reception and interpretation. They enabled graphical distribution of the text-based messages taken from fixed sources like books, periodicals and photographs. The technology of facsimile converts printed images into electronic impulses composed of minute dots that, if magnified, reveal spaces and gaps on surfaces where alterations and modifications are possible.

A technology can also be designated “new media technology” when it re-presents traditional forms of texts and images. However, I maintain that the designation should refer more to how they enabled new forms of contestation among groups resisting the authoritarian rule and less to their technical constitution, however novel this may be. In this manner, the interpretive realm of new media technologies can be viewed as a space for the limitless return of a representation where meanings are infinitely multiplied. Thus, the possibilities of these technologies not only reside in their synthetic effects, that is, how abstract electronic impulses of dots and intervals compose conditional meanings and unrestricted judgments in political terms, rather they are also revealed in the manner in which new media technologies have served to provoke impressions, judgments and interventions. To understand this kind of

representation is not to cognize the dots and spaces inscribed on a surface, but to read their innumerable projections in the public realm where their meanings are significant. What Derrida said in *Echographies of Television* about the mediatic role of radio, television and newspapers, in relation to their time in history, resonates here: “This other time, media time, gives rise above all to another distribution, to other spaces, rhythms, relays, forms of speaking out and public intervention”(Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.6-7).

We can now say that new media technologies exhibit a spectrality that reconfigures a chance for the political transformation in the Philippines, years before the February 1986 uprising took place. Spectres are the technical effects of new media technologies that disturb the balance of forces in the nation: they are the processes of articulation of the enduring demand for justice in uneven spatiotemporalities. This articulation is, necessarily, the operation of representation that was earlier assayed as an absent-presence. When representations are mediated by new media technologies, they enable them to become an iteration of themselves. Thus, we can say that these representations have neither presence nor absence but instead are presence-absence. This means that the ubiquity of representation simultaneously alludes to its absence, presence and the possibility of both. Accelerated repetition makes representation simply impossible to predict or fix (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.71). In the context of the authoritarian rule in the Philippines, spectrality can be seen as a form of contingency that intervenes to represent what is excluded and who is silenced. New media technologies inaugurated presence when, as a result of injustice, it was inevitably absent. What this condition provided was the instantiation of mediated and direct symbolic exchange among the subalterns and the underclass who were able to reflect and discuss their plight in relation to the social order that oppressed them (San Juan, 1999, p.84). In other words, new media technologies cannot be directed solely in their technical form; they have to be in a relation

with individuals who aware of the technologies' potential to become democratic (Street, 1992, p.196). The spectrality of new media technologies renews the interpretive capacity of individuals and communities, giving the capacity to produce representations with limitless iteration. Such reconstruction pushes individuals from the confines of their private selves to the public sphere that they have prefigured. In a way, the spectres solicited by new media technologies asserted a bigger, all-inclusive subaltern public sphere to enact a promise of democracy.

In the four days of the uprising that unseated Marcos on February 1986, new media technologies played a crucial part in precipitating the gathering of tens of thousands on the streets of Manila to give support to military mutineers. Filipinos made a revolution by standing up to Marcos's soldiers and tanks. By this time, no political groups could claim the lead role over the spontaneous mobilization of the multitude that took part in the uprising as everyone recognized each other's worth, which is a public sphere ideal. This occasioned new media technologies to demonstrate how the logic of the spectre lives up to an event that is not quite predictable and intelligible. It displayed the capacity of new media technologies for limitless iteration that was put to use when the whole nation tried to make sense of what was happening. This time while newspapers did provide analysis, the instantaneity of radio and television was dramatic in its transmission of accounts and images, testifying to the flexibility and variability of forms available to various anti-Marcos groups. Marcos tried, and succeeded briefly, to block the signals of a radio station owned by the Catholic Church that broadcasted updates during the first hours of the uprising, but the station managed to return on air from a secret location. The bloodless uprising also enjoyed international coverage with the presence of the foreign press. All told, there is a connection between the sharp decline of regime's popularity and the installation of the public sphere, formed from a network of subaltern public

spheres, where those who are politically aware can find their voices, and who moved the revolution along without a predetermined sense of the nature and direction of the engagement.

Conclusion

Many of the local accounts of the aftermath of the February uprising were interlaced with religious imagery and symbolism, not only because the Catholic church played a major role in the uprising but also due to the messianic nuances of the event that showed how, in the midst of disorder, unpredictability and crisis, a political transformation was possible. However, the analysis should go beyond simple allusion to piety, which the Philippines had no shortage of. Hence it would be instructive to return to the notion of messianicity that Derrida linked with the aporias of new media technologies whose effects cannot be addressed in merely technical terms. When the event is confined to the identification of either religious symbolism or technological accounts, it is reified. Derrida argues that religion, like reason, has developed alongside the promise to respond to the “otherness of the other” as well as the advances in technoscience (Derrida, 2002, p.66). In other words, political discourses that addressed faith are also contaminated, if not mediated, by technological effects; they hold as many limitations and possibilities derived from such a relationship of co-implication. Derrida sees religion as always understood in relation to time, which suggests that it is revealed in the everydayness of life and of the world, that is, history as such. This conveys the capacity of history for iteration, in the sense that it addresses something hidden and obscured in order that it will be embraced, rejected or modified.

The work of spectres of soliciting the chance for democracy in repressive times, such as the Marcos regime, relates to the structure of the promise of an unexpected that, in Derrida’s

term, is “messianicity without a messiah,” or the “waiting without awaiting itself,” paying intimate and urgent attention to the demands of justice (Derrida, 2002, p.56). Neither circumscribed nor detached, this promise means fidelity to faith; it inheres in the practice of repeating the material, a chance that is offered by the convention of new media technologies. In other words, repetition underlies the making of the promise because the latter can only be broken or fulfilled if it is witnessed, affirmed, confirmed, or reiterated (Rafael, 2008, location 11941, e-book; Derrida, 2002, p.80,83). When spectres breached the limits of the constrained fields of representations under the Marcos regime with their ability for iteration, this repeatability simultaneously multiplied meanings and their possibilities in uneven political spaces. It can be argued that these spectral impulses were present in the momentum of the February uprising and had the capacity to provide a chance for political renewal: “No faith, therefore, no future without everything technical, automatic, machine-like supposed by iterability,” says Derrida, adding that “the technical is the possibility of faith, indeed its very chance”(Derrida, 2002, p. 83). However, being receptive to spectres requires awareness that their consequences are unforeseeable, and that they cannot be presupposed in any way.

Uprisings are probably difficult to theorize as direct political actions because of their spontaneity, timing and breadth. But writing about mass strikes as the revolution unfolded in Russia in 1904, Rosa Luxemburg’s portrayal of an uprising somehow presaged Derrida’s concept of an event that is used here to explain the 1986 uprising against Marcos, which thrives on the repeatability (Derrida, 1994, p.125-126). Luxemburg notes that a mass strike comes after a long period of political struggle, a series of actions that culminates in a revolutionary wave, which is “unhindered and unrestrained, in a spirit of reckless radicalism” (Luxemburg, 2008, p.164). Its spontaneity, which defies formulas and pre-set plans, demonstrates an awakened class consciousness (Luxemburg, 2008, p.160-161).

Manuel Castells, in his trilogy, *The Information Age*, describes the emergence of a “network society” made up of interwoven connections that shift, fragment, and regroup, depending on the changes of social, economic and political realms (Castells, 1998). In his later work on the public sphere, Habermas sees the latter more as a “network for communicating information and points of view” (Habermas, 1996, p.360). In both depictions of a network, new media technologies play a role to mediate the transmission of representations so that they make sense to those who access them. Networks, by their nature, are attuned to the logic of Derridean spectres. Habermas sees their porosity, while Castells underscores their flexibility, decentralized execution, and horizontal reach that is made possible by the accelerated exchange of information. It is in the latter that a democratic possibility resides because it allows the breakdown of codes and hierarchies that inhibit the networks (Castells, p.372). Following Derrida, networks can thus be thought as communities of people soliciting the spectres of new media technologies because they happen to know their democratic possibilities.

CHAPTER 6

THE SPECTRES AS THE HOPE FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE AGE OF NETWORK TECHNOLOGIES

Introduction

Democratization, in the wake of authoritarian rule in the Philippines, was a kind of exorcism. After the unmasking of authoritarianism as domination in the name of reason, democratization was an effort to rethink the system of power that permeated the structures, institutions, and the national consciousness in the Philippines. Along with this came the removal of vestiges of the Marcos rule whose evildoing had to be cast out. Or at least this was the belief of the new leaders, who assigned themselves the task of recuperating democracy through political reform, which was attempted by reversing and transposing authoritarian representations. However, eschewing the pernicious practices of authoritarian rule was more easily said than done. What happened was accommodation, rather than repudiation, of the political and class interests of the remnants of the dictatorship. Thus, the traces of despotism easily slid into the new order – practices, structures, and meanings – which then mutated into another form of domination that coordinated political freedom with the logic of invasive markets and technologies.

New media technologies were among the major beneficiaries of this process of democratization. They opened up avenues of expression after fourteen years of censorship under Marcos. However, the condition of freedom also presented a dilemma because their democratic role was constrained by the pecuniary laws of the market. In other words, while

new media technologies were expected to articulate demands for justice, they battled for their survival, which was defined by how efficiently they transmitted simulacra and desires tailored to the contingency of market choices. There was much to lose in this trend, especially because new media technologies had reverted to the character of the culture industry, which consequently affected the interactions in the hard-won public sphere. This is not to say that the activism of the “mosquito press” was forgotten; rather the complex conjuncture of political and economic interests weakened the moral basis of the democratic role assigned to new media technologies. Both politics and the market offered them excessive material and experience for commodification, that they have reworked to become more seductive, sensational, and slanderous, to fit the format of “infotainment.” The underlying premise was that individuals, as consumers, should be given what they want – commodities and symbols of identity shaped around the values of excess, ambivalence, and apathy. Certainly, these values have long been disseminated by the culture industry but, under the condition of the accelerated global expansion of capital, which coincided with the post-authoritarian period in the Philippines, they acquired more intensity and breadth. In what follows, I will sketch how new media technologies that developed in the Philippine economy are predisposed to a particular techno-mediated politics.

As the Philippines embarked on “democratization” in 1986, global economic changes were taking place in the world, after heady decades of post-war growth. Capitalism, in the 60s and 70s, suffered from chronic overproduction and overcapacity, which, in the 1980s, was absorbed by the global expansion of the market (Wood, 2003 p.130-133; Harvey, 2005, p.11). This spatio-temporal fix, characterized by the rapid movement of capital, brought complex and technologically mediated, relations of domination and subordination (Wood, 2003, p.133-134; Bello, 2002, p.xii). The other name for this trend is globalization, viewed in economic

terms. This meant the adoption of agreements on global trade, policies on international finance, and styles of governance prescribed by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization (WTO). These multilateral institutions secured the assent of states to international finance and development strategies intended to bring “global prosperity” (Bello, 2003, p.xi). Globalization is the hallmark of neoliberalism, which is a political theory that coordinates human freedoms with “strong private property, free markets, and free trade,” (Harvey, 2005, p.2). The role of the neoliberal state is to preserve economic hegemony by creating and sustaining the conditions for the free movement of capital (Wood, 2003, p.xi).

After the fall of the Marcos regime, the Philippines was all set for neoliberalization. Its new rulers looked to a new growth model, after a long time under a dictator, who, together with his technocrats and associates, closely intervened in the economy. The Philippines joined other Third World countries that accepted neoliberal economic conditions, so that they could be fully integrated into the global system of accelerated capitalism. It is not that these countries rejected capitalism in the past; rather, global financial institutions wanted an end to state-brokered capitalism, which restricted the flow of goods and investments from industrial countries, especially the United States, whose economic interests are apparent in the policies of the World Bank, IMF, and WTO (Bello, 2002, p.3). The insertion of corporate driven market forces into the uneven landscape of capitalism in the Philippines, where the fundamental issue is the distribution of wealth and power, brought far more unintended consequences than could have been imagined by global financial institutions in the West. The adverse effects of prescribed economic programs became evident as soon as they were applied, especially in “residual” or peripheral sectors of the economy (Angeles, 1999, p.368). For instance, without safety nets, the flood of imports in agriculture ruined small farmers and

traders, whose products could not compete with highly subsidized ones from Western countries. Moreover, the high demand for export crops resulted in further degradation of the nation's commons. Instead of alleviating poverty and boosting confidence in the economy, the deregulated market brought uncertainties and constraints on the country's economy (Bello, 2002, p.xii).

For its adherence to neoliberalism, the Philippines, by extension, is a neoliberal state that pledged to advance the right to individual private property, civic order, and free trade (Harvey, 2005, p.64). The country embarked on a programme of deregulation in the economy and privatization of public services that entailed withdrawal of the state from provision of welfare services. In governance, the parallel move was decentralization in the early 1990s, a process of devolving authority and services of the national government to local government units that were expected to generate more revenues, much like business corporations. It translated to the government backtracking on its social obligations, and subjecting them to the laws of the market. The overall effects of this neoliberal turn chimed with what David Harvey called the "creative destruction" of society (Harvey, 2005, p.3). In *Empire of Capital*, Ellen Meiksins Wood describes the role of neoliberal state as "extra-economic force." While the state does not intervene directly in the relations of labour and capital, it indirectly sustains such relations (Wood, 2003, p.4-5). This idea of the state as an agent of globalization found expression and theoretical cogency in the Philippines that even exceeded Wood's projections. The government had intervened in some labour disputes by invoking "national interest," that often favoured capitalists. It has to be mentioned that, since 1986, the succession of administrations in the country were strong advocates of neoliberalism, whose logic and circumstances they have pushed in all directions regardless of its consequences.

Globalization is often seen as a process of standardization and integration into an imagined global community, to borrow Benedict Anderson's iconic phrase. Though in vogue in the last twenty years, the term globalization merely magnifies the features of multinational capitalism that has increased its presence in the new markets it opened. In the Philippines, globalization is bound up with the colonial history of establishing capitalism, accomplished through the reconfiguration of existing modes of production, formation of classes, and global trade. While capitalism and colonialism have undergone changes, they have sustained the logic of "commodity exchange for the sake of profit" (San Juan, 1999, p.261). Put differently, the accumulation and expropriation of surplus value are a constant within uneven, but compliant, spatiotemporalities. The latter include the classic combination of cheap and docile labour, natural resources, and an amenable government that opens up the economy to a deluge of imported commodities. While it is true that the Philippines had long been a ready market for Western, mainly American, products, there are still enough spaces to saturate with fungible but branded commodities. Brands, according to Naomi Klein, are a function of the nominal strategy of homogenization, where the focus is not on "things" but brand images and their meanings (Klein, 2000). Brands are not only applied to commodities, they can also be ideas, people, and lesser life forms.

The Marxist's notion of the combined and uneven development of capital argues that capitalism's growth is best understood as irregular, unbalanced and conflicted, rather than unvarying, homogeneous, and smooth (Luxemburg, 1951; Mandel, 1970; San Juan, 1999; Wood, 2003; Harvey, 2004; Harvey, 2005). This simply means that capitalism thrives on the conflation of several different factors that crucially shaped its distinctiveness. To explain the latter, and bring the concept of uneven development to bear on neoliberal debates, David Harvey emphasized two elements that he attributed to Marx: spatiality and the conjunction of

abstract and concrete labour. The first one, space, is what capitalism needs to grow, so once the space contracts, capitalism will try to expand it (Harvey, 1982, p.391-393). Put differently, capitalism expands within its host or predetermined space but when it finds this space constricting, it actively reproduces it, not physically but technologically. While this point was not explicitly articulated by Harvey, I argue that capitalism enhances and extends space through representational forms generated within new media technologies in order to expand surplus value. The second element, which is the simultaneous occurrence of concrete and abstract labour, refers to reduction of skilled, or concrete, labour to simple, or abstract, labour, where the latter becomes replaceable and undervalued (Harvey, 1982, p.59). Skilled labour and specialized work are transformed to resemble assembly line tasks, which are repetitive and require only limited skills to perform. This logic reorganizes the hierarchy of labour process and assigns corresponding value to all types of work (Harvey, 1982, p.392). It relies on location advantage that is inseparable from factors like colonial history, racism, and state politics. The Marxist notions of space and labour, in the time of globalization, explain the emergence of overseas Filipino workers in affective work and the proliferation of call centers and similar jobs, issues that I will discuss in length later.

The role of new media technologies can be deduced from this global development, specifically the way in which the neoliberal ideology is naturalized when its dominated subjects become part of media-technological networks and systems of representation (Harvey, 2005, p.3). Fredric Jameson calls this shift the communicational focus of globalization, while Jodi Dean termed it “communicative capitalism”; both concepts convey how neoliberal ideals are articulated through new media technologies (Jameson, 2009, p.436-438; Dean, 2009, p.22-23). The Philippines has shown how these transformation of new media technologies negotiated the neoliberal terrain. In the 1990s, the discourse of democratization coincided

with the early years of Internet diffusion. Activists, cyber enthusiasts and non-government organizations (NGO), many of them veterans of the anti-Marcos struggle, shaped the nascent practices of the Internet and, to some extent, the use of mobile phones in the Philippines. Information sharing gestures toward political activism, which carries the Habermasian ideals of the public sphere – openness to rational critical debate, disregard of differences in status, and the cultivation of consensus. It was thought that new media technologies could become a mechanism for democratic participation, or at least, provide an online platform for political demands (Lovink, 2011, p.158-159). This activist platform proved its worth when mobile phones were recognized for their role in the overthrow of President Joseph Estrada in 2001 because they coordinated the mobilization of thousands of protesters (Celdran, 2002, p.94). The possibilities of mobile phones reside in what Paul Levinson calls “omni-accessibility,” which refers not only to the fact that they are handy but also because they are “telepathic” (Levinson, 2004, p.xii-xiv). The latter conveys a certain spectrality because communication can be carried out through means other than physical senses and presence, and across time.

Soon after the 2001 uprising, the market forces, that intently followed the rapid diffusion of new media technologies, brought ambivalence to technologically mediated activism. The new media technologies’ convergence with the culture industry, the popularity of “user-generated” content, “informatization,” the reliance of money capital on communication platforms, were among the features of what is now called Web 2.0 (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.284). The latter refers to the era of networked new media technologies, whose distinguishing interfaces are embodied in these buzzwords: “user-friendly, social media, real time, and search-and-share” (Lovink, 2011, p.4-5). It is also the time of surveillance for security, but more for the benefit of the market because online user profiles became the commodities sold to advertisers and corporations (Lovink, 2011, p.5). And yet, despite their ambivalent effects, new media

technologies, now ubiquitous, were still perceived as having profound possibilities for change in the Philippines. The online presence of all sorts of political movements, groups and individuals supported this claim. In other words, it was no longer a question of whether new media technologies could be part of change, but how and when they can be deployed; it was a question of means and ends.

This relationship between new media technologies and the chance for change requires a closer look. Associating new media technologies with democracy restricts the understanding of their possibilities, and while the practice of democracy and convention of new media technologies are mutually determining, they are not identical. It narrows democracy's sense to the exchange of information in the public sphere so that other aspects of politics, such as class rule and its exercise of state power, would be less noticeable. This presumed congruence carries the logic of identity thinking that, as Adorno has warned, leads to reification. To recall, the latter designates a "coercive rationality" that exemplifies capitalism's notion of exchange value, wherein concrete things become abstract and replaceable (Adorno, 2005, p.200; Cook, 2004, p.40). For Adorno, the concept broadly refers to the effacement of heterogeneity, a condition wherein incommensurable objects and individuals become identical because sameness is assumed in the relationship (Adorno, 1973, p.135; Jay, 1984, p.68; Buck-Morss, 1997, p.26; Rose, 1978, p.45). This principle of equivalence, which extends to many aspects of social relations, supports domination and absolutization as well as restrains autonomy, spontaneity, and specialization (Jameson, 2010, p.204). Adorno expands the concept of reification to cover how people relate to technologies, and he came up with the phrase "veil of technology" to define a condition in which technologies become so dominant they are regarded as the solution to all the problems in society – a fetishization of technology that accompanies domination (Adorno, 1991; 2005, p.200-201). This is not the place to discuss

Adorno's idea of fetishism, but what I want to highlight is technological messianism, a thinking that considers technology as having the capacity to set directions of change in society, and the latter has no choice but to adapt and be absorbed by its instrumental logic (Street, 1992, p.30-31). In other words, humans have to cede their agency to the workings of technologies and their rationale (Street, 1992, p.26).

It is useful now to bring up the difference between Habermas's concept of democracy provided by the public sphere, and Derrida's democracy to-come. Democracy in the public sphere operates with pre-set goals – intersubjective understanding, public use of reason, truth as underlying motive for communicating – that establish ideal conditions for interaction. It remains a normative ideal because such restrictive conditions could be realized if enforced. By setting preconditions and rules for rational interaction, Habermas narrows the reaches of democracy and contradicts its emancipatory impulses. Moreover, consensus in the public sphere is often influenced by spectacles, simulacra and spin, and there is no shortage of pundits who say that these types of representation weakens political agency. On the other hand, Derrida's idea of democracy to-come is about the future that is unfolding in the present (Derrida, 1994, p.98-99). It is linked to the question of justice that needs to be realized. In other words, democracy serves the interest of justice that while it is unrealizable at the moment, it has to be established at once. Democracy to-come sets no boundaries or preconditions; it favours unconditional hospitality and acceptance of heterogeneity (Derrida, 1997, p.104-106).

Democracy is a paradoxical practice; while it strives for plurality and integration, it is simultaneously complicit with homogeneity and exclusion (Derrida, 1992, p.100). However for Derrida, the concept of democracy should encompass the complexity and conflictual

nature of inclusion and consensus, and pay attention to otherness, difference and the unforeseen. Derrida's assessment should be considered in the light of his deconstructive politics that does not propose an abandonment of democratic ideas but their constant transformation. There is no guarantee that democracy will not be exclusive, or that new media technologies will not use their "techno-economic power" to render false representations of reality (Derrida, 1992, p.92). However, Derrida believes it is possible to locate a point where a chance for democracy exists in the same reified condition. This chance is offered by iteration. When representations are posited and transmitted, it is doubtful that the meanings they engendered can form one coherent interpretation or remain the same throughout. Thus, they become frontiers for semantic exploration, experimentation, and modification. The process is accomplished by repetition, resulting in the transformation of common notions and dominant discourses, a gesture that privileges diversification of meanings and revitalization of worn-out concepts and relations.

While offering no guarantees, Derrida's suggestions point to the chance of democracy through the effects of new media technologies. New media technologies carry the possibilities of the logic of iteration. If the world is awash with representations that could be repeated, rehearsed, and made recurrent, and this process is neither mechanical nor mimetic, then new media technologies, which are mechanisms of representations, epitomize this kind of iteration. The technological process of representation involves synthesizing, processing, and transmitting that, when representations are converted into sequences of images, sounds, and texts, enable modification and customization. In other words, new media technologies reconfigure the basic suppositions of representation, where meanings can never be singular or fixed, because innumerable versions are always put into play (Derrida, 2007, p.127-128). In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida sees new media technologies as having the capacity to solicit a space for

democracy through the use of tele-sciences or tele-technology (Derrida, 1994, p.212). He depicts specters as those which bring possibility to a condition of reified authority. These spectres evoke hidden meanings, traumas, promises and prospects that have destabilizing consequences for society: they affirm a messianic promise that arises from the shifts and progression of the past and the anticipation of the future. Spectres persist because justice has been unrealized, hence the haunting continues.

The preceding discussion of reification and spectres orients the analysis of the political possibilities of new media technologies in the Philippines that I will provide in this chapter. As the plurality of representations, practices, and aesthetic experiences compete for attention, there exist recurrent, spectral demands that are projected onto new media technologies from where messianic hopes are restaged. New media technologies are not merely regarded as vehicles for social movements and platforms of political groups; they are also seen as having the intrinsic capacity to precipitate reflection and action. This chapter will examine the transformative potential of new media technologies, with the aim of discovering new models of resistance, new metaphors of change in the postcolonial context, and novel hypothesis for Derridean specters. In the section that follows, I will give an account of the conditions in the Philippines, how specters manifest themselves as the country retraces its democratic steps and deals with the compulsions of globalization. The second section examines the fate of the public sphere and the consequences of its saturation carried out by new media technologies. Finally, the third section looks at the logic of new media technologies and the political possibilities they offer.

6.1 Spectral Media Technologies, Neo-liberal Regimes, and the Reification of Democracy

If there is a sign that it would not be an easy return to authoritarian rule in the Philippines, it is the presence of new media technologies that have the capacity to breach the controls of information that any potential despot installs. It is not that suppression of free expression did not take place again, as the nation found out belatedly; rather, the attempts have not been fully successful and were accomplished only briefly. One reason for this resiliency is the openness of new media technologies' interfaces that crisscrossed the many forms of representation. The growth of these technologies in the Philippines was attributed to the liberal climate in the economy, politics and culture, after the restoration of civil and political rights in 1986. But the changes also brought ambivalence. In the economy, this translates to the policy of opening up the country to neo-liberal strategies that accord primacy to the operation of markets. The area of culture follows the rationale of commodification, where the assignment of value underpins the development and production in the culture industry. However, local aesthetics has to compete for space and attention in an increasingly globalized and technologically mediated, hence depersonalized, public sphere. The deluge of Western cultural products has brought novel forms of expression, which, although tied to consumerism and the spread of Western hegemony in art and technology, also enabled experimentation and innovation in the realm of culture and politics.

Technological developments in the culture industry in the Philippines, in the late 1980s and 1990s, followed the emerging Internet culture, but it was the diffusion of personal communication technologies that was most significant. In a country where only one in a hundred was able to make a telephone call in the 1980s, the growth of mobile telephones was

remarkable. As of 2001, two years after the introduction of SMS (short messaging system), the country had seven million mobile phone users, sending 65 million SMS or “text messages” a day, that in that same year, it was called the “texting capital of the world” (Celdran, 2002, p.91; Mirandilla, 2007, p.8). The diffusion of mobile phones was a market-driven decision but it also had a social dimension. It cashed in on the steady growth of Filipino communities in diaspora (Madianou and Miller, 2011, p.461). A consequence of the international division of labour, the diaspora refers to labour migration, mostly women, to Western and developed countries mainly to work in the “care industry” as nurses, domestics and the like. The phenomenon of diaspora links emotions to human labour that is shaped around technologies that overcome space and time barriers (Madianou and Miller, 2011, p.460; Pettman, 2006, p.39). I will return to this point later but, in the meantime, I will focus on affective labour as an essential component of the accumulation of surplus value and the uneven development of capitalism.

The Philippines’s economic growth rate lagged behind other countries in Southeast Asia but, in terms of the telecommunications industry, it experienced exponential growth as shown by the ubiquity of mobile telephones, increase in Internet access, and the proliferation of Business Product Outsourcing (BPO), which is another name for call center (Wallace, 2007, p.179). The growth in the industry was noteworthy but the statistics tells little about the reason for their rapid expansion. For example, the Philippines ranked eighth in the world for the proportion of Facebook users per capita: almost one in four Filipinos has a Facebook account (Stockdale and McIntyre, 2011). Users in other social media and location-based interfaces, such as Twitter, LinkedIn and PinInterest have increased too (Socialbakers, 2012). So popular were these interfaces that, in 2011, the country was dubbed as the “social networking capital of the world” (Stockdale and McIntyre, 2011). This appellation is

conveniently attributed to Filipinos' ingrained behavior of being amiable and expressive of their feelings, but, I argue, there is no tenable basis for this claim.

The trends in the development of telecommunications infrastructure show more how new media technologies, including the Internet, mobile phones and their eventual convergence with mass media, were established, when the Philippines was on a fast track to neoliberalization via deregulation, privatization, and free market policies (Mirandilla, 2007, p.3). Their proliferation provides an insight into how capitalism operates in a society characterized by the uneven growth of markets. These technologies were set up to become the backbone of accelerated real-time market transactions, because of their capacity to store, analyze and transmit databases that can influence financial decisions (Harvey, 2005, p.3). However, given the Philippines's weak manufacturing and industrial sector, the new media technologies were harnessed for the service sector, mainly for communications, and the maintenance of symbolic ties. In other words, telecommunications companies shifted the burden of surplus accumulation, by seeking profits in the forms of communication and reified desires they had created.

Under the existing growth strategy, the Philippines was primarily seen as a huge market for the telecommunications industry, notwithstanding the country's deep urban-rural disparity and the poverty that is experienced by a third of the population (Mirandilla, 2007, p.6). This unevenness in the capacity of the economy to generate surpluses remains the same to this day. Despite the veneer of urban middle-class lifestyle, twenty-three million Filipinos are considered poor, which nine million are on subsistence wages (Virola, 2011, online). Poverty was the push for Filipinos to go abroad to seek jobs and better lives. There are about ten million Filipinos living outside the country, which some two million have work contracts, the

majority of them as nurses and domestics. In 2010 alone, the government estimated that they sent home 141 billion pesos (about £2 billion) to support the families they left behind (National Statistics Office, 2012). On the household level the money is spent on consumables, in addition to school fees, communication gadgets and services to maintain the frail ties of geographically separated households (Madianou and Miller, 2011, p.466-468). On the national level, the remittances became a major source of foreign exchange to alleviate fiscal deficits, trade imbalance and the national debt (Pernia, 2007, p.222; Aguilar, 2000, p.7-8). To return to the discussion of the proliferation of call centers, which appears to be the only viable employment for young people around this time, the Filipinos' uniqueness, which springs from their competency in English, university education and affinity with American or Western lifestyle, has become a marker of deep of cultural alienation (San Juan, p.24-25; Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.291-292). San Juan argues that such generalized statements of Filipinos' advantage over their Asian counterparts, masked class conflict, ethnocentrism and racial prejudice, while at the same time highlighting a mode of Orientalism that sees Filipinos as easily assimilated postcolonial subjects (San Juan, 2009, p.24-25).

How capitalism regulates labour power, as well as labouring bodies, is key to understanding alienation in Hardt and Negri's concept of "immaterial labour" (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.291-292). In the Philippines, the concept applies to labour found in call centers, which currently employ some 350,000 persons; the established practice is to cut costs by farming out work to casual labour employed in temporary contracts. This work mirrors the shifts in the labour process that are bound up with the emergence of information as a commodity. In the overall set up of globalized capital, the presence of outsourcing companies indicates a weak position of the country in the global division of labour. In Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, call center work typifies immaterial labour, which is, in this context, labour power concerned with

the production of services, cultural products, knowledge and communication (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.290). Hard and Negri further delineated outsourcing work by quoting Robert Reich: “symbolic analytical services . . . problem solving, problem-identifying, and strategic brokering activities” (Reich in Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.291). Immaterial labour is vital to the accelerated global competition of capital; its alienation lies in its power of abstraction which accomplish the removal of workers from the object of their labour, thus turning them into number crunchers, human answering machines, and complaints’ absorbers (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.291-292).

Meanwhile the culture industry’s success of bringing its audience under the influence of the market was even more intensified under neoliberalization in the Philippines. The rapid, simultaneous, and networked way of transmitting meanings pushed the culture industry to adapt the logic of globalization – of being fast, first and fungible – that constitute the new ideology of the times. Since the 1990s, news media in the country have grown dramatically in terms of circulation, styles and formats. The number of nationally circulated newspapers multiplied, but tabloids also began to enjoy a substantial following; radio kept its place as the medium of the masses, while television was hugely popular for entertainment (Coronel, 1999, p.90). This development in the culture industry, which shaped the news along a form of populism, saw the rise of celebrity politics. The latter marries popularity with patronage, and translates them to political power through the agency of election. Celebrity politicians in the Philippines fall into two categories: those in show business who want to enter politics, and those in politics who use show business techniques. However, it was easy for the two categories to conflate, as was the case of an actor-politician, Joseph Estrada, who was elected president in 1998; he proved that the trend became a norm rather than the exception, in a nation that, to this day, cannot decide if celebrity politics enhanced or damaged democratic

practice. Celebrities personify commodity value, particularly its enigmatic and irrational aspects, that appear as innocuous and pleasurable when, in fact, in Adorno's words, they are "illusory and mendacious," even with some "semblance of political legitimacy" (Adorno, 1991, p.33; Taylor and Harris, 2008, p.133-134).

While the commodified culture industry got the upper hand, this did not preclude new media technologies from reviving the "mosquito press." Some journalists embarked on investigative journalism, a reporting genre whose primary goal is to uncover a wrongdoing, and by drawing attention to longstanding social issues, mainly corruption and abuse of power, that were glossed over by infotainment. Through investigative genres, media technologies contributed significantly to the democratization discourse of the 1990s, as part of the entrenchment of neoliberalism in the country. However, except for Estrada, who was the subject of investigative pieces that led to the erosion of his legitimacy and subsequent overthrow in 2001, the stories did not result in bringing other corrupt officials to court. At best, the series of 'expose' accomplished some kind of public shaming.

The breadth and impact of anti-corruption reportage had generated an illusion that new media technologies, can fix democracy by exposing cases of corruption. However this reportage has tragic consequences when tried out in communities where political power and economic resources are dangerously concentrated in the hands of warlords and local elites – it saw the rise of cases of harassment and the killing of journalists. Since 1986, there have been 124 journalists killed, but the most heinous, single attack took place in 2009 when 32 journalists died. The prime suspect was a local official belonging to a powerful political clan considered an ally of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. For many years now, the Philippines has been considered as one of the world's most dangerous places for journalists. While the

practitioners are under attack, new media technologies, however, shielded the public from physical harm with the anonymity of their interfaces such as emails, text messages, online polling, and comments. The risks of confronting structures of power, where political violence is a fact, were minimized with the convention of new media technologies, where the identity of interlocutors became secondary to their opinions. The anonymous interfaces, which provide synchronous and asynchronous interaction, connected users to the public sphere as well as the news organizations thus, creating a discursive network of intersecting agendas. But at the same time, this network of mediated interaction, emanating from personal communication interfaces and gadgets, opened up possibilities for purposive encounters, given the increased awareness of other interlocutors that respond to similar issues.

New media technologies have inaugurated new ways of interacting in the public sphere although, if infotainment is considered, this only reflected part of their rational and technical specifications. To recall, Adorno notes that the technologies of the culture industry are shaped for and by the logic of unregulated market and commodity exchange that was true in his time, and, in fact, is even more relevant in the time of globalization, where technology is essential to the growth of capital. However, this also breeds a technological rationality known as technological messianism. The latter is a form of technological determinism, which is a belief that technologies, mainly through their material constitution, bring progress independent of social relations (Feenberg, 2010, p.8; Wayne, 2003, p.39-40; Street, 1992, p.30-31). Technological messianism was common in the 1990s, when new media technologies were growing ubiquitous, even though a similar thinking has been earlier criticized by Marcuse as ahistorical and one-dimensional. Technological messianism is a belief in the redeeming power of technology an agent of transformation that has an enormous capacity to effect change, and that transformation is inevitable even though the conditions for change are embryonic. While

giving assent to the redemptive power of technologies, this view, however, is naïve and lapses into consumerism because of its positive opinion toward technological diffusion. Technological messianism tends to be triumphal, which is taken to mean that technologies are regarded as agents, or the *telos*, of neoliberalism, that Francis Fukuyama has sanctified (Derrida, 1994, p.85-86).

Technological messianism has underpinned discourses of technologies in the Philippines. The country is often cited as a case wherein new media technologies, particularly mobile phones, were harnessed for political change (Rheingold, 2008; Levinson, 2004; Morozov, 2010). The uprising to unseat President Joseph Estrada, on January 2001, was partly credited to the use of mobile phones, particularly their SMS (short message service) or text messages that transmitted political messages and appeals for people to join protests. As a result, more than a million gathered on the stretch of highway that, fifteen years ago, hosted a similar uprising against the Marcos regime. (Estrada was impeached for abuse of power, but a botched trial angered many who then demanded his resignation. He was subsequently jailed, convicted of plunder, but pardoned in 2007). The 2001 uprising is often cited as an example of mobile communication technologies having a political impact because of their “disruptive political potential” (Rheingold, 2008, p.225). Mobile phones were crowd gatherers; they facilitated consensus of political action through the networks they created (Shirky, 2008, p.17-20). These networks were construed as publicly situated, not unlike Habermas’s idea of the public sphere, which is a space for deliberation and political participation. Common to accounts of the mobile phones’ mediation of Philippine politics is their ubiquity that carries hope for political change and democracy (Celdran, 2002, p.95-99; Rafael, 2008, location 11353, e-book). Although in a less dramatic way, the same was said of other new media technologies that were popular at that time, particularly the Internet, which hosted websites, digital

newspapers and blogs of political groups with all sorts of ideologies. The argument is simply that the democratic promise of new media technologies lies in an inherent diffusion that could outrun attempts to suppress their message.

As mentioned, technological messianism is an example of technocratic rationality. Bound up with capitalism, this rationality masks a totalitarian tendency because it aims for classification, quantification and domination (Marcuse, 1964, p.xviii). Technological messianism, with its rudimentary analysis, sees technologies as the decisive way by which a networked society attains progress. In a neoliberal regime, information is vital as commodity and cultural item; its storage and transmission influence decisions in the marketplace (Harvey, 2005, p.3). Technological messianism in the Philippines misread the relationship of technology and society by reducing technology to an instrumental power, as the work of Celdran and Pertierra have suggested (Celdran, 2002; Pertierra, 2007). For instance, Celdran argued that in 2001, with the Philippines being the capital of SMS of the world, the more than ten million mobile phones are gadgets of democracy (Celdran, 2002, p.91). If this claim were at all valid, then social transformation follows the cycle of introduction and diffusion of new media technologies.

I believe that technological messianism has gained ground in the Philippines for several reasons. First, rationalization has not expelled elements of the sacred as influenced by Catholicism, folk, and pre-Christian beliefs. Second, political discourses have been contaminated with religious overtones, and faith-based ethics have also been invoked in many political decisions. Third, churches, religious movements and sects, by the strength of their number, exerted some moral influence on the secular public sphere at crucial periods in the country's history and, in fact, provided the matrix from where identities were constructed.

Fourth, neoliberalism supplies the bases in which articulation and “return” of religion can be relevant because of the reifying conditions it had produced in the economy, politics and culture. Fifth, the effects of new media technologies solicited certain forms of secular eschatology, which could be seen as manifestations of alterity that repudiated hegemonic representation and activated a messianic agency.

In *Politics and Technology*, John Street argues that there is no single perspective that could sufficiently explain the relationship between technology and politics (Street, 1992, p.45). He argues that uncertainties are intrinsic to the evolution of technology, including its design and social consequences (Street, 1992, p.119). Paradoxically, these uncertainties are engendered by the technical decisions taken on machines or tools such as design, costs and profit; and yet these limitations anticipate interventions, dangers and agencies, arising from the use of technologies (Street, 1992, p.118-119). Therefore, acknowledging the uncertainties in the technologies is to be aware of the technical and social decisions that accompany their use. It also to recognize that while they are shaped around instrumental interests they do not necessarily perpetuate those interests, either as means of social control or capital accumulation. In other words, technologies, despite their constitution and convention, are not programmatic per se.

If not by their material form and quasi-religious predisposition, how does one understand the possibilities of new media technologies in the Philippines? In his essay *Faith and Knowledge*, Derrida proposes a radical contingency that he calls “the messianic without a messianism,” which refers to the unconditional construction of history – it is “opening to the future or to the coming of the other as an advent of justice, but without horizon of expectation and without prophetic prefiguration” (Derrida, 2002, p.56). Derrida rewrites the terms of messianism by

introducing indeterminations in the technological and political realm. His version is a secular strategy of interpretation that repeats the possibility of religion without a religion, or “faith without dogma” (Derrida, 2002, p.57, 61). The messianism that Derrida offers is a messianism that prophesies the “other.” This presaging, also called witnessing, is a form of responsible intervention that is infinite and opens up to the absolute future (Derrida, 2002, p.98).

The preceding discussion also leads to the question of the presence of new media technologies. Presence, for Derrida, signifies being simultaneously committed to and independent of the demands of representation or, in other words, being absent and present at the same time. In *Writing and Difference*, Derrida correlates writing to presence wherein the latter conveys being involved, but an involvement that cannot be specified in advance by the logic of inscription (Derrida, 1978, p. 13-14). What this implies for the analyses of new media technologies is that political proposals and speculative perspectives, which are projected into them, are largely technical or mechanical in their approaches. They have overlooked the demands of social forces that tend to stray from the pre-set or demarcating codes of technologies. But the judgments that new media technologies negotiate are complex, and the same is true with effects they give rise to, hence they simply defy neat and qualified assessments. Derrida notes that contradictory motivations found in new media technologies require a certain ethical discretion that he termed “vigilance of the unconscious” (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.135). The phrase drew much from its etymological roots, that is, the work of remembering an inheritance that can be repeatedly accessed to bear on political judgment and action. While it appears to be subjective, this vigilance instantiates its power if exercised intersubjectively, or in the public sphere where its power is multiplied. And yet Derrida also retained the unknowable element in that aporetic phrase because, he believes, actions could

have effects beyond their lucid and conscious modalities because mobilizations may not always presage emancipation (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.136-137). Awakening, recalling and remembering have, according to Derrida, spectral traces, as they enabled the re-presentation of “collective memory and political ghosts” that might have been absent, but might just spring into the view again, in yet another arrangement or guise (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002, p.137).

It is not as though spectres, or the technical effects of new media technologies, cannot reveal their existence in the present, and are taken to mean that they are simply spirits devoid of actual existence. In fact, the Derridean spectres rest on the presumption of materiality. Spectres derive their presence from signs, which include images and texts transmutable into digital data that are suited for transmission and manipulation. Digital formats transform representations into programmable signs that are simultaneously “mobile and modifiable,” and consequently allow a relationship among a community of interpreters or meaning makers (Manovich, 2001, p.174). This relationship relates to the arrangement of space and time that spectres have successfully disrupted. The spatiotemporal displacement is the consequence of a lopsided and hierarchical development of capitalism from where the materiality of new media technologies emanates. From within this unevenness, the specters articulate what can be said and unsaid. The situation that emerges cannot be described as the disintegration of aura that, for Benjamin, means a representation that is proximately cut off from its natural and symbolic anchors in society (Benjamin, 1968, p.224-225; Lunn, 1982, p.169-170). Instead of the detachment that Benjamin perceives, spectrality appears to be a re-enchantment of the public sphere, or a reconnection with history, because digitization is a condition of possibility. Digitization, like archewriting, makes human expression and thought possible. This possibility has less to do with content or the material constitution of the object itself, but how

it provides the matrix for something to appear, happen or be known. I believe that this spatiotemporal orientation solicits effects of new media technologies that give rise to the transformation of conventional identities and the hegemonic structures of political order. This is because the same effects enable individuals to look inward into themselves in relation to the object of their gaze, so as to invest it with meanings. Benjamin's idea of the demise of aura as the compression and constriction of space brought by technological mediation, also brings an insight that the elimination of distance actually enables intervention upon a representation to disrupt the latter's material and discursive constitution (Benjamin, 1968, p.222-224; Manovich, 2001, p.174). In other words, new media technologies can inaugurate a different relationship of distance-nearness in which objectification and disruption are possible.

When taken in relation to the public sphere, new media technologies not only enlarged this discursive space but also reconfigured the terms of its interactions, and allowed dissension, differences and spectres of the "other" to emerge. This is how I see the shifts enabled by new media technologies in the Philippines; they defy the messianic politics that facilely linked technologies with the conflictual changes taking place in the neo-liberal order. Their effects are the spectres that articulate the enduring demand for justice, beyond the binaries that reflect the tension of the uneven development in the growth of capitalism. In the next section, I will address the political consequences of spectres in the public sphere.

6.2 Spectral New Media Technologies and Democratic Politics

The line-up of administrations that replaced the Marcos regime begins with an Aquino and, to date, ends with an Aquino. Corazon Aquino was swept to power with an uprising in 1986 while her son, Benigno Simeon Aquino, was elected president in 2010. The Aquinos' brand

of democracy strengthened the power of the elites, with Corazon Aquino restoring the structures of formal representation, and the younger Aquino affirming them. Fidel Ramos, a former Marcos martial law general who succeeded Corazon Aquino, was remembered for his strong adherence to neoliberal prescriptions for the country's economy. Then came Joseph Estrada, with his populist style of politics that inclined to favour a circle of associates. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who stayed as president from 2001 to 2010, harbored authoritarian tendencies when she briefly placed the country under a state of emergency and staged a crackdown on left-leaning activists and communists.

The five administrations have many things in common in their approach to democracy. They generally considered communist and Muslim rebellions as terrorism requiring military intervention. Social justice, in terms of land distribution and recognition of workers' rights were dissolved under the national agenda of global market competitiveness. Thus, for example, vast tracts of land were made available for export crops, while trade unionism is discouraged. All the five administrations also viewed poverty not in terms of class inequality, but a condition that can be made bearable by the extended family system and overseas migration, the two safety nets that enable the country's poor to deal with a level of poverty that, at 25 percent in the late 1990s, was one of the highest in Southeast Asia (Bautista, 1999, p.385-387). Since then, the poor became recipients of state dole-outs ranging from rice rations to petrol rebates. Some scholars termed these measures "coping strategies" of both the government and the poor, but for the latter it is simply a way to survive, more instinctual than voluntary (Bautista, 1999, p.388). Poverty and its attendant issues hardly figure in the discourse of democracy, as the latter is linked entirely to formal conditions of free speech, legal rights, and elections. And yet poverty, I will argue, is the main obstacle to full participation in the public sphere in the Philippines, as it leads to high levels of

marginalization and exclusion. It is not that agency, or political autonomy, can never be realized in conditions of deprivation; rather poverty provides the underlying reason why subalterns are prone to fatalism and manipulation, out of need, ignorance, or a combination of both. All told, the poor bore all the risks of the neoliberal order, while the rewards of progress insinuated in the catchphrases “catch up” and “trickle down,” could not stand theoretical scrutiny.

The neoliberal sponsored democracy, as I argued, inhibits the democratic potential of the public sphere as a space for constructing an autonomous public debate. Aside from the realm of social integration, Habermas conceptualized the public sphere as having a steering function in material production and democratic practice that affects, and is shaped by, the existing networks in society. In other words, the interchanges in the public sphere, cannot be divorced from instrumental demands posed by what Habermas himself called the “economic-administrative complex” that impinges on public interaction and the lifeworld (Habermas, 1987, p.33). The governmental and economic structures, steered through power and money, can override the genuine debates and commodify the interaction to fit the mould that Habermas termed as “functional rationality,” a variant of the Frankfurt School’s instrumental rationality (Edwards, 2004, p.117-118; Habermas, 1987, p.304-305). This logic underlies Habermas’s thesis of “colonization” that, in the context of Western capitalism, gives rise to problems in all areas of the social, including the mechanisms of representation. The latter can be implicated in what Habermas calls “cultural impoverishment” and “loss of meaning” in the lifeworld, which supplies interpretive resources to society (Habermas, 1987 p.302). This instrumentalism in the public sphere strikes a chord in the works of Naomi Klein (2000) and Jodi Dean (2002) who separately pointed out that when public spaces, in the time of neoliberalism, yield to corporate money and power, instead of public deliberation, what

occurred were private acts of consumption. Moreover, in lieu of democratic governance, there exists a public life tied to the market ideology. Dean maintains that the “public sphere has become the weakest link” in a networked society, which Klein observed as thriving in a “climate of cultural and linguistic privatization” (Dean, 2002, p.13; Klein, 2000, p.281, 284). While Klein was primarily referring to consumption of branded commodities, her argument also touches on the effects of the functionalist logic that neoliberalism has made hegemonic. Dean went on to argue that the public sphere, by the way it transmits commodified and democratically deficient discourses, becomes complicit with the dissemination of the neoliberal agenda, and thus has become the opposite of its putative aims (Dean, 2002, p.12-13).

The conduct of Philippine politics exemplifies the reification of the public sphere, showing that the means for producing alienation and repression are not in short supply. The “liberal-minded” presidents have not delivered on their promise of social justice and political reforms but instead pandered to partisan interests and the U.S. strategic agenda. If there is one thing that runs through all neoliberal administrations, it is their assent to the deployment of migrant labourers everywhere in the world, to ease the unemployment problem that they have failed to solve. There are at least ten million Filipinos working in some two hundred countries around the world, and seventy five percent of them are women working as domestics, health workers and semi-skilled labourers; they comprise ten percent of the country’s population (San Juan, 2009, p.157; Madianou and Miller, 2011, p.459). Since the time that President Corazon Aquino called overseas workers the “new heroes,” in recognition of their contribution to the country’s dollar reserves, the label stuck, along with its incongruousness. By shifting the terms of the exclusion to the valorization of labour power in other countries, the neoliberal regimes glossed over the inequalities, the primary reason why Filipinos go abroad. On the other hand, the accelerated global expansion of capitalism has also increased the demand of

variable capital on some areas of work, the care industry, for instance, as a means of accumulating surplus value and abating the effects that globalization has engendered. These issues, along with the existing demands for land, jobs and justice, were articulated by growing ranks of activists and political groups that also rehearsed various ways of confronting the sitting power. These demands arise from what Derrida termed in *Spectres of Marx* as “plagues of the new world order,” or the conditions of injustice that haunt the global neoliberal order (Derrida, 1994, p.100).

Marx’s spectres have inspired the Philippines’ communist struggles for decades but, in the early 1990s, they went through a bitter ideological schism that ended in a split, giving rise to several groups with various ideological tendencies. Although the issues appeared to be hermetic, arguably they were affected by the “end of ideologies” syndrome, which came with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 and the onset of globalization. At first glance, it appeared like a death knell to the Marxist ideals that many had died for during the Marcos years. However, the ideological split can be seen positively, in the light of what Derrida called the “second interpretation,” which is “putting into question again, in certain of its essential predicates, the very concept of the said ideal(s)” (Derrida, 1994, p.108). Indeed, some points raised by Derrida in *Spectres of Marx* speak to the Left in the Philippines, which tried to be faithful to a certain spirit of Marxism. Derrida calls for a Marxism without genealogical and ideological closure, one where “time is out of joint,” or always renewing itself, past dogmatism and adventurism, beyond the insularity of party politics, and toward a “new international” which attends to the “innumerable, singular sites of suffering” (Derrida, 1994, p.106-107). More than an organization, the new international is a “public” renewal of ties to a certain Marxism, whose spectres haunt the persistent demands for justice among subalterns in the Philippines. What is now apparent was the plurality of tactics and engagements that the

various groups from the Philippine Left had initiated against the succession of neoliberal regimes. Taken together, they have been active in putting arguments in the public sphere to solicit aporias and push democratic practices quite beyond the boundaries set by the neoliberal administrations. In keeping with Derrida, I believe that the crisis of the Philippine Left was a timely renewal and radicalization of a certain spirit of Marxism.

The presence of political groups with various demands and expressions of political agency has also brought some unpredictability to the public sphere in the Philippines. In neoliberal times, the public sphere was constructed around the historical demand for unfettered discourse, but it was also shaped by unbounded rationalizations of the market, in which technology plays a pivotal part. At the same time, this metaphorical realm attends to the contradictory tensions of unimpeded representation and exclusion. Capitalism, with its market values, shaped the interactions in the public sphere that, in turn, guaranteed the interlocution of democratic ideals for as long as market freedom is assured and the structures that support it are intact. In this sense, the terms of engagement in the public sphere can be seen as more like choices that an individual has to make within a limited range, and in a manner not unlike the cost-benefit one considers when buying a commodity. In the end, the person becomes atomized, less of a citizen but more of a consumer entrapped in web of commodification, a fate that Adorno so described as the net effect of instrumental rationality. Thus, the commitment to install democracy, in the aftermath of authoritarian rule, is denied its full extent insofar as deliberation in the public sphere offers little of what could pass as communicative democracy.

However an awareness of the gap between representation and inclusion gives rise to a radical way of understanding the reification of the public sphere in the time of neoliberalism. The lack of participation in the public sphere can be assessed in the many ways in which new

media technologies sustain or undermine this lack. In the Philippines, it is widely believed that the activist mode would prevail in the public sphere, given the political role once accorded to new media technologies in undermining the instrumental power of the Marcos regime. Thus, new media technologies were regarded as vehicles that can surmount the barriers to communicative democracy. For example, interfaces such as social networks, micro-blogging, citizen journalism, and the online communities guarantee some participation. Habermas, however, was cautious his assessment of this claim when he said: “Mediated political communication in the public sphere can facilitate deliberative legitimation processes in complex societies only if a self-regulating media system gains independence from its social environments, and if anonymous audiences grant feedback between an informed elite discourse and a responsive civil society” (Habermas, 2006, p.411). Simply put, new media technologies cannot sufficiently meet the criteria for full deliberation in the public sphere although they shaped issues and framed the terms of the debate (Habermas, 2006, p.415). This suggests that, for Habermas, the flow of information and instances of aesthetic representation are not equivalent to discursive communication. He also sets the bar higher for what could be construed as communicative democracy.

One could say that Habermas’s assessment is influenced by the thesis of the culture industry, but he is not alone in this. In *The Net Delusion*, Evgeny Morozov, similarly argues that placing hopes on new media technologies as catalyst of democracy is falling into the trap of “laissez-faire approach to democratization,” which is powerless against technology savvy despots, both enduring and resurgent (Morozov, 2011, p.ix). Jodi Dean provides a somewhat similar argument in her recent works that, for example, in *Blog Theory*, she reprised her notion of “communicative capitalism,” which is a “strange convergence of democracy and capitalism” in networked media (Dean, 2010, p.4). While the latter, according to Dean, have

instantiated some democratic values, they are primarily conduits of manipulative political messages and consumerist desires. Simply put, if the Internet is an information highway, it is not always paved with good economic and political intentions. Dean and Morozov's thoughts are redolent of earlier criticisms of the belief that new media technologies, on their own, can bring society to a more democratic future. Both critics argued that new media technologies do not always have the potential for freedom unless, for Morozov, there exist conditions that require it and, for Dean, unless the repetitive transmission of information, images and desires, from where networked technologies derived their power, is disrupted (Morozov, 2011, p.xvii; Dean, 2010, p.30-31). While Morozov and Dean's arguments would admit discord and the unforeseen in the deployment of new media technologies in the public sphere, Habermas framed interactions in the public sphere around intersubjectivity and rational consensus, even as it recognizes the hegemony, consumerism and individualism that take control of the public sphere and the lifeworld. For Habermas, intersubjective understanding is more important than the conditions or interfaces in which deliberation takes place. The norms of rational communication are more vital to the democratic organization of the public sphere than the mediation of information and the diffusion of viewpoints in the media (Habermas, 1998, p.362). And this is where the problem lies and what has set Habermas apart from cyber-democracy theorists.

Although new media technologies are expressive of resistive communicative rationality, they are not what Habermas has in mind. He places more importance on rational norms of interaction and the values of market and politics have to be subordinated to that logic. Habermas may have invested hope in the autonomy of individuals, but he overlooks the fact that if the circulation of public opinion is in accord with the unhampered flow of capital, the resulting consensus could be tied to the codes of domination. This condition leads to passivity

and apathy that typify the state of reification, which does not spare the lifeworld that supplies the interpretive elements of social interactions. Reification of the lifeworld, to recall Adorno's discussion of the concept, would mean that an individual is capable of knowing reality but only within what is determined by the institutions, behaviours and social relations that rule out other ways of viewing reality (Rose, 1978, p.48). Reification is also reproduced in new media technologies that shared the interpretive function of the lifeworld. This happens when they are endowed with the capacity to posit and transform reality, while other factors are seen as secondary. The same conditions apply to the public sphere, which is also built upon interchanges and social relationships. Adorno raised an important point in his assessment of a constrained public sphere; that instead of being a realm that demonstrates the political maturity of individuals in society, it becomes just another commodified entity (Adorno, 2005, p.283).

With Adorno's evaluation of the public sphere, a bleak picture of democracy emerges in the context of a neoliberal order. The liberal ideals of democracy, such as free speech and freedom of choice, are projected into technologies and meanings that have less to do with enhancing vertical solidarities and more to do with free-floating individual choices that are detached from the possibility of critical thinking. Put differently, freedom has been repositioned to reflect the logic of the market in which the culture industry is its major broker in the promotion of a consumer culture of pseudo-individualism (Johnson, 2006, p.8). Bauman, who recognizes the denigration of public sphere by the neoliberal order, calls for its defense. He argues for the preservation of agoras because they are "the sites in which *norms were created* – so that justice could be done, and apportioned *horizontally*, thus re-forging the conversationalists into a *community*, set apart and integrated by the shared criteria of evaluation" (Bauman, 1998, p.25, author's italics). Bauman's prognosis implicates the culture

industry: it requires no hard sell to accept the reign of the market as what this requires is simply the diffusion of representations that effectively communicate that there is no alternative (Johnson, 2006, p.9).

What the preceding discussion of the public sphere implies for Philippine democracy is that the neoliberal order, which embodies the strategy of control, has naturalized discourses, social relations, and representations. It points to the inadequacy of Habermas's ideas to sufficiently articulate injustices because of his fixation on popular will and consensus. This analysis can be demonstrated in the phenomenon of overseas labour, which, as a discourse, has been naturalized as an acceptable social choice – the only question being how it is best implemented. On one hand, there is a popular acceptance of this condition, while on the other, it cannot be easily reconciled as a free choice of individuals. In other words, labour migration, which is a social consensus dispersed in the public sphere, and absorbed in laws and social interactions, emanates from a flawed condition of will formation that could be seen as aggregate choice of reified individuals.

In *Spaces of Hope*, David Harvey revisits the concept of the spatio-temporal fix to explain how the mobilization of migrant labour alleviates the crisis-prone condition of late capitalism. The strategy of accumulation is not just about the search for cheap markets and labour in poor countries, like the Philippines; it also includes the use of affective migrant labour in industrialized countries. For Harvey, this demonstrates the how the compulsions of capitalism “pushed the limits of the working body” to “discrepant directions” (Harvey, 2000, p.103). Hence in the terrain of globalized capital, exploitation of this particular abstract labour does not only take place in countries where labour is cheap and capitalism's growth is uneven, it also happens in industrialized countries where affective labour power is a necessary variable

capital. Affective labour is labour power servicing the industry of care in affluent countries. Hardt and Negri's designation of affective labour as "labour in bodily mode," is relevant to the experience of Filipino migrant workers, the majority of them women, and also resonates with Harvey's theory of the unequal and uneven development of capitalism (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p.292-293; Harvey 2000). Drawing from the work of socialist feminist Donna Haraway, with her postulation of "the body as accumulation strategy," Harvey expands discussion of how the body, as a source of labour power, is shaped by exigencies of capitalism, in which the construction of race and gender are implicated (Harvey, 2000, p.106-109). In this case, his analysis of neoliberalism concerns not only the exploitation of labour power, but also the construction of the body from where the labour power emanates. This is all about how an individual's capacity for warmth and empathy is turned into a commodity, or a transmutation of affect, which is a private act, into "emotion work" (Hochschild, 1983, p.118).

Bodies, according to Harvey, are variable capital in the international division of labour that also regulates their circulation, discipline, and reproduction, both at home or sites of immigration (Harvey, 2000, p.108). Harvey argues that, under this set-up, capital's formula of circulation is Money-Commodity-Money (M-C-M), where labour power is inserted as a commodity in the circuit whose goal is accumulation of more money. However, I agree with postcolonial theorist San Juan who argues that the classic Marxist formula of simple commodity production of C-M-C (Commodity-Money-Commodity), to describe the appropriation of bodies for capitalism's expansion, is more appropriate. In this circuit, the commodity of labour power expresses exchange value, in order to generate the money-form that is subsequently converted into consumer goods (San Juan, 1999, p.223). Another way to apply this formula is seeing affective labour as a commodity that generates surplus value for the employers, who then convert the surplus to expand commodity production, or capital. In

both instances, the exchange value of labour power takes over, and the profit motive is presupposed in the exchange. For Harvey and San Juan, affective labour is at once valorized and devalued – simultaneously in demand but belittled for its skills. The migrant workers’ alienation can also be located culturally – in the conditions of their work, in uncongenial foreign culture, and when buying consumer goods, thus highlighting the role commodification plays in nurturing ties that are dependent upon the fulfillment of financial and communication obligations (Madianou and Miller, 2011, p.460). This condition also underscores the fact that individuals become consumers and reproducers of the self (by selling their labour power) at the same time. As it is also widely acknowledged that the money sent by the migrant workers, sustained not only their families but also the Philippine economy, thus, I argue that the appropriation of their wages is also the expropriation of their bodies. In this context, the intersection of sex, gender and race becomes an inscription of difference that matters within the terrain of the uneven growth of capital, in which bodies, as variable capital, are constituted simultaneously – racially and sexually. This difference traverses what Harvey identifies as two contradictory circulation processes – the first one is shaped by the historical movement of capital accumulation, and the second one is shaped by the current demand for production and reproduction of variable capital within a particular context (Harvey, 2000, p.109).

Women, subjected to technologically accelerated capitalism, are what Haraway termed “cyborgs,” to name the intersecting women’s experience and the agencies enacted. Cyborgs are at once bodies and machines, designed for pleasure and responsibility (Haraway, 1991, p.140). As the embodiment of organic and machinistic functions and desires, cyborgs concretize the aporias in the relationship of bodies to technologies, temporality, science and space. Haraway sees this relationship as a “matrix of complex domination” that cyborgs have to negotiate, redefine, and subvert in their daily lives, and in political terms (Haraway, 1991

p.181). In *A Cyborg Manifesto*, Haraway argues that globalization may have compelled labour power to be amenable to the contradictions of techno-capitalism, but this condition also solicits the possibility of its repudiation (Haraway, 1991, p.163). Even as she sees communication technologies as indispensable in maintaining relations of power, Haraway also notes that disrupting communication constitutes the biggest threat to power (Haraway, 1991, p.164). With cyborgs' interlocutions as sites of political action, Haraway is implying that resistance to machinations of the market lies in how new media technologies bring to the public sphere the articulation of cyborg desires.

It is through this implicit appeal for justice to labouring bodies that a public sphere becomes urgently transnational, or cosmopolitan, primarily as a response to conditions of subalternity of women migrant workers. Haraway appears to imply this when she wrote: "Cyborg gender is a local possibility taking a global vengeance" (Haraway, 1991, p.181). The public sphere cuts through borders, geographies and differences; its unconditional responsibility is to represent migrants' conditions and to redress injustices at home or beyond. Put differently, the public sphere is not a given; it is always prefigured by those denied representation, both in the formal and aesthetic sense. The public sphere and new media technologies, which are the means of articulation, are essential to how migrant workers constitute and act upon their identity. In other words, migrant workers' articulations require interlocutors who can respond to the specifics of their longstanding and immediate demands. I believe that this response requires a commitment to transformation that can find a fair hearing in a globalized public sphere, but which is located in their country of origin. An extended public sphere gives migrants the space for the articulation of rights that they cannot exercise because of the marginality of the situation they experience. There is no denying that they endured racism and discrimination, but their alienation appears greater because the logic of the market operates

everywhere: they cannot escape the compulsions of capitalism back home, hence the need for a transnational public sphere that connects them to political movements in their home country. Moreover, the global structures were represented locally, both by the ruling elite bourgeoisie and the state. It is not that the migrant workers cannot channel their struggles into the oppressions they endured in their host countries; rather, the organic and social ties embedded in their identities are still valid and provide a chance for them to seek redress for injustices that have to be articulated within some kind of a public sphere. In the section that follows, I will discuss the capacity of new media technologies to solicit the articulation of the bodily desires and needs of subalterns under the conditions of capitalist globalization.

6.3 The Spectral New Media Technologies and Global Networks

Technological orientalism, which was sketched in earlier colonial and postcolonial historical accounts as a patronizing narrative of the gains of new media technologies on some corners of the globe, is a racialized perspective. In an interconnected world, technological orientalism posits that the “other” is different, but nonetheless can be part of global networks in order to be seen, heard and known. In this sense, being an “other “ has nothing to do with marginalization or invisibility; rather an “other” is one who is online, linked and tagged in communities, blogs and interfaces where techno-surveillance is possible. In other words, the “other” is an “available other.” Identities are multiplied and formed around the networks of subcultures, defined by just anything “cool” or “likeable,” which are then bound up with commodified arrangements that electronically monitor consumer preferences online. The individuals’ use of a digital form or interface is primarily linked to how it can spur or maximize marketing transactions, given the length of time of exposure to advertising platforms online. This configuration of new media technologies in relation to global

capitalism alludes to what Fredric Jameson calls the “communicational concept of globalization,” a relationship that masks and transmits cultural or economic meanings” (Jameson, 2009, p.436). When the logic of market and new media technologies coalesce, to shape economic and social transactions, it gives rise to standardization of culture, imposed assimilation and massification of desires (Jameson, 2009, p.438).

It is worth examining the fact that, despite the ubiquity of mobile phones, high television viewership and a marked increase of Internet connections in the Philippines, consumption patterns and frivolous aesthetics have not fully advanced to the state anticipated by Jameson. Offhand, one can cite some obvious social factors like poverty, uneven development of the market, continued dominance of the culture industry and the peculiar use of new media technologies. However, such analyses, while valid, should be interrogated through the logic of new media technologies, to include the spectrality that was earlier presented as having the capacity to initiate fundamental shifts in the process of representation. In other words, new media technologies should be appraised in both their social and technological effects, a complementary analysis that would provide a cautious and, hopefully, thorough evaluation of their democratic potential.

There are some elements that showed how the uneven development under a neoliberal order supported exploitative and discriminatory representations in the Philippines. When neoliberal policies were embraced by the Philippines in the 1990s, under the aegis of the IMF, World Bank and the World Trade Organization, the country’s fiscal policies and banking system were revamped chiefly to stimulate growth, as if liquidity is the only reason for underdevelopment. The neoliberal policies have been criticized as having maintained impoverishment, especially in the rural areas where poverty stood at eighty percent, or about

half of the country's population (IFAD, 2011). Poverty is stark among peasants whose backward agriculture exposed them to food shortages, ill health, and ignorance. Feudal relations have been maintained to grow crops intended for export. The removal of subsidies, privatization of state assets, and flood of imports affected them the most. The incursions of capital in the countryside was superficial because it came merely seeking markets and buyers, and not to transform production. The succession of administrations, adhering to neoliberal agendas, have pointed out that the country's natural resources retain their competitive advantage in the world market. However, these resources – mining, fishing, and farming—are either marginal or so ecologically degraded that they can hardly provide employment or long-term livelihood. There is a huge pool of free labour in the country but due to lack of jobs, there is high emigration (IFAD, 2011). It is from the latter that rural household members derive their sustenance. The remittances mitigated the risks of subsistence agriculture, like natural disasters and perennially poor harvests so as to pay for education in a country where eighty percent of tertiary or university education is in private hands. But beyond survival, postcolonial critic San Juan sees the diaspora as a “process of metamorphosis occurring among marginalized, subjugated people,” where the migrant labourers, as “serfs of global bourgeoisie” (San Juan, 1999, p.xii). Migrant workers produce surplus value, for the employers and their countries, which used their remittances to pay the foreign debt, finance the privileges of those in power, and keep the consumption-driven domestic economy alive (San Juan, 1999, p.6-7).

New media technologies produce dissonances, disjunctions and aporias that shape the forms and consequences of the representations that they produced. While they are capable of raising the political awareness of subalterns, and of offering a chance for subversion of dominant discourses, new media technologies also reproduce the reactionary and self-serving narratives

of neoliberalism. Their effectiveness lies in the way they inscribe the logic of the market in the lifeworld. Moreover, the values that underlie the interfaces they have built include consumerism, escapism and apathy. Thus, the growth of new media technologies does not necessarily translate into the improvement of the representational possibilities in society; in fact, it brings forth a costly condition that Stiegler notes as the “systematic and unlimited access to market” (Stiegler, 2011, p.2-3).

Cyber theorists have credited new media technologies with constituting or keeping alive an idea of a nation that resonates with Benedict Anderson’s notion of an “imagined political community” (Anderson, 1983; Pentzold, 2010, p.705). Simply put, a nation’s sense of belonging is held together by new media technologies and not by the bonds sealed from physical encounters. Anderson’s theory is in accord with cyber theorists who argue that the anonymity afforded by the technologies is crucial in maintaining the idea of the nation (Pentzold, 2010, p.706). Stiegler, however, notes the underside of this kind of connectivity in the context of globalization. Anonymous or otherwise, the connections, according to Stiegler, demonstrate the “loss of individuation,” as a result of being cut-off from society; the individual becomes a “technical individual,” primed for manipulation and “user profiling” (Stiegler, 2011, p.4). Instead of the larger sense of an imagined nation, what emerges are “tribalized” ties as a result of this “hypersegmentation” that Stiegler sees as an “inescapable malaise” (Stiegler, 2011, p.4-5). He further argues that the “malaise that submerges the public sphere” experiences an epochal re-doubling that suspends the unity of space and time (Stiegler, 2011, p.6-7). Like Derrida, who sees a condition of possibility in technologies, Stiegler also states that the possibilities of re-doubling construct a “new psychic and collective individuation” (Stiegler, 2011, p.7). Hence, Stiegler’s idea of social malaise, which is a

generalized anguish, is not an end state because its reproducibility allows for the modification and differentiation based on concrete decisions and judgments (Stiegler, 2011, p.221-224).

Stiegler's proposition that political judgments should be rendered upon new media technologies requires more than reducing them to an instrumental specification. In other words, new media technologies are not about computers and social media, or machines and softwares. They are also processes that incorporate social relations, contestations and utopian desires. The chain of meanings that they transmit also set up innumerable points of modification and iteration in relation to what can be thought of in a particular space and time. In other words, while new media technologies operate within the uneven geographical development of capitalism, they also transcend that development through iteration that gives rise to paradoxes and reification, which suggests the shape of a democracy to-come. Derrida is interested in the solicitation of these aporias, which convey "contingency, errancy, spacing and alterity" (Ryan, 1982, p.77). In Derrida's sense, solicitation, which allows for incessant repetition, is a process that conjures up spectres of the subaltern. I have argued that specters are the effects of the process of articulation of permanent injustices within the network of particular national history. This process of iteration, inherent in the convention of new media technologies, has the capacity to disrupt binaries and ontological identities, and opens up the space for movements, groups, individuals, and the nation to reflect upon the contradictory tensions of unevenly developed global capitalism. Put another way, new media technologies exhibit spectrality in iteration, which allows for representations to be customized and contested, such that it would be impossible to posit sameness and unchangeability.

The workings of Derridean spectres can be understood in Lev Manovich's enumeration of the principles of new media (Manovich, 2001). The first three principles are numerical

representation, modularity and automation that involve the use of interfaces and algorithms to alter, enhance, animate and allow the interactivity of a representation (Manovich, 2001, p. 25-27). For instance, Manovich calls digitization, a process that assigns numerical value to a text, image or sound, a crucial process in making representation susceptible to transformation (Manovich, 2001, p.25-27). Variability, the fourth principle identified by Manovich, is even closer to the concept of Derridean spectres. Variability allows the creation of innumerable versions of the same representation, from elements that maybe related or agonistic (Manovich, 2001, p.35-40). For Manovich, variability grants new media technologies their emancipatory potential, as it allows users to decide on an ideology that is not preprogrammed nor in conformity with others. Finally, transcoding, the fifth and last principle, is the process of cultural reconceptualization or the application of the logic of technicization to society (Manovich, 2001, p.47). Manovich's new media principles underscore iteration as central to social change. Iteration is premised on the fact that digitization takes into account the interaction of numerical data with the symbolic, and their repetition inaugurates new ways of transmitting and reproducing meanings (Manovich, 2001, p.41).

I need to briefly clarify the ways of spectres and to give a theoretical account of the particular reading I have offered of Derrida's concept of spectrality. I argued that the convention of new media technologies, which brings spectre-like effects, holds a promise of change in the particular form of networked society that the Philippines has come to be. The starting point in the analysis is the recognition of unevenness and differentiation arising from how capitalism expands in a particular space, time and history. What I proposed was a notion of change as "return," a concept taken from Derrida's idea of representation as iteration, after acknowledging that representation also brings reification, enforced equivalence, spectacle,

and simulacra. Spectres cannot guarantee anything but they can have a redemptive capacity, if so recognized.

Iteration prepares the ground from which transformation becomes feasible because it allows individuals to recognize the difference, reification, and ambiguity arising from representation. Repetition is a form of sensing meaning; it does not privilege universalism and equivalence but favours variance and multiplicity. Repetition, in this period, means technical simulation, digitization, and virtualization that have enormous consequences for representation and its meanings. Iteration presupposes a particular condition for interpretation; or that the political and epistemological potentials of a representation are derived from a particular historical situation – that can be accessed in the present from the period or time that preceded it. In other words, it is a representation that defies effacement, a spectre that returns to haunt the present. Derrida sees spectres as capable of soliciting changes that transform absolute truths, finality, naturalization, and the uniformity of experience. However alterity, or differentiation, is not the only outcome possible. Derrida connects the spectre to the demands of justice; its dual effect is to introduce hope when there is none, and guide change toward a redress of injustice (Beardsworth, 1997). This turn toward justice is what Derrida calls messianicity, an awareness that the condition of reification is also a space of renewal (Derrida, 1994, p.212). Spectres cannot guarantee anything anymore than new media technologies *can* eliminate the deficits of the present democracy. But together they can open up a space for rethinking and action. New media technologies can be the sites for constructing solidarities among groups, or symbolic communities, to constitute identities and take collective action.

Conclusion

Under neoliberalism new media technologies in the Philippines manifest the social growth of communication technologies, including the culture industry, that have to keep up with the latest technologies for production, transmission and distribution, as well as the status demand of the social milieu that they are in. The effects of new media technologies are noticeable by the way in which they undermined conventional images and texts. Mentioned earlier were the mobile phones that instantiated the neoliberalist values – mobile, personal, and handy -- the values not exclusive to a technological process but to social processes as well. Mobile phones are not just gadgets of communication; they are mechanisms of representations, with the possibility of reaching understanding with others. In terms of communication, that is, the exchange of short, typed messages, mobile phones enable technologically-mediated writing, unencumbered by space and time. However, the “texts” also embody traces of earlier contexts of communication – time and space that include history, power, social relations and elements of the lifeworld, or the processes and forms of expressions and thoughts that can be taken as having the conditions of writing, which Derrida calls “archewriting.” While there seems to be an element of choice afforded by the mobile phones, the choice is not insulated from the imperatives that impinge on meanings and actions. And yet this communication, constrained by the logics of postcolonial and neoliberal operations of capital, may yield spaces in which alternatives can emerge. This means that difference and multiplicity are presupposed in the interchanges that, even if suppressed, exist in reserve, waiting to be summoned.

Mobility, as the defining feature of communication, continues to evolve in the meaning and technological capability of mobile phones. The latter have come a long way from when they were credited as having played a role in removing a president in the Philippines. While technological evolution also occurred in other new media technologies, mobile phones are

distinct because they are, to use Heidegger's neologism, "ready-to-hand." It is "a little device with an enormous impact" (Levinson, 2004, p.xiii). Rather than the computer, mobile phones are even regarded as the "epitome of the information age" (Myerson, 2001, p.51). Subsequent new media technologies are designed around, integrated, and presented with mobile phones. What the concept of 'being mobile' holds for the Philippines is in seeing its potential as harbinger of new patterns of representation and action. These two possibilities can enhance a form of political autonomy that defies hegemonic channels of communication. What can be imagined are spontaneous, versatile, jocular, and subversive actions that, if collectively performed, may actually modify power relations in society.

CONCLUSION

THE POLITICS OF SPECTRES

After having conjured spectres in the narrative of new media technologies in the Philippines, from the colonial times to the present, it is time to look forward to what they promise for the future. And yet, as Derrida reminded us, there is no way of telling what spectres can do, and there is no political programme or agenda that could set the terms or limits to what they could give rise to. After all, one can never predict the irrepressible effects of new media technologies, even if these are reduced to the barest of their states – such as photons and neurons, from where light particles and human impulses originated. Spectres are everywhere, in gestures that could be taken as conditions of spectrality, which necessarily include almost all human expressions and thought. Spectres are also technological constructs emanating from new media technologies. They are omnipresent, and Derrida was right in saying that the future belongs to them, belongs to ghosts. The underlying question that orients my concluding remarks, therefore, is: to what extent might we embrace spectres, which is a form of political intervention that is based on radical openness and uncertainties? In other words, should we entrust our political futures to the ephemerality of spectres?

Spectres are figurative devices that shaped my account of the political transformation of the Philippines; they are also the key to understanding its postcolonial condition. The narrative, which was presented in historical stages, has grounded deconstruction in a particular postcolonial society, with its various political configurations and spectral affects. Spectres constitute a framework for understanding the politics of new media technologies, whose effects manifest simultaneously in material and transcendental realms. These effects are

conditions of possibility, and their power lies in their iterability and messianicity. Iteration provides a chance for representation to redouble illimitably, in a manner that destabilizes the hegemonic form of “the real.” When dealing with postcolonial aporias – modernization, rhetoric of nationalism, and so forth – spectres express a larger implication than their material constitution and discursive capacity can offer, like when they unsettle existing contexts and dominant meanings. The messianic gesture of spectres is evident in the way they prefigure the future, as the time when injustices and other asymmetries can be redressed. Spectres also presage a transformation that is open-ended, differentiated, and deferred. They embody Derrida’s articulation of democracy to come, which simultaneously names the impossibility of realizing democracy, and the ethical responsibility of striving toward it as the horizon of human freedom.

Spectres prefigure a public sphere when the latter is absent or effaced by institutional and discursive controls. By inducing an absent or repressed representation, spectres open up society to the task of installing a public sphere that indexes a commitment to democracy. In the Philippines, especially during colonial times and in the years of authoritarian rule, spectres sustained the democratic role of the public sphere by providing the conditions in which effaced and recalcitrant voices can be heard. The same function is possible whenever a public sphere exists, or at least when it is allowed to exist in less repressive times. In every figuration of the public sphere, spectres disrupt the existing arrangements to open the way to an interlocution that is not primarily concerned with communicative action, but which attends to its neglected and suppressed elements. It is best then for a public sphere to be served by a range of representations and discursive frameworks, however discordant these may be. If agonistic representation were allowed to confront the asymmetries of power that bind them,

perhaps new representations and imaginaries would set in, and real democracy, which concerns subalterns, could take place.

Spectres offer a more radical politics as they operate on the premise that concepts and categories in history are not absolute truths because they can be undermined and reconfigured. While the same is possible through a Marxist dialectical analysis, there is a possibility that a dominant category represents a preservation of binaries. Thus, a synthesis allows a certain complicity with domination, given that it is a condition built upon dialectical structures salvaged from the past. On the other hand, Adorno's negative dialectic maintains that the subordinate category offers the key to end the domination within a binary. However, a resolution does not eliminate the categories but preserves them, provided that a reified relationship is done away with. In other words, both dialectics retain the traces of a totalizing universalism that, when applied to the question of technology, posits that truth and closure are possible once, for Marx, the material conditions for technological domination are terminated and, for Adorno, when the thought process that sustains technological rationality is abolished. This is not to dismiss their insights; rather, I believe that given the dialectics' adherence to universality, there is a danger that the chance of emancipation is also undermined because the categories somehow remained linked to each other, so that unity becomes authority by itself. On the other hand, Derrida's spectres, which reveal the workings of deconstruction, articulate diversity and difference to expose the reified pairing and the structures that maintain hegemonic binaries.

This study is aligned with postcolonial studies as shown by its intent and the issues it raised. The historical account that framed my discussion on new media technologies was oriented toward the interrogation of the aporias of postcolonial studies. The narrative seeks to prove

that displacing the postcolonial method of textual analysis supplies the prospects for a postcolonial theorizing that I have developed in relation to the era of networked technologies. My account of new media technologies in condition of postcoloniality provided the ground for the analysis of their iterability. By intersecting with postcolonial studies, the term “new media technologies” confronts its renewability in history, making it as relevant a terminological construction in the past as it is in the present. My aim was not to ratify the term “new media technologies”; but rather to render it free from the delusions that its suppositions imply, such as technological orientalism and technological messianism, which both designate the deterministic and encompassing perspectives of representational technologies. While these views are a throwback to colonial era, they persisted into modern times, where speed and ubiquity of representation predominate. These reified views produce aporias, dissonances, and injustices within an uneven development, shaped by the logic of capitalism and neoliberal ideology that sustains it, as the case of the Philippines has shown. However, given the level of technicization, the effects of spectres also grew in intensity and variability. Spectres inflect politics in general, and representation in particular, and iteration have made it possible for technological orientalism and technological messianism to be undermined by their own claims. As spectres return with intensity, the haunting requires new responses and political intervention.

In societies where control and injustices are the norm, spectres are the hope for democracy as they open up innumerable political resources for those who have little or no access to power. This hope is essentially the faith in the messianicity of spectres, or the latter's capacity to prefigure a humane future. While this vision of a future appears impossible to be realized, the groundwork has been laid out in the present, as shown by forms of representations and the struggles of subalterns in the Philippines throughout history. It is not that these political

interventions are singularly attributed to the effects of new media technologies; rather these actions are unimaginable without the presence of new media technologies that have made it possible to foreshadow a future that could be worked out in the present. How this future becomes possible in other contexts, in another time, depends on how a society considers political events (this could be anything) as presaging a future, that despite the uncertainties, they still are worth a wager. Thus, to return to the question of embracing spectres, it remains an aporia that requires enactable political judgments.

If this work sounds more of an awkward rumination about a particular postcolonial condition, and less of a provocation as intended, it is because spectres remained the ungraspable phantoms of our political life. And yet, they have kept alive the hope for change. I believe that it is only by keenly engaging with new media technologies and being watchful of their effects that hope, in times when none is present, can be teased out. Spectres, to emphasize their metaphorical sense, are traces and a mirage, fleeting and ephemeral, something which can be everything and simultaneously an “other.” They are ungraspable because they slipped through our fingers, and yet they never slip away from us.

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