HISTORY AND HISTRIONICS: VISION MACHINE'S DIGITAL POETICS

Michael Uwemedimo

Forgetting to Remember

> One thing still upsetting me, however, is that no one kept proper records of meetings or decisions. This led to my failure to recollect whether I approved an arms shipment before or after the fact. I did approve it; I just can't say specifically when.
>
> Ronald Reagan, Iran-Contra scandal admission[1]
>
> I have found it so difficult to believe what people told me of what happened under the Khmer Rouge regime, but today I am very clear that there was genocide... It was so unjust for those people. My mind is still confused.
>
> Khieu Samphan, former Khmer Rouge leader[2]

> The plaintiff complains that he has been fooled about the existence of gas chambers, fooled that is, about the so-called Final Solution. His argument is: in order for a place to be identified as a gas chamber, the only eyewitness I will accept would be a victim of this gas chamber; now…there is no victim that is not dead…There is, therefore, no gas chamber.
>
> Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend*[3]
>
> The Indonesian army did not kill anybody…I've never heard of the civilian death squads.
>
> Kemal Idris, Indonesian Army General who oversaw the extermination of the PKI[4]

Toward the end of his life, Ronald Reagan could remember nothing. The holes in his memory into which slipped illegal arms shipments and much else besides, had opened alarmingly. His memory was all hole from whose horizon no fact, figure, or image could escape. It was not so much that he had forgotten, it was that he could not remember.

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

Both these examples of troubled recollection were staged within the purview of a judicial and forensic apparatus that affirmed the reality of an historical event whose details called for determination. Plainly put, in both these cases there had been at least an admission that *something* had happened—something criminal, something terrible, something whose details needed to be remembered. Much harder is a process of remembrance where no such apparatus exists; where no event is admitted to have passed.

These notes sketch out a practice whose aim is to seek a media form that might adequately address a history that refuses to recollect its systematic violence within a judicial, ethical, or forensic frame. A form which nonetheless conjures and casts the spectral threat of that violence. We propose an intervention and investigation into history *as* terror, specifically the history of the 1965_66 Indonesian massacres. This essay outlines the practice of mediated history. It reflects upon the implication of the digital in its methods and processes, suggesting ways that a hitherto untheorized "digital poetics" may inform the notion of history on which the practice is predicated, and the mode of historiography through which it proceeds.

Martyrs and Memory

On the night of September 30th 1965, six of Indonesia's top army generals were abducted and murdered in an abortive coup attempt. Who was ultimately behind this operation, and their final objectives remains unclear.[5] In a response that

appears to have been remarkably well rehearsed, General Suharto seized control of the armed forces and instigated a series of nationwide purges to consolidate his power. The CIA provided radio equipment and arms, the MI6 provided black propaganda, the U.S. military provided training and cash, the U.S. State Department provided death lists, and the Agency for International Development provided support for "youth groups" that were groomed to become death squads.[6] With this assistance, General Suharto engineered and set in motion a killing machine whose chain of command reached into every region and every village, murdering alleged communists, trade unionists, organized peasants, members of the women's movement, and anybody else the army considered a threat. The campaign was deliberately organized so as to implicate the "masses": much of the killing, though under the supervision of the army, was actually carried out by paramilitary branches of political groups in competition with the Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia, or PKI) and affiliated groups. As pro-Suharto, U.S. diplomat Paul F. Gardner observes, "[Surharto] did not wish to involve the army directly…he preferred instead [quoting Surharto], 'to assist the people to protect themselves and to cleanse their individual areas of this evil seed.'"[7]

The massacres that swept the archipelago in the months after October, 1965, were one of the most savage and systematic genocides of the twentieth century. Western governments, covertly and deeply involved, made no official

protest and little public mention of the slaughter, save the odd encouraging message of support.[8] The Western press was equally mute. Since then, the events have been all but erased from official histories; no national or international juridical process has been launched. No trials, no memorials, no days of public mourning for the victims of the massacres. While martyrs were made of the seven murdered generals, their memorialization served at once to justify and mask the memory of the massacres. Tales of ritualistic savagery inflicted on the murdered generals were circulated widely. These tales of savagery served to conjure an overwhelming and spectral threat facing the nation—the "evil seed" as Suharto called it. In the face of this threat, the massacres were not murders, they were at once justice, self defence, and victory. In any case: "The Indonesian army did not kill anybody."

A History of Holes: The Crocodile Hole

> *Lubang Buaya* (Crocodile Hole) was the name for the area, within the Halim Perdanakusumah Air Force Base Perimeter [Jakarta], where the bodies of the assassinated generals were disposed of (dumped down a disused well). In 1965_66 a successful psychological warfare campaign was launched by the army to persuade anti-communist notables and political leaders that the PKI had secretly prepared thousands of comparable "holes" for their burial after execution.

Benedict Anderson[9]

This psychological warfare campaign was part of a systematic extermination program in which anywhere between 100,000 and 2,000,000 people were murdered.[10] These figures are impossible: on the one hand, they are radically deflated and kept from circulation so as to shield the operation from the condemnation of the international community of conscience. On the other hand, higher figures, even inflated figures, are deliberately allowed to circulate threateningly.[11] Such divergent estimates render attempts to count the dead, to recount their history, and to hold to account the murderers, fraught with terrible uncertainty. That is to say, the trail of noughts in these tallies are more precisely ciphers in that they mark both mass graves and empty graves—graves waiting to be filled. They are threatening placeholders, as were the rumoured "crocodile holes" that supposedly awaited the anti-communist notables and political leaders.

A history of the massacres would be a string of such holes and the ciphers in the tallies of the dead form an abysmal archipelago, a network of absences and silences haunted by whispers, and by a sometimes spectral, sometimes spectacular, violence. This history itself does not seek merely to deny or hide its violence, but to allow it to circulate as a haunting force that suddenly from time to time, flares up in an awesome display of violence.[12]

Snake River

At the National Security Archive in Washington D.C. there is an anonymous and untitled folio of notes recording some of what little is publicly known of the 1965_66 Indonesian genocide. A Sumatran massacre of 10,500 people is recorded in a typical entry as follows:

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

The Sungai Ular, or Snake River, is distinguished only by its size and relatively swift flow. It was for this reason that it was chosen as an execution site—unlike slower smaller rivers, the Sungai Ular could be relied upon to carry the dead out to sea.[13] Before the river meets the sea, it passes under the trans-Sumatran highway at Perbaungan about thirty miles southeast of Medan, north of Sumatra's capital city. Within sight of a bridge where the highway spans the river is one of the clearings in the plantation belt where the Sungai Ular was loaded with its nightly freight of bodies.

For the past three years Vision Machine, a collective of filmmakers, theorists and activists, has been working collaboratively in this region with a community of Indonesian ex-political prisoners, former bonded plantation

workers, and union activists all based in North Sumatra. In various *infiltrative* modes, they are working with political, military and paramilitary groups in the same region. The work of the collective is comprised of research into and performance of this impossible history.

History and Histrionics: An Archaeological Performance

To excavate the history of the massacres, Vision Machine has developed a research and production method that is perhaps best thought of as an archaeological performance. Between a buried historical event, and its re-staging with historical actors, this method opens a process of simultaneous *historical excavation* (working down through strata), and *histrionic reconstruction* (adding layers of stylized performance and recounting).

An archaeological performance entails successively working with, and working through, the gestures, routines, and rituals that were the motor of the massacres. The successive performances aim both to tap an embodied memory of singular gestures and to reveal the body's singular movements as moments of the minutely geared motions of a killing machine that mobilized well-rehearsed ideological roles.[14] The method seeks to reveal what was at once singular, and scripted, and to do so by *going through the motions* of historical events to develop a densely layered artifact. Here each layer is at once rehearsal and performance, reenactment and response. This method, which typically moves from interview via narration and re-narration through increasingly elaborate re-stagings, relies in

large part on digital media as the relay channel between different participants, or the same participants at different stages of the process. Let me turn to one series of reconstructions and encounters.

There is a chilling scene in *The Globalization Tapes* (2003), a video that Vision Machine co-produced in Indonesia, in which a small girl, Intan Sinaga, looks on bored at her grandfather, Sharman Sinaga. A former *Komando Aksi* executioner and hired thug of the plantation management, Sharman Sinaga stands up during an interview to demonstrate for the camera how he killed a local SARBUPRI leader considered *kebal* or "invincible"—he couldn't be killed with knives.[15] He held him upside down in a flooded field. He mimics the gargles his victim made as he choked in the mud.

This brutal and direct account is the first layer in the archaeological performance. It is for the most part a conventional interview. However, even here, Sharman is encouraged not merely to *tell* but to *show*. The interview moves already beyond recounting toward reenactment. It seeks out what might be lodged in embodied memory and asks questions of the position of the body in the motions of history. The interview is neither relegated to a merely informational source, nor are its words privileged as a source of truth or of untruth from which truth is somehow extracted. Rather, it is one layer in a densely layered series of performances.

As a result of the interview's disclosures, Vision Machine invited Sharman Sinaga to reconstruct his nightly routine on the banks of the Sungai Ular, where he dispatched perhaps many hundreds of people. The words and gestures of his interview continue to haunt this scene. This reenactment is the second histrionic layer, a layer constituted by a field of action that directly overlays the site of the historical event. His demonstration veers between chilling pantomime and forensic reconstruction. On the one hand, he details most precisely the modes and methods of decapitation, illustrates angles of approach and attack, explains the organizational and operational structure of the killing machine. On the other hand, as he plays to the camera, staging himself for an imagined movie audience, the rehearsal of recursive motions breaks into a performance of disturbing improvisational flourish. He elaborates kung-fu movie-style sequences, displays his own ferocious machismo at the same time as he speaks the script of the purity of the heroic national struggle against "atheist communism." His projected self-image is clearly inflected by the imagery of genre (he imagines himself a "kung-fu movie star"). Equally apparent is that this self-image is projected and refracted through a symbolic universe of ideological tropes, those of the "heroic and pure national struggle." Yet there are gestures that appear to break out by reflex, that appear to motion from a still vivid and singular scene. There is a tension here between remembrance (an attempt to recall an event in its singularity), and performance (the acting out of a role and speaking of a script that is generic). His

performance, then, begs questions not just of what happened at Snake River, but also of the relationship between trauma, memory, history and the politics of genre. This method begins to suggest the ways in which what happened was itself already staged and scripted, the ways in which the massacre mobilized well-rehearsed ideological roles and relations, and the ways in which genre inflects the memories and imaginaries of those who were its historical actors.

Sharman's performance constitutes a layer whose contours are defined at once from underneath, as it were, by the now-buried events that passed this site, as well as by downward pressures from the sedimented layers of historical revision that have buried them there. His words and reenactment stretch a spectral screen between these strata. So staged, Sharman's performance becomes a kind of ghosting, or shadow play—it both accentuates the terrible absence of the victims, and conjures their spectres. Soon after this shoot, footage of Sharman Sinaga demonstrating what happened at the Sungai Ular is screened back to Sharman for him to narrate. This re-narration is the third stage of the process. The footage is transformed from a chronicle of events at the riverside clearing into a *reflexive* document of how Sinaga sees himself, and how he would like to be seen by others. It becomes his own reflection on his own representation of himself as hero to the audience. From this staging emerges a complex artifact that gestures not only to the past but to the operations that continue to bury the past. This process of layered performance and response simultaneously reiterates the irrecoverability

of the historical real, and resists its erasure. This material is then taken to survivors of the massacre and families of their victims. The content is described to them, and they are invited to review it.

During the screenings of this material they are asked to voice their responses. The material is then rescreened, and another layer of response and re-narration is added. Each screening and each response is a mnemonic trigger, spawning further narrations and re-narrations, stories and stories about the stories, memories and memories of the process of remembrance, constructing in real time a crystalline constellation of voices that speak of the relationships between history and trauma, recounting and remembering.

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

Recording their responses to the contemporary performance of a history of terror, a history that has itself been terrorized, allows them to speak and to speak

into their own history. It is a form of memorialization, mourning, and a moment of healing. Perhaps it is a first step towards justice in a context where no effective judicial framework has been established, or is likely to be established soon.

Yet another histrionic layer is added as this footage—reenactment overlaid by re-narration and response—is used as source material for a performance by the local Ludruk troupe, a Javanese improvisational popular village theatre. Ludruk incorporates dance-like martial movements from a system of indigenous self-defence, *Pencak Silat*, and borrows promiscuously from a host of sources, high and low. Decidedly carnivalesque, its subversive mocking of established orders has at times been met with severe official response. Durasim, widely considered one of the form's greatest talents, was tortured to death by the Japanese military administration in the early forties.[16]

The scenes, based on the layered film material, are performed in the village, to an audience that includes Sharman Sinaga and those he once terrorized on the London-Sumatra plantation. This show and its reception are also filmed, performance and response together becoming another stage, another layer. Whereas the staging of Sinaga's performance invites a consideration of the connections between history, memory, trauma and the politics of genre through a performative investigation of the ways in which the televisual and cinematic imaginary has shaped historical imagination, this staging suggests the subversive and therapeutic possibilities offered by popular genre forms in the recovery,

recounting, and working through of traumatic memories and histories that are otherwise repressed or suppressed. Again, the possibilities of "going through the motions" are not only moments of historical recovery, but of imaginative transformation. If Sharman Sinaga demonstrates one mode of revisionism, then the Ludruk appropriation of his performance instances another form of historical revisioning. These experiments with genre are one passage, one path toward transformation, to becoming other. Here lies the redemptive potential of the method. The aim is to both *reveal* and *resist* what the method makes manifest, to imagine oneself as other in the act of remembering, to make one's history one's own at the moment of transforming the self.

This process of becoming other while going through the motions was dramatically illustrated by the sudden possession of one of the Ludruk players by the spirit of William Colby, one-time director of the CIA and architect of the Phoenix civilian extermination program in Vietnam. Here, a spectral figure that haunts the history of the region is suddenly given body and voice; a figure that lurked in the wings literarily steps onto the stage. I will return to William Colby shortly.

The aim of Vision Machine's project is not merely to re-stage the performance of terror. It is not a history in the realist register. It does not speak in order to refer, rather it is rehearsed in order to exercise a power. It is a history in the *performative register*. Vision Machine re-stages history in order to intervene

in its ceaseless rehearsals in schools, on national television, on days of official memorial. The aim is, in the first instance, to perform it in such a way that the operations of its obscenity can be grasped. This is carried out so that the spectres it produces can enter the scene, be addressed, acknowledged, contended with. That is to say, the project re-stages the performance of this history to gain an insight into its singular and generic operations, at once spectacular and spectral. This is a history which continues to be performed as an instrument of terror. Shifting between memory and imagination, documentary reenactment and genre re-staging, the great potential of this project is in making these insights available to a political and historical imagination that can draw the process of national- and self-imagining out from under the shadow and sway of catastrophe.

Digital Palimpsest: Supplementary Layering

Digital technology is key to the process of political and historical re-imagining, and to a method of archaeological performance. This can be neatly illustrated by an emblematic experiment with the re-narration of an archival film of William Colby. Images of the former CIA Director giving a speech on the progress of the pacification of South Vietnam are taken from the National Archive in Washington, D.C. The sound remains classified, and so Vision Machine employs a deaf man—a lip reader—to read Colby's lips. It is not easy because the footage is blurry and the lip reader requires eight passes to produce even a fragmentary picture of what Colby is saying. With each pass, the lip reader picks out more and

more phrases like "from time to time," "isolating the population," and "sportsmanship." The words from each pass are layered over the others, each at the same relative point of utterance. This results in a thick and strangely contoured voice track—some moments become dense with the same words or phrases, a crowd of echoes seeming to issue from Colby's mouth. At other moments, different words are read from the same mouthing, the syllables of each interfering with those of the others to produce a perverse double (or triple) speak. Some words are picked up on one pass and not another. William Colby is saying different things at the same time; but, of course, he is saying nothing. The silence beneath the re-narration is telling. It speaks at once of the uncertainty of historical knowledge, and of the deliberate attempt to erase it. In place of an account of the murders, and in place of the voices of the murdered, we have footage of a small spectacled man in a suit mouthing banalities in silence. Whereas in the Ludruk performance the spirit of Colby possessed the performer, here we possess Colby. We speak as Colby, we give him a voice. As he mimes, he is mimicked, both mocked and mined for what he withholds. Some historical knowledge is yielded, something more is made known of the regional policy that he was instrumental in shaping and administering. More tellingly, the banal administration of tremendous power and violence is made to speak through his silence, and the official history that he authored is given another voice that speaks out against it. It becomes the material of an historical imagination it would want to destroy.

This process is a form of archaeological performance. The historical fragments that are recovered are artifacts of the present. The speech of the past reaches us only as a contemporary performance.[17] Each stage of the interpretation exerts pressure on the preceding and subsequent stage yet remains, in itself, distinct. With analogue technology, this process would be all but impossible. Unless one had dozens of small, portable tape recorders for recording and playing back successive narrations, the best one could do is replace one of two sound tracks on a videotape, or else use a mixer to blend the narrations which couldn't be unmixed. Thus, digital technology makes possible a method wherein each new layer is an addition or a supplement, rather than something that erases earlier versions. In a project on historical remembrance and excavation *in situ*, this is essential.[18] A digital palimpsest is fashioned where overwriting does not entail writing out. Each layer interacts with and refracts the others, yet its singular features remain intact. Layering, of course, is built into the architecture of the editing software.

Digitally layered artifacts pervade contemporary media space. The process can be heard in any pop song where voices are filled out, in multiscreen news that CNN initiated, or in the multiple facets and sound features of DVDs. For Vision Machine the tools of digital post production offer an ideal figure and metaphor. The material infrastructure informs our conceptual framework and a working methodology of successive reenactment, circling the same gesture, the same

scene, the same event, asking participants to repeat and rehearse, and then relaying these rehearsals to different participants, projecting them onto each other and into different generic contexts. Importantly, this process of digital layering allows the figuring of a particular construction of spectrality. This in turn informs the quotidian field in which the digital project unfolds. The history which the project addresses is quite literally haunted. That is to say, it produces and is populated by ghosts.

The production process must include both the community of spirits and the fraternity of metaphors. Indeed the video itself has conjured spectres, precipitated possessions. The domain of ghosts is parallel to, and distinct from, the world of the living. Yet it occupies *the same space*. This spectral realm is not so much contiguous with the corporeal world, as it is *coextensive* with it.

Contrast the *digital* process of *layering* to the *analogue* process of *montage*. Let us take for example Marcel Ophuls' film *The Sorrow and the Pity* (1972) which is essentially a montage of testimonies. Memory, and the resistance to remembering, speak through testimony. It is montage, however, that re-members, puts together fragments of testimony, articulates memory into historical chapters. This conception of re-membering history is predicated on the possibility of recovering and articulating a coherent and original historical event and truth. This articulation proceeds by way of a subtle cross-examination, whereby one account is held up to the next, inconsistencies exposed, denials made to betray

themselves, confessions teased out. Even if in *The Sorrow and the Pity* each account that abuts the next in some sense betrays the other as "untrue," the elements are nonetheless the lies from which emerges the truth. A truth against which the lies can be judged even if it can be arrived at only *via* these lies. The instrument of this cross-examination is montage. The hinge of the edit is the pivot of the scales that weigh one account against the other, and the totality of accounts against a notion of justice, truth and authenticity. Much is in the *balance*. Thus, Ophuls uses montage to deliver justice from history.

Indonesia's relationship to the massacres of 1965_66 remains beyond the frame of judicial scrutiny, and much of the evidence that might supply a coherent account has been destroyed. Here the judicial figure cannot be drawn on and history has been rendered incoherent by a still present terror; collecting the fragments and gluing them together will not produce a coherent whole.

Freud's figure of the "eternal city" is appropriate here. The image of contemporary Rome superimposed on the sedimented ruins of ever more ancient settlements served Freud as a spatial metaphor for the psyche. Freud found the analogy ultimately unsatisfactory, however. The architectural figure points to the physical impossibility of two objects occupying the same space (one building can be built only on the ruins of another), while in the psyche this coextensivity is achieved. A spectral coextensivity structures the field of social relations the film

involves, and digital layering allows working methods, and produces works, structured by the possibilities of a congruent spectral coextensivity.

In his "Theses for a Philosophy of History," Walter Benjamin provides another figure through which to imagine this difference between a process of chronicling structured by syntagmatic contiguity, and a historiography that works through successive layering:

> Where we perceive a chain of events, he [the angel] sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward.

Rather than a chain of events, we have layer after layer of wreckage. It is down through these layers, paradoxically by a working up, that the archaeological performance proceeds. Working with digitized elements allows for this simultaneous working down and working up.

These figures tentatively suggest a critical difference between an analogue process of montage and a digital process of layering. They point to why the

formal and technological approach of layering—a digital poetics—is appropriate to the historical site and historiographic approach of the film project.

Shared Time

Driven by an economy of enthusiasm and commitment rather than cash, an important, if obvious, point to make about digital technology is economic: it is a relatively cheap technology.[19] The low cost of digital video equipment has been a decisive factor in the evolution not only of Vision Machine's practice, but that of innumerable activist and community video projects. Digital technology has been a means of exploring not only media forms, but media forums. From production through to exhibition, from simply being able to distribute tapes, disks and cameras to developing online collaborative editing environments, distribution channels, and satellite links, the digital has opened new ways of generating webs of stories and networked solidarities. Working with relatively localized communities (for instance, palm plantation workers in North Sumatra or ex-child-soldiers from El Salvador in Los Angeles), Vision Machine aims to give voice and vision to the singular stories of these communities. Coming together to make a medium of creative reflection, the collectives that Vision Machine works with swap footage and experiences, share tactics of resistance, create intercontinental chain stories, to fashion dense multi-layered works. In effect, these collectives produce a *narrative geography*.

To underpin the network of collaborators, we are developing a network of

social technology. In time, we hope to develop a global Internet-based video-on-demand and streaming system. Collaborating collectives will upload, download and recut each others' footage as well as contextualize their work with writing, activist and cultural links, and other documentation. In London, England, the network exploits the local East End free wireless network. In more remote locations, we hope to use satellite broadband as well as other available community broadcast infrastructures.

It has long been the dream of activist and avant-garde artists to create robust alternative distribution and exhibition circuits. Indeed, many exist. What digital technology offers practices such as ours are tactical opportunities to exploit a massively expensive global infrastructure. One of the perennial promises of the Internet has been the possibility to radically transform the relation between moments of production, distribution, and exhibition. In ways that we hope will go well beyond the experiments of the twentieth century avant-garde, this is a promise that Vision Machine hopes to fulfill.

Notes

1. From a speech broadcast on PBS, March 4, 1987.

2. Seth Mydans, "A Top Khmer Rouge Leader, Going Public, Pleads Ignorance," *The New York Times*, January 3, 2004.

3. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

4. From a filmed interview with Vision Machine, July 21, 2004.

5. See especially Benedict Anderson, "Petrus Dadi Ratu," *New Left Review* 3 (May_June 2000): 9.

6. For excellent background on the United States' role, see Peter Dale Scott, "The United States and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965_1967" in *Pacific Affairs* 58 (Summer 1985): 239_64. For the CIA, State Department, and U.S. Defense Department's roles, see especially *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964_1968*, vol. 26, documents 142_205 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office). Regarding death lists, see document 185, along with the research of journalist Kathy Kadane.

7. Paul F. Gardner, *Shared Hopes, Separate Fears: Fifty Years of U.S.-Indonesian Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 229.

8. See Scott, and also John Pilger's film, *The New Rulers of the World* (2001). See also Jeffrey Winters's *Power in Motion: Capital Mobility and the Indonesian State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

9. Benedict Anderson, afterword to "Am I PKI or Non PKI?" *Indonesia* 40 (October 1985).

10. Indonesian member of parliament Permadi received the deathbed confession of Sarwo Edhie. In a July 2004 interview, he says Edhie claimed that 2,000,000 were killed. The same report appears in Anderson's "Petrus Dadi Ratu" (see note 5). The CIA cites a figure of 100,000 in their own research study internal report, "Indonesia 1965: The Coup

that Backfired," December 1965. Robert Cribb cites 500,000 dead in *The Indonesian Killings of 1965/6: Studies from Java to Bali* (Clayton, Victoria, AUS: Monash University, 1990).

11. So, for instance, though the *systematic* terror of the massacres was down played for an international public, that very terror was deliberately conjured by the CIA six years later, when, going after Salvador Allende, they sent key figures on the radical left and the ultra-conservative right alike, cards, each day for a month, reading "Djakarta se acera."—Jakarta is coming. See Scott, and also Donald Freed and Fred Simon Landis, *Death in Washington* (Westport, CT: Lawrence Hill, 1980), 104_05.

12. From Vision Machine interviews with families of victims, the trauma of this spectral threat is always linked to the fear that the killings could happen again. Unlike in the psychological discourse, Indonesian trauma is dangerous even to admit, spectral and terrifying, because it is nothing other than the threat that the massacre will return, the spectral power of death conjured up in a seance of violence by a spectral state power.

13. Rivers like the Sungai Brantas, flowing from Kediri through Surabaya, in East Java, were choked. See P. Rochijat, "Am I PKI or Non PKI?" in *Indonesia* 40, October 1985; Cribb, *The Indonesian Killings* (see note 10); Peter Dale Scott, "Using Atrocities: U.S. Responsibility for the Slaughters in Indonesia and East Timor," (unpublished monogram).

14. "Repression, Repetition, and Working Through" is the essay in which Freud first outlines his ideas on the "compulsion to repeat."

15. Vision Machine film project, *The Globalization Tapes,* 70 mins, 2003.

16. http://www.petra.ac.id/english/eastjava/cities/sby/performing.htm (site now discontinued).

17. The contemporaneity of this historical project is important to stress. The profound violence of 1965_66 still haunts national life; it is neither spoken, nor unspoken, rather, it is whispered, threatened, insinuated into the subtext of daily discourse.

18. Even where multiple analogue tracks might produce an analogous result, similar experiments with re-narration certainly wouldn't be portable enough to bring to remote villages in the Sumatran plantation belt.