

The place of the dead, the time of dictatorship: Nostalgia, sovereignty, and the corpse of Ferdinand Marcos

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Abstract

In 1993, the body of former Philippine dictator, Ferdinand E Marcos, was moved from Honolulu, Hawaii, where he died in exile, to a private mausoleum attached to his ancestral home in Batac, Ilocos Norte. Preserved and placed in a refrigerated coffin while his wife, Imelda, lobbied for his burial at the Heroes' Cemetery, Marcos's body remained on display until 2016, when permission for his interment was granted by the newly elected president, Rodrigo Duterte. Drawing on fieldwork conducted at the Marcos Mausoleum prior to the controversial burial and at the protests that came in its wake, this essay examines the sense of loss and longing that has animated the rise of authoritarian nostalgia. Banished yet unburied, the dictator's embalmed corpse, I suggest, speaks to what remains unmourned under democracy and which thus always threatens to return—namely, a figure of unfettered freedom and authority, whose power might be said to extend over life, death, and time itself. I argue that it is this figure—the figure of a sovereign gone missing—that authoritarian nostalgia takes as its object and which grows more seductive in light of the hollowing out of popular sovereignty that has come to define the post-revolutionary experience.

Keywords

Authoritarian nostalgia, sovereignty, Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos, Rodrigo Duterte, democracy

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A funeral oration whose refrain never ceases:

Long live the king, the king is dead long live the king
the king is dead long live the king the king is dead.

Jacques Derrida, *The Beast & the Sovereign, Volume I*

When former Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos died in the fall of 1989, some three and a half years after being forced to live in exile in Honolulu, Hawaii, his wife, Imelda, refused to have his body buried. Instead, she had it preserved and placed in a temporary crypt, in hopes of one day fulfilling his dying wish to have his remains returned to Manila and interred at the *Libingan ng mga Bayani* (Heroes' Cemetery). Four years later, this wish was partially granted, when the Ramos administration permitted the repatriation of Marcos's body under the condition that it would not pass through the capital, where political tensions ran highest, and that it would be buried immediately in his hometown of Batac, Ilocos Norte, where the "people power" revolution that ousted the Marcoses in 1986 was still seen by many as a grave injustice. Designed to appease those who remained loyal to the Marcos regime, this compromise agreement was not adhered to fully. For while the dictator's corpse was flown directly to Batac, as the government insisted, the four-day wake that followed did not culminate in Marcos's burial but in the transfer of his body to his family's ancestral home, where a modest mausoleum had been quietly erected next to the Spanish colonial-style Marcos mansion. There, per Imelda's orders, Marcos's body would remain on display, encased in a refrigerated glass casket, while she and her family continued to lobby for the hero's burial they believed he deserved as a former head of state and a purportedly decorated war veteran.

When I first conducted fieldwork at the Marcos Mausoleum in 2014, I believed, as I suspect most other Filipinos did, that it would serve as Marcos's final resting place. After all, his body had been lying there for over two decades, far longer than Imelda must have intended, and though she and her children had regained a measure of political influence during those years, still it was difficult to imagine that any ruling government would carry out their wishes and risk reigniting the ire of a public for whom the fate of Marcos's corpse had, for the most part, become an afterthought. Indeed, though Marcos's corpse may have been preserved in a gesture of defiance, the fact that the corpse had been sequestered some five hundred kilometers from the capital seemed to diminish its capacity to keep the nation from moving on, to arrest history in its tracks. There, amid a local population whose loyalty to the Marcoses was oft dismissed as cultish, immune to reason, and thus, an immutable fact, the dictator's unburied corpse appeared to pose no danger, no threat. Out of sight and hence largely out of mind, its existence could be tolerated, forgiven under the condition of a second banishment—a posthumous exile without end.

In 2016, however, only two years after my initial visit, that condition would be lifted by the newly elected president, Rodrigo Duterte, an avowed admirer of the Marcos dictatorship.¹ Following a controversial decision by the Supreme Court upholding the legality of Duterte's order, Marcos's corpse was moved surreptitiously to Manila on November 18 and buried at the Heroes' Cemetery with military honors. Although the funeral was not announced, news of it spread quickly when Marcos's eldest daughter, Imee, then Governor of Ilocos Norte, shared a video of the ceremony online, prompting protests to erupt on Epifanio delos Santos Avenue (EDSA), Manila's main thoroughfare and the site of the 1986 revolution. I was present at the protests and will return to them later; suffice it to say now that those protests bore no fruit and did not last—and not unexpectedly so. After all, the 2016 elections provided ample evidence that public opinion about the Marcos

dictatorship had shifted dramatically. Far from hampered by his exaltation of the authoritarian past as a period of order and discipline, Duterte had garnered a landslide victory fueled by a promise to restore state violence to levels unheard of since the Martial Law years.² The 2016 elections also saw the narrow defeat of Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr for the vice presidency, a result that made clear the Marcos family’s renewed viability as a national political force. Moreover, the rise of both Duterte and Bongbong Marcos was accompanied by the rapid spread of pro-Marcos propaganda on social media, where long-discredited revisionist histories depicting the Marcos years as a “golden age” of progress and prosperity had begun to garner a surprising amount of popular traction.

In the context of such shifts in public sentiment, the burial of Marcos’s corpse might be read as an especially evocative moment in what has been dubbed, in the Philippines and elsewhere, a time of “authoritarian nostalgia” (Webb, 2017)—a period marked by the perilous recovery of pre-democratic pasts as objects of mass desire and as legitimating grounds for new repressive regimes. For Cleve Arguelles (2017), Marcos’s burial in fact represents the completion of Duterte’s “memory project,” an “other war” that has run parallel to the “war on drugs” and that would promote “public amnesia” through Marcos’s rehabilitation and the devaluing of People Power’s historical significance. Similarly, Jocelyn Martin (2019) argues that the burial should be seen as a “mnemonic intervention,” an act of “agentive re-entombment” designed to restore the myths of “heroicity” that once underpinned the dictator’s legacy. For both Arguelles and Martin, in other words, Marcos’s burial is best understood as part of an ongoing project of erasure. An act of legitimation, it “grounds” revisionist narratives and ritually seals the “historical amnesia” said to be at the root of the authoritarian past’s reemergence as an object of nostalgic longing.

While there no doubt have been insidious efforts to restructure national memory, the popular framing of authoritarian nostalgia as a consequence of ongoing battles between the truth of history and its deletion tells only part of the story. Nostalgia, after all, has never operated on the register of truth. From its earliest inception as a seventeenth-century name for the disease of homesickness, nostalgia’s object could be understood not simply as a time and place that had been lost, but one that may have never existed. Indeed, the discovery that nostalgics were not cured upon returning home made it clear that nostalgia could persevere in the face of an encounter with truth, that it could maintain its hold on those afflicted because its putative object, “home,” was but a figuration of something immaterial and fantastic. As Svetlana Boym (2001: xiii–xv) writes, nostalgia “speaks in riddles and puzzles”; it is “a sentiment of loss . . . but it is also a romance with one’s own fantasy”—a fantasy that is particularly resistant to exposure *as* fantasy, for it masks its very groundlessness by attaching itself to the empirical ground of a historical time and place.

What would it mean to take seriously the role of nostalgia in *authoritarian* nostalgia, to give an account of the riddle and puzzle of the fantasy that drives its operation in Philippine public culture under Duterte? And how, in turn, might we make sense of the central place occupied by Marcos’s burial in national memories of the authoritarian past that have grown fractured in nostalgia’s wake? In what follows, I look to Marcos’s corpse and the mausoleum in which it once lay in order to think through the sense of loss and longing that animates the desire to see authoritarianism return. Banished yet unburied, the dictator’s embalmed corpse speaks to what remains unmourned under democracy and which thus always threatens to return—namely, a figure of unfettered freedom and authority, whose power might be said to extend over life, death, and time itself. I argue that it is this figure—the figure of a sovereign gone missing—that authoritarian nostalgia takes as its object and which grows more seductive in light of the hollowing out of popular sovereignty that has come to define the post-revolutionary experience. This essay contends that the allure of the

authoritarian past stems less from historical amnesia than from the persistence of a *fantasy of sovereignty* that is not subject to falsification and which lives on in the notions of freedom, autonomy, and historical agency that democracy holds out in the form of a promise.

To examine how this fantasy endures into the time of democracy, I turn first to the embalment of Marcos's remains and how it complicates our understanding of revolution as a transfer of sovereignty from the dictator's body to the body of the people. I then offer an ethnographic account of the mausoleum as a site of ruin that dramatizes the experience of abandonment under democracy, setting the stage for the re-enchantment of the authoritarian past as an imagined locus of lost sovereign power. The essay ends with an account of the protests that met Marcos's burial and of the uncertain boundaries that separate nostalgia for revolution and for the figure of the sovereign that revolution purports to vanquish. Drawing attention to the reemergence of authoritarianism from within the folds of democracy itself, I argue that democracy contains the seeds of its own undoing and, for that reason, must be preserved, not only as a political system, but as an object of critique.

The dictator's body

In one of the most remarkable scenes from the 2003 documentary, *Imelda*, the former first lady is shown inside the Marcos Mausoleum, standing next to the dictator's corpse. Dramatically shot against a backdrop of near total darkness, her face illuminated only by the lights set beneath Marcos's glass casket, Imelda keeps her eyes set on the corpse's face while speaking to the director hidden behind the camera. "This is one of the advantages of the fact that he is still not buried," she says. "I can still see him, physically, like he was sleeping." She says that the body is heavily refrigerated, that it is encased in wax, "thin enough so that the contour of the body and the face is almost all there," and that it can last without refrigeration for forty-eight hours. "I even told the man who did all of this," she recalls, trailing off, her voice cracking, "Because he had some white hair, I said, 'Please, paint it a little so that there will be no white hair.' So he will be younger even. Even in death."

That man, the mortician Frank Malabed, would explain in a 2011 interview that he had to do much more than paint the dictator's hair. "His face, his legs, they were already bloated," he recalled. "His hair—that's a wig. He had no more hair when he died. I had to fix everything. What you see now is a mask already" (Zambrano, 2011; my translation). Imelda's legendary obsession with beauty notwithstanding, her desire to see her husband's body returned to its prime resonates broadly; it echoes the commonplace understanding of embalming as the art of erasing traces of death, of rolling back time. However, like the corpses of other leaders who have been embalmed for indefinite display, the restoration of Marcos's body does not so much forestall the lethal force of time as assert its conquest. Set against the very work of mourning that death demands, it empties the threat of disappearance by turning the dictator's corpse, the very sign of his finitude, into an image of immortality—an incorruptible mask, a *body turned effigy* (Yurchak, 2015).

Thus embalment serves not only to keep the memory of the man alive but to turn his body into that which figures what cannot die. Here death fulfills the dictator's fantasy of having a body in excess of itself, of having that doubled body—at once mortal and eternal, earthly and sublime—that sovereignty presupposes and which Ernst Kantorowicz (2016 [1957]) famously analyzed in *The King's Two Bodies*. As Kantorowicz reminds us, the problem of establishing sovereign power and perpetuity was addressed during the age of absolute monarchy through the invention of a peculiar doctrine about the fantasmatic physiology of the king: a political theology that made of the sovereign body a geminated figure, comprised of both a mortal coil, subject to infirmity, and an immortal form, an invisible body politic

that stood above the laws of man and nature and which could be ritually transferred to a successor upon the king's death. It is this ritual transfer, the passage of the body politic from king to king to king, which the advent of democracy putatively breaks, severs through that originary cut—the king's beheading—that marks the physical and symbolic death of the sovereign and paves the way for its supersession by another body, the undying body of the People that comes to serve as the rightful locus of the sovereign authority that once gave the king's body "its strange material and physical presence" (Foucault, 1977: 222).

Although this doctrine appears archaic now, the blueprint for political change it inaugurates lives on, as others have noted, in our understanding of sovereignty writ large (Lefort, 1988). Indeed, from photographs depicting deposed dictators humiliated and shorn of regal status, to accounts of their executions, to the banishment of their corpses from hallowed grounds, one can readily see how the reality of a transfer of sovereignty from the one to the many remains predicated on performative operations conducted on the bodies of modernity's would-be kings. Such operations have also extended to the elimination of the "second" bodies constructed by such figures: the statues, portraits, and monuments that form the iconography of dictatorship and which alter the temporality associated with the persons they represent by arresting "the process of (their) bodily decay" and bringing them into the realm of the sacred (Verdery, 1999: 5). As Katherine Verdery explains, the destruction of such visages remains crucial to the "dead body politics" of regime change, not only because they remove particular bodies from the national landscape, but because they dissolve those who have abrogated for themselves the exceptional status of the sovereign into "ordinary, time-bound persons" whom "no god protects" (Verdery, 1999: 5).

The fall of the Marcos dictatorship was no different in this regard. In one of the most iconic photographs of the 1986 revolution, jubilant protesters can be seen standing on one of the balconies of the presidential palace, lowering one of Marcos's portraits to the ground below. In the months that followed, this act would be echoed across the country, as citizens were reported defacing various monuments erected by the Marcos regime (Scott, 1986). Most evocatively, indigenous people smeared pig's blood on the thirty-meter high Marcos bust that had been carved on the side of Mount Pugo, La Union. That same bust would later be bombed, leaving intact only the lower half of his face and exposing the hollow interior of what might be read as Marcos's attempt to transubstantiate himself into "a geographical feature of the national landscape" (Barmé, 2015: 25). Enacting "symbolic death blow(s) on the sovereign" (Balke, 2005: 81), the destruction of Marcos's "other" bodies betrays an implicit understanding that dictatorship operates on a material *and* immaterial register, that for revolution to put an end to the time of dictatorship it must also target the figures that render the dictator timeless and his rule without end.

Seen this way, Marcos's embalment can be read as arresting more than his bodily decay. For if the process might be said to turn the dictator's body into "the biological structure of an historical monument" (Barmé, 2015: 25), then what it represents is nothing less than the unfinished task of desublimating the figure of the sovereign, of cutting off the head of the king. Still immortal, still *present*, still *here*—"younger even, even in death"—the endurance of Marcos's body into the time of democracy challenges our belief in democracy as an age that follows the already accomplished demise of the sovereign and presents it instead as the condition of living with a sovereign that remains only in repose. Read symptomatically, Marcos's unburied corpse marks the difficulty of banishing the sovereign for good; it dramatizes how this figure retains its "strange material and physical presence" even after its supposed elimination from the political landscape. If this figure refuses to go away, however, it is not simply because there are forces that would rescue it from corruption, but because our relationship to the promise-cum-threat of its disappearance is always

necessarily vexed. Indeed, if the present moment of authoritarian nostalgia demonstrates the precarity of the temporal progression from absolute to popular sovereignty, it is because the “people” themselves appear to be willing its reversal, to be welcoming the return of one that would act in their stead and whose disappearance they once paradoxically celebrated.

Although this phenomenon is greeted now with a sense of puzzlement, its emergence is prefigured, too, by the representational regime the doctrine of the king’s two bodies set in place. For in that doctrine one not only finds a premodern solution to the problem of royal succession, but the roots of a still operative symbolic economy whereby the sovereign comes into being as an enjoyable if not necessary fiction: a seductive figure of autonomy whose elimination, even when popularly willed, cannot not be experienced as a loss. Granted a second, otherworldly body anchored in a realm beyond our own, the sovereign appears as a figure that papers over the void from which its legitimacy emanates with nothing more than an image of itself. It emerges in effect as the grounds for its own otherwise groundless authority, as that which gives “itself to itself” (Agamben, 1998: 46), a “power that *gives itself* its own law, its force of law, its self-representation” (Derrida, 2005: 11). From this understanding of the sovereign proceeds the familiar conceptions of sovereignty as the capacity to decide on the exception (Schmitt, 1985), to “exercise control over mortality” (Mbembe, 2003: 12), to make die and let live. Although such definitions importantly stress the deadliness of sovereign power, they should not be taken to mean that the sovereign rules by force alone. Rather, in being endowed by “an act of originary authorization” (Balke, 2005: 73), in its embodiment of autonomy without limits, the sovereign holds out the “un-fulfillable promise of access to freedom and power” (Mansfield, 2010: 42) and in so doing offers to those whom it subjects the possibility of being recognized, and of recognizing themselves, as subjects. Put differently, if the figure of the sovereign continues to capture our imagination, it is because we are bound to it in an imitative structure. At once identical to us (he takes our place) and more than us (beyond our reach) (Esposito, 2008), the figure of the sovereign enables us to participate in sovereignty, to share or borrow it, to partake in “the illusion of pulling sovereignly the strings of history” (Derrida, 2009: 289). This is what Derrida refers to as “the trap, the trap narrative . . . the very trap of sovereignty, of shared sovereignty.” “Sovereignty *is* this narrative fiction,” he writes. “(It) draws all its power, all its potency . . . from this simulacrum-effect” (Derrida, 2009).

Understood this way, one can see how the figure of the sovereign returns in relation to states of vulnerability, inviting fear and admiration, dread and loyalty, by nominating itself as an agent that proffers control over “forms of life that are . . . contingent, fragile, susceptible to breakdown” (Santner, 2011: 6). The attempt to convert Marcos’s corpse into an effigy of his youthful form acquires additional meaning in view of this symbolic function, for it not only restores a more appealing version of the dictator, but the avatar that was constructed during his reign to consolidate national power. As Rolando Tolentino (2003) details in his account of the manufacture of Marcos’s “presidential body,” the regime’s exercise of sovereign authority was accomplished through the concoction of “a presidential apotheosis” based on the vitality of Marcos’s youthful form, the creation of a figure that was “made distant and inaccessible” to the subordinated bodies of the repressed populace who were nonetheless called upon to mimic it. From accounts of his alleged leadership during the second World War; to his depiction as a college athlete and political maverick; to the boldness of his oratory skills; to the much-rehearsed story of his whirlwind romance with Imelda, and their heavily publicized friendships with foreign celebrities and heads of state—the Marcos regime proliferated images of the president as a virile, cosmopolitan man of action whose body could serve as a unifying substance for the founding of a “New Society.” At the same time, Marcos’s body was depicted as prior to the nation itself,

projected into the past as the mythic figure Malakas (strong), whose emergence alongside his wife, Maganda (beautiful), out of a bamboo stem was represented in portraits and textbooks as the nation's origin story. Already present at the nation's birth and still forging forward amid the uncertainties of the Cold War world order, Marcos's body was made to appear as a body out-of-time through which the nation could acquire a sense of existential legitimacy, a master-signifier through which citizen-subjects could imagine themselves as historical agents.

While Marcos's simulacral body effectively quelled challenges to governmental authority through the unifying force of a seductive sovereign body, time would nonetheless prove to be its undoing. Racked with lupus erythematosus, an autoimmune disease that led to kidney failure, Marcos's mortal body ceased to resemble his "presidential body" during the final years of his presidency. Grotesque and pallid, it instead began to figure "the decaying, corrupt body of the nation," the ruinous effects that "impeded the community from coming into being" (Tadiar, 2004: 216). As with other dictators, the gap that time opened between Marcos's two bodies would prove fatal to his regime, for it created a space ready to be filled by revolutionary forces buoyed by his fragility and the promise of expropriating sovereignty out of the dictator's body and into the people whom that body was said to represent. The expulsion of Marcos's decaying body, like the king's beheading, might thus be seen as the realization of this promise—that is, as the severance of the body politic from the sovereign that had been exposed as the very cause of the people's unfreedom. If so, however, then it also necessarily entails a "disturbance in the space of representation" (Santner, 2011: xiii). For if the sovereign once performed the task of figuring "our capacity to feel represented in the social field," if it provided a necessary fiction that served as a "viable facilitation of our vitality," then its absence leaves us with the task of "incarnat(ing) in some new way the excarnated principle of sovereignty"—of putting forth "a body that would, as it were, (occupy) the now empty place of the king" (Santner, 2011: xiv, 92).

Sites of ruin, acts of creation

While the advent of democracy is often taken to mean that the people have replaced the king as the new bearers of sovereignty, in practice the locus of sovereign power under democracy is much more difficult to determine. Indeed, we know from now familiar accounts of biopolitical power that even in so-called "consolidated" democracies sovereign functions are exercised by various organs of control that do not necessarily serve as extensions of a given people's will. "Post-sovereign" arrangements of power, in other words, reveal to us that popular sovereignty may not be a *sine qua non* of democracy, and that formal institutions of representation often fail to sate the sense of impotence that marks the lives of those who, in principle, come to possess freedom and autonomy.

In the post-authoritarian condition of places like the Philippines, the gap between democracy and revolution is even more readily apparent. For there, the end of autocratic rule has not led to forms of administration that confirm the worth of the population's life, but to a state of neglect—of "biopolitical failure" (Rafael, 2019). The condition of neglect and abandonment underprops the overarching sense that the people have not come to possess political weight, that the revolution has not made the people sovereign, and serves as the foundation for the various grievances oft credited for authoritarianism's return: from the fact that economic growth has benefitted the few at the expense of the many, to the deepening of corruption on all levels of government, to the unheeded calls for better infrastructure and services. From such grievances emerges the notion that the EDSA revolution may have been a ruse, for while it was said to mark the emergence of the people as "a collective

subject, a subject with historical agency” (Tadiar, 2004: 191), the time of democracy it inaugurated has been marked instead by the redistribution of “people’s power” to private forces beyond the people’s control: political dynasties, corporate tycoons, criminal syndicates, foreign powers, elites of various forms. Put differently, if democracy can be said to be facing a crisis of legitimacy it is insofar as it has failed to deliver on *the same promise* authoritarian rule once offered—that is, the “promise of access to freedom and power,” of a capacity to act, to pull “sovereignly the strings of history” (Derrida, 2009: 289).

In view of this common promise, we can see how the authoritarian past emerges as an object of nostalgic longing. For against the hollowing out of sovereign power under democracy, the past presents us with the memory of a fantastic figure through which we once recognized ourselves as agents of history and casts it against the passage of time over which we have had no mastery. It is this memory of sovereign power set against the ruin of the present that gets redeployed at the Marcos Mausoleum, where an atmosphere of neglect and disrepair paves the way for the re-enchantment of the dictator’s body, which comes to serve as a point of entry to another time and place, where a sense of agency might be enjoyed through the vicarious exercise of sovereign power over the national landscape.

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I had seen many photographs of the Marcos Mausoleum before my visit and thus knew it would bear no resemblance to the imposing structures erected to house the similarly preserved bodies of Lenin, Mao, and Ho Chi Minh. Still, seeing the Marcos Mausoleum in person, I was struck by its dilapidated state. Located at the end of Marcos Avenue, a long, dusty road serving as Batac’s main artery, the complex appeared less like a grand public monument than a roadside tourist attraction that had seen better days. There was the welcome hall-cum-photo gallery whose façade bore the stains of a sign that had fallen off but had not been replaced and which contained boards of faded photographs documenting the Marcoses’ glory years. There was the souvenir shop where one could buy memorabilia that resembled leftover materials from long forgotten election campaigns. There was the small museum where one could see mannequins garbed in Imelda’s old dresses and Ferdinand’s old *barongs*, ostensibly there to tell the “history of Marcos fashion” but which reminded me of department store displays from my childhood in Manila in the 1980s. The house itself bore the hallmarks of age, its grandeur diminished by soot marks left on its exterior walls by years of rain and patches of peeled off paint revealing the brickwork beneath. Around it an informal economy had grown to take advantage of the small tourist trade. There were rows of *pedicabs* selling drinks, a pair of *carinderias* offering cheap meals, and a *sari-sari* store inside the mausoleum compound itself, constructed out of recycled plywood and corrugated iron sheets, not unlike the shantytowns that Imelda had famously ordered demolished.

Erected, presumably, to preserve the influence of the Marcos regime, the mausoleum instead told the story of its fall from grace. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the tomb proper: a cubic structure made of raw stone blocks that stood just meters from the hubbub of the museum and souvenir shop. In the documentary showing Imelda next to Marcos’s corpse, the silence and darkened background lent the tomb a sense of solemnity. There was, I would learn, good reason for the use of such cinematic strategies. For if the documentary had presented the scene as a one might encounter it on any given day, it would have revealed a space that was less foreboding than pitiful and kitsch. Guarded by an old ununiformed watchman, its walls were lined with plastic lamps designed to look like torches and small speakers that filled the modestly sized room with the unintentionally comic sound of Gregorian chants on loop. On the day of my visit, those chants competed with the outside

noise of tourists waiting to get in, schoolchildren on fieldtrips, vendors hawking coconut water and popsicles. The watchman himself added to the irreverent atmosphere as he scolded tourists for whispering too loudly. All those sounds, the lights, and the overwhelming sense of disrepair made it difficult to contemplate the sight of Marcos's corpse itself, which lay in the center of the room in his glass casket, cordoned off with velvet ropes and raised three feet above the ground.

He was smaller than I imagined him to be. His feet were almost doll-like in size. His face, as the mortician described it, was "like a mask already." Waxen, with no traces of the ailments that had taken his life, it made me think that there might be truth to the rumors that the body had been replaced with a mannequin. I wondered, however, if the reason some came to that conclusion was because the idea of an eternal corpse seemed improbable amid all the evidence throughout the mausoleum testifying to the corrosive force of time and the Marcoses' failure to stop it. How indeed might one read the dictator's unchanging body against the atmosphere of ruin that had become its environment? How does one make sense of the miracle of his arrested decomposition in view of the reality of time passing? For a critic who rues Marcos's refusal to go away, the juxtaposition generated contradictory feelings. On the one hand, there was pleasure in seeing the former dictator incapacitated, in having him rendered eternal but inert, present yet unable to stall the ruin of his surrounds. The mausoleum's dilapidated state generated a sense of hope even, for it allowed one to believe that time would claim Marcos's legacy, if not by returning his body to the elements than by burying it in signs of decay. On the other hand, the mausoleum dissipated hope in what time would deliver. For in presenting Marcos's corpse as a body left impotent against time's ruinous passage, it also placed that body in a state that mirrored the people's own, emplotting it in a narrative that echoed familiar accounts of national deterioration. In other words, while the sight of Marcos's corpse may have elicited a sense of satisfaction, that satisfaction was tempered by the fact that the corpse still functioned as an object of identification. It invited those who gazed upon it to again see themselves in the dictator's body, to recognize in his lifeless form a reflection of the people's own erasure as a "historical subject"—its relegation to "that inert substance, sometimes called the masses, whose shape and role is determined by greater or stronger forces" (Tadiar, 2004: 221).

Indeed, though the revolution may have severed the equivalence between Marcos's body and the body politic, the fact that death had turned the former into an embodiment of sovereign power gained and lost seemed to render it, again, a viable analog for the people. Neglect and decay, after all, were not properties of the mausoleum alone, but apt descriptors for all those sites of dereliction that had become representative of the national condition: the crumbling mass transit systems and traffic-clogged roads, the garbage-filled waterways, the decrepit public buildings, the shantytowns where scavengers live, the disaster sites left waiting for reconstruction, and so on. Such sites mark the gap between the people and a post-revolutionary state that no longer functions as the "bounded expression of the people's sovereign will" (Nayar, 2014: 125). They speak to the unifying role played by spatial degradation as common evidence that the post-EDSA system has abetted the people's subjection to forces it can neither stop nor steer. However one conceives of the forces responsible for this degradation, it remains clear that the time of democracy has been elided with processes of ruination that have come to represent the erosion of popular sovereignty, if not the decomposition of the principle of sovereignty tout court, and for which the Marcos Mausoleum serves as but one of many possible metonyms.

If the mausoleum can be understood from this vantage as an emblem of the ruin of the present, then the corpse it houses might be read, in turn, not only as a corporeal representation of the people's lack of historical agency, but as a point of entry to a past that promises

a means for that lack's redress. I suggested earlier that the figure of the sovereign seduces by inviting those whom he subjects to recognize themselves in his fiction. One might consider now how the dictator's embalmed corpse—the figure of the undead sovereign—invites identification by presenting sovereign power as something he (and thus we) *once* possessed, that is, as something to recover, an object of nostalgia. This lost sovereignty is represented, most forcefully, in and as the dictator's capacity to create, to transform the national landscape. Indeed, if the authoritarian past proves seductive, it is because the time of dictatorship has long been imagined as a *time of creation*: a period when the nation was being re-forged into a showcase of “development” through the construction of new roads, highways, and bridges; satellite systems and communications towers; airports, dams, and power plants; housing complexes; medical and technological centers; and, not least, spectacular Brutalist cultural buildings that were erected at breakneck speeds and on land reclaimed from the sea (Benedicto, 2013). Like all infrastructures, those of the Marcos years signal aspirations and serve as vehicles whereby collective fantasies about advancement through the linear time of progress are made “emotionally real” (Larkin, 2013: 333). Understood as the material effects of authoritarian power, however, the Marcos regime's infrastructural remains do not only evoke a time when dreams of progress appeared within reach, but also, crucially, a time when those dreams could be *willed* into reality—a time, in other words, when the people could exercise a certain mastery over time itself, if only vicariously, through the medium of the dictator's body.

It was precisely this image of the dictator as a godlike creator whose vision and will made possible the nation's movement forward in history that I found myself recalling in the face of his embalmed corpse and which the mausoleum's photo gallery also served to confirm. Featuring countless images of Marcos's revived “presidential body,” interspersed with hundreds of newspaper and magazine clippings, press releases, and photographs of the various development projects established under his orders, the gallery gave visitors an opportunity to not only see the dictator's corpse brought back to life, but to be transported, with it, backwards in time. Like an avatar through which one might traverse a world other than one's own, the dictator's body appeared throughout the gallery as a means to inhabit a modern utopia that almost but never came to be, a world-in-the-making whose very existence was rendered contingent on the presence of a living sovereign body and whose allure was set in relief by the dilapidated condition of the mausoleum itself.³

One photograph at the gallery might serve to illustrate this point. Likely taken during the mid- to late-1960s, shortly after Marcos was first elected to the presidency, it showed a young Marcos leaning on the side of a boat with Imelda by his side, looking out over clear waters to the unsullied land in the distance. Standing before the photograph, one could not help but be lured by the glint of hope in Marcos's eyes and be drawn into looking *with* him, into following his line of sight and imagining what he must have seen: the promise of a *terra nullius* ready to be reshaped, modernized, “synchronize(d) . . . with the developed metropolitan world” (Tadiar, 2009: 237). Evoking a sense of beginning, the photograph appeared to set the stage for the images surrounding it, nearly all of which showed the always glamorous Marcoses in a flurry of activity: surveying farmlands and construction sites for infrastructural projects, cutting ribbons at inauguration events, meeting with local officials, greeting crowds, or entertaining foreign heads of state at the newly minted structures that had been erected in Manila, or being hosted by them overseas. None of the photographs bore labels, dates, or names. They did not require them, for what they wanted to convey was not information per se, but an image of Marcos as a sovereign agent, an embodiment of the capacity the people have yet to possess.

At the mausoleum, one was given a reflection of the people's non-sovereignty, but also a pathway out of that condition, one that led in and through the dictator's body and back to a past in which that body appeared to wield "the power to model and plan and act *on* life" itself (Stewart, 1988: 227). That such a power should be represented in the form of acts of creation should come as no surprise, not only because spatial ruin speaks directly to the people's experience of impotentiality, but because the products of such acts are *still present, still here*. Like the dictator's corpse, the regime's infrastructural projects have withstood time's passage. Scattered throughout the country, they serve as extensions of the dictator's body, as sovereign *effects* that evoke freedom from the logic of contingency and which present that freedom as something to recover rather than gain. In turn, nostalgic images of the authoritarian past seduce by recapitulating the simulacrum-effect of shared sovereignty, offering in the place of democracy's failures pleasure narratives of creation that appear to fulfill the drive toward freedom and agency that brought the authoritarian past to an end.

Repetition and revolution

The authoritarian past may have only recently emerged as a widespread object of mass nostalgia, but, in a sense, the Filipino people have long been anticipating Marcos's return. In a 1997 article titled, "Marcos Died, but It Didn't Last," the *New York Times* correspondent Seth Mydans describes how Filipinos had grown "hypersensitive to government actions that bring back the past." "An initiative to amend the constitution to allow Mr. Ramos a second term is being met by threats to revive the popular uprisings called 'people power,'" he writes. "A tough anti-terrorism law . . . was rejected by the public as smacking of repression. Moves toward instituting a national system of identity cards have raised fears that freedoms will again be curtailed." To explain the public's "skittishness", Mydans quotes a local journalist, who tells him that "(Filipinos) are dealing with a ghost. Every time there seems to be a move to restrict civil liberties, Marcos haunts the debate. Ramos has to keep saying over and over again that he is not Marcos. The wounds are . . . still very raw. The psyche is still traumatized."

Anticipating the repetition compulsion that would come to shape Philippine democracy's relationship to revolution, the article's account of a traumatized national psyche speaks to the uncertainty surrounding the transfer of sovereignty from the one to the many and to the way that uncertainty engenders a desire to see the transfer secured and re-secured, a desire which, in turn, necessitates the reappearance of Marcos's ghost, the specter of the sovereign, if only so that it may be banished, over and over again. Indeed, if Marcos's ghost has proved persistent, it is because it remains the object of a "paradoxical hunt"; it is convoked to be chased away, to be exorcised repeatedly (Derrida, 1994). As Lisandro Claudio (2018 [2013]) notes, post-authoritarian Philippine history has been dominated by re-enactments of Marcos's downfall. Most notably, following a failed impeachment trial on corruption charges, Ramos's successor, Joseph Estrada, was ousted in the 2001 "EDSA Dos" uprising, a sequel that provided an opportunity to relive the 1986 revolt: from the singing of the same revolutionary songs, to the unfolding of a near identical series of events, to the swearing in of a new female president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Only four months later, however, Arroyo herself would face potential ouster in the form of "EDSA Tres," a failed counter-uprising. Moreover, while Arroyo would survive EDSA Tres, her time as president would be marked by widespread accusations of corruption and electoral fraud, so much so that by the end of her tenure she too was routinely being compared to the Marcoses and was likely spared the indignity of another revolt only because in 2010 the people had the opportunity

to elect Benigno Aquino, III to the presidency, in what has been described, aptly, as “EDSA masquerading as an election” (de Quiros, 2011).

Indeed, Aquino’s election would be difficult to disarticulate from the pull of revolutionary repetition. A relatively quiet figure in national politics prior to 2010, Aquino became a viable presidential candidate only in the wake of the passing of his mother, the revolutionary icon, Cory Aquino, the procession of whose corpse evoked that of her husband’s, Ninoy, whose assassination in 1983 had set the stage for Marcos’s ouster.⁴ Whether at the polls or on the street, however, the desire to repeat the revolution tells us much about the transfer of sovereignty it failed to enact. As Freud (1955 [1920]) taught us, repetition might be seen as an effect of a drive that does not reach its aim, as “a result of a barrier or inhibition, a thwarting or failure” (Dean, 2010: 9). Revolutionary repetition, one might say, is marked by a cruel optimistic structure (Berlant, 2011). Every iteration is animated by the sense that *maybe, this time, the transfer will take place; maybe, if we again cut off the head of the king, the people will finally become sovereign for good*. It is in this vein that Derrida (2009) writes of the “sovereignty drive” that undergirds democracy, which, for him, never involves an abandonment of the figure of the sovereign, but always only a “struggle *for* sovereignty,” for the sense of mastery and agency that binds democratic notions of individual freedom and autonomy to the “inflated sovereignty of the sovereign (that) serves as a locus for each individual’s imagination of herself as self-sovereign” (Frost, 2010: 159).

To think of the transfer of sovereignty as shaped by the circular temporality of a drive that never reaches its aim is to see sovereignty, precisely, as an object of fantasy—that is, as the hole around which struggle loops, the void papered over by the fiction of the king’s second body. If the sovereignty drive persists, however, it is because, even in failure, the drive produces partial satisfactions that appear as object-representatives of the impossibility that sovereignty is (Bennington, 2006). This surplus satisfaction is captured well in what Neferti Tadiar (2004: 214) describes as the “jouissance of ‘people power,’” the sense of enjoyment derived from the experience of the revolt as a “moment of subjective freedom,” a “moment of pure becoming in which the Filipino people (found) themselves empowered as historical actors.” This moment of enjoyment, one might suggest, becomes the object of repetition-compulsion; it is what holds the people captive in the circuit of a drive that loops around sovereignty’s “empty place” (Lefort, 1988). Indeed, looking back on EDSA Dos, the role played by the promise of reliving the jouissance of people power in bringing the people back to the street is hard to miss. As one columnist put it, in response to critics who worried that the eagerness to repeat the revolution may have compromised due process, “These people simply don’t get it . . . People Power is not a club to be wielded . . . It is a mysterious, unpredictable outpouring of collective energy that seems to arrive when we most need it” (Mydans, 2001).

The sense of subjective freedom that revolution affords, however, is also what renders it proximate to authoritarian projects, which, as we have seen, likewise operate by offering the enjoyment of “pulling sovereignly the strings of history.” Indeed, the pleasures of revolution might be described using language that directly evokes the sense of mastery made available through the sovereign’s incorruptible body. As Tadiar (2004: 16) writes of the 1986 revolt:

The inexplicable ecstasy of Filipinos celebrating Marcos’s departure could be said to derive from the feeling of immortality conveyed in ideals (of family, nation, and God) . . . for which many have laid their lives down . . . impelled by the image of something greater and beyond their own mortal existence . . . (T)he experience of people power was the experience of power over death.

Recognizing the unlikely coincidence between the promises of revolutionary aspiration and authoritarian subjection reveals how, in the blink of an eye, one might lapse into the other; how their political and ethical contradictions, deep though they may be, are underpinned by a common desire for an unencumbered existence; and how that desire might, in turn, fracture the people's body, splitting those who would seek their freedom in democracy's promises from those who, having had enough of democracy's betrayals, might seek it elsewhere instead. It is this fracture that was on clear display when news broke of Marcos's burial in 2016—an event that marked the literal return of the dictator from his posthumous exile and his figurative return in the form of Duterte, who, unlike those previously cast as Marcos's heirs, seemed to embrace that designation willfully and to understand, intuitively, that a sovereign had to be buried for his place to be taken, that a king's death had to be ritually confirmed for him to be pronounced living once again: *The king is dead, long live the king.*

I was in Manila when Marcos's interment took place and, like many, I heard news of it as an injunction to return to EDSA, where we, the people, might again emerge as a historical force and restage the expulsion of he who had taken or would take our sovereignty for himself. On the road that evening the desire to protest the dictator's return took on a doubled form. There was the call to be rid of his body, to “Dig him up! [*Hu-ka-yin!*]” and cast it back from whence he came. And there was the wish to oust, or at least shame, his present reincarnation, whose equivalence to Marcos was evoked through chants of “*Digong Duterte/Tuta ni Marcos!* [Marcos's lapdog]” and signs bearing labels such as “*Dutertador!* [Duterte + *diktador*]” and “Never again!” In many ways, the protest took me back to EDSA Dos. There was the rehearsal of the songs and chants inherited from the 1986 revolution. There were the veterans from both revolts—activists, celebrities, politicians—giving speeches at the foot of the People Power Monument. Most importantly, there was a familiar sense of anticipation coursing through the crowd, as people wondered whether the protest might swell to revolutionary proportions. “What do you think?” a friend asked as we watched the crowd grow slowly, “*Ito na ba? People Power na ba? [Is this it? Is People Power happening?]*”

Such questions were asked, however, with what seemed to me faint hope that Marcos's burial might catalyze the consolidation of feelings of rage and disbelief about Duterte's election; that the anger at the protest would prove his popularity false; and that the people would come together, again, to fend off the specter of authoritarianism whose long-anticipated return seemed to finally be taking place. Those hopes would only grow fainter as the protest progressed, as it became apparent that those who were gathered could not lay claim to being the “people,” that the call to return to EDSA had resounded primarily among likeminded networks tied to Manila's largest universities and whose relative homogeneity was made plain by the shared humor and cultural references that would come to define the protest for many observers (see Monje, 2017). There was, certainly, a sense of collectivity that night, but its emergence was not marked by that “inexplicable ecstasy” that might merit reference to the *jouissance* of people power, but by the mere relief of seeing one's anger mirrored, of encountering others who had not been caught in the thrall of authoritarianism's return.

Indeed, for those at the protest, it was the allure of authoritarian power that seemed driven by some mysterious energy. People expressed shock that Duterte's approval ratings were unaffected by the violence his war on drugs had unleashed; that revisionist pro-Marcos histories were being widely embraced; that people thought members of the Marcos family worth electing into the highest offices; and that Duterte's persecution of political opponents was being loudly applauded. What was even more bewildering to many was the discovery that people to whom they were proximate did not share their distress over the anti-democratic turn public opinion had taken. There were stories traded about friends, relatives,

coworkers, and classmates who had become outspoken defenders of the Duterte regime or had “come out” as Marcos apologists. Told with a sense of disbelief, those stories betrayed a tacit understanding that the line between those who welcomed the turn away from democracy and those who saw it as a threat was difficult to delimit, and that the authoritarian “turn” was, or had become, a turn that *anyone* could make.

Writing this now, more than three years since Marcos’s burial, I am struck by how the indiscriminate seductiveness of authoritarianism has confounded attempts to make sense of its resurgence. Think, for instance, of how Duterte’s support across *all* economic classes has made it impossible to dismiss the return of “strongman” rule as a function of the poor’s susceptibility to populist appeals. Or of how Bongbong Marcos’s narrow defeat for the vice-presidency has put into question popular depictions of Marcos nostalgia as an affliction rife only in “Marcos territory.” And yet, despite the fact that the allure of the authoritarian turn has been able to cut through the political, economic, and social differences that have long riven the Philippines, we have, nonetheless, persisted in searching for fractures that might explain why and how the people’s collective disenchantment with the post-EDSA order has produced a split, a break between those who would meet the revolution’s shortcomings with the repetition of calls for a more meaningful democracy, for a “true” transfer of sovereignty, and those who would instead welcome the repetition of the authoritarian past that the revolution had ostensibly put to an end.

The fact that so many seemed willing to abandon prior commitments to liberal ideals of freedom and liberty might be seen as evidence that those ideals have not been sufficiently internalized and consolidated. I am suggesting, however, that to demystify the authoritarian turn we might begin not by casting it as the abandonment of democracy’s ideals but by seeing how those ideals remain operative in the structures of power that democracy has, as a rule, been positioned against. In other words, if so many appear to be willing to trade freedom for subjection, it may be because freedom and subjection are not always that easy to distinguish, or because the drive to be and to have a sovereign have always been necessarily entwined.⁵ Authoritarian power, after all, is only experienced as unfreedom if one does not see oneself in the figure that wields it. For those who do, it affords an opportunity to share in something akin to the *jouissance* of people power, to partake in the subjective freedom of a figure who appears as an agent of history rather than a slave to its forces, and who, in so being, provides a vehicle for the people to escape the condition of non-sovereignty that has been elided with democracy itself.

One might think here of how Duterte’s rise to power has been grounded in his “enactment of . . . freedom from the constraints of responsibility and the norms of decency” (Rafael, 2019: 153), a freedom manifested in such seemingly trivial ways as his use of coarse language and bawdy humor, but also, more devastatingly, in the extrajudicial killing of alleged drug addicts. As Vicente Rafael (2019: 144) has argued, it is no coincidence that violence under Duterte has been trained on the figure of the addict, a figure that appears to “recognize no other authority except (its) own,” who “know no limits to (its) power for destruction,” and who, therefore, is also able to claim “absolute sovereignty.” Duterte’s murderous campaign against drug addicts can thus be read as the performative staging of the recovery of the lost sovereign power for which authoritarian nostalgia longs. With every death, Duterte appears to “absorb” the addict’s deadly power, offering to those who would see his actions as their own the sadistic *jouissance* of exercising a “fearsome authority that brooks no limits,” a “capacity to access that which lies beyond life” itself (Rafael, 2019: 145, 155). We might thus better understand why Duterte’s drug war has been so widely popular, though narcotics were hardly a matter of grave public concern prior to his election. For in the same way that the seductiveness of Marcos’s infrastructural projects has had little to do

with their actual economic effects, the allure of Duterte's drug war is not contingent on the fulfillment of its stated aims, but only on its ability to convey the presence of a godlike sovereign from whose acts of creation *or* destruction the people might derive the partial satisfaction of a sovereignty drive that remains unsated.

It is, of course, this very model of sovereignty mediated through the body of a godlike figure that democracy claims to reject. On social media, for instance, Duterte's supporters are often mocked for treating the president as "Poon" (God). Harking back to the 1990s cults which depicted Marcos as Christ's second coming, such charges cast those who welcome the return of authoritarianism as having retrogressed to a state of religious devotion, as having fallen back under the spell of absolute sovereignty from which the people were said to have already been emancipated. The reach of that spell, however, may be more expansive than we care to admit. Consider again the *jouissance* of people power. On the one hand, we might see that *jouissance* as the product of our having rid ourselves of a figure that stands outside the law, whose agency is unbound by the constraints under which we labor. On the other hand, if, as Tadiar argues, that *jouissance* stems from the experience of a "moment of subjective freedom," then we might add that that sense of freedom derives from the fact that to revolt is also to act outside the law. As Geoffrey Bennington (2006: 404) writes, revolution is revolutionary "because of its radical illegitimacy. (Any) revolution worthy of the name would be an act of pure illegality . . . (and) therefore . . . a properly sovereign act." People power, in other words, is nothing if not the performance of the unencumbered freedom of the sovereign it banishes; it is, at bottom, "a form of crossed obedience or loyal disobedience to a superior force" (Edmondson and Mladek, 2017: 12).

Understood this way, the *jouissance* of people power registers the ambiguity of democracy's relationship to the sovereign, which comes to represent a force from which the people must be liberated *and* a model from which the very meaning of freedom is derived. Pronounced dead yet not laid to rest, the figure of the sovereign remains operative under democracy, not only as the ghostly threat that keeps returning, but as the unavowed measure for all aspirations to sovereignty that remain unrealized. The return of authoritarianism is, from this vantage, a possibility that inheres within democracy itself, for though it may be forgotten and exiled in death, any given authoritarian figure may readily be rediscovered as the last known locus of the sovereignty that was not transferred during the revolution nor in any of its reenactments. Derrida, more than anyone, was alert to the possibility of such rediscovery. Warning against the potential "suicide of democracy," he reminds us that "the self-inadequation of any present and presentable democracy" sets it on a "route that turns back on itself," back to the sovereign whose ruin it wills and yet whose radical autonomy grounds the principles of freedom and self-determination that democracy cannot do without (Derrida, 2005: 18–35). The bewilderment with which we might greet the return of authoritarianism is predicated on the hardened belief that democracy constitutes a forward movement away from the logic of the sovereign's sovereignty. Against such a belief, we might point out that the advent of democracy does not break the spell of the sovereign, for

at the death of the king one can still say: 'The King is dead, long live the King!' [. . .] The sovereignty of the people or the nation merely inaugurates a new form of the same fundamental structure. The walls are destroyed, but the architectural model is not deconstructed. (Derrida, 2009: 282)

Democracy and authoritarianism are thus able to appear as the other's alternative, for they orbit around a shared fantasy of sovereignty that has yet to be mourned, even though, or precisely because, it seems to be rendered real only in memory—that is, in nostalgic recollections of revolution *or* dictatorship. This is not to suggest that democracy and

authoritarianism are one and the same, but to recall the proximity that binds them and which allows autocratic figures, living or dead, to raise their heads wherever democracy fails, as though to offer another body, a second body, through which the people's sovereignty drive might be channeled. The question this interchangeability begs is how to keep sovereignty's circularity from leading back to the time of dictatorship, to the resurrection of sovereignty in its most monstrous form. The intuitive response to this question is that democracy's relationship to popular sovereignty must be made meaningful. Democratic institutions, we say, must be made more accountable, more representative, less susceptible to the hollowing effects of corruption, oligarchy, and neoliberal capitalism. Such tasks are immediate and necessary; they should not, however, keep us from remembering that the sovereign lives on in the aspirations that are set against it, that it survives because "too much that we cherish, too many of our goals, are in fact tied up with the conception... of sovereignty" for us to eliminate the figure that presents us with an image of its possible fulfillment (Martel, 2010: 162). Seeking a way out of the repetition compulsion that takes the sovereign as its object, Derrida famously voiced an injunction to imagine a democracy outside sovereignty's circularity, a democracy *to come*. Already difficult to heed in moments that appear far from crisis, such an injunction may seem even less pressing now, when so many of us may find ourselves longing—nostalgically—for a recent past in which democracy, imperfect though it may have been, at least did not appear to be collapsing in on itself. To restore that past, however, is merely to return to a time that leads to *this* present and to fail to see that democracy, even then, was already afflicted with authoritarian nostalgia.

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Notes

1. My fieldwork in 2014 was conducted as part of an investigation of what, at the time, I saw as nascent feelings of Marcos nostalgia that could be illuminated through a reading of the spectral environments of Marcos-era architectural and infrastructural projects (Benedicto, 2013). As this article details, those feelings would become, over the course of a few years, a markedly *public* feeling. I returned in 2016 to investigate this shift.
2. As of this writing, the death toll of Duterte's drug war is estimated to be as high as 20,000. Meanwhile, his approval ratings across demographic categories have remained astonishingly high, reaching 87% in December 2019 (Bernstein, 2020).
3. Imelda's body also features heavily in these images, especially in relation to the regime's architectural projects, for which she was seen as a primary driving force. One might argue that the figure of the sovereign, understood as a body that interpellates *and* exceeds the people, was effectively split by the Marcoses along gendered lines.
4. On the role of the corpse in Philippine politics, see Rafael (2000).
5. This indistinguishability speaks to contradictory survey data indicating strong support for democracy *and* authoritarian policies and figures among Filipinos. This contradiction has been interpreted in terms of "ambivalence" or the simultaneous holding together of oppositional values (Webb, 2017); my contention, however, is that these values may not be as oppositional as they appear if one considers the logic of sovereignty undergirding democracy and authoritarianism.

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