

NEITHER ORWELLIAN NOR HUXLEYAN: THE AUTHORITARIAN STATE IN INDONESIA

IVONNE KRISTIANI

Research Master's degree on Sociology and Political Philosophy from Université Paris Diderot

ABSTRACT

Depictions of an authoritarian state most of the time fall into one of the two categories. The first is Orwellian: whereby a central state maintains control through fear, repression, and constant surveillance of its subjects; the other is a Huxleyan state, in which pleasure, happiness, and distraction serve as a better mechanism of control. As a consequence, a dichotomous version of an authoritarian state is presented: either the subjects are forced to comply using state apparatus or their resistance is defused and made unthinkable by constant distractions. Studying the case of Indonesia, neither of these versions could explain the complexity of the mechanisms used during its authoritarian period. Analyzing Suharto's New Order in Indonesia (1966-1998), this paper argues that recourse to illegitimate violence and repression would not be sufficient to maintain the regime. On the other hand, a Huxleyan vision, which alludes that the subject internalizes their domination and is blindly obedient, renders collective resistance as impossible and thus undermines any social movement that could overthrow the regime. Using a Foucauldian approach to discourse and his conception of governmentality, this study delves into a more subtle, anonymous, form of power that maintained Suharto's New Order for thirty-two years.

INTRODUCTION

May 1998 marked the beginning of a democratic regime in Indonesia after a long-standing authoritarian regime led by General Suharto (Bunte & Ufen, 2008). Ever since, social and political scientists have been analyzing the causes leading to the collapse of a previously "strong and stable" regime as well as the complexities and the difficulties of a democratic transition during the period that follows, known as the *Reformasi*, or the reformation era (Budiman, 1999; Nyman, 2006; O'Rourke, 2003). More importantly, as researchers in democratizing Indonesia gained more freedom of speech due to the removal of repressive laws leading to incarceration and persecution for criticizing the government, there is an increasing interest in classifying the regime under Suharto's New Order and understanding its legitimation (Aspinall, 2005; Aspinall & Fealy, 2010; Vatikiotis, 1998).

A classical definition of an authoritarian government, regardless of its variations (whether military, dictatorial, populist, monarchic, etc.), assumes a strong centralized power and a low or non-existent political freedom. Authoritarianism itself is a concept describing total obedience to a figure of authority who, in turn, regulates, controls, and restricts the activities of individuals. The overarching characteristic of an authoritarian state then is the concentration of power in a charismatic leader or a group of elites who surveil the private lives of its subjects. An authoritarian regime is usually contrasted with a democratic one where the monopoly of power and authority is avoided by majority-rule voting therefore assuring that the leader elected is the one desired by the people.

However, this dichotomous classification of authoritarian and democratic regimes bears little significance due to the characteristics of the New Order in which formal elections were conducted without any proper civil liberties, known as *illiberal democracy* (Zakaria, 1997). The classification becomes more problematic also when a democratic state takes authoritarian measures, as exemplified by the National Security Agency (NSA) surveillance case in the United States. This points out that the weak point of the ideal-types is not taking into account the intricacies of social reality, or at least standing the test of time, since after the end of the cold war there was a need to redefine these ideal-types.

How then should we describe Suharto's New Order? Can we classify it as an authoritarian state? In what ways is it authoritarian? There is no denying that the New Order regime instrumentalized fear and violence. Nonetheless, if constant fear and oppression is the ultimate tool to maintain power, how should we understand the outburst of mass protests and demonstrations by the people against the then-powerful Suharto, which as a consequence threw down his position? In other words, how is it possible that all of a sudden these people seem to have no fear anymore?

The central argument of this paper is that coercion is not an effective measure of maintaining a despotic regime. Instead, it is a symptom of a weak regime with no source of legitimation. The more coercive a regime is, the more it is undermining itself since relying on illegitimate violence will provide a pretext for insurgency and unite the oppositions. A perfectly strong regime would not need to use violence because its subjects are purposefully obedient without question and thus no threat or physical force is necessary. Why then, one would ask, the Suharto's New Order was extremely successful in maintaining itself? The attempt to answer the question would look into the traditional depiction of an authoritarian state and analyze its limitations in interpreting the Indonesian case. In light of the Foucauldian (re)-definition of power, this paper proposes another possible explanation of what sustains the regime.

ORWELL AGAINST HUXLEY ON AUTHORITARIAN STATE

George Orwell's *1984* (1950) and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) are two most well-known dystopian novels whose depictions of a perfect totalitarian state have an eerie resemblance to our contemporary society. The differing opinion and debate between Orwellian and Huxleyan vision of an authoritarian centralized government was popularized by Neil Postman (2005) and exemplified by the passage he wrote in the foreword, favoring a Huxleyan vision:

"Orwell warns that we will be overcome by an externally imposed oppression. But in Huxley's vision, no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity and history. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think. What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy." (Postman, 2005)

Both Orwell and Huxley have a remarkable futurist vision penned through an elaborate description of how power maintains itself. Both are equally plausible. As a matter of fact, in our current times, we are starting to see how their "prophecies" begin to materialize. The always-watching and always-listening Big Brother in modern days is made possible by the invention of new technologies: not giant telescreens but GPS-tracking cell phones, small video cameras at every corner of public places, and small everyday technologies which supposedly made our lives simpler but are used instead to collect a huge amount of metadata of an individual's profile (credit card and online transaction data, cell phone numbers, text messages, emails, chat messages and any other online communication data). Besides, the rise of entertainment culture and a hyper-mediatised society perfectly fits the incessant distractions and happiness offered to distort subject's perception of the world (our social media culture with YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram is a perfect example) and accordingly might produce ignorance and blind obedience as illustrated in *Brave New World*. However, the two authors' fundamental theses differ in deciding which one is a better mechanism of control: the former argues for pain, the latter for pleasure. In the Orwellian world, the central government maintains control through fear, repression, and constant surveillance of its subjects while in the Huxleyan one, public was oppressed by their own addiction to amusement and happiness. *"Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us."* (Postman, 2005)

The Orwellian vision translated into most of the studies undertaken on New Order Indonesia. They emphasized the incessant recourse to violence, repressions, and restrictions by the military and other state apparatuses during the New Order as the main pillars which supports the whole regime structure (Anderson, 2000; Crouch, 2007; Heryanto, 2005). Further, media studies during the period also documented censorship, propaganda, and restrictions on media ownership (Hill, 2006). It is true that during the authoritarian period, the press and media did not obtain a relative freedom as to what to say, who could say it, and in what way can it be said. It was widely acknowledged, although this was not necessarily a written rule, that any news that displeased the President would be demanded to be retracted. The consequence for the press who did not obey would be removal of their publishing permit. Supported by strict licensing and media laws, repressive censorship of Indonesia's print and broadcast media is seen as the fundamental attribute as well as a tool of the regime. Control of the state over media is seen as total and thus articulated in mass propaganda, which functions like the Ministry of Truth in *1984*.

This vision assumes that domination was state-imposed and relies heavily on perpetual repression, constant creation of new language, and discourse that distorts or hides the ultimate truth from reaching the public, as well

as rewriting of history to perfectly fit the state's ideology. Notice that the state here does not necessarily need to legitimize itself. All it does is creating a dispositive that would enable it to diffuse any resistance easily and to make people obey. The heavily controlled discourse is meant not to legitimate but to prevent counter-power in the form of writing to emerge. Under this model of totalitarian state, the subjects are well aware of their own circumstances and the domination they suffer, but as they see that the state power is overwhelmingly present they do not find any point in resistance. In this sense, resistance is futile since the enactment of it would risk further deprivation of the already-limited personal liberty, such as imprisonment and confinement in the notorious Room 101. An individual's capacity would be no match to the omniscient state.

Contrast this with the Huxleyan State where the issue is not the sense of powerlessness one feels but the irrelevance of resistance. In this matter, it can be seen how this is one step ahead than Orwellian one. Instead of blocking any possible ways of resistance, the dictator in Huxleyan State would eliminate any desire or need to dissent the powerful state and thus would make resistance **unthinkable**. In his own words, Huxley explained in a letter to Orwell how his conception of powerful authoritarian state is more plausible: "My own belief is that the ruling oligarchy will find less arduous and wasteful ways of governing and of satisfying its lust for power, and these ways will resemble those which I described in *Brave New World* [...] and that the lust for power can be just as completely satisfied by suggesting people into loving their servitude as by flogging and kicking them into obedience." (Huxley, 1949) Looking at the same example of modern digital technology, constant surveillance would be obsolete when people willfully share their private lives in public through social media. Even in the case where they knew that the government is spying on them, as revealed by Edward Snowden, many seem to not care or not be aware of the dangers and the implications of this. Accordingly, Huxley is quite right in his premise, which argues that it is far easier to control a population by persuading them to believe that there is nothing wrong or that things are the way they should be. After all, the first step to solve a problem is acknowledging that there is one. Without any recognition of a common problem, no action will be taken whatsoever. Probably in the same vein, some studies on authoritarian Indonesia had also focused on the basis on which the regime legitimized itself and looked for its ideological underpinnings: either Suharto's conception of *Pancasila* (the State's constitution), its cultural basis (Javanese culture as inherently leading to paternalistic state), or its economic basis (economic development as necessitating an authoritarian government). (Robison, 2008; Sarsito, 2006; Ward, 2010)

In spite of the rather accurate revelation of what underlies a strong state, this vision privileges one side of the coin. It assumes that the subjects are "passive readers" and thus would consume whatever the state shoves at them at face value, leading to a voluntary servitude. Further, this suggests that the subjects themselves do not have a capacity to think for themselves and would automatically become ignorant and obtain a "false consciousness" through the bombardment by massive distractive entertainment and media. Stuart Hall (1973) has criticized this linear model of communication in his seminal essay entitled "Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse". He demonstrated that audiences interpret the same messages differently according to their cultural, economic, social, and personal differences. Opposing the passive conception of audience, Hall advanced that audiences have an active role in decoding messages. Hence, the state's production of sign does not control its interpretation. The decoding of a message, then, is independent of the sender's intention. The interpretation of signs transmitted resides instead in the active reading done by the audiences. Hall's theoretical insight is important in its rejection of disempowering pessimistic model and its endowment of capacity of action to subjects. Taking into account Hall's model, state propaganda and behavior conditioning are not foolproof ways to control the subjects. If the control of a physical body is more visible and noticeable, making it certain and easy to enact (imprisonment of one's body would ensure his immobility outside the scope of the confinement), the control of one's mind is not evident by virtue of plurality of possible interpretations, whether hegemonic, negotiated or oppositional.

LIBERTY AS THE CONDITION OF POWER

The Orwell-Huxley debate serves to illustrate that we are faced with a binary analysis of an authoritarian state: either a powerful repressive state where the subjects are forced to comply using state apparatus or a voluntary servitude of the subjects where their resistance is defused and made unthinkable by constant distractions. Both of these analyses are inadequate to explain the interworking of power relations, especially in the case of Indonesia. A possible explanation that transcends both visions comes from Michel Foucault's conception of governmentality. His skepticism on the concept of power as repressive, always prohibiting and always negative, made him interrogate the productive aspect of power. He questions, "[i]f power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what

makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression.” (Foucault, 1980 p.119)

In his lecture at *Collège de France* in 1978 titled “Security, Territory, Population”, Foucault (2009) sketched for the first time his notion of governmentality by retracing its history and its emergence in the West. One of his objectives was to extend his analysis of power-knowledge in order to analyze another form of technology of power by concentrating on the formation of modern State. This notion is further developed in his other lecture one year later, “The Birth of Biopolitics”. He placed the definition of “governmentality” in a more global level this time, presenting it as “a way of conducting the conduct of men”¹ (Foucault, 2004); meaning that to govern is to orient, to guide, to influence, to lead, or to point out to a certain desirable action so that the subjects took this particular action instead of others. This implies that the subjects of power have a liberty to conform or not. In the end, the decisions lie in the hands of the subjects. They have the potential to alter the relations although their margins of freedom are slim. This capacity, however, is not due to a weakness in the ways of governing or side effect of techniques of subjection, but “its very condition of possibility”. (Cremonesi et al., 2016) Power relation, then, is never fixed. It is ever changing, subject to inversions, and should not be analyzed monolithically as a binary relation between the governors and the governed whereby there is, on one side, someone who prescribes certain actions, and on the other, someone who passively obeys. On the contrary, liberty precedes power, considering that without it, there would be only the use of force, instead of power. Liberty here should not be understood narrowly only as civil liberty or political liberty but more broadly as liberty to think and to choose their own actions in a certain field of possibility. In short, liberty in this case is the capacity to resist conforming to the encouraged behavior and action.

Following this line of analysis, Suharto’s New Order can be freshly scrutinized not by focusing on the force and violence it committed, without nonetheless negating or diminishing the scale of crimes perpetuated. The dictatorial regime was not characterized by a voluntary servitude assuming passive ignorant subjects. A certain number of resistances in the form of protestations and manifestations during the period testified to a willingness to unsettle the asymmetric power relations. This also suggests that the regime was neither characterized by a blind obedience nor blind love for the master. Suggesting such would imply that the subjects demanded their own oppression. Although the subjects played their indispensable part in the disciplinary mechanisms, they are caught in a Kafkaesque world where the question is not simply whether or not to obey. In Kafka’s *The Trial* (1925), the protagonist, Joseph K., was not confined nor were his actions restricted by the authorities; after all, he lived in a country governed by the law. Rather, he assists them in controlling himself. The individual consciousness is here formed by the existing disciplinary procedures to which the subjects submit themselves.

By means of illustration, in a regime that instrumentalizes violence and threat, such as the New Order, a decision to obey does not automatically suggest a false consciousness or internalization of the regime’s domination. Rather, it is a rational decision to preserve one’s life. When one is discontent with the way the authoritarian state governs, one is forced to rethink their decision to resistance considering the potential risks of more oppression. In fighting for liberty, one risks further deprivation of their freedom; which ultimately leads to reluctant obedience. Hence, obedience here is a strategic action while disobedience is an irrational move. In this way, it was not a singular coherent power or a centralized organizing machine which governs the individuals but a disciplinary structure permeating the society. A shift in focus is necessary in order to delve into this subtle anonymous form of power in the New Order by looking at the discourse produced to govern behaviors and to render certain actions as legitimate while others as the opposite. This structure limits the possible fields of actions by determining what is permissible and what is not, what is speakable and what is not, also what is intelligible and what is not. The analysis of discourse during the period would serve as an empirical evidence to reveal the underlying rules or procedures, whether conscious or unconscious, which guided the production of this discourse, independently of the speaker. For this very reason, an examination of the winning discourse that became dominant during the period is indispensable.

MAINTAINING THE SOCIAL ORDER AT ALL COSTS: SOCIAL HARMONY AND RESPECT

Suharto was socialized as a Javanese and had a good knowledge on Javanese philosophy and wisdom. One could say that these were his guiding principles in life as well as in governing the country. Indonesianists have identified the Javanese culture as a non-negligible source for New Order’s legitimacy; the most well-known was Benedict

Anderson's "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture" (2007). However, this oftentimes led to a cultural-reductionist approach, which assigns essentialist features to a culture while neglecting its historical formation. This approach neglects the very condition of discursive formation, cultural or others, which involves power struggle whereby the winners have the privilege to determine the dominant discourse. Another way of looking at the Javanese culture then is to treat it as a discourse itself, which has its own implicit rules and guidelines that give order to life and behavior of people submitted to it. Submission, most often than not, is equivocal to agreeing with the underlying arbitrary rules governing the conduct. The critical imperative is to dissect these underlying rules and evaluate their effect and limits in the contemporary context in order to scrutinize the political reason guiding our government.

This being said, the dominant discourse during the New Order can be identified as idealizing the consensual end of political practice by emphasizing harmony and unity of the state while demanding a non-critical posture of the subjects. The discourse of consensus was supported by the reactivation of the symbolic dimension, which holds a dear place to the imagination of the people and gave itself a natural appearance. Two significant Javanese social values that became the principal values in guiding moral principles amongst Javanese, as identified by Geertz (1961) in her study of Javanese family life, are "rukun" or "social harmony" and "hormat" or "respect". The two became the keys in analyzing the New Order since they can be found guiding the political discourse uttered by Suharto to defuse resistance, as recorded in his autobiography (Dwipayana & K.H. Ramadan, 1988).

"Rukun" or social harmony is the dedication to maintain harmonious social appearance by minimizing overt and direct conflicts of any kind with other people by suppressing opposing views or emotional excess. Notice that the social harmony should be maintained only at the surface level. In other words, the appearance of social harmony is enough. If there is a disagreement, it should not be expressed overtly. This moral imperative is based on the Javanese notion of equilibrium, whether emotional, social, or supernatural. This view assumes that equilibrium is the natural order of things and the social goal is to maintain this equilibrium, not to create one. Any action or behavior that disrupts this equilibrium is considered morally wrong. Javanese people are expected to adapt to this reality of existing equilibrium rather than to change it by controlling their own impulses and keeping them unexpressed. (Magnis-Suseno, 2013) One must relativized their own position in order to achieve a common agreement. The second most central social value is "hormat" or "respect". This value is based on the view that social structure is a natural reality. All social relationships are hierarchically ordered and one, then, is obliged morally to maintain this social order by recognizing the superior ranks by means of linguistic rituals and other forms of social etiquette. Through the socialization they received in the Javanese family, proper behavior is not enforced by threats but rather by a more indirect hint of disapproval.

Both of these social values, along with their corresponding moral imperatives, require each person to be able to self-reflect, to inhibit and control one's public behavior and "to choose inaction rather than action, encouraging a deeply passive attitude". (Geertz, 1961) Inhibition and passivity are key aspects overarching this moral principle. In the context of politics, this moral and cultural framework could be regarded as a technique of governing, being at the intersection of self-governing and the governing of others. While Javanese families' form of socialization may not attain a political aspect per se, it becomes political once one's self-conduct is in line with the interest of the State.

Social harmony becomes a technique of the government by limiting the field of possible political actions of the subjects and reprimanding any opposition towards central authority and the interest of the State. Further, it was a tool to depoliticize the society and to defuse social struggle. This is done through the reframing of class antagonism from class struggle to partnership between capitalists and workers. In his autobiography, Suharto tried to persuade workers not to declare an overt conflict to their superiors and vice versa by succumbing to a rhetorical discourse employing Javanese wisdom:

*"We do not want to live like in the West, where there is a fierce opposition between workers and employers. The employers there search for maximum profit and crushed the workers. Because of it, the reactions of the workers there consist of trying to demand high salaries, which could cause the bankruptcy of the enterprise. In Indonesia, [...] The legitimate work relation here is one in which the partnership between the workers and employers is based on "Tridharma". Three devotions. What is important is the point of view and the reference to "Rumangsa melu handarbeni", the sense of belonging. Even though, legally the workers do not own the factory, but through the sense of belonging, know that it provides for their lives, therefore the atmosphere between the two could not be more pleasing. In so doing, the workers help the factory. In so doing, the workers support the factory and not destroy it."*² (Dwipayana & K.H. Ramadan, 1988 p.374)

The three devotions (*tridharma*) referred to here illustrate well the presence of Javanese values in the political discourse by suggesting to: (1) have a sense of belonging to a particular thing (*rumangsa handarbeni*), in this case, the factory; (2) have a sense to be obliged to defend it (*wajib melu hangrungkebi*); (3) to do self-introspection, have a self-discipline (*mulat sarira, hangrasa wani*). Again, a sense of belonging here did not need to translate into concrete rights but it was enough to have it "in the mind". Following this logic, no prohibition of demonstrations or protests is necessary since every laborer is invited to restrict themselves not to. When each and every one is persuaded to self-govern so that their behaviors benefit the interest of the State, the government does not need to the heavy work of restraining, prohibiting, and controlling every movement of the subject. This is resumed in an excerpt of Suharto's discourse where he responded to laborer's strike:

"Why should the workers not be allowed to strike? As a matter of fact, we do not need to prohibit strikes. But strikes are not necessary if both parties could cooperate well. We do not prohibit strikes in itself. We do not eliminate the fundamental rights of workers. However, we should always keep in mind that the development should advance. This should be in consideration by all three parties. The three forces should assimilate into one, which are the workers', the employers', and the government. Then, strikes are not necessary." (Dwipayana & K.H. Ramadan, 1988 p.375)

This explains the logic of social harmony, which muzzled any oppositional force. Anyone who tried to voice their criticism of the government was immediately labeled as putting his own interests above those of society and the economic development of the country. This includes any action or speech that was judged likely to compromise the stability and unity of the country. The social harmony, which searched for a way to build consensus (*mufakat*) through deliberation (*musyawarah*) had as a consequence the silence and the repression of any oppositions to the government, supported by unofficial sanctions given to those who tried to "rebel".

The value of "respect" serves to further support the whole dispositive, by relying on the naturalization of inequality and hierarchy and forgetting the arbitrary nature of these two. Positioning himself as the father of the development of the country, Suharto expected his subjects to obey him just as children would obey their father inside the hierarchy of a family. The inferior should respect and follow the wisdom of the superior because their life depends on them. Suharto explicitly envisaged the nation as one big family with him as the father and his subjects as the children:

"The development of the spirit of deliberation to attain consensus is a result of us within the last 20 years, in abandoning previous behavior and political culture, which considered politics as struggle of power, a way to form this power, and to mobilize this power to fight other groups even though those groups belong to the big family that is our nation." (Dwipayana & K.H. Ramadan, 1988 p.409)

By conceiving the patriarchal state, not only did the father of the family had the final and the sole authority to decide for the country, the citizens as children must be obedient and must act to one another in a way that do not pose problems or interfere with the interest of the state in general, which is primarily an economic interest. Suharto legitimized his administration further by guiding Indonesia into becoming self-sufficient in rice production in 1984 proving his ability to be a father that provides for his children.

The techniques explained precedently are forms of subjugation that shape and mold subjects who are ready to obey to the government. This served as the framework of politics in the New Order. It depended on passive behavior, which leads to the creation of obedient subjects who do not challenge or criticize the government but accepts its form of governing to avoid open conflict.

The seed of authoritarian government

"No," said the priest, "it is not necessary to accept everything as true, one must only accept it as necessary."

"A melancholy conclusion," said K. "It turns lying into a universal principle."

(Kafka, 1925)

All in all, the characteristic of any authoritarian states or rather, the condition of its rise is well illustrated by Kafka. In his parable "Before the Law" in *The Trial* (1925), he depicts a paradoxical situation in which a country man who came to access the Law find himself refused by the doorkeeper, only to find out during his last breath that the door has been made exclusively for him to enter. If we are to learn from this, Kafka's most important point is achieved by satirizing the man's unquestioned acceptance of the Law through an implicit tautological reasoning that the Law is just and truthful because it is the Law. Upon denied entrance by the doorkeeper, the man fails to put into question why is he not allowed to enter. The reasoning and the legitimation behind the refusal are taken as granted because it was uttered by the guardian of the law, employed by the law itself and thus lending him a veridical quality. The man instead accepts the refusal to enter at the moment **as is** and waits for this verdict to change. Since

the Law is superior to himself, he must wait for the law to finally change or for it to give permission to him to enter so that he would never have to violate the law.

Upon the revelation, in the end of the parable, that no one else could gain admittance through the door but the man himself, and that the doorkeeper would shut the door after his death, it was made clear that the man was being oblivious to the fact that the power resides in him. Regardless of whether or not the doorkeeper would let him pass had he transgressed, the very fact that the door was intended for him should give a sufficient legitimacy for the man to enter despite the prohibition. The reluctance of the man to enter the door without permission resides in his fear of transgressing the law. However, since we know that the door was made especially for him, had he entered he would not have had broken the law, properly speaking.

The parable serves to illustrate a society that fails to question the law, the absurdity of it, the basis of it, and the legitimation of it, but accepts them as necessary in their socio-political life. Treating the law as divine law or natural law would lead to a posture that accepts the law as it is without further questioning and is oblivious to the socio-historical aspect of it. Taking "Before the Law" allegorically, we could replace the law here with social norms or cultural norms, etc. in which blind acceptance of them to the point of naturalizing them would be dangerous and serve as a basis for an unjust authoritarian government. It had justified killings, terrors, and exclusion of certain social, ethnic, or racial groups by deeming the act as **necessary**. Obedience to the law, or any other political reason for that matter, is therefore not a submission to external force or pressure but the internal intuition to follow the "rules" despite not having grasped fully their meaning and justification.

It is also highly probable that the words of the doorkeeper, that proclaims his powerfulness and other doorkeepers' superiority to him, made the man feel powerless and thus resides to inaction. All of this is obscuring the fact that the doorkeeper is subordinate to the man since his entire assignment is dedicated to the entrance intended only for the man. However, while blaming the man for his own demise is equivalent to blaming the victims for what they underwent, blaming the doorkeeper would attain more or less the same absurdity. As rightly mentioned by the priest in the conversation with K., the doorkeeper, being the lowest rank, was merely fulfilling his duty. The law ordered him to refuse admittance and he did well in this. So, the question of who is being deluded by whom would be of little relevance, since they are both governed by the law. The primary question is, then, to scrutinize and examine this law.

CONCLUSION

While many analyses of the New Order have focused on the repressive state apparatus and violence perpetrated, a distinction between power and force is necessary in order to apprehend completely the complex dispositive used to sustain an authoritarian government. Even though recourse to force is a non-negligible aspect of it, it could not stand on its own without a solid disciplinary mechanism, which was operated by the subjects at the same time they were being subjected to it, that penetrated the whole society. This mechanism is anonymous and faceless. Although we saw it being re-activated by Suharto, he did not create it and it was less of a deceptive illusion than an already existing framework shaping social reality. There was not one supreme force controlling the whole society but it was a cooperative relation inside of it. Cooperative, because not taking action is already an action in itself.

Consequently, coercion, although ever-present, should not be accounted as the main characteristic of an authoritarian regime since recourse to violence signals an open "invitation" to fight back as in war. The ultimate effectiveness of power resides in making the other party accepting the desired actions as necessary and justified, thus legitimate. The danger for any society lies in mythologizing and naturalizing the instruments used to organize existence and impose order while forgetting the contingent character of it and also overlooking that it was human-made, thus changeable. In light of this, the ability to take a step back and take a critical stance against the way our society is ordered is more than ever an important quality and a political tool to contest any authoritarian regime.

NOTES

1. This is author's translation from the French edition, *Naissance de la Biopolitique* (2004), for English edition see *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2010).
2. All of citations from Suharto's autobiography are authors' translation from Indonesian.

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