The Discourse of Democracy in Thailand

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1992 in many ways showed the extremes of politics in Thailand. There were two elections, one mass movement, and one brutal crackdown. And democracy was central in each of these defining events. The word was all over the headlines and in conversations almost every day. But what does democracy really mean?

Gen Sithi Jirarote—the former chairman of the National Peacekeeping Council-formed committee investigating "unusually rich" politicians—put his finger on an important problem in the quotation above.\(^1\) The word "democracy" is so everpresent that it is empty, for even Gen Suchinda Kraprayoon, who is now taken as the arch-nemesis of democracy, believed that he was putting forth his own vision of democracy for Thailand by shooting down pro-democracy demonstrators.

And it is not just the generals who are confused. "Democracy" has reentered the world academic stage as a reputable topic in recent years with hundreds of articles being published about democracy in Eastern Europe and the 1989 Democracy Movement in China. Indeed, much has been written journalistically in 1992 about Democracy in Asia to explain and interpret general elections in the Philippines, Taiwan, and South Korea in addition to Thailand—and academic treatises are sure to follow.

But even with all this attention, the confusion continues for the struggle is not just for "democracy" but also about just what "democracy" means. Even if one takes the term etymologically as "self-rule," or "people-power" the analytical problems continue. As democratic theorist Giovanni Sartori points out, even in the European context there are disputes over just who "the People" are and what their "power" entails. In the Asian context it becomes even more difficult because the arguments often divide the field into

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2 An article by Peter Kien-hong Yu can serve as an extreme example. To describe and analyze how democracy works in Taiwan he ends up with six different models which are very confusing to differentiate. DEMOCRATS are: democrat, "democrat", democrat-> "democrat", "democrat"---> democrat, "democrat"---> democrat---> democrat, and democrat---> "democrat"---> democrat. Still with all this effort, Yu only analyzes two dictators. (*Models of DEMOCRATS in Island China/Mainland Relations* Journal of Contemporary Asia, Vol.22. No.2, (1992), pp. 224-232.)

"Western-style democracy" and "Asian-style democracy," or "Thai democracy."  

Indeed, terms like democracy are truly multi-valent, but the ambiguity does not stop there. The concept and practice of democracy vary not just by country and culture, but by groupings and sub-cultures within any one society.

Perhaps the problem then is not so much with "democracy" as with the search for some core meaning of the term "democracy" which can be applied equally in every time and place. So rather than searching for some essence which we all can agree on, a standard that can be used to judge yay or nay, here I will look at how "democracy" is used by different groups in Thailand to blur its commonsense meaning, at the same time as clarifying it in specific structural and historical circumstances. Hence rather than trying to follow some straight path of "democratization"--which is all too often reduced to "westernization"--I aim to look at the discourse of how democracy is used in different political situations.

This essay then has two purposes. In the first section I will use both texts and interviews to outline how democracy is used in different ways by three

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4See for example how even sympathetic researchers like Joseph W. Esherick and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom lament that the Chinese didn't get democracy right in 1989 in "Acting out Democracy: Political Theater in Modern China" in Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China, Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom and Elizabeth J. Perry, eds. (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 28-66.
specific groups—politicians, the military, and non-government organizations—to show how democracy comes to life in Thailand. In the second section, I will make a more polemic argument about the relations of these three models of democracy to non-Thai influences, as a way of connecting democracy in Thailand with Euro-American precursors while not limiting Thai politics to some forms of westernization: rather than having to choose between East and West, I want to have both cakes and eat them too.

SECTION I: DEMOCRACY FOR POLITICIANS, SOLDIERS AND ACTIVISTS.

Is democracy a positive thing? Was it used to argue for something in particular? This admittedly strange question addresses how the mass demonstrations in April and May 1992 were ideologically organized: in other words, how did the anti-Suchinda protests get transformed into a prodemocracy movement? When asked this question, Dr. San Hattirat, the Chairperson of the Confederation for Democracy—the ad hoc group which coordinated groups like the Student Federation of Thailand, the Campaign for Popular Democracy, pro-democratic political parties and NGOs to spearhead the demonstrations in May—could not give a simple answer. In a long and edifying historical explanation San traced

5The way the data divides itself is telling. The bulk of the evidence about the military is from written sources, while the bulk of my information about NGOs grassroots organizers is from interviews and short articles.
the opposition to the National Peacekeeping Council (NPKC) back to soon after the February 23, 1991, coup.⁶ But he never made the switch to how this negative protest became a positive force.⁷

So in this section I would like to switch the analysis around from democracy being a positive movement to being an oppositional movement as well. In many ways this is more "democratic" in the sense that it includes a wide array of people and groups who can come together in a coalition, or a confederation, to oppose something.⁸ But this oppositional view of democracy also comes up in unexpected places, for parliamentary democracy and military democracy often take their meanings from that which they oppose.

PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

Parliamentary democracy is perhaps the most familiar form to most people. In Thailand, the main rival for parliamentary democracy is seen as military dictatorship. In this discourse of parliamentary democracy commentators then focus on the army

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⁶Dr. San Hattirat, Interview, 18 Nov 1992, Bangkok.

⁷As things stand in January 1993, many of the activists are wondering about this question too. The demonstrations eventually resulted in the Chuan coalition government getting elected, but this "pro-democracy" government seems to be ignoring them.

and political parties, dividing them up into pro-democracy and pro-military camps, because "democracy" is here defined as government by an elected parliament, as opposed to by a military dictatorship which comes to power through a coup.

Indeed, parliamentary democrats are fond of writing the history of Thailand in terms of the spiraling conflict of coups and constitutions in the "60 years of Thai democracy" since the 1932 revolution. A recent example of this kind of scholarship is Likhit Dhiravegin's new book *Demi-Democracy: The Evolution of the Thai Political System*. As the title suggests, Likhit aims to trace a democratic thread from Siam's prehistory all the way through March 1992. But this rational discourse of progressive political development of "democratization" founders on the unexpected 1991 coup. Indeed, the imperative of Likhit's rationalizing argument seems to work the coup into his evolution of demi-democracy as an inevitable and thus positive force: "When an investigation of the evolutionary process is undertaken, it appears that such a system has inevitably emerged from a process which is both natural and (probably) desirable...a halfway democracy may be the only choice."9

But as Suchit Bunbongkarn argues at the opening of his article "Thailand in 1991," the coup disputes such "progressive" arguments.

While a democratic wave has swept throughout communist states in Eastern Europe in the

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past two years, a reverse trend occurred in Thailand in early 1991 when the armed forces took power from the elected government of General Chatichai Choonhavan on February 23. The coup which ended a decade-long parliamentary democracy, came as a surprise to most politicians, political observers, and academics.\(^{10}\)

Thus rather than describing the "development" of parliamentary democracy, it make more sense to write the history of constitutions in Thailand. For here the government is defined by a constitution, and democracy is the rule of law. People's participation is defined by elections and majority rule, and stability is provided by accountable institutions and an efficient and honest civil service.

Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, who is himself a lawyer, embodies this notion of parliamentary democracy by always looking to the law and constitutional measures to solve political problems.\(^{11}\) Rather than searching for social justice, Chuan takes a much narrower legalist stance. His quest in government is to make everyone equal under the law: "it is impossible to make people equally rich. But we can make them equal under the law."\(^{12}\)

\(^{10}\)Suchit Bunbongkarn, "Thailand in 1991: Coping with Military Guardianship," *Asian Survey*, vol. 32, no.2 (Feb 1992), p. 131. This is an interesting switch for Suchit. He welcomed the coup in an interview with the *Bangkok Post* on the day of the coup in 1991.


This structural view of democracy is certainly important, but the weakness of this stance came out in May 1992 when the constitution, the law, and parliament were so obviously being manipulated by Suchinda's military government. Yet some still said that the parliament was the only vehicle to solve the problems, because they saw them as stemming from a constitutional crisis rather than a popular uprising.

MILITARY DEMOCRACY

The army's involvement in politics is much more complex than simple coup-making, for the military also has its own view of democracy. Indeed, we often hear soldiers saying how they "love democracy," but just what is it that they love?

The military tells us that "It is the sacred and historic mission of the National Armed Forces not only to defend the country but also to democratize it." But its definition of democracy is much different from that of the parliamentary democrats. Rather than seeing Thai politics in terms of democracy/military relations as the parliamentarians do, the military sets up the opposition between democracy and communism.

This largely came about when the army switched its tactics From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive to

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13Chai-Anan Samudavanija, Kusuma Snitwongse, Suchit Bunbongkarn, From Armed Suppression to Political Offensive: Attitudinal Changes of Thai Military Officers since 1976 (Bangkok: Institute of Security and International Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 1990), p. 183-84. Hereafter citations will be in the text followed by AS.
fight the communist insurgency in the late 1970s. As Chai-Anan Samudavanija, Kusuma Snitwongse, Suchit Bunbongkarn write in their recent book, according to the military, "The key to final victory is the use of democracy to fight communism." (AS, 8) So democracy for the military is not an idea or a practice, but a weapon.

This notion of democracy stems from the tactical changes that the Thai army made to face the challenge of the Communist Party of Thailand's (CPT) insurgency which erupted into armed struggle in 1965. The communist insurgency was a crisis for the military because "the challenges posed by the Communist Party of Thailand were total challenges since they were diametrically opposed to...the triological institutions of Nation, Religion, and King." (AS, 129) The suppression of "communist terrorists" was not a text-book case of conflict: it was not a war against external enemies, even though that is how the war was initially fought. Yet after over a decade of shooting, history shows that the communist insurgency was growing in the late 1970s. The more ruthless the army became, the more people joined the CPT to resist. In other words, the army's violent strategy for stomping out communist insurgency in Thailand was not working.

A change of tactics was needed, and this change came in 1980 with General Prem's famous Order No. 66/2523: "Policy of Struggle to Win Over Communism." This order shifted the anti-communist tactics "from armed suppression to political offensive." It resulted from an army faction's reconsideration of anti-communist strategy in 1978: "It was judged that using primarily military means to solve the problem of
communism only resulted in expanding the problem and that to solve the problem effectively, a war had to be declared against corrupt officials and poverty." (AS, 68) The army's battle was thus shifted to the political turf to address the exploitation and corruption in Thai society that drove many Thais to communism.

Yet when this democratic weapon does not serve the military's purposes it is painted red: one grassroots activist recently said of his work that he "couldn't do this if the CPT still existed" since in earlier times he would be branded as a communist for his democratic activities. Though Order No. 66/2523 stated that the military would promote all existing democratic movements, it further warned "against confusion between democratic movements and communist movements which hide under the banner of democracy." Yet perhaps it is military dictatorship that is "hiding under the banner of democracy."

Far after the communist insurgency was over in 1984, Suchinda in 1992 used the same vocabulary in talking about (military) democracy vs. the "mob-rule" of the demonstrators. In April and May of 1992, Suchinda and his pro-military coalition parties tried to paint pro-democracy demonstrators as a threat comparable to that of communism. The pro-democracy demonstrations were characterized by state propagandists as threatening the three defining Thai institution: Maj Gen Chamlong Srimuang was depicted as a renegade Buddhist and hence a threat to Religion, Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh was painted as a communist-sympathizer and therefore a threat to the Monarchy, and the whole movement was alleged to be a "foreign conspiracy" which made it a threat to the Thai Nation. Hence when the soldiers
came out of their barracks on May 17 they were told that they were fighting communists. The military plan used to shoot the demonstrators in Bangkok was originally written to suppress communist insurgency, and village leaders up-country were told that the pro-democracy demonstrators were "communist troublemakers." And so on.

And it continued after Suchinda and the coup-makers were out of office: in the lead up to the September election the Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), the army intelligence unit which was organized to combat communism in the '60s, was still teaching students in the provinces this anti-communist view of democracy which distrusts politicians and in a "Workshop on Democratic Development." In a televised interview on January 24, 1993, Army Commander-in-Chief Wimol Wongwanich was still talking about communists as a viable threat in Thailand.

This is how the military uses "democracy" as a weapon, but what does it mean? Democracy is tied to the military's power and stability, at the expense of the people's participation.

Again the history of how the military has talked about democracy is important. The military has been involved in the discourse of democracy in Thailand from the beginning with the coup of 1932. But as Thak Chaloemtiarana writes in his classic *Thailand: The Politics of Despotic Paternalism*, Field Marshal

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15This interview with Suthichai Yoon was translated and published in The Nationon 25-26 January 1993.
Sarit Thanarat more than any other person set the pattern of politics in Thailand with his 1958 revolution (patiwat). 16 This is also not just historical background, for it is important to note that Class 5 of the Chulachomklao Military Academy—which includes Suchinda, Kaset Rojananil, and Issarapong Noon-packdee—graduated with the 1958 patiwat, and it certainly influenced their view of politics and democracy.17

Sarit’s home-grown democracy had little to do with either constitutions or laws, but personal and arbitrary rule. Rather than trusting in the institutions as parliamentary democrats do, Sarit’s so-called Thai form of democracy relied on the benevolent despotism of the Phokhun father ruler which he adapted from the myth of King Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai.18

16Thak Chaloemtiarana, Thailand: The Politics of Despotic Paternalism (Bangkok: Thammasat University Press, 1979). Hereafter notes will be in the text following PDP.

17Thak argues that Sarit’s attitude was similarly influenced by his participation in the 1947 coup. “Sarit’s education in Thai politics coincided with this period of political instability and the growing power and success of the army. His experiences...showed him the supremacy of force in the solution of political problems.” (PDP, 54-55)

18One should note that this vague inscription of Ramkhamhaeng—the authenticity of which itself is in dispute—is used for many purposes. Sulak Sivarakska interpreted it in terms of democratic values (see “Ramkamhaeng’s Inscription: Thai Democracy or Dictatorship” in Siamese Resurgence, (Bangkok: Asian Cultural Forum for Development, 1985), pp. 298-311.) And more recently Siam Cement has used it in a two-page advertisement in the Far Eastern Economic Review to state that Thailand has always been capitalist—even though Ramkhamhaeng pre-dates capitalism by about 400 years.
"King Ramkhamheang of Sukhothai was idealized as the father-figure (phokhun) who rules over his domain in a paternalistic, yet autocratic manner." (PDP, xii) Sarit was the benevolent father and Thailand was his family. Since father knows best, Sarit and the army disciplined the populace-always for their own good-like a father beating discipline into his wayward children, always echoing "this hurts me more than it does you."

Elections were not necessary to choose the Phokhun. "The concept of the people's sovereignty does not mean that the people directly exercise legislative, executive, or judicial power, but the concept implies that these powers should represent the aspirations of the people." (PDP, 160) And actually politicians who advocated popular rule were turned into communists and jailed. Hence, the prevailing view of democracy in the military ironically does not include the people, except as children of the despotic patriarch.

Likewise with Order 66/2523, the military again entered into people's day-to-day lives to stomp out communism. We must recall that Prem's 1980 "policy to win over communism" for all its merit was not democratic in its origin or content. It was an executive order, a revolution from the top down with little or no participation, even from non-military elites, not to mention the broader masses of people. So democracy was not won, but it was given, and hence perhaps the military thinks that it can be taken back.

According to Chai-Anan et al, the army's "preference is for bureaucratically guided liberalization, expressed in terms of limited participation, which emphasizes consensus over competition, a minimal legislature
over an active and potent parliament, appointments over elections, and centralization over decentralization or devolution of power." (AS, 154)

In a 1975 interview Suchinda reinforces how the military-style democracy does not trust the people. After saying that "almost 100 percent of the soldiers wanted democracy to be successful in Thailand," he goes on to describe and thus prescribe this "democracy. " Suchinda insists that in democracy "there must be no trouble, no crisis or conflict." In short, there can be no politics in democracy: "the army has attempted to intervene directly in national politics with the aim of steering it in the direction of its definition of democracy." (AS, 83)

Suchinda's frank harshness of 1975 serves as a gross reminder of what he did do in 1992: "If the stability of the throne or the security of the nation were placed in serious jeopardy in the future, we will intervene to save 40 million, even if it means killing 100 or 200 thousand." (AS, 148-49)19

GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY

But democracy is more than just a deadly game where the parliament struggles against the

19This interview is not listed as being with Suchinda in AR, but with a "Colonel S" who in 1990 was a general. But Chai-Anan in an earlier work refers to an interview on the same day with Colonel Suchinda Kraprayoon. See David Morell and Chai-Anan Samudavanija, Political Conflict in Thailand: Reform, Reaction and Revolution, (Cambridge, MA: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, Publishers, Inc.), 1981, p. 168
military. There are other factors involved as well which add further twists to this struggle for democratic meaning.

Rather than opposing democracy against right-wing military rule as the parliamentary democrats do, or against left-wing communism as the military does, Gothom Ariya, an activist in both PollWatch and the Campaign for Popular Democracy, suggests that democracy is used to fight dictatorship whatever its color.20

Thus to many grassroots organizers "democracy" is not an abstract concept or an institution or a weapon or a personality. It is not an end, but a means of solving the people's problems, otherwise "what good is it?", they ask. In this way grassroots democracy is a positive pro-active force as well.

This problem-solving can be done through majority rule in parliament, but it also needs to go beyond parliament and Bangkok to the rest of the nation. Though elections are necessary to choose a responsible government, Gothom says "Parliamentary democracy is not enough. It must include democratic thinking at other levels." This is because, as a PollWatch volunteer in the North put it, "the major point of democracy is not the election, but how people participate in solving their own problems."21

There are many dictatorships that grassroots

20Gothom Arya, Interview, 4 September 1992, Bangkok.

21Prapoj Sithep, Interview, 1 September 1992, Phitsanoluk.
organizers encounter when trying to solve their day to day problems, among them are:

**DICTATORSHIP OF THE RICH**

Though the May events are often described as a middle-class revolution, if Thailand is to continue to develop socially as well as economically then the urban and rural poor will have to be included as well.

Somchai Homla-or, the Secretary-General of the Campaign for Popular Democracy, goes beyond Chuan's "equality under the law" to work for social justice in the economic sphere when he states "We think that real democracy is something that can be eaten." 22

This can be done by making elections relevant. As one PollWatch volunteer in Sukhothai province said:

I try to show the people how the stability of the government affects their lives. Before the coup rice was Bt5000 a cart, after the (1991) coup it fell to Bt3000; Mangoes were Bt25/kg before the coup and Bt5-6/kg after the coup. It matters to vote for a responsible MP who won't just quarrel for his own advantage. 23

Democracy is economic for the urban poor as well. Slum activist Prateep Ungsongtham Hata puts it simply: "Democracy for the slum people is the

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22Interview, 30 November 1992, Bangkok

distribution of wealth." To explain her position she told a long story of how it took two years for the Emergency Fund for Slum People to get through parliament and then through bureaucracy and to the people.

This was while the stock market got forty times as much money almost instantaneously: "A small amount of money for poor people and a large amount to rich people." Hence for her, one measure of democracy would be equal treatment in terms of government programs, "If it were a real democracy, poor people would get a share."^{24}

**DICTATORSHIP OF THE BANGKOK BUREAUCRACY**

Some activists see the government and its programs as the problem for a truly participatory democracy: "I don't think that any ruling group trusts the people. They don't trust the demands of the people." (Somchai)

This is because the dance of parliamentary elections and military coups is an elite game which has little effect on the rest of Thailand. The only time people upcountry are even consulted is at election time, and even with the ministrations of PollWatch, both elections in 1992 still were reportedly dominated by vote-buying and other electoral fraud.

Some even go as far as to say that the corruption in the halls of parliament is nothing compared with that in the bureaucracy and the military. Hence many of

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^{24}Interview, 21 November 1992, Bangkok.
the nongovernment organizations have been working to establish a network to by-pass the bureaucrats and get information and assistance directly to the people who need it at the village level or in the slums.

Democracy here is worked out in organization and information, for with this free flow of information and assistance, villagers can work solve their own problems in their own way, and more effectively fight off such things as the environmental catastrophes of deforestation and drought that are often the by-products of government policies and projects.

**DICTATORSHIP OF THE PATRIARCHY**

Despotic paternalism did not end with the death of Sarit. It is present at all levels of Thai society from the government and the military on down to the village level and the family.

In "Democracy: Women's perspectives" Sukanya Hantrakul also takes a direct problem-solving approach to the persistent concerns of over one half of Thailand's population. After surveying the absence of female politicians in the Kingdom, she writes: "Probably, it is not practical at all to wait for any male-dominated governing establishment to speak for women's concerns."25

Rather, Sukanya opts for a different kind of democracy where "Driven by problems they consider a matter of life or death and needing to seek solutions for their survival, women in pressure groups are much

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less handicapped by the representative systems controlled by male cliques—military oligarchies or so-called middle-class democracies."

These democratic pressure groups are organized to address specific vital issues affecting women's livelihood such as the environment, consumer protection, health and mother/child-related problems. These issues, which are largely invisible to the government and the military, are the focus for democratic organizing and problem-solving at a grassroots level.

This women's democracy then is not so concerned with the male-dominated political game, for in terms of "democracy" Sukanya "would want to hear more of what is going to be done, how the quality of everyday life can be improved, and most importantly how equal opportunity will become a reality for all and between the sexes."

Democracy at the grassroots level then is used as a method to address specific problems, hence people can see how democracy is useful and they will participate. The work of NGOs to fight the various forms of dictatorship—many more than the few which were mentioned here—is exemplary in this activity.

SECTION II: MODELING DEMOCRACY

Now we get back to the polemic. Some people feel that one of the dictatorships that needs to be opposed is hidden by this whole discourse of democracy: the overarching dictatorship of westernization. People like Lee Kuan Yew, the Senior Minister of Singapore, challenge advocates of
democracy in Asia by arguing that "democracy" is a foreign concept, an alien utopia that is inappropriate to Asian cultural systems. In a speech in the Philippines in 1992, Lee set democracy up in a nationalist opposition: American-style democracy vs. his own style of Confucian Neo-Authoritarianism. Hence to be a democrat is to be a traitor to one's own national roots. Lee also points to the (economic) success of Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea (as examples to China and Vietnam) to say that this neo-authoritarianism is not only better than democracy, but affords the discipline he deems necessary for development. "The exuberance of democracy leads to undisciplined and disorderly conditions which are inimical to development."26

Even western academics question whether "democracy" is a universal which is the best system for all. As Francis Fukuyama writes in terms of "traditional Asian values" vs. "Western democratic norms" in a section of his essay called "The Asian Alternative":

Singapore's former premier Lee Kuan Yew would argue that (neoauthoritarianism) is much more suited to Confucian cultures than is the chaotic individualism of Western democracy. More than that, an increasing number of Asians would argue that this type of authoritarianism is superior

26His speech, along with Fidel Ramos' reply are excerpted in "The 5th Column: Discipline vs. democracy," Far Eastern Economic Review, 10 December 1992, p. 29.
to the individualism of Western liberal democracy in producing the highly educated, motivated, and disciplined populations necessary to achieve an advanced, technological, post-industrial society.27

There are echoes of these sentiments in Thailand as well. Many of the people interviewed for this article noted that "We (Thais) have been strongly influenced by Western thinking." (Gothom) Another quoted from "The Gettysburg Address" by US President Abraham Lincoln when he said in an interview: "The best explanation is from your country. Government more by the people for the people of the people. That is the best explanation that I have ever heard." (Chamlong)

Democracy is not seen as part of Thai culture. A new book on keywords in "Thai Thought" lists many social and moral terms chosen by a wide range of scholars, and "prachathipatai" is not among them.28 Indeed, the word "prachathibatai" is a foreign word even in its Thai incarnation since its roots are from Pali—one way of marking it as a formal and/or alien concept.

So just what is "democracy" doing in Thailand, then? To answer this question it is necessary to examine


28Suwanna Satha-anand and Nuangnoi Boonyanate, eds., Key Terms in Thai Thoughts, (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1992). (In Thai)
how the word, the concept, and the practice appear in Thailand both historically and structurally.

Though nationalism and democracy are put at odds in this East/West debate, in other ways they work in the same mysterious ways. Indeed King Rama VI, who created the slogan "Nation, Religion, Monarchy" and is known as the foremost promoter of nationalism in Thailand\(^{29}\), also created the Thai word prachathipatai. This Thai word for democracy was invented to commemorate an experimental democratic community called Dusit Thani. (DD, 116)

There are ways to explain this political irony without reducing it to either East or West, nationalism or democracy. Simply put, democracy is a modular concept which does have foreign roots, but has been, and can be, modified for Thailand. My argument then tries to recognize both the foreign, often Euro-American, aspects of democracy while pointing to its Thai characteristics. To argue this point I will make a detour into nationalism to argue this modular mechanism. Then I will circle around again to examine just which models of democracy are being appealed to in the parliamentary, military, and grassroots forms of democracy outlined in Section I.

**MODULAR NATIONALISM**

Especially since the end of the Cold War, both democracy and nationalism have leapt to the forefront

of social science analysis, especially in the constitutive societies of the former Soviet empire which were recently freed up to the trials and tribulations of these related concepts. But actually the ties between democracy and nationalism go back much further. They are both products of the eighteenth century European Enlightenment, where a more rational world questioned the workings of medieval religious states. Both nationalism and democracy were formed out of social struggles against absolute monarchies and empires in Europe and the Americas.

And lastly, both "democracy" and "nationalism" share the heavy burden of overuse and ambiguity from being inflated into universal concepts of some human spirit. In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson addresses this inflation problem in his refreshing analysis of "nationalism."

Part of the difficult is that one tends unconsciously to hypostize the existence of Nationalism-with-a-capital-N (rather as one might Age-with-a-capital-A) and then classify 'it' as an ideology...It would, I think, make things easier if one treated (nationalism) as if it belonged with 'kinship' and 'religion' rather than with 'liberalism' or 'fascism.'

Analysis of "democracy" could also profit from this decapitalization, which opens it up to the local context of national history. Anderson goes on to state

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that nationality is a "cultural artefact of a particular kind," which needs to be considered historically to see "in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy." (IC, 4) Anderson's point here is to make the "nation" a creature of modern culture which is imagined, molded, and invented by people rather than being a "natural" concept that has fallen from Heaven or grown up from some remote tribal past.

The truly innovative aspect of Anderson's research is to postulate that "nationalism", though historical and cultural in its origin, became a model that has been applied by different groups over time and space. Once created, nationalism "became 'modular', capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations." (IC, 4) For "by the second decade of the nineteenth century, if not earlier, a 'model' of 'the' independent nation-state was available for pirating." (IC, 81) This model was formed from a complex of French and American elements, and by the twentieth century other models of nationalism were available to be pirated. (IC, 135) To put it simply, " 'the nation' proved to be an invention on which it was impossible to secure a patent. It became available for pirating by widely different, and sometimes unexpected, hands." (IC, 67)

Though praising Anderson for de-naturalizing nationalism and thereby "emphatically pos(ing) the ideological creation of the nation as a central problem in the study of nationalism," Partha Chatterjee also makes an important critique of Imagined
Communities. Rather than looking at nationalism as a global phenomena, Chatterjee examines the process specifically in India's colonial and post-colonial experience in Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World. In his critique, Chatterjee concentrates on the "blueprint" aspects of nationalism which show it to be quite formulaic. He supports his argument by quoting Anderson as writing "But precisely because it was by then a known model, it imposed certain 'standards' from which too-marked deviations were impossible." (NT, 20) Even though Anderson argues that nationalism is cultural, and thus is a local product like "handicrafts," he uses very industrial language—model, invent, blueprint, patent—to describe the processes, as if it were a factory churning out identical national goods.

Thus, according to Chatterjee, Anderson falls into the trap of social determinism: "instead of pursuing the varied, and often contradictory, political possibilities inherent in this process, Anderson seals up his theme with a sociological determinism" by "con-fin (ing) his discussion to the 'modual' character of 20th century nationalisms, without noticing the suppressed possibilities, the contradictions still unresolved." (NT, 21-22) Anderson takes nationalism for granted and thus goes onto use sociological arguments as to why it failed or succeeded in any


32 In the second edition of Imagined Communities (1991) Anderson changes "impossible" to "impermissible." (IC, 81)
one place or time, when there could be other ways to image a community. "Where in all this is the working of the imagination, the intellectual process of creation?" (NT, 21)

It seems that we are right back where we started. If democracy is modular, then what use is it to Thailand if it is a stiff Euro-American model? But perhaps it is Chatterjee who is being too stiff, since the first section of this essay showed how varied the concepts, programs and activities which are labeled of "democracy" are in Thailand. Indeed, how do the models work? Anderson did not address this other than with "empirical" historical evidence, but since he maintains that nationalism is intensely cultural, and I would argue that to be successful democracy must be culturally relevant as well, it is now time to go to cultural theory to see how models function to influence and reproduce democracy and nationalism.

The paradox of influence on the cultural level is that no one likes to admit it. It seems not only ironic, but even treasonable to base one's "Thai-ness" on foreign concepts. Egos and honor are part of ideology. In many ways this anxiety of influence in nationalism and democracy mirrors that of poets. In two landmark studies, *The Anxiety of Influence and A Map of Misreading*, Harold Bloom opened up the doors of the academy to interpretation by challenging the

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33Indeed, state lines are increasingly irrelevant to Chinese communities which are now imagining themselves transnationally. I discuss this in "Gender, Ideology, Nation: *Ju Dou* in the Cultural Politics of China* *East-West Film Journal*, January 1993.
prevailing stiff ideology of the Humanities that there was one correct meaning to each poem. He argued we "need to stop thinking of any poet as an autonomous ego" because poets are always intertwined with other poets, for influence is passed between poets of one generation to form those of the next.\(^{34}\) In other words, no nation or ideology is unique.

But this influence is fluid, not authoritarian. Bloom argued that poetry itself innovates through creativity that actually comes from one poet misinterpreting a strong precursor, a model: "Poetic influence... always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation..." (Al, 30) It is a misinterpretation because poets always deny this influence: Bloom quotes T.S. Eliot as saying "a good poet steals, a poor poet betrays an influence." (Al, 31) The misinterpretation helps poets individuate themselves while still being part of the poetic discourse: They carry on as they separate themselves. (Al, 86)

Reading this back onto the discourse of democracy allows more room to manoeuvre between the authoritarian structures of East and West. Indeed, for democracy, like nationalism, the models can be traced back to French and American historical situations. Yet when we de-capitalize and decentralize democracy, we can see how the concept

\(^{34}\)Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 91. Hereafter the notes will be in the text following Al.
and practice of "people power" has grown and differentiated in these societies as well as others who have taken this model. (Anderson's metaphor of pirating patents and copyrights seems even more appropriate for Thailand which is often accused of these economic crimes. I hope that Thais can pirate the invention of democracy as well as they have created "nationalism".)

Indeed, there are changes in the democratic models—this is how the concepts and practices of democracy are passed between groups and times—but these should not be ascribed to a misunderstanding, a mistake or a "second class culture" as measured against an essential standard, as is so often the case. Bloom argues that intentional and creative misreading is the strength of a poet, and I think it shows the strength of a whole political-cultural system.

The point is not to find a pure, true democracy. As Anderson says about nationalism, "Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined." (IC, 6) So let us see how democracy has been imagined modularly in Thailand. Because even though according to Bloom, "no poet can choose his precursor," with democracy there are many models out there to misread.

35See Kavi Chongkittavorn, "Emerging East Asian Consciousness", The Nation, 13 January 1992, p. 6. "East Asians can now no longer be expected to assume that their values, civilization, culture and ways of life are somewhat second class or inferior to those elsewhere."

MODELS OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

It is not hard to trace the history of parliamentary democracy in Europe or in Thailand. This rule of law and constitutions stems from struggles in the United Kingdom, the United States and France against absolute monarchies.

History shows...that democracy emerged out of a dialectic of opposition between opposing forces, not thanks to the good will of potentates. It was the rise of the bourgeoisie that led to the placement of limits on the traditional power structures of feudalism and absolutism.\(^3\)

The aristocrats and then the bourgeoisie demanded that the government power be limited and accountable. Democracy comes from these places not just historically, but starting at the end of the last century it was brought back to Thailand with returning students.

"Liberal democracy" is taken for granted in the United States, with many scholars even going so far as to call it "commonsense democracy."\(^3\) Indeed, American philosopher Richard Rorty once critically


described "science" as only meaning "The way we do things around here", and one could easily apply that commonsense phrase to "liberal democracy".

This is the concept of democracy that is seen as so foreign in Thailand. For what is "the way we do things around here" in the United States, becomes "the way they do things over there" when students return to Thailand. (And recall that Chamlong said "The best explanation is from your country (the US)."

The so-called democratic revolution of 1932 of the "People's Party" against absolute monarchy is commonly attributed to the frustrations of foreign trained elites. One of its organizers, Pridi Phanomyong, studied in France where he, as the myth goes, picked up these democratic ideas. Indeed, once the People's Party was in power, the Constitution was added as the Fourth Pillar of Thai identity.

But according to Thak, these ideas did not work because they were applied too stiffly: Democracy was an alien principle, while authoritarianism was traditional, and thus indigenous. Leadership of the People's Party vacillated between the urge to nurture the seeds of the democratic system and/or reverting to old authoritarian values. (PDP, xix) Speaking about Thai politics 60 years later, Sulak Sivaraksa in his characteristic blunt style says:

Sulak Sivaraksa in "Regression of Democracy in Siam" also points to the Constitution as one of the pillars of Thai society. (in Seeds of Peace, Bangkok: International Network of Engaged Buddhists, 1992, pp. 119-126). Indeed, in 1932 many of the people up-country did not understand what a constitution was, and thought it was the name of the new king.
Everything western that we accept we make it worse. The corruption of Thai politics now is much worse than the rotten boroughs in England ever were. My point is if you accept something that you don't understand you stick with forms. And the Siamese are wonderful with forms: elections, parliament, cabinets, the Prime Minister. So perhaps the problem with parliamentary politics in Thailand is that it is not creative enough, or as Sulak also states: it takes the worst from both worlds, the greed and consumerism from western culture and the authoritarianism of Thai culture.

MODELS OF MILITARY DEMOCRACY

According to Thak, Sarit was reacting against the problems of constitutional democracy which were inherited from 1932. The standard argument goes on to state that Sarit's generation of elites of 1957 had no real foreign experience, and were at any rate less impressed with western democracy. "Under Sarit's leadership a formal rationalization of democracy in the Thai context took place." (PDP, xxv)

The revolution of October 20, 1958, abolished democratic ideas borrowed from the West, and suggested that it would build a democratic system which would be appropriate to the special characteristics and realities of the Thai. (PDP, 157)

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40Sulak Sivaraksa. Interview, January 20, 1993, Bangkok.
In a word, Sarit wanted to be different, he wanted to be indisputably "Thai." So in this way the model was not imported or pirated. Through the intellectual leadership of Luang Wichit Wathakhan, Sarit reinvented the traditional Thai way of being democratic by applying the lessons of King Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai in opposition to western models.41

Let us hope that our democracy is like a plant having deep roots in Thai soil. It should grow amidst the beating sun and whipping rain. It should produce bananas, mangoes, rambutans, mangosteens, and durians; and not apples, grapes, dates, plums, or horse chestnuts. (PDP, 158)

Chai-Anan, et al concur when they write that "Sarit himself did not have a serious commitment to build a viable democratic system, even a Thai-style one. His Thai-style democracy was only an instrument to fight communism and to legitimize his authoritarian regime." (AS, 138)

In some ways this scripting of Sarit as "Thai-er than thou" is a very selective reading of history. Even though Sarit touted Thai values, he accepted not only money from the United States, but also its models of world politics. As stated in section one, military democracy opposes communism. But what is communism?

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Even though red scares had been in Thailand since the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, and anti-communist laws first appeared during the Seventh Reign, these particular anti-communist strategies largely came from the "Western ideology" of the Cold War.

Indeed, even "liberal democratic" theory supports this opposition, for according to most of the writers in the "Special Issue: Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy" of the Journal of Democracy, capitalism is necessary for democracy. And if you are not capitalist, then you must be communist: there are no other options because the communist specter is still out there even in 1992:

The womb which gave birth to Marxist utopianism is not yet barren. New utopian ideologies are springing up, kinder and gentler than Marxism perhaps, but capable of wreaking monumental economic havoc just the same. Thus there is a socialist path to feminism, and an environmentalist one...Either capitalism will survive, or socialism will return in one form or another.42

This western capitalist democracy/communism opposition explains how the "Western Powers" were "less and less interested in the struggle between liberalism and authoritarianism" in places like Thailand, and supported any regime that opposed communism however it was defined. (PDP, 78)

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42Berger, "Uncertain Triumph", p.16. It is interesting that even though (or just because?) Berger is anti-feminist he uses the womb as a metaphor.
Though the political leaders were not educated in the United States and Europe for Sarit's generation, the military leaders certainly were with the Cold War and the Indochinese conflicts. This role was shaped by anti-communist "training" in the intricacies of American ideology of Thai officers. As one officer put it:

U.S. officials taught us communism, using the PRC as the main target. We, the military, at the time had no knowledge about communism...What we learned about communism from the Military School was taught by our officers who graduated from the U.S. Staff College. (AS, 141)

But the effect of this training was in terms of military democracy rather than liberal democracy:

The fusion of the Thai military thinking with American security values, however, did not result in the emergence of a liberal-democratic outlook within the military. American strategic values, including the idea of military professionalism which advocated the abstention of the military from involvement in non-military political affairs, never gained acceptance among the military leadership and hence among the upcoming generation of officers. Instead, the military's expanded role in national political affairs resulted in the military's self-socialization. (AS, 30-31)

Hence, just as liberal democracy fits well into American domestic policy, military democracy coin-
cides with a model of American foreign policy: the model for Thai military democracy is that of American Cold War anti-communist foreign policy. As Surachart Bumrangsuk writes in his aptly titled book, "United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule," "U.S. military aid...served as a symbol of U.S.-Thai relations."43

MODELS OF GRASSROOTS DEMOCRACY

The Thai military is unconditionally opposed to communism, that is what they tell us. Yet the anti-communist democratic theory that is now popular to explain the situation in Eastern Europe and China goes a long way to describe the political processes of the Thai military bureaucracy.

"Civil society" is in vogue now to explain what happened in Eastern Europe where the seemingly seamless communist states just evaporated. This is extended to analyze the so-called Democracy Movement in China as well. But let us see how the non-government organizations of Thailand fit into this civil society theory, and how they call it into question.

"Civil society" is a broad concept, but basically it refers to a network of organizations which are not directly tied to the state, or to the dominant single party like the communist party, or for that matter the Thai bureaucracy. These autonomous political, social,

43 Surachart Bumrangsuk. United States Foreign Policy and Thai Military Rule, 1947-77, (Bangkok: DK Books, 1986). This study provides a general argument about the ties between the US and the Thai militaries.
cultural and economic organizations would include professional organizations, labour unions, the media, chambers of commerce, universities, cultural societies (both popular and high), religious organizations, and so on. Poland is often cited as a leading example of how to whittle away state power through civil society: the Solidarity labour union provided an alternative to the workers' state, and the Catholic Church and dissident scientists provided an alternative truth.44

In a sense, civil society creates an autonomous "public" which has a "public opinion" that can be distinguished from official propaganda. In this way, according to this popular democratic theory, civil society is an alternative to a totalitarian state that controls all aspects of life, be they political, economic or social: "the struggle to regain civil society was nothing less than the struggle of democracy against totalitarianism." (DM, 190) The power of civil society is that rather than mirroring the totalitarian structure that it opposes, it decentralizes power and organization so that it is less likely to reproduce the oppression: it moves from centralization to decentralization.

Civil society can challenge the all-powerful state because it poses no head-on threat, but creates a parallel society, a "second economy." For example, the revolutions of 1989 in Hungary

and Czechoslovakia proceeded so smoothly because there was an alternative power of civil society waiting to fill the vacuum after the Communist Party broke down. This is because after the direct challenges of 1956 in Hungary and 1968 in Czechoslovakia "many intellectuals concluded that neither a revolution from below nor reforms from above could restore democracy. The alternative was to seek an autonomous society which would not directly challenge the state." (DM, 190) This works right under the noses of the totalitarian states because organizers "seek out areas where the state was indifferent to, or not aware of, social activity to establish ad hoc zones of autonomy." (DM, 192)

Even though the rise of civil society is positioned in opposition to a socialist state, it has many echoes in Thailand where the opponents are runaway development, capitalism and authoritarianism.\(^45\) Indeed, the experiences of activists in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 are very similar to those of activists in Thailand after the 1976 crackdown. One of the problems of the student movement in the 1973-76 period was that it was too centralized around certain social groups--students, farmers, workers--who posed a direct challenge to the state and economic powers. When the movement was crushed in 1976 it was crushed totally. Students went abroad or fled into the jungle to join the communist party.

\(^{45}\)Q: What is the difference between totalitarianism and authoritarianism? A: A totalitarian government arrests, tortures and murders. An authoritarian government, on the other hand, leaves many of these functions to the private sector.
But when the students became disillusioned with the CPT, and came back to a more relaxed political atmosphere in the late seventies, they were political again, but with a change in strategy. They organized themselves in different ways. As one activist who as traversed the length and breadth of Thai politics put it:

The political movements of the 1970s were cut off with the 1976 backlash that sent activists to jail or to the jungles...After being disillusioned with the communist party in 1979 student activists divided into two groups... One group joined the NGOs to develop rural areas. After a while they returned to become government officials... We learned that change does not come from the forests surrounding the cities, that doesn't work. Change has to come from the top, and from NGOs which are active in the villages.\textsuperscript{46}

Rather than using mass movements that were directly politicized, activists then organized on a more decentralized level to address some of the same political questions issue by issue through NGOs. As another NGO worker puts it:

NGOs in all fields of development began to emerge from 1980 onwards in a climate of renewed attention to democracy, small group work rather than mass organizing, and greater sensitivity to the difference in viewpoints...\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{46}Prapoj Sithep, Interview, 1 September 1992, Phitsanoluk.

\textsuperscript{47}"NGOS working on women's issues" Thai Development Newsletter, no. 19, 1991, p. 52.
This is analogous to the civil society described above. Many say that this proliferation of NGOs was also influenced by students who had returned from study in North America. Again, if we are looking for models at work, it is largely held that the Thai Volunteer Service was modeled after the Peace Corps.

But there are also important differences that grew out of the Thai situation. While civil society supports "middle class democracy" theories, NGOs are involved in grassroots participatory democracy. Rather than coming together in associations to "preserve the heritage of the European Enlightenment," NGOs organized along the needs of the people and the environment, to preserve the lives of the poor by filling in the gaps left open by government policies and dealing with the by-products of those policies. In this way NGOs address not just issues of public policy, but also issues of how to empower people to solve their own problems while demanding government action: "development workers and NGOs became less of a provider of service and more of a catalyst of people's movement and a stimulator of local planning and action."48

But there are still problems standing in the way of a more robust civil society in Thailand. To be legal, all organizations must register with the government. Indeed, even though past governments have said they want to promote democracy, the law limits it. Human Rights lawyer Thongbai Thongpao cited the

example of how labour unions, associations and foundations must write one line in their charter which states that they "will not get involved in politics", otherwise they cannot register. The wording is so vague in these laws that it is up to the government to decide what is political, and it varies: the Anand II government actually encouraged (especially business) associations to be political, although not partisan.

This technicality seriously hinders the democratic development that such organisations afford in civil society because it serves to keep these independent organisations separate from politics and political parties. This is how the "elite monopolise politics," says Thongbai, because it keeps politics out of grassroots groups, and the mass majority of the people then cannot get involved in deciding their fate.

This has direct relevance to the pro-democracy movement which sprang up in May 1992. The Confederation for Democracy decided to shift from being ad hoc to being more official. As Prateep explains:

The Confederation for Democracy's application for registering the Foundation of Democracy Heroes has been pending for the last six months. The Interior Ministry has withheld its approval for the wording (which it believes to have political implications).

Our association has a clear-cut purpose aimed at educating and supporting the public with political information.\textsuperscript{50}

This is an example of the laws limiting democracy, and the reply of Anchalee Wanit Theppabut, a Democrat MP from Phuket, reinforces Thongbai's fears about politicians monopolizing power. She states: My personal view is that foundations should not be involved in politics..."

In this way the CFD is analogous to Solidarity in Poland or the independent student movement that sparked the Beijing protests in 1989: the state refuses to recognize the organization.

Still there are creative ways to get around these problems. One is to work through an established organization which has enough national and international prestige that it cannot be questioned. Another is to work outside the system so that it does not matter if the state legally recognizes the activities or not.

One example mixes both these tactics, as well as the models of East and West, for creative applications of the democratic spirit. PollWatch—the usually rational election watchdog organization which was set up by the Anand government(s) to curb vote-buying and encourage participatory democracy\textsuperscript{51}--


also used unorthodox concepts and methods to reach the people who were falling through the cracks by appealing to culture. In the final days of the September 1992 election campaign, Chaisiri Samudavanija--the chairperson of PollWatch's Awareness Campaign--organized 50 "witch doctors *(maw pi)*" into the "National Committee of Local Witch Doctors." Certainly many, including his fellow activists, think that was a frivolous misunderstanding of "democracy," but with Bloom's misreading theory we can take this as a potential strength.

Though the media concentrated on the witch doctor' cursing of corrupt politicians as "the devils" in a black magic ceremony, Chaisiri explains that the witch doctors also know most about the problems of the rural poor. Official channels do not work since the villagers generally cannot trust the local government officials and "bureaucratic monks" who are more of a problem than a solution.

The witch doctors then are the local spiritual leaders who can be a link to villagers' problems. The idea is to set up a new communication network of villages through the National Committee of Local Witch Doctors. In this way information and assistance can be shared without having to go through the central government and Bangkok. This plan utilizes modern technology in the information age where knowledge is power. Chaisiri envisions satellite dishes

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being positioned so that villagers who are combating deforestation in Thailand can talk directly with people with people with similar problems in Brazil.\textsuperscript{53} Hence the very material problems of the rural poor are made known to the centers of power through symbolic mechanisms, while magic is used as a method of resistance to corruption on both a local and a national scale.

This play between official and unofficial activity is analogous to the manoeuvring between foreign and domestic. Indeed, in many ways NGOs serve as mediators between the "modern west" and the "traditions of Thailand" when they link the poor with institutions by speaking both bureaucratic language and local dialects. In this way they can both get around the bureaucratic red tape while encouraging good officials. The 1992 issue of "Asian Review" pointed out Buddhist models of development which serve as other important examples of "imagining democracy."

CONCLUSION

I separated this essay into two cumbersome sections because the two points that were made, though intimately related, should each stand on its own. The first point was to show how the discourse of democracy is used in very different ways by different groups in Thailand by appealing to a close reading of the context of the term's use. This highlights the need for an active interpretation of Thai politics which continually questions what democracy means and how it is being used.

\textsuperscript{53}Interview, 15 October 1992, Bangkok.
The second section was more complex. It addressed the more general issues of the global discourse of democracy where some local elites say that "democracy" is a foreign concept which is unsuitable and even unpatriotic. Countering this powerful argument was more difficult, but I aimed to avoid this East/West trap to argue both sides at once. Indeed, there are "Euro-American" influences, but there are also local influences and creative (mis)interpretations as well. There are other ways of arguing this point which refer to local concepts of democracy that are useful, although not mentioned here.

Democracy, then, should not be judged according to its genuine-ness, but according to its use-value. This is particularly important since even as some "western" governments occasionally try to enforce a copyright of democracy as intellectual property, grassroots movements in these same "western" countries are reconsidering how democracy has worked, and who it has left out. Indeed, as Thais were considering the 5th cycle of democracy in 1992, analogous reconsiderations were taking place in the Americas with the 500th anniversary of Columbus's "discovery" of America to see what this event accomplished, and for whom.

The relationship between Thai democracies and those in Euro-America is an uneasy one. And that is good since it calls for continual self-examination, criticism and perhaps innovation. So in a way we should thank Lee Kuan Yew for forcing Fidel Ramos to thoughtfully respond when Lee questioned the use of the hard-fought democracy in the Philippines. Ramos
said: "without democracy we cannot truly win development."\textsuperscript{54}

Democracy, then, is not a clear term. That is both its strength and its weakness. Rather than being a pure essence that has been imported from some European utopia, democracy takes on its meaning, its many meanings, here in Thailand.

So the struggle is not just for "democracy," but also for the meaning of democracy. This is a positive situation, for in this peaceful struggle of interpretation, more people can be included in the "demos" that democracy is supposed to serve.

\textsuperscript{54}"The 5th Column: Discipline vs. democracy" \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review}, 10 December 1992, p. 29.