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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I was deeply honored to have been appointed the second President of the Yale-NUS Society for Academic Research (YNSAR) in May this year. I accepted the role without hesitation - YNSAR is an important institution at Yale-NUS, a testament to the brilliant undergraduate research here, whilst the Yale-NUS Undergraduate Journal (YNUJ) is a flagship enterprise for a college pushing the frontier of liberal arts education in Asia. It is doubtless imperative that Yale-NUS students ensure its longevity.

With the post came myriad challenges - not least the difficult task of taking over the YNUJ mid-publication cycle. Fortunately, I have been blessed with a fantastic Executive Committee, and it is to them that I first wish to convey my thanks; without their tireless contributions, Volume II would never have come to fruition. Thank you especially to Jannell for assisting with printing, and Jiankai for giving the Journal a fresh coat of paint. Here I reserve special mention for our Editor-in-Chief, Tee Zhuo, who doubled as mentor and friend in a pivotal transition year for the organization, and who is stepping down with the publication of this volume. It has been an absolute privilege working with and learning from you; the editing team is well-equipped for the road ahead thanks to the solid foundation you have laid. Thank you for your distinguished service, and happy “retirement”! My deepest gratitude and heartfelt congratulations, as well, to our exemplary team of student editors for a job truly well done in editing the countless submissions to Volume II. To Abdul, Algol, Amarbold, Jincong, Dianne, Sambhav, Thu, and Yejin: you have all been an invaluable part of Volume II’s identity.

I must also thank the faculty members who have magnanimously lent us their time and expertise, allowing us to hold the Journal to the highest standard: Doctor Cheng Yi’En, Associate Professors Andrew Hui, Eduardo Araral, Marcia Inhorn, Marvin Montefrio, Nozomi Naoi, and Sarah Weiss, and Professors Barbara Andaya and John Driffill constitute a cosmopolitan and illustrious panel of scholars befitting YNUJ’s ambition and affiliation. A final note of appreciation, also, to our faculty advisor, Professor Terry Nardin, for providing wise counsel and helping shape the direction of the Journal.

Finally, to our esteemed reader: Thank you for your continued support of the Journal. We have curated the strongest possible mix of articles from this year’s student submissions, and have sourced contributions from beyond Yale-NUS in our endeavor to grow the Journal into a regional, if not international, centerpiece for undergraduate research. The selected pieces are novel, rigorous, and insightful. I hope you will derive as much enjoyment and insight from perusing them as I did.

Yours,

Darrel Chang

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I am proud to introduce Volume II of the Yale-NUS Undergraduate Journal (YNUJ). We start with a classic in the piece by Thu Truong, “Behind the Looking Glass”, where she explores themes of reflection and the self in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Turning from poetry to the pages of history, Teng Wen Li looks at Tudor (1405-1603) anti-enclosure legislation in “A Remedy to These Evils”. In the third piece, “Threats from the Old Order”, Chan Li Ting interrogates whether Japan’s Shintō state (1868-1945) can really be blamed for ultranationalism and militarism in World War II. Moving from the past to the present, we have two pieces that deal with marginalised communities in Europe and China. In “We Live Together, We Fight Together”, Francesca Maviglia focuses on the contrasting sociopolitical meanings of humanitarianism vs. solidarity in the European refugee crisis. In the fifth piece, “Affirmative Action for Ethnic Minorities in China”, Chu Jincong critiques Chinese government policies offering affirmative action for ethnic minorities. In the last three pieces, we offer critical perspectives on the Journal’s home city, Singapore. We start by reflecting on Yale-NUS College’s place in Singapore in “Govern-mentality & Schizophrenic Hyphens” by David Chia. The next piece, “Ecological Biopolitics in the Garden City” by Joshua Goh, interrogates discourse around a well-known moniker for Singapore — the Garden City. Finally, in “Positioning May 13, 1969”, Natalie Christian Tan looks at how curatorial institutions shape the meaning of Southeast Asian art, focusing on Malaysian artist Redza Piyadasa’s work May 13, 1969.

The aim of our Journal has always been to present quality and original perspectives, across intersecting disciplines, yet written clearly to be accessible to our wide academic audience. I think we have done all three in this collection. I would like to thank this issue’s contributors, our student and faculty editors, our executive committee members, and our faculty advisor Professor Terry Nardin for making this possible. Finally, my sincere thanks to the Society’s President Darrel Chang for his tireless efforts in leading our organization and, most of all, for his friendship.

As Darrel mentioned in his introductory note, I will be stepping down from my position as Editor-in-Chief with the publication of this issue. Leaving the Journal is a bittersweet experience for me, having founded it with the Society’s inaugural President Patrick Wu two years ago. It has been my privilege to serve our cause, and I could not be prouder of what we have achieved. It gives me great pleasure to welcome my successor, Dianne Araral. Dianne has been an active member of the Society and a skilled editor. I am confident that I am leaving the Journal in capable hands.

Finally, to our readers, thank you for your support. I hope you will enjoy the contents of this Volume as much as I have.

Yours,

Tee Zhuo

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BEHIND THE LOOKING GLASS

Self-Reflection, Self-Expression and Identity in

Ovid's Metamorphoses

Thu Truong, Yale-NUS College

This essay discusses how the mirror in Ovid's Metamorphoses navigates between the ancient theory of reflection and the Platonic conception of the soul, and how it illustrates Ovid's own, unique position on self-reflection and identity. Tales of transformation in the Metamorphoses constantly define and redefine the relationship between body and soul, and the mirror, as a vehicle for self-knowledge, becomes crucial in such definition. In accordance with the ancient theory of reflection, the physical appearance revealed by the Ovidian mirror is inseparable from one's inner self; at the same time, the Platonic dissonance between body and soul suggests that the self is distinct from what is visible. This tension manifests in the story of Actaeon, in which the character learns of his bodily changes and gains a sense of identity by looking at his mirror image, but still meets his tragic fate when that consciousness goes unrecognized. The Ovidian mirror, it follows, both affirms and challenges the significance of appearance in shaping the human identity. This essay concludes by exploring how the tragedy of Actaeon situates Ovid in a completely different position from his predecessors regarding the philosophy of self.

I saw myself on the shore as of late
when the sea stood unruffled by the
winds
Virgil, *Eclogae* 2.25–26

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas corpora. ‘My spirit urges me to speak of forms changed into new bodies.’¹ So begins Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, a song of changes, where tales of transformation are myth and history in equal measures. It is little wonder, then, that in a poem so concerned with physical alterations, the mirror should occupy a central role. From Book I where Io’s downcast gaze meets the clear water, to Book XV where Helen mourns her aged image, the mirror accompanies bodily changes to record the moments reality slips into magical realms.

For a motif so prevalent, it is surprising that the mirror has been rather understudied. Most existing scholarship comments on the fable of Narcissus, whose mirror and mirroring are admittedly paradigmatic. Yet the focus on a single myth limits the answers we can provide to questions about the nature of the Ovidian mirror, which is better treated as an independent poetic phenomenon rather than a device integral to only Narcissus. This paper aims to bring fresh insight by exploring the use of mirroring in the oft-overlooked story of Actaeon, with the hope that Actaeon’s

A note on translation: Verse and prose passages that provide only contextual relevance will be cited in English, with the original Latin given in the footnotes. When the verse itself is the object of study, it will be cited in the original language accompanied by translation. All English translations are my own, as are all emphases (italicized). All citations to Ovid are taken from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. R. J. Tarrant (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹ Ovid, 1.1–2.

reflection and bodily changes can reveal aspects of the human self that are not apparent under the gaze. I contend that the Ovidian identity is something both hidden and visible, and the mirror, paradoxically, exposes both the fickleness and the absolute necessity of self-expression in shaping the human self.

All concepts in question—the self, identity, self-expression, and reflection—need philosophical validation, and yet it is no easy feat trying to pinpoint the framework used by the elusive poet. In choosing two specific models, I have certainly left out other theories that could have made the discussion more nuanced. Still there are certain merits in making such choice. The ancient specular tradition provides enough of a contrast against the Platonic philosophy of the self, and they are both featured in the *Metamorphoses* more consistently than most other philosophical models. For that reason, this paper will first look at each of these two treatments of reflection, then focus on how Ovid responds to them, before turning to the story of Actaeon where that tension is made most apparent. Due to Plato’s influence on our discourse, concepts of ‘the soul’ and ‘the mind’ will also be used interchangeably to express the ‘inner self,’ with which this paper is primarily preoccupied.

The Mirror in Ancient Imagination

Seneca writes about the mirror in the very first book of his *Quaestiones Naturales*. Its scientific significance aside, the treatise focuses much on the ethical role of the mirror whose essence is contained in one passage:

Mirrors were invented so that man could know himself, and from this many benefits will follow: first, knowledge of himself, then, in a certain way, wisdom. The beautiful uses it to avoid infamy; the

ugly to know that whatever he physically lacks must be remedied by virtues.²

The above passage reflects the heritage of a long specular tradition in antiquity, a tradition in which self-knowledge, the gaze, and the mirror share a deep connection. Moritz H. W. Schuller discusses how integral the physical gaze is to the instructive capacity of the mirror in key classical texts. The ancient mirror, while not nearly as efficient as the modern, illumined looking glass, and in many cases dented to various degrees, is regarded a faithful instrument that would return the exact reflection of one's appearance. In so doing, it provides a perspective otherwise unavailable and allows the person to 'know' himself in the same manner that he would be apprehended in the public sphere. The self-knowledge gained from the reciprocal gaze with the mirror is of a social kind and requires no introspective insight, and whose visual merits are connected to how mirror image is often seen as a distinct, physical object.³ Shadi Bartsch likewise comments on how the idea of an inner self, one separate from appearance, is largely absent from ancient thinking. The eventual instructive value of reflection is neither to suggest that appearance is negligible, nor to inspire subjective, "self-generated

² Seneca, *Natural Questions: Books 1–3*, trans. Thomas H. Corcoran (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 1, 17.4. Original Latin: inuenta sunt specula ut homo ipse se nosset, multa ex hoc consecuturus, primum sui notitiam, deinde ad quaedam consilium: formosus, ut uitaret infamiam; deformis, ut sciret redimendum esse uirtutibus quicquid corpori deesset.

³ Schuller, Moritz H. W., "Watching the Self: The Mirror of Self-Knowledge in Ancient Literature" (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 1998), 4–15.

insight";⁴ instead, the ethically implicated appearance is used as the measure for virtues. Cued by his own reflection, the individual is motivated to shape his behaviors to either uphold or mitigate the social expectations attached to his image. The ancient mirror thus functions mainly as a device to moral ends: by showing the person how others would see him, it inspires ethical cultivation to maintain, or improve, his image in the eyes of his peers.

This emphasis on the appearance is rooted in the face-to-face cultures in both Ancient Greece and Rome, where personal looks are believed to be reflective of the mind. (This is partly the reason the ethical mirror never appears in the *Metamorphoses*, which, as we shall see, concerns itself precisely with the dissonance between appearance and essence.) For example, no Greek equivalent exists for expressions such as 'under the mask,' 'behind the mask,' or anything that suggests mismatched inner and public identities.⁵ Similarly on the importance of countenance, Cicero remarks, "imago animi uultus, indices oculi" ('the face is the image of the soul, and you express with the eyes').⁶ The ancient

⁴ Bartsch, Shadi, "The Mirror of Philosophy," in *The Mirror of the Self: Sexuality, Self-Knowledge, and the Gaze in the Early Roman Empire* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 21.

⁵ Frontisi-Ducroux, Françoise, *Du Masque au Visage. Aspects de l'identité en Grèce ancienne* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), quoted in Simon Goldhill, "ΠΡΟΣΩΠΙΟΝ," Review of *Du Masque au Visage. Aspects de l'identité en Grèce ancienne*, *The Classical Review* 46, no. 1 (1996): 112.

⁶ Cicero, "On the Orator: Book 3," in *On the Orator: Book 3. On Fate. Stoic Paradoxes. Divisions of Oratory*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), 3.221.

self becomes synonymous with visible expression. Most classical texts follow this tradition, and the mirror, even in the writings of Seneca, still retains its deeply social, performative function. While the Ovidian mirror does partake in this legacy, it nevertheless is much more cynical about the integrity of mirror image. The fickleness of appearance stands as the tenor of Ovid's grandest song, and violent changes to the body can cast doubt over any easy definition of the self. The subtle tone of distrust toward appearance echoes that of Ovid's poetic predecessor, Lucretius, whose writing has a Platonic pedigree, which in turn lends Book XV of the *Metamorphoses* philosophical substance.⁷

Lucretius, in Book IV of his *De Rerum Natura*, presents a sustained analysis on the illusory nature of reflections and images. Bearing an Epicurean imprint, Lucretius' images (*simulacra*) are films of atoms streaming from the surface of physical bodies, which, while having no substance, easily create illusions of the actual objects.⁸ Mirrors that return these films unchanged add little essence to the already empty semblances.⁹ Drawing the distinction between water and its likeness, the poet scoffs at the unreality of appearance toward the end of the treatise:

Like a thirsting man in a dream seeks
something to drink,
and is given no liquid which could
quench the flame in his limbs,

⁷ Hardie, Philip, Introduction, in *Ovid's Poetics of Illusion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 10.

⁸ Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse, rev. Martin F. Smith, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 4.26–44. See also Hardie, 9.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.59–120.

but, laboring in vain, he then seeks the
image of the springs
and thirsts even as he drinks from the
middle of a rushing river . . .
(4.1097–1100)¹⁰

The analogy recalls Socrates' treatment of the mirror in *Republic* X which Melchior-Bonnet suggests begins the tradition of meditation on mirror image.¹¹ The Platonic mirror could limn the heavens and earth, but is incapable of creating things as they are¹²—an argument that draws from Plato's continued belief in the existence of an inner soul distinct from the body. Even though it may not yield direct insight of such a soul, nor lend itself to spiritual revelation,¹³ the mirror nevertheless is still a trusted device that brings forth the tension between appearance and essence in many Socratic dialogues. For example, the *Alcibiades* sees Socrates suggest that humans gain knowledge of their soul only by looking into a mirror (130e–133a);¹⁴ the *Sophist*, on the other hand, mocks the sophistic

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Original Latin:

ut bibere in somnis sitiens quom quaerit, et umor
non datur, ardorem qui membris stinguere possit,
sed laticum simulacra petit frustraue laborat
in medioque sitit torrenti flumine potans

¹¹ Melchior-Bonnet, Sabine, "In the Semblance of God," in *The Mirror: A History*, trans. Katharine H. Jewett (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), 102.

¹² Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1968), 596d.

¹³ Schuller contests Melchior-Bonnet's claim that the mirror could reveal things other than physical appearance. For extended discussion, see Schuller, 1–7.

¹⁴ Plato, "Alcibiades," trans. D. S. Hutchinson, in *The Complete Works of Plato*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997).

orators who take the world in the mirror to be true (240a).¹⁵ Other dialogues which more broadly discuss the Platonic conception of appearance also display affinities with the framework that Ovid will eventually adopt for his poem. Much of *Phaedo* is dedicated to address the dissonance between body and soul, in which the soul is uniform, divine, and deathless, as opposed to the body which remains inconsistent, mortal, and frail (80a–c).¹⁶ The *Republic* sees a similar discourse at the end of Book X, when immortal souls choose the earthly forms for their next incarnation (617d–621b).¹⁷ *Charmides* raises a question over the trustworthiness of appearance, when upon the arrival of the titular character, the greatest beauty of Athens, Socrates is skeptical if his mind is “of good grain” (154d).¹⁸ *Gorgias* tells a fantastic tale where judges of the underworld are fooled by the looks of men before they die (523d–524a).¹⁹ The list goes on. Even though they are by no means the sole influence on the poet, these dialogues still remain part of the philosophical currents from which Ovid could draw inspiration.

¹⁵ Plato, “Sophist,” trans. Nicholas P. White, in *The Complete Works of Plato*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997).

¹⁶ Plato, “Phaedo,” in *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo*, trans. G. M. A. Grube, rev. John M. Cooper, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002).

¹⁷ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*.

¹⁸ Plato, “Charmides,” in *Charmides. Alcibiades I & II. Hipparchus. The Lovers. Theages. Minos. Epinomis*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955).

¹⁹ Plato, “Gorgias,” in *Lysis. Symposium. Gorgias*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925).

The framework that Ovid seemingly employs for his poem is nestled within his longest monologue. In Book XV, Pythagoras delivers a speech that many have taken to be an account on the nature of corporeal bodies, and by extension, of all changes:

Everything changes; nothing dies. The soul moves back and forth,
now here, now there, and occupies
whatever frame it likes,
passing from beasts to humans,
from our own forms to beasts, and not
ever dies.

Like soft wax imprinted with new shapes,
neither staying as it was nor maintaining
old designs,
yet still being itself, just like that, hear
me, the soul
is forever the same, even though its
shape varies. (15.165–172)²⁰

Bearing more than passing resemblances to Plato, Pythagoras’ speech may be read as a poetic rendition of both the *Phaedo* and Book X of the *Republic*. As he echoes the philosopher who questions the integrity of the form, Ovid also expresses his own distrust of appearance in his grand epic. Transformations become the means to reveal the changeable shape, and hence, its

²⁰ Original Latin:

omnia mutantur, nihil interit. errat et illinc
huc uenit, hinc illuc et quoslibet occupat artus
spiritus eque feris humana in corpora transit
inque feras noster, nec tempore deperit ullo.
utque nouis facilis signatur cera figuris,
nec manet ut fuerat nec formas seruat eadem,
sed tamen ipsa eadem est, animam sic temper eandem
esse sed in uarias doceo migrare figuras.

unreliability as a measure of the self. Accordingly, the mirror that follows these transformations takes on a new layer of meaning. It is true that the mirror in the *Metamorphoses*, like many other mirrors in antiquity, still focuses heavily on the actual, physical gaze. Its primary function, still, is to let the person see what he is otherwise unable to see. The most powerful thing about the Ovidian mirror, however, is its capacity to render the self-aware subject, who by looking at his reflection is conscious of how he is different from his mind.²¹ On the other hand, the failure of recognition, which so often leads Ovid's characters to their tragic fate, reminds us of the pivotal role appearance plays in shaping the human identity. Ultimately appearance is all we have to communicate ourselves, and—as the story of Actaeon will show—the hard-earned human consciousness is simply futile when it goes unexpressed. The paradox of Ovid's mirror is that it both questions and affirms the significance of appearance, and the philosophical dispute surrounding ancient reflection only adds to the palette from which Ovid paints his universe.

Actaeon's Mirror and the Fractured Self

The Ovidian mirror takes many forms. In Book I, the transformation of Io and her subsequent discovery of her morphed appearance introduces the mirror to the poem. Book III picks up where Book I leaves off, with Actaeon, Tiresias, and Narcissus forming a cluster of narratives on vision and mirroring. The story of Hermaphroditus explores

²¹ Anna Mudde raises a similar point on the mirror—though not on Ovid's mirror—and its alienating effect. For more on the mirror and self-reflection in general, see Mudde, Anna, "Self-Images and 'Perspicuous Representation': Reflection, Philosophy, and the Glass Mirror," *Metaphilosophy* 46, nos. 4–5 (2015): 539–554.

the complexities of gender through the ruffled surface of water, before leading up to perhaps the most well-known myth of reflection, Perseus and Medusa. Among these, the mirror of Actaeon is one of the earliest, and also one that most skillfully articulates the crisis of a soul residing in foreign flesh. Often overshadowed by the story of Narcissus, it nonetheless proves an equally compelling treatment of reflection that accompanies bodily changes. Actaeon's story is atypical because it does not stop at the point of metamorphosis, as do most other tales, but instead lasts well until after his death. In fact, the bulk of the story happens *after* the transformation. The mirror that appears at the mid-point of the story offers us a chance to watch the story unfold from within—a window into the human consciousness of Actaeon which endures despite his now animal form. Its presence draws us into one of the few moments in the poem when the subject is aware of the divide between his mind and his looks, and to Actaeon, when he experiences both the knowledge and the tragedy arising from that chasm.

The story begins with the hunter Actaeon, by sheer accident,²² stumbling upon the goddess Diana while she is bathing.²³ Enraged, she transforms him into a stag, and Actaeon, in his flight, sees his altered appearance when looking into the water:

dat sparso capiti uiuacis cornua cerui,

²² Ovid stresses Actaeon's innocence in 3.175–176: "Through unknown clearings of the forest, [Actaeon] found the sacred grove—so the Fates guided him."

²³ For more on the relationship between Diana and Actaeon, and a different account on Actaeon's mirror image, see Barkan, Leonard, "Ovid and Metamorphosis," in *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 44–46.

dat spatium collo summasque cacuminat
 aures,
 cum pedibusque manus, cum longis
 bracchia mutat
 cruribus et uelat maculoso uellere corpus;
 . . .
 ut uero uultus et cornua *uidit* in unda . . .
 (3.194–200)
 (She gave his sprinkled head the antlers
 of a living stag,
 gave his neck length, and made the tips
 of his ears pointed,
 changed his hands into feet and arms
 into long legs
 and covered his body with a dappled pelt;
 . . .
 When he saw, indeed, his face and
 antlers in the water)

A typical ancient mirror, the shimmering forest stream renders a strikingly truthful reflection of his animal appearance. Ovid assures us of the clarity of the image by taking great care describing Actaeon before the eventual *uidit*, ‘seeing,’ which marks the moment the image is revealed to the seeing subject. In fact, the delayed *uidit* means that the hunter is the last to realize his altered form. In that sense, Ovid’s mirror goes beyond its dictated role in antiquity: more than a mere reflecting medium that faithfully returns Actaeon’s appearance, it becomes a device that enables changes in his psyche once confronted with a reality he does not expect. While Actaeon is not the only metamorphosed victim to learn of his own transformation—Ulysses’ comrades, for example, can give their gruesome recollection as ample proof—he is one of the select few who, through vision, could see themselves in the same way they are gazed at by others. The emphasis on ‘seeing’ is significant, as Ovid will proceed to tell the rest of the story from Actaeon’s inner feelings and

thoughts. This mirrored gaze, though momentary, allows him to see what otherwise would be hidden from himself, while exposing the rupture between the bestial guise and the human mind to which only he has access.

In fact, one can say that Actaeon is only, and painfully, aware of himself because of his altered appearance. Leonard Barkan offers an excellent commentary on the same note: “what Actaeon sees in the mirror after his transformation is for the first time a sense of his own identity.”²⁴ For Actaeon, what comes after ‘seeing’ is a desire to define himself as something other than his looks:

. . . lacrimaque per ora
non sua fluxerunt; mens tantum pristina
 mansit. (3.202–203)
 (. . . And tears were flowing
 On the cheeks that were *not his own*;
 only his mind remained untouched.)

The sense of self that slowly takes shape within Actaeon comes from the negation of what is visible. His inner self, he identifies, is precisely the thing missing from the surface. Ovid is careful to contrast the reflexive possessive *non sua* with Actaeon’s preserved human consciousness (and we might as well supply *sua* for *mens* had the meter allowed), a contrast which draws out “the dissolution of selfhood” as Philip Hardie terms it.²⁵ In trying to rationalize the change while he straddles the divide between being human and being animal, his blooming consciousness, new as it is, learns to separate its own existence from his physical form. Over the episode this consciousness remains, and is strengthened. It urges him to turn to the other medium of expression, voice, as his appearance no

²⁴ Barkan, 45.

²⁵ Hardie, 9.

longer corresponds to what he considers appropriately his:

. . . clamare libebat
'Actaeon ego sum, dominum cognoscite
uestrum!' (3.229–230)
(. . . He wanted to yell
'I am Actaeon, recognize your master!')

"Actaeon ego sum" is registered on the same key as the later Cartesian "cogito ergo sum," albeit less detached, less cerebral—more desperate and instinctive. It is a clear and unequivocal statement of the human essence, a sentiment that Ovid also seems to agree with. *Dominum* appears first from Actaeon's perspective, but gets repeated twice in the narrator's comments where it assumes a more impersonal, and hence more authorial, tone:

. . . dominum retinentibus illis
cetera turba coit confertque in corpore
dentes.
...
dilacerant *falsi* dominum sub imagine
cerui (3.235–250)

(. . . while they held down their master
the rest of the pack gathered and sank
their teeth into his flesh.

...
They tore apart their master under the
false guise of a deer)

The insistent repetition confirms the truth in Actaeon's silent words. Appearance is proven merely skin-deep, and the false guise (*falsi imagine cerui*) is implicitly contrasted with what lies hidden. The hunter's identity is fractured through the mirror—*dominum* to himself, *cerui* to his hounds—but Ovid, if only so briefly, gives us a glimpse of what is true. Perhaps even more

importantly, the vision of that truth is impossible to experience without knowledge of the physical form. That inner self, buried beneath the guise of appearance, can only be apprehended after the individual confronts his own mirror image.

With this discovery, it is compelling to think that the Ovidian mirror can now accommodate the introspective gaze, like the intensely meditative mirror of the biblical Rachel, or the spiritually endowed looking glass in the Middle Ages. But the mirror-puzzle of the *Metamorphoses* is not as easily resolved, and in any case, it is Ovid who eventually reminds us that his mirror still keeps in line with the ancient specular tradition. In other words, a paradox: the instrument that unveils to Actaeon his human consciousness, in reality, reflects nothing but his physical looks. The mirror could 'show' us the identity of the hunter only because it grants us access to his shifting psyche. A conundrum of a tragic kind follows—the inner self that Actaeon discovers can never be truly divorced from his appearance. Like Narcissus, he gains the vision at the cost of his life, and one might wonder if Tiresias' prophecy can be retroactively invoked: He may live, "if he does not know himself" (3.348: *si se non nouerit*). As Gian Biagio Conte keenly remarks, Ovid does not always remain faithful to the philosophical framework that he himself lays out.²⁶ The Platonic exhortation "everything changes; nothing dies" (15.165: *omnia mutantur, nihil interit*) strikes a deeply ironic note when we remember that Actaeon's life indeed has ended:

nec nisi *finita* per plurima uulnera *uita*

²⁶ Conte, Gian Biagio, "Ovid," in *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. Joseph B. Solodow, rev. Don Fowler and Glenn W. Most (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999), 353.

ira pharetratae fertur satiata Dianae.
(3.251–252)

(If his *life* had not been *finished* through
many wounds
The wrath of quivered Diana would not
have been satiated.)

To the world he was living in, Actaeon is no more. *Finita uita* marks the end of his physical life and also of his social existence, announced by none other than his rejected appearance (*per plurima uulnera*, through many wounds). Similarly, as much as the mirror reveals to Actaeon the self-invisible to the naked eye, it also affirms that to any other person, his appearance is all there is.²⁷ On the surface of the mirror dwells the dual existence of human and animal, hunter and prey, being and non-being. The doubling mirror thus gives every moment of revelation a counterpart, manifest in every thwarted attempt to bring that revelation to the surface. The instant Actaeon gains the vision of himself, for example, is marred by the failure to communicate it:

ut uero uultus et cornua uidit in unda
'me miserum!' dicturus erat; uox nulla
secuta est
ingemuit; uox illa fuit . . . (3.200-202)
(When he saw, indeed, his face and
antlers in the water
'Miserable me!' he was about to say; but
no voice followed
Instead he growled; that was now his
voice . . .)

The distressed cry 'me miserum' is heavy with the weight of recognition. Actaeon's identity is splintered: on the one hand, the thinking, feeling human, on the other hand, the animal guise. But the

words for that recognition are lost. The question of the hunter's nature returns as Ovid draws our gaze to another mirroring pair, *uox-ingemuit-uox*. One is the human voice that is no longer real (*nulla*), the other the sound of animal, materialized through the dividing growl. If the visual mirror shows Actaeon his inhuman form, the vocal mirror reflects his now inhuman utterance reinforced by *ingemuit*. The dual *uox* later on finds another parallel: "Labros et Argiodus et acutae uocis Hylactor" (3.224: 'Labros and Argiodus and Hylactor with the sharp voice'). Robbed of his speech, Actaeon is faced with an eerie echo of both his human and bestial *uox*, which resounds in the voice of his hound. The former is a reflection of opposites, the latter a mirroring of resemblances. Here we reach a dismal conclusion: the transformed man, in the end, is only little more than an animal. As the hollow of his silent 'me miserum' fills with foreign growling, his mirror image turns a stranger to himself.

The lack of human voice, the inability to speak,²⁸ reminds us that the tragedy of Actaeon is essentially the failure of self-expression. Io, who suffers a nearly identical fate as Actaeon, could eventually pronounce her existence by scraping letters on the ground. The young man, however, has no such luxury. The divide in his case is clear: what he knows is completely unknown to others. Here the paradox of Ovid's mirror emerges. One look at the mirror allows Actaeon to define his inner self by rejecting his appearance. Another look, from the other side, denies its existence once the individual fails to bring that self to the surface.

²⁸ For an extended discussion on Actaeon's inability to speak, see Murray, Penelope, "Bodies in Flux: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," in *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings*, ed. Dominic Monserrat (New York, NY: Routledge, 1998), 92.

²⁷ See Mudde, 546–547.

The further we advance in the story, the sharper this contrast becomes, the tragedy hedging closer. Actaeon is aware, and he tries to escape its finality—every passing line sees another attempt to make himself heard. The *dicturus erat* ('he was about to say') eventually matures into an insistent *clamare libebat*:

. . . clamare libebat
 'Actaeon ego sum, dominum cognoscite
 uestrum!
 uerba animo desunt; resonat latratibus
 aether. (3.229–231)
 (. . . He wanted to yell
 'I am Actaeon, recognize your master!
 But words deserted his spirit; the air
 resonated with barking.)

Cognoscite is the imperative of a self-aware soul: from *con-* ('with') and *-gnoscite* ('know'), Actaeon demands that the hounds know him the same way that he knows himself. Never vocalized, however, that demand is echoed back at him and his isolated inner world. With the muted speech "Actaeon ego sum," Ovid summons up the hunter's self-consciousness only to cast it in the animal lexicon where words are nonexistent (*uerba desunt*). Line 231 sees a transformation of the mirroring *uox-uox*, this time with a clearer contrast: words against barking, silence against discord. After the initial struggle, the voice and the barking become one. Actaeon, his human words missing, is overwhelmed by the beastly presence in both himself and the real animals.

The climax of the tale comes, as Barkan notes, when Actaeon's consciousness has been completely divorced from his form.²⁹ Incidentally this is also the moment his human companions appear in the

story. At this point Actaeon not only is most conscious of himself, but also learns the painful necessity of appearance when his companions arrive and seal his fate, unaware of what has happened:

at comites rapidum solitis hortatibus
 agmen
 ignari instigant *oculisque* Actaeona
 quaerunt
 et velut absentem certatim Actaeona
clamant
 (ad nomen caput ille refert) . . .
 (3.242–245; emphasis mine)
 (But his comrades, ignorant, urged on
 the rapid pack
 With their usual cheers, and looked for
 Actaeon with their *eyes*
 And, as though he was absent, *called* for
 Actaeon earnestly
 [He turned his head at the name] . . .)

The story comes full circle: it starts with Actaeon seeing himself in the mirror and ends with him meeting the gaze of others. The self reflected in the mirror and its physicality, which he denies, become the only means for others to measure his identity. Metamorphosis creates tension between the flesh and mind, but we would be hard-pressed to find the same celebration of the human essence otherwise present in Platonic thoughts. If the story of Actaeon is any indication, it is the true 'self' that would eventually, and tragically, yield to the false guise. After everything we have learned about the deceptive appearance, Ovid closes the curtains with cruel irony when Actaeon's companions first look for him with their eyes. There is simply no better way to reinforce the importance of appearance, which is fatal in every sense of the word.

The fact that the story focuses so heavily on expression reveals the intimate link between

²⁹ Barkan, 46.

consciousness, self-expression, and reflection. The two words *Actaeona clamant*, line 244, are that link made manifest. They resound the earlier, unexpressed *clamore libebat*, and above all, are the inner wish of Actaeon materialized. But those words come only from his companions, the external world, while he who is most aware of his own identity cannot make a sound. Actaeon's death affirms that self-expression is inherently imperfect, and the tragedy situates Ovid's mirror in a completely different position from the ancient specular tradition. The mirror of Actaeon no longer appeals to ethical ends—there is nothing he could do, no moral he could cultivate, that could let him 'overcome' the judgement based on his looks (nor, as Ovid stresses Actaeon's innocence, is he supposed to). Ovid's mirror, instead, is a central figure that negotiates the relationship between self-expression and self-consciousness. The subject only acquires a sense of identity when he sees the asymmetry between the two, and from whence grasps a vision of the self unbound by the corporeal. At the same time, to live in a world of others is to construct an identity that can be seen and, eventually, understood. The goal is to bring that discovered self to the surface, even if that quest is by nature futile, and even if, along the way, something might be lost in translation.

Ultimately that quest of self-expression lies at the heart of metamorphosis—the struggle to find one's self amidst the fickleness of all changes, the impermanence of a world made flesh. Some, like Lycaon, after the transformation are united with their hidden essence, while others, like Actaeon, mourn the loss that comes with such vision. Let us conclude with the lines that best capture Actaeon's nature, when the failure of expression renders him something neither beast nor human:

... gemit ille sonumque

etsi non hominis, quem non tamen edere
possit
ceruus . . . (3.237–239)
(. . . He gave a scream,
Which, though none of human, no stag
was able to give.)

This is the precis of the story, when the essence of the transformed subject is at its most ambiguous. Things from both sides of the mirror are to be questioned, but then again, no other object is more appropriate for the job. To reveal the multiform nature of things: that, in the end, is the *telos* of metamorphosis.

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A REMEDY TO THESE EVILS

Tudor Legislation and the Enclosure Riots

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The agricultural policy of enclosure was practiced in England from the 13th century onwards. The removal of a community's common rights to land led to rural poverty. In response, the Tudor governments (1405 to 1603) passed anti-enclosure acts beginning from 1489. While anti-enclosure legislation could have slowed or prevented the negative effects of enclosure, by the 1530s, enclosure riots had broken out over parts of England, culminating in the 1549 Kett's Rebellion. An analysis of Tudor primary sources reveals that legislation enacted from 1489 to 1549 was ineffective. The royal proclamations and Acts of Parliament included anti-enclosure laws, anti-riot laws, and royal pardons. Anti-enclosure laws failed to prevent further enclosure, which was the root cause of the riots. Such laws even encouraged the rioters, who felt that their actions were sanctioned by the government. Neither did the subsequent anti-riot laws stop the outbreak of further riots. Royal pardons for the rioters may also have spurred them to persist in destroying enclosures. Nevertheless, the legislation demonstrates that the government was well-intentioned and attuned to the impacts of enclosure and enclosure laws. These findings bridge the existing gap between the study of Tudor legislation and popular rebellions by social, economic, and legal historians.

“[G]ive order that those who have dispeopled so much soil may either rebuild the villages they have pulled down or let out their grounds to such as will do it; restrain those engrossings of the rich, that are as bad almost as monopolies; leave fewer occasions to idleness; let agriculture be set up again, and the manufacture of the wool be regulated, that so there may be work found for those companies of idle people whom want forces to be thieves, or who now, being idle vagabonds or useless servants, will certainly grow thieves at last. If you do not find a remedy to these evils it is a vain thing to boast of your severity in punishing theft.”¹

Of the laws passed by the governments of Tudor England, few were as unsuccessful as the anti-enclosure laws, anti-riot laws, and royal pardons issued to manage the problem of enclosure. The exploitative economic practice of enclosure, defined in its most general sense, was an act in which a single landowner imposed his exclusive control over arable fields, pastures, and wastes that had been used in common by several villagers.² Enclosers sought to improve the profitability and productivity of their land, especially by turning the enclosed land to pastures for their wool-producing sheep.³ By putting up fences, walls, hedges, and ditches, enclosers evicted

¹ Thomas More, *Utopia* (London, 1684), 25.

² John R. Wordie, "The Chronology of English Enclosure, 1500-1914," *The Economic History Review* 36, no. 4 (November 1983): 484.

³ Joan Thirsk, *Tudor Enclosures* (London: Routledge and Paul, 1959), 4; and 9.

the peasants who were farming on the land and prevented them from feeding their animals there.⁴ The resulting state of agricultural decay, as described by Thomas More in *Utopia* (1516), eventually led the population to raise arms.⁵ During the 1530s and 1540s, the riotous levelling of hedges became prevalent.⁶ The most serious of these riots was the 1549 Kett's Rebellion. The rebellion, which began when a crowd of villagers tore down the hedges of a local landlord, involved 16,000 men blockading the city of Norfolk.⁷

Granted, the Tudor Kings and Parliaments were not idle during this time. As More called upon them to do, they attempted to find a "remedy to these evils" by issuing a series of enclosure-related proclamations and Acts from 1489 to 1549. However, that such riots continued to break out in increasing severity demonstrates that these laws were limited in effectiveness. Firstly, there were the anti-enclosure laws, which intended to stop enclosure and to return enclosed land from pasturage to tillage. These laws failed to prevent further enclosure, which was the root cause of the riots. Such laws even encouraged the rioters, who felt that their actions were sanctioned by the government. Secondly, there were the anti-riot

⁴ Kenneth M. Kines, "The Reaction to Enclosure in Tudor Policy and Thought," (master's thesis, University of Richmond, 1971), UR Scholarship Repository (331), 8-9.

⁵ *Ibid*, 8.

⁶ Roger B. Manning, *Village Revolts: Social Protest and Popular Disturbances in England, 1509 - 1640* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 31.

⁷ Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education, 2008), 70.

laws to penalize and punish the enclosure rioters. As Kett's Rebellion demonstrates, these laws were not effective deterrents. Thirdly, there were the royal pardons. These were remissions of the legal consequences for rioting, and were extended to rioters in the hopes that they would desist. These pardons, often contained in the anti-riot laws, might have emboldened the rioters. Combined, these weaknesses contributed to the recurrence of the enclosure riots. Even then, the legislation still had its strengths. They provide evidence of a government that recognized the problems with enclosure and paid close attention to the impacts of enclosure and enclosure laws, even if this cognizance and attention did not ultimately benefit the agrarian situation in the long run.

As such, there was a significant dissonance between the laws issued from Westminster and the state of enclosure and riots on the ground. Interestingly, this divergence does not seem to have been examined closely by the many historians of enclosure or the smaller number of scholars who have studied the enclosure riots and legislation in particular. A popular approach is quantifying the development of enclosure. For example, in "The Chronology of English Enclosure," John R. Wordie traces the state of enclosure from 1500 to 1760 by drawing upon the data of W. E. Tate, Michael Turner and others.⁸ Similarly, as referenced by W.G. Hoskins in *The Age of Plunder*, L. A. Parker provides a percentage breakdown of enclosure in Leicestershire between the Crown, the monasteries, and the squirearchy

⁸ Wordie, "The Chronology of English Enclosure," 501; and 484.

from 1485 to 1550.⁹ Such studies are most helpful in visualizing the phenomenon of enclosure as it unfolded across the varied terrain of England. However, they do not consider the causal relationships between this phenomenon and the laws that were issued out of Westminster, as well as the riots which broke out all over England.

Encouragingly, there is still a minority of studies which note the simultaneous development of enclosure-related legislation and riots. Ian Blanchard briefly covers the anti-enclosure Acts of 1489 and 1516 in his "Population Change, Enclosure, and the Early Tudor Economy."¹⁰ To his introduction to *The Domesday of Inclosures*, I. S. Leadam supplies a helpful summary of the statutes against enclosure and engrossing.¹¹ Nevertheless, these studies do not attempt to evaluate the curious relationship between the ideation behind the legislation and the practical realities on the ground. For this, one would have to turn to W. H. R. Curtler, Joan Thirsk, R. H. Tawney, Joyce Youings, and Andy Wood. Not only does Curtler examine the peasant revolts and 1549 Rebellions, he also provides one of the earliest surveys of enclosure legislation, from the Statutes of Merton (1236) and Westminster the Second (1289) to the

⁹ W. G. Hoskins, *The Age of Plunder: King Henry's England, 1500-1547* (New York: Longman, 1976), 71.

¹⁰ Ian Blanchard, "Population Change, Enclosure, and the Early Tudor Economy," *The Economic History Review* 23, no. 3 (December 1970): 436-7.

¹¹ The Commissioners of Inclosures and The Royal Historical Society, *The Domesday of Inclosures, 1517 - 1518 Vol. 1*, ed. Isaac S. Leadam (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), 6.

Act of 1908.¹² To complement her pamphlet on the enclosure movement and its riots, Joan Thirsk provides a similar survey, only in a more abbreviated form.¹³ Tawney, in his influential *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century*, also gives a brief overview of the Acts from 1489 to 1597.¹⁴ Joyce Youings refers to the statutes (such as the 1489 and 1515 Acts) only sporadically throughout her study, without linking these Acts to the armed rebellions and popular commotions she examines.¹⁵ More recently, Andy Wood has discussed the legal definitions of rioting and the role of the law courts.¹⁶ Yet, this discussion is not connected to his analysis of the geography and decline of enclosure riots from 1509 to 1720.¹⁷ It would seem that in the discourse on the enclosure riots, legal developments have not been discussed in great depth. The only exception might perhaps be made for the master's thesis by Kenneth M. Kines. Kines elaborates on individual proclamations and Acts, such as the 1514 proclamation by Henry VIII and 1515 Acte Avoidyng Pullyng Downe of Townes.¹⁸ Even then, like the scholars that have preceded and succeeded

¹² W. H. R. Curtler, *The Enclosure and Redistribution of Our Land* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), 82; and 298.

¹³ Thirsk, *Tudor Enclosures*, 3-13.

¹⁴ Richard H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 353-5.

¹⁵ Joyce Youings, *Sixteenth-century England* (London: Allen Lane, 1984), 51.

¹⁶ Andy Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 38-48.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 82-95.

¹⁸ Kines, *The Reaction to Enclosure*, 17-8.

him, he does not focus on how these laws may be related to the enclosure riots.

Thus, the links between enclosure, legislation, and riots have not been clarified within this wealth of secondary literature. Instead, it is through a close textual analysis of primary sources that one can develop an analytic framework to disentangle these three factors. Such a method has been used by David Brown and Frank Sharman to evaluate the weaknesses of enclosure agreements in seventeenth and eighteenth century England.¹⁹ The same approach may be used with the Acts and Proclamations from 1489 (when Henry VII put forward the first major Tudor statute against enclosures) to 1549 (when Kett's Rebellion broke out).

The Weaknesses of the Legislation

The Anti Enclosure Laws

Above all, the biggest problem with the anti-enclosure acts and proclamations from 1489 to 1549 was their failure to adapt adequately to the multifaceted and worsening enclosure situation.²⁰ As reiterations and repetitions of one another, they inadequately addressed the sweeping economic and social changes which gave rise to and sustained the enclosure movement. Specifically, these laws relied too heavily on the compliance of the Tudor aristocracy, which did not always cooperate. The laws were poorly-enforced by the courts and were also susceptible to the manipulation of the enclosers. Hence, the laws failed to eliminate the root cause of the enclosure

¹⁹ David Brown and Frank Sharman, "Enclosure: Agreements and Acts," *Legal History* 15, no. 3 (1994): 269.

²⁰ Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem*, 353.

riots – the enclosures themselves.

The legislation shows how the Tudor government repeatedly attempted to solve the enclosure problem with the same types of penalties, without considering the broader circumstances that rendered such sanctions ineffective. At least three acts and four proclamations were passed from the start of Henry VII's reign to Kett's Rebellion in 1549. All are remarkably similar and do not demonstrate any major effort to approach the enclosure issue from different angles. The acts usually forbade land from being appropriated for uses other than tillage, penalizing offenders by confiscating part of their profits. The 1489 "Acte Agaynst Pullyng Doun of Tounes" declared that the owners of houses with twenty or more acres of farmland were "bound to keep, sustain, and maintain housings and buildings upon the said ground and loud, convenient and necessary for maintaining and upholding of the said tillage and husbandry." If these owners did not do so, the King or the owner's lord would confiscate half of the profits of the land. The 1515 "Acte Concnynge Pulling Downe of Townes" likewise asserted that any land which was enclosed for pasture be "put in tillage" again. Once again, if the owner did not comply, his lord or King would "receive yearly half the value of the issues and profit of any such land" By 1536, this penalty had been modified in the "Acte Concnynge Decay of Houses and Inclosures." Firstly, it was applied only to the Midland counties: "Lincoln, Nottingham, Leicester, Warwick, Rutland, Northampton, Bedford, Buckingham, Oxford, Berkshire, the Isle of Wight, Worcester, Hertford, and Cambridge." These counties were possibly targeted because they were seen to be more prone to unrest: the Midlands were where most of the late-medieval and Tudor depopulating enclosures

and conversions to pastoral land had occurred. Secondly, if the lords did not "take the benefit" of the 1515 act, the King would "in default of the said Lords" take the full one-half of the land's profits. These penalties were echoed in the royal proclamations, which may be defined as public ordinances issued by the King (instead of Parliament), by virtue of his royal prerogative. In 1514 and on July 14 1526, Henry VIII proclaimed that all land which had been used in tillage before the reign of Henry VII be returned to that state "by the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel next coming." In addition, the 1526 proclamation also called for enclosers to "take away, destroy, cut, and cast down the hedges, pales and other enclosures" before the 15th of Michaelmas. This was repeated in the February 15 1529 proclamation which demanded that enclosers "break and cast down all and singular the said hedges, ditches, and enclosures so made or enclosed" before the 15th of Easter" and asserted in Edward VI's April 11 1549's proclamation which "put in ure all the said penal laws heretofore made for the repressing of such offenses." In this way, there were no significant changes in the acts and proclamations from 1489 to 1549.

These laws did not adapt to the pressures which compelled landowners to ignore penalties and continue enclosing land. The economic forces were simply too strong for the acts and proclamations: the value of enclosed land increased much more than unenclosed land, such that the former was sometimes eligible for subsidies at a higher rate than the latter.²¹ With the rising profits from raising sheep for the cloth trade, landowners broke the law to seek larger

²¹ Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem*, 169.

fields for pasture, in place of crops, and erected hedges to keep their animals from straying.²² These landowners were also impelled by demographic pressures. In many places, especially the Midlands, landlords resorted to enclosing land wholesale and turning it into pasture because they severely lacked the labor needed sustain the ancient farming economy and its predominance of arable husbandry.²³ William G. Hoskins explains how this came to be the case:

The successive waves of plague during the fifteenth century had reduced many a once populous village to half a dozen small farmers and a few laborers. So when Sir Robert Brudenell evicted thirty people (probably half a dozen households) at Holyoak on the Leicestershire-Rutland border in the autumn of 1496 – and the record says ‘they have departed thence and are either idle or have perished’ – these were but the remnants of a much larger village that had been decaying over a long period ... The tax quotas of the fifteenth century for the Midland counties reveal serious economic decay generations before the early Tudor landlords roused such fury ... for their enclosing activities.²⁴

This population decline continued until the 1520s in the arable areas of southern and midland England.²⁵ In the face of these widespread

economic and social problems, the laws were inadequate for halting the enclosure movement. After the 1520s, England’s population began to increase. As a result of enclosure, there were fewer tenancies and wastes available for the surplus population, which expressed its displeasure with enclosures by levelling hedges.²⁶ Hence, the incidence of anti-enclosure protests increased between 1530 and 1549.²⁷

The inadequacy of these laws was worsened by their overdependence on the cooperation of the Tudor aristocracy, where lawmakers relied heavily on the landowning lords to uphold the anti-enclosure laws. The Acts of 1489 and 1515 relied on the feudal contract as a means of enforcing the law, by empowering superior lords to take half the profits of mesne lords and tenants who infringed it.²⁸ However, these Acts assumed that it was the tenants who were carrying out the enclosure and that the lords were not interested parties in the resultant profits.²⁹ On the contrary, enclosures were often the work of the lords themselves.³⁰ Even if they did not enclose land, these lords compelled their tenants to do so by abusing their privileges, ignoring planted fields or overcharging the grazing resources of arable and waste.³¹ In any case, the 1536 Act blamed the lords for not “putt[ing] the said good act [of 1489] in

²² Wall, *Power and Protest in England*, 151.

²³ Hoskins, *The Age of Plunder*, 71.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 27.

²⁶ Ibid, 33.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem*, 354.

²⁹ The Commissioners of Inclosures and The Royal Historical Society, *The Domesday of Inclosures*, 9.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 40.

due and plain execution.”³² In this manner, the laws were doubly flawed in conception, failing to take into account the conflicting interests of Tudor lords and the rising value of enclosed land and labor shortages which motivated them to participate in enclosure. These deficiencies curtailed the Acts and proclamations’ effectiveness in preventing the enclosure of more land.

Consequently, the Acts and proclamations were poorly-implemented at the local level. These laws may not have been made known to all. Merchants and farmers who were new to the lands they enclosed were often singled out. This was because they were unaware of local agricultural customs or ignorant of the importance of such customs, and were less-respected by their tenants or other members of the gentry than longer-established landholders.³³ For example, John Grymes, a “clothworker” of London, had his stone walls and hedges levelled by 18 husbandmen who disagreed with the 1546 letters patent granted to Grymes for the manors of Wetton and Butterton, Staffordshire.³⁴ It is possible that these outsiders may also have been poorly-informed about the laws. Thus, they may have continued to enclose land, to the increasing dissatisfaction of those whose livelihoods were affected and who subsequently rioted.

Even if these laws were known, they were poorly enforced in the courts. Manorial courts were increasingly unable to resolve disputes over enclosed land, and royal authority, exercised through courts such as Star Chamber or special

local commissions, were not always able to compensate for the decay of manorial courts.³⁵ In 1509, John Mulsho, a landlord of Finedon, Northamptonshire, refused to accede to a King’s Council order for him to remove his enclosures.³⁶ Subsequently, he ignored a Court of Star Chamber compromise where he was to keep part of his closes open during certain times of the year.³⁷ Similarly, by 1544, one Thomas Bowles, the lessee of the demesne and stock of Chippenham in northeast Cambridgeshire, was running two thousand sheep on the common pastures, for all attempts to restrain him had failed and no other villagers could keep sheep.³⁸ In this way, the courts failed to uphold the very laws needed to check the growing enclosure movement and the violent responses to it. In other words, by failing to protect local agricultural customs and to regulate access to the commons, the local manorial courts were inadequate fora for the settlement of enclosure disputes.³⁹

Not only did enclosers ignore court orders, they also tried to manipulate the outcomes of the cases themselves using sophisticated legal maneuvers.⁴⁰ The peasantry was already disadvantaged in many ways. Often, a whole village had to pool its money to bring a case to the Court of Star Chamber or the Court of Requests.⁴¹ Even when the villagers successfully brought a case to London or to an enclosures commission (set up

³² An Acte Concnynng Decay of Houses and Inclosures, 1536, 27 Hen. 8, c. 22.

³³ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 51.

³⁴ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 51.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Youings, *Sixteenth-century England*, 51.

³⁹ Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics*, 44.

⁴⁰ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 54.

⁴¹ Hoskins, *The Age of Plunder*, 230-1.

by the government to investigate the state of depopulation), they faced other difficulties. The emergent class of commercially-minded yeomen refused to participate in the cases because they were more in sympathy with the lord of the manor than with the villagers.⁴² Tenants were afraid to give evidence that might lead to their eviction.⁴³ The peasants also had trouble communicating with the London lawyers, whose style of speaking and terminology they did not always understand.⁴⁴ Although the odds were already stacked heavily against the peasants, the landlords pressed their advantage. The enclosers made use of the positions they held in the courts, or their links to those who held them. Hoskins described the following situation in Leicestershire, which occurred despite the intervention of Wolsey's commission of 1517 to 1518:

[O]nly twenty-two cases were brought to court, and only one conviction secured out of fifteen known results. Packed juries made conviction difficult, and many landlords got away with the plea that the enclosed land had been reconverted to tillage. There is little likelihood that this was true; after all, some of the biggest offenders were justices of the peace, unlikely to convict themselves or their friends. They were a closely packed caucus, both by marriage and by financial interest.⁴⁵

Confident of their ability to manipulate the

courts, landlords continued to enclose land, which often led to the outbreak of riots. For example, in 1544, Sir Thomas Cuppeldike, lord of Great Carbrooke manor in Norfolk, assembled seven or eight servants to remove the hedges of John Payne, a tenant who was a newcomer.⁴⁶ Cuppeldike had exhausted his legal options – Payne repeatedly ignored the authority of the manorial court, and had refused to attend its sessions and obey and order to remove his enclosure.⁴⁷ In fact, the petition presented by the rioters in Kett's Rebellion highlighted this need to enforce regulations. The petition requested a royal commission to consider the laws, statutes, and proclamations which had been neglected by the Justices of the Peace and other officials.⁴⁸ Evidently, the legal system was not working at the local level.

The repetition of the enclosure Acts also evinces how each law failed to serve as an effective deterrent. The 1489 Act mentions how “[g]reat inconveniences daily do increase by ... laying to pasture land which customarily have been used in tillage.”⁴⁹ Yet, the same problem and wording still appeared in the 1515 Act: “Great inconveniences be and daily increase by ... laying to pasture land which customarily have been manured and occupied with tillage.”⁵⁰ The 1536 Act is even more explicit in stating many lands “be and remain unto this present day ... converted and employed only

⁴² Ibid, 231.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 72.

⁴⁶ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 41.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Wall, *Power and Protest*, 165.

⁴⁹ An Acte Agaynst Pullyng Doun of Tounes, 1489, 4 Hen. 7, c. 19.

⁵⁰ Acte Concnynng Pulling Downe of Townes, 1515, 6 Hen. 8, c. 5.

into pasture and to none other purposes.”⁵¹ So too did the proclamations demonstrate that little change had taken place. The July 14 1526 proclamation stated that “very little reformation thereof as yet is had or made” despite the best efforts of the King.⁵² Likewise, the June 1 1548 proclamation noted that although Kings Henry VII and Henry VIII, as well as their parliaments, passed “diverse and sundry laws and acts ... the insatiable covetousness of men do not cease daily to encroach hereupon and more and more to waste the realm.”⁵³ As late as 1549, these problems were still described in the April 11 royal proclamation: “For some still, and willfully, have continued to [convert] the lands from tilling to pasture for sheep, and into parks for deer ... some others have enclosed and taken their tenants’ (and other poor men, their) commons.”⁵⁴ Given that enclosure persisted at a steady rate of increase of 2 per cent from 1455 to 1607, Tudor anti-enclosure laws were clearly ineffective at addressing the root cause of the enclosure riots.⁵⁵

Not only were the anti-enclosure laws largely unsuccessful, they may even have directly encouraged the outbreak of riots. Two proclamations from 1549 described how this happened.

[C]ertain numbers of disobedient and seditious persons, assembling

⁵¹ An Acte Concnynge Decay of Houses and Inclosures, 1536, 27 Hen. 8, c. 22.

⁵² Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 155.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 428.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 452.

⁵⁵ Wordie, “The Chronology of English Enclosure,” 494.

themselves unlawfully in some parts of the realm, have most arrogantly and disloyally, under pretense of the same proclamation [of 1549, enforcing statutes against enclosures], taken upon them his majesty’s authority ... and so gone about ... plucking down pales, hedges, and ditches at their will and pleasure.⁵⁶

[A] great number of rude and ignorant people, in certain shires of England, hath ... assembled themselves, plucked down men’s hedges, disparked their parks, taken upon the direction of things, the King’s royal power and sword.⁵⁷

Indeed, rioters were either convinced that they were helping to uphold the law, or otherwise used the proclamations and acts to justify their riotous behavior. The leaders of large-scale enclosure riots caused church bells to be rung and had the town bailiff or village constable read proclamations in the king’s name ordering enclosures to be cast down.⁵⁸ During the widespread troubles of the late 1540s in East Anglia and the Midlands, the rioters claimed to be supporting the government’s social policy, and thought that they were representing the King against the local Justices of the Peace who failed to uphold the law.⁵⁹ In particular, the local disturbances of late summer 1549 were popular attempts to enforce the 1549 proclamation that

⁵⁶ Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 461.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 463.

⁵⁸ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 53-4.

⁵⁹ Wall, *Power and Protest*, 164-5.

statutes against enclosure be observed.⁶⁰ The rioters became even more agitated after the formation of John Hales's commission set up in 1548. The commission, which consisted of Hales and five of his colleagues, was empowered to directly and immediately "reform" any enclosures of commons and highways, particularly in the counties of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Northamptonshire.⁶¹ The peasants felt that the commission was not doing enough about rural depopulation and the conversion of arable to pasture.⁶² Lacking legal recourse, they might have been provoked into taking the law into their hands. Thus, the anti-enclosure laws were counterproductive because they legitimized the actions of the rioters.

The Anti-Riot Laws

While anti-enclosure laws were partially responsible for the outbreak of riots, the enclosure riot laws also failed to deter would-be rioters. This was despite the fact that the enclosure riot laws were much more specific than the anti-enclosure laws. Firstly, the enclosure riot laws clearly delineated what was considered rioting and what penalties offenders would face. The 1549 "Acte For the Punyshment of Unlawfull Assemblies and Rysinge of the Kinges Subjectes" defined as illegal any assembly "above the number of two and under the number of twelve" which "intend, go about, practice, or put in ure with force and arms unlawfully and of their own authority [to]

overthrow, cut, break, cast down, or dig up, the Pales, hedges, ditches, walls, or other closure of any parks, park or other ground enclosed," where the rioters ignored the commands of "any Justice of Peace or the Sheriff of the Count or by any Mayor Bailiffs or Bailiffs or other head officer of any City or Town corporate [to] retire or return to their habitations, places, or houses."⁶³ The Act declared that offenders "shall suffer imprisonment of his or their bodies by the space of one year without bail or mainprise, and shall make fine and ransom at the King's will and pleasure."⁶⁴ They would also have to pay, to any victim of the riot, three times the value of any damage they caused.⁶⁵ Such penalties were reinforced in the June 14 proclamation of the same year, which threatened that "all such offenders shall immediately be apprehended by the next justice or justices of peace ... and suffer such pains of death, loss of lands, goods, and chattels, as by the laws of the realm in such case is provided."⁶⁶ Secondly, the enclosure laws targeted and punished those who instigated the rioting. The 1549 Act also stated that any person who "by open word or deed shall procure, move, or stir any other person or persons to arise or make any traitorous or rebellious assembly, ... shall therefore be deemed and adjudged a Felon, and suffer pains of death and forfeit his goods, cattle, lands, and tents as in cases of felony, and shall also lose the benefit of his

⁶⁰ Youngs, *Sixteenth-century England*, 215.

⁶¹ Fletcher and MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions*, 79; and Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem*, 366.

⁶² Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem*, 366.

⁶³ An Acte For the Punyshment of Unlawfull Assemblies and Rysinge of the Kinges Subjectes, 1549, 3 & 4 Edw. 6, c. 5.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 464.

Clergy and Sanctuary.”⁶⁷ Similarly, the July 16 1549 proclamation made it illegal for any person to:

[B]y drum, taboret, pipe, or any other instrument striking and sounding, bell or bells ringing, open crying, posting, riding, running, or by any news, rumours, and tales inventing, divulging and spreading, or by any other means, device, or tokens, whatsoever the same shall happen to be, call, gather, assemble, congregate, and muster any number of people, whatsoever they be, either to pluck down any hedge, pale, fence, wall, or any manner of enclosure; or to hunt, waste, spoil, desolate, or deface any park, chase, warren, house, lodge, ponds, waters, or any other unlawful act which is forbidden ... upon pain of death presently to be suffered and executed by the authority and order of law martial.⁶⁸

Thirdly, the anti-enclosure laws empowered local officials to act directly against the rioters. The 1549 Act empowered local officials, such as Justices of the Peace, sheriffs, mayors, and bailiffs, “to raise and assemble the King’s loving Subjects in a manner of war to be arrayed in such great number as he or they then shall think meet or able, to the intent by violence and strength to suppress, apprehend, and take the said persons that so shall

be unlawfully assembled.”⁶⁹ These officials would be “free discharged and unpunishable” in the event that any of the rioters were “killed, slain, maimed, or hurt in or about the suppressing or taking of them.”⁷⁰ This delegation of duties was further elaborated in the May 23 and July 16 proclamations of 1549:

[His highness] straightly charging and commanding all mayors, bailiffs, headboroughs, constables, and all other his majesty’s officers, ministers, true and faithful subjects, that they and every of them be aiding and assisting the said sheriffs and justices and to every of them in and about the execution of the premises, as they will avoid his majesty’s indignation and imprisonment during his highness’ pleasure, without bail or mainprize, and make further answer at their uttermost peril.⁷¹

[H]is majesty most straightly chargeth and commandeth all manner his sheriffs, justices, ministers, and officers, upon the knowledge of any offender against the tenor of this proclamation, forthwith, with all expedition and with such power as thereto shall be requisite, to apprehend and attach the same offender, and him commit to a safe jail, and thereupon undelayed to certify the

⁶⁷ An Acte For the Punyshment of Unlawfull Assemblyes and Rysinge of the Kinges Subjectes, 1549, 3 & 4 Edw. 6, c. 5.

⁶⁸ Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 476.

⁶⁹ An Acte For the Punyshment of Unlawfull Assemblyes and Rysinge of the Kinges Subjectes, 1549, 3 & 4 Edw. 6, c. 5.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 462.

Lord Protector and the rest of the council.⁷²

Lastly, the anti-enclosure laws empowered ordinary subjects to apprehend or inform on rioters. The 1549 Act proclaimed that any person who refused to suppress a riot when required to do so by a local official would “suffer imprisonment of his body for one year without bail or mainprise and make fine and ransom at the King’s will and pleasure.”⁷³ If a Lieutenant was appointed by the King to any county to suppress the uprisings there, everyone was expected to stop the rioters: “[A]ll Mayors, Bailiffs, and other such Officers and all inhabitants and subjects of [shall] be bound to give attendance upon the same Lieutenant to suppress any commotion, rebellion, or unlawful assembly ... upon pain of imprisonment for one whole year.”⁷⁴ The May 23 1549 proclamation charged the King’s subjects to “as soon as by any means they shall have any certain knowledge, intelligence, or vehement suspicion of any secret or open conspiracy or unlawful assembly of any multitude, either for the breaking down of hedges, pales, ditches, or enclosures ... fail not with as much speech as he or they possibly may to give notice and information to the next justice of the peace.”⁷⁵ All in all, the enclosure riot laws were comprehensive in addressing the involvement of rioters, officials, and other subjects in the riots.

However, the enclosure riot laws failed to prevent the outbreak of riots. Just as the anti-enclosure laws were over-reliant on the Tudor aristocracy, so too were the enclosure riot laws over-optimistic about the role of Tudor nobility and officials in enforcing the laws. Admittedly, Tudor lawmakers were constrained by the manorial court system which was entrenched in many villages.⁷⁶ This system according much legal authority to the lords, who could select jurors and override inconvenient court rulings.⁷⁷ Tudor lawmakers might have benefited from co-opting these lords into their anti-riot measures. Still, at best, the local officials condoned the rioters’ actions, since the officials themselves disapproved of enclosures and tolerated the riots as a form of popular justice.⁷⁸ At worst, the Tudor gentry and officials instigated riots to discredit their rivals, gain a political advantage, or win support from their opponents’ tenants.⁷⁹ There are numerous examples. A riot which broke out at Lichfield on May 6 1549 was started by a bailiff of the city to harass some of his rivals among the citizens.⁸⁰ Similarly, John Skelton, esquire, procured a number of persons in October and November 1549 to destroy the hedges of John Gryndall and attack Gryndall’s son.⁸¹ John Vicary of Somerset, likewise, countered his tenants’ armed defense by firing on them with arrows and hiring a band of Welsh ruffians to attack them.⁸² This calculated use of violence against rivals or tenants was often

⁷² Ibid, 476.

⁷³ An Acte For the Punyshment of Unlawfull Assemblies and Rysinge of the Kinges Subjectes, 1549, 3 & 4 Edw. 6, c. 5.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 461-2.

⁷⁶ Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics*, 44.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 53.

⁷⁹ Wall, *Power and Protest*, 150.

⁸⁰ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 53.

⁸¹ Ibid, 51.

⁸² Wall, *Power and Protest*, 153.

combined with harassment in courts of law.⁸³ In other cases, members of the gentry and local government believed themselves to be upholding the law. In Chepping Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, the mayor and burgesses believed they were implementing an order when they encouraged a midnight riot of hedge-cutting and burning, against a yeoman who had previously been ordered to remove the hedges which hindered common rights.⁸⁴ In this manner, the Tudor gentry and local officials proved themselves to be unreliable in supporting the efforts of the King and government to stop the riots, a fact acknowledged in a 1549 proclamation:

[T]he bailiffs, constables, or headboroughs, whose bounden duty and office it had been to have most earnest travailed and employed themselves for the pacifying and stay of their neighbors ... have nevertheless been the very ringleaders and procurers, by their example and exhortation, to the rest of their neighbors.⁸⁵

Moreover, just as they had interfered with the prosecution of enclosure cases, the gentry also protected themselves when they were caught for rioting. Riots had broken out among the royal tenants of Galtres Forest in East Yorkshire in December 1535 and April 1536.⁸⁶ However, at the Topcliffe sessions the gentry comprised the jury prevented indictments for rioting from being returned against the other participants despite the

evidence presented.⁸⁷ In this case, the gentry thus went unpunished and likely remained undeterred from rioting.

By refusing to uphold the enclosure riot laws, other members of Tudor society exacerbated the situation of the gentry and officials' failure to cooperate. Abbots and priors of monasteries frequently behaved no differently from their gentry neighbors in pursuing violent feuds.⁸⁸ The abbot of Fountains instigated six large enclosure riots from 1497 to 1499 against a neighboring gentleman, who had enclosed part of a disputed waste.⁸⁹ In 1532, the prior of Lytham, Lancashire, also provoked three large enclosure riots, with the help of Dame Margaret Butler and her son, Thomas.⁹⁰ Such behavior was unsurprising, since the clergy had previously violated the anti-enclosure laws. Fifty-one monasteries were brought before the Star Chamber between 1518 and 1529 on charges of having enclosed land since 1485.⁹¹ Hence, the clergy continued to undermine the government's enclosure riot laws, contributing to the recurrence of enclosure riots.

The Royal Pardons

Some of the laws against enclosure riots were part of the pardons extended to enclosure rioters, which may not have contributed effectively to the government's efforts to stop the uprisings. At least three pardons were issued in King Edward VI's name in June and July 1549. The Lord Protector Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, who believed that the rioters were goaded into rebellion by

⁸³ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 39.

⁸⁴ Wall, *Power and Protest*, 153.

⁸⁵ Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 477.

⁸⁶ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 49.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁸⁹ Manning, *Village Revolts*, 46.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Youings, *Sixteenth-century England*, 59.

intolerable grievances, probably played a role in issuing these pardons.⁹² As the June 14 proclamation shows, the pardons exempted most rioters from further prosecution:

[His majesty is] contented and pleased to remit and pardon all the said outrages, misbehaviors, riots, and conspiracies, to all and singular his said subjects, other than to such as be already apprehended and in prison as heads and stirrers of the said outrages and riots; and therefore willeth and commandeth all justices of peace, mayors, sheriffs, bailiffs, and all other his highness' officers and ministers, not to interrupt, vex, or trouble, for any in his majesty's behalf, any manner person, other than is specified before, or for any offense, injury, contempt, or conspiracy done at the said stir of riots lately made about the breaking of enclosures.⁹³

The July 12 proclamation even protected the rioters from the wrath of the enclosers whose hedges and fences they had torn down.

[H]is majesty willeth and straightly commandeth all manner his other subjects ... having suffered any manner of grief, damage, or loss, by the act of any of the abovesaid the King's subjects whilst they offended and before they received the pardon from his majesty, that they shall not by action, suit, violence, or compulsion, force, punish,

avenge, or correct any manner of offense, trespass, or unlawful act committed by the same offenders, and pardoned by the same act; but shall suffer and permit them to enjoy and take the benefit of the King's majesty's pardon.⁹⁴

The pardons may have had a twofold effect on the enclosure riots. Firstly, it is possible that the pardons allowed some rioters to avoid the imprisonment set out in the 1549 "Acte For the Punyshment of Unlawfull Assemblyes and Rysinge of the Kinges Subjectes," or even the death penalty set out in the June 14 proclamation. The rioters, hence, lived to riot again another day. Secondly, the pardons suggested that the King and his government were somewhat tolerant of the riots and were not going to crack down harshly on the rioters. Rioters may thus have been emboldened to continue tearing down hedges and fences, confident that they could evade punishment again. Either way, the pardons did not appear to have a significant impact on Kett's Rebellion. Throughout August 1549, the rebels continued to violently resist the troops sent to suppress them in Norwich, engaging in backstreet skirmishes in the day and arson at night.⁹⁵ Therefore, the pardons, on a whole, may not have been fully effective in curbing the riots.

The Strengths of the Legislation

As such, the anti-enclosure laws, anti-riot laws, and royal pardons did not prevent or remedy the outbreak of riots. These uprisings occurred most prominently during the 1530s and 1540s,

⁹² Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem*, 370.

⁹³ Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 463-4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 474.

⁹⁵ Fletcher and MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions*, 75.

when the population had increased and there was insufficient land for the surplus population. Yet, the legislation of the 1480s to 1540s was not entirely flawed. Doubtlessly, Tudor lawmakers were likely well-intentioned. They sought to be equitable, just, and merciful in their laws. The King's subjects could seek redress in the event of any injustice, as seen in the May 23 1549 proclamation which ordered the punishment of enclosure rioters as well as the June 14 1549 proclamation pardoning enclosure rioters:

And yet his majesty doth his highness' good and loving subjects to understand that if any of them do or shall suffer any wrong or injury in any of the said cases, or any like: upon their humble and quiet complaint, his majesty will command such order to be given for redress thereof as his majesty's laws, justice and equity requireth.⁹⁶

But if so be there be any just cause to complain for default of justice, or lack of redress in any such enclosure, or default made against the said acts and statutes before specified in this case provided, or other who find themselves unjustly grieved or injured, may give information, make suit or complaint to the King's majesty, or other his highness' officers deputed to the redress of all such offenses, according to the laws of the realm, and the good and lawful order of the same.⁹⁷

The benign motivations of the Tudor King and his government are also seen in the three pardons which were given to the rioters in 1549, based on the assumption that the rioters had expressed their "humble submission and sorrowful repentance," and had acted out of "folly and of mistaking the said proclamation [against enclosures], and at the instigation and motion of certain lewd and seditious persons, than of malice or any evil will."⁹⁸ Pardons were also given out for enclosers. The April 11 1549 proclamation read as follows:

[H]is majesty [pardons] his loving subjects; not that thereby they should be animated to do evil still, and to hurt the King's majesty's realm, people, and commonwealth; but that men so gently thereunto provoked should obediently again follow so noble, godly, and wholesome laws.⁹⁹

These pardons for enclosers may have been less unhelpful than those extended to the rioters. Although pardons were given to offenders brought before the Hales commission (appointed June 1 1548), their enclosures seem to have been thrown down, arable which had been turned into pasture to have been ploughed up, and farms which had been united to have been separated.¹⁰⁰ Thus, anti-enclosure and anti-riot laws were not unduly severe or malicious.

Moreover, Tudor legislation during this time reveals a government that was somewhat attentive to the impact of its laws. The Acts and

⁹⁶ Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, 462.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 464.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 474; and 463.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 453.

¹⁰⁰ Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem*, 367.

proclamations, namely the “Acte Concnynge Pulling Downe of Townes,” “Acte Concnynge Decay of Houses and Inclosures,” July 14 1526, June 1 1548 and April 11 1549 proclamations, repeatedly described how enclosers ignored the laws. Yet, these laws show that the government monitored the effects of its legislation.

More generally, the acts and proclamations from the 1480s to 1550s show that the government was cognizant of the state of the enclosure movement. Certainly, this was not always the case – when the first enclosure commission was appointed in 1517, the Crown was not adequately well-informed to recognize regional differences in the geographical pattern of enclosure and to discern the subtle differences between enclosing and engrossing.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, the agrarian statutes and proclamations of this period reflect a growing understanding of local differences and changing economic conditions governing the motives for enclosure.¹⁰² Joan Thirsk provides a summary of how agrarian-related Acts became increasingly specific:

The first general statute of Henry VII’s reign against the pulling down of towns (1489) aimed at arresting all depopulation and the conversion of arable to pasture irrespective of region and motive. Later statutes, however, attempted to differentiate. In 1536 the Act of 1489 against depopulation and the conversion of ploughland to pasture was re-enacted, but it now applied only to the Isle of Wight and a group of

counties in central England, extending from Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire south to Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Hertfordshire, east to Cambridge and west to Worcestershire, and including Leicestershire, Rutland, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire. A second statute of 1533 attacked engrossing by prohibiting farmers from occupying more than two farms unless they lived in the parishes in which they were situated, and forbidding them to keep more than two thousand four hundred sheep.¹⁰³

A changing focus was also seen in the proclamations, which moved from targeting enclosures, to the riots, to pardoning the rioters. Although the government could not ultimately address all the enclosures and all the resulting riots, it made a consistent attempt to adapt its laws.

After all, these Acts and proclamations emerged from a period where numerous sources apparently made Tudor lawmakers aware of the enclosure problem. King Henry VIII even took a personal interest in agrarian matters, fearing that they would add fuel to religious discontent.¹⁰⁴ The King may have found out about the enclosure problem through correspondence addressed to him, such as the 1538 letter from a John Bayker, or through the enclosure commissions and Star

¹⁰¹ Thirsk, *Tudor Enclosures*, 10.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 11.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 11-2.

¹⁰⁴ Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem*, 360.

Chamber Proceedings.¹⁰⁵ Otherwise, the King may have found about enclosure from popular culture. In 1496, a series of rhymes against enclosures appeared in Coventry, and the anti-enclosure poems titled “Enclosing Abbots” and “The Pleasaunt Poesye of Princelie Practise” were published in 1527 or 1528 and 1548 respectively.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, the anti-enclosure ballads “Nowe a Dayes” and “Vox Populi Vox Dei” were produced around 1520 and 1547 or 1548 respectively.¹⁰⁷ Almost all the writers of the day, notably Thomas More, vehemently denounced enclosure because they were concerned with its social aspect, especially the loss to the community by driving men from the country.¹⁰⁸ With criticism from all quarters, the King and his government doubtlessly had to act upon enclosure and its resulting riots.

Conclusion

The legislation passed from the beginning of Henry VII’s reign to Kett’s Rebellion had some merits. However, on the whole, the anti-enclosure laws, anti-riot laws, and royal pardons failed to prevent the enclosure riots from occurring. On the contrary, some of the Acts and proclamations even contributed to perpetuating the riots. Despite their best efforts, the Tudor governments from Henry VII to Edward VI attempted, but failed to find,

¹⁰⁵ Richard H. Tawney and Eileen Power, eds., *Tudor Economic Documents: Being Select Documents Illustrating the Economic and Social History of Tudor England* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1924), 2:302-5; 1:44-6; and 1:29-39.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 3: 12-3; 20-2; and 39-46.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 18-9; and 25-39.

¹⁰⁸ Curtler, *The Enclosure and Redistribution of Our Land*, 88.

what Thomas More demanded: “a remedy to these evils.”

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THREATS FROM THE OLD ORDER

The Dismantling of State Shintō

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State Shintō featured prominently in Japanese politics between the years 1868 and 1945. With Shintō beliefs first used as a form of justification of the Meiji Emperor's reign in 1868, Shintō became institutionalized as a national faith. However, Shintō beliefs about the divinity of the Emperor, as well as alleged ideas about the superiority of the Japanese people and land, were then accused by the Allied Powers as the roots of Japan's militarism and ultranationalism during World War II. Therefore, after the Japanese surrendered, the United States occupied Japan and forced the Japanese government to dismantle State Shintō by issuing the Directive for the Disestablishment of State Shintō. However, can we assume that State Shintō was the primary cause in Japan's militarism and ultranationalism? This essay seeks to answer this question by examining the Directive's stated motivations and analyzing the wording of clauses that respond to these specific motivations. It argues that the portrayal of State Shintō in the Directive reveals the United States' distrust of a government that involved itself in a state religion, therein reflecting a threat that State Shintō had posed to the Western political system that advocated the separation of church and state. It thus argues that State Shintō, while no doubt a factor in Japan's militarism and ultranationalism, had been portrayed such that it became a convenient scapegoat, and that further research should be conducted to unveil the underlying motivations behind the call for its disestablishment.

Beginning with the formation of the Shinto Section in the Council of State in 1868, State Shintō had been established by the Meiji administration to unite Japan under the rule of the Meiji emperor. However, the resulting extreme loyalty to the Japanese emperor and the Japanese nation has been thought to have caused the militaristic and ultranationalistic tendencies that precipitated the Pacific War. The fall of the Japanese Empire in 1945 was thus accompanied by the demise of State Shintō – a consequence of the Directive for the Disestablishment of State Shinto.¹ Yet, to what extent is State Shintō culpable for this alleged rise in militarism and ultranationalism? In this paper, I will argue that such an attribution to State Shintō is in part a projection of the Allies’ secularistic political beliefs – particularly that of the United States which was the primary occupying force in post-World War II Japan – and that State Shintō was described in a manner that was convenient for it to be pitted against the prevailing Western political order. I will analyze the motivations that led to the issuance of the Directive, and examine how State Shintō was perceived to have fueled these ultranationalistic and militaristic tendencies by analyzing some of its key components.

In the Directive, State Shintō is defined as the “branch of Shintō (Kokka Shintō or Jinja Shintō) which by official acts of the Japanese Government has been differentiated from the religion of Sect Shintō.”² Beginning with the Meiji period, the Japanese government funded selected Shintō shrines

¹ Helen Hardacre, *Shinto and the State, 1868-1988*, Studies in Church and State 2 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 6.

² General Headquarters, “Translations and Official Documents: The Shinto Directive,” *Contemporary Religions in Japan* 1, no. 2 (1960): 85–89.

and mandated certain Shintō rituals to be performed by all Japanese citizens.³ Shintō doctrine was also used to legitimize the rule of the Japanese Imperial Family during the Meiji Restoration.⁴ State Shintō, as its namesake suggests, thus described a previously religious institution that had the full backing of the Japanese political leaders. However, throughout the course of its existence there remained many debates on whether State Shintō was religious or non-religious – partly because state rituals could be perceived as ‘cultural’, and partly because of the existence of Sect Shintō (Sect Shintō was thought to be separate from government and acknowledged to be religious).⁵

This relationship between Shintō and the Japanese government was problematic for Japan’s occupier, the United States. While the Japanese government had explicitly mandated the practice of Shintō, it was not so in the United States, where the Christian church was strictly separated from matters of governance.⁶ As much as the United States was a “Christian” nation, it had never been under the purview of a state church. In fact, the First Amendment necessitated the separation of church and state, whereby “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or

³ Stuart D. B. Picken, “State Shinto and the Post-1945 Situation,” in *Sourcebook in Shinto: Selected Documents*, Resources in Asian Philosophy and Religion (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2004), 87–122.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Robert Booth Fowler et al., “Religion and Political Culture in America: The Historical Legacy,” in *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices*, Third (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2004), 5–26.

prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”⁷ The prevailing opinion among the Christian majority then had been that “the only way to get [religious freedom] for themselves was to grant it to all others.”⁸ Religious freedom from the state was of foremost importance, hence the emphasis on a deliberate distancing of state from religion. The interference of Japanese politics in the religious affairs of its citizens therefore flew directly in the face of such American political ideals.

As such, the Directive, written in English by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, was issued on 15 December 1945 to cleanly separate the state from Shintō.⁹ The document is important not just because of the changes it made to the politico-religious landscape in post-war Japan, but also because it demonstrates how the Allied Powers perceived State Shintō’s influence in Showa Japan’s ultranationalism and militarism. State Shintō had often been portrayed by contemporary Western scholarship for being a religious vehicle through which the Japanese government facilitated a “nationalistic unification” by a “deification of the political might of the military state.”¹⁰ *Religions in Japan*, a subsequent report issued by the same department in 1948, served to further the Allies’

understanding of the religious landscape in Japan, and hence is useful in illustrating the Allies’ perception of State Shintō. The Allies’ stated purpose in issuing the Directive is fourfold: first, to “free the Japanese people from . . . compulsion to believe in a religion or cult officially designated by the state;” second, to “lift . . . the burden of compulsory financial support of an ideology;” third, to “prevent recurrence of the perversion of Shintō theory and belief into militaristic and ultranationalistic propaganda designed to delude the Japanese people and lead them into wars of aggression;” and fourth, to “assist the Japanese people in a rededication of their national life to building a new Japan based upon ideals of perpetual peace and democracy.”¹¹

From the first aim, we can tell that the Allies considered State Shintō to be a religion. It is also defined as a “national cult officially sponsored by the government”¹² in *Religions in Japan*, and was described as the “state religion” by Daniel C. Holtom, then a leading scholar on Japan.¹³ However, such a perception of State Shintō is based on the Western notion of religion and presumes to end the Japanese debate on it. Through the Meiji and Taishō administration and into the Showa era, Japanese scholars have wrestled with Shintō in relation to other religions – writer Takashima Beihō wrote in 1930 that “the Meiji governments declared that [State Shintō] shrines...were not the objects of religious faith,” and also points out that both

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Sydney Mead, “From Coercion to Persuasion: Another Look at the Rise of Religious Liberty and the Emergence of Denominationalism,” in *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007), 35.

⁹ Hardacre, *Shinto and the State, 1868-1988*, 136.

¹⁰ Daniel C. Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism: A Study of Present-Day Trends in Japanese Religions*, Revised Edition (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corporation, 1963), 28-65.

¹¹ General Headquarters, “Translations and Official Documents: The Shinto Directive,” 85.

¹² William K. Bunce, *Religions in Japan: Buddhism, Shinto, Christianity*, 1st ed. (Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1963), 107.

¹³ Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism: A Study of Present-Day Trends in Japanese Religions*, 5.

Buddhists and Christians “support[ed] the policy of such governments.”¹⁴ On the other hand, some saw the rites in State Shintō to be “profoundly religious,”¹⁵ which Western scholars later appropriated as support for the religious nature of State Shintō. The clear distinctions that the Japanese government made between State and Sect Shintō also seemed to indicate a deliberate separation of what was perceived as religious from the non-religious – in 1882, for example, the Home Ministry banned state-supported shrines from conducting ‘religious’ rites such as funerals and from performing sermons.¹⁶ Whether State Shintō had crossed the line between religion and non-religion, therefore, was not clear-cut from the Japanese perspective. The Allies’ straightforward definition of State Shintō as religion or cult is thus puzzling.

The third and fourth aims of the Directive on the other hand expose a suspicion of linking national identity to religious identity. While State Shintō was blamed for fueling ultranationalism among the Japanese citizens, the fourth aim of the Directive demonstrates that the Allies were not opposed to the Japanese having some form of national unity. The Directive thus appears to operate on the assumption that a national faith is capable of

bringing nationalism to its extreme form, whereas ideals such as democracy would not. Democracy was effectively set up as a force against State Shintō. This is further made evident in scholarship that paint Japan’s “ultranationalistic Shinto” as a reaction to Western democracy and secularization – Skya asserts that Shintō was a means for Japan to “destroy the Western secular democratic international world order.”¹⁷ The conflation of democracy with secularism illustrates the Western political order’s hostility to state religion. The fact that State Shintō had its roots in spiritual elements and could be conceived of as a state religion thus made it an easy target for the democratizing forces of the West.

From these three aims, we see a narrative emerging – one where the Western secularistic democracy wages war against a traditional state religiosity. This is evident in the Directive as well, which states that its purpose was “to separate religion from the state, to prevent misuse of religion for political ends, and to put all religions, faiths, and creeds upon exactly the same basis.”¹⁸ However, this narrative presumes that State Shintō is a religion. In line with the Japanese government’s portrayal of State Shintō as non-religious, Josephson argues that State Shintō was “a mandatory Shintō secular, concerned with government ritual.”¹⁹ If State Shintō can also be perceived as Japan’s equivalent of the secular, it raises the question of why the Allies had chosen to construct it as a religious institution that was opposed to their

¹⁴ Beihō Takashima, *Tōkyō Nichi Shimbun*, Feb. 3, 1930, quoted in Daniel C. Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan: A Study in Modern Shinto* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd, 1938), 295.

¹⁵ Setsuo Uenoda, *Japan Advertiser*, Oct. 21, 1938, quoted in Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism: A Study of Present-Day Trends in Japanese Religions*, 48.

¹⁶ Jason Ananda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 159.

¹⁷ Walter A. Skya, *Japan’s Holy War*, Asia-Pacific (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009), 4.

¹⁸ General Headquarters, “Translations and Official Documents: The Shinto Directive,” 88.

¹⁹ Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan*, 159.

secularized democracy. Answering this question is not within the scope of this paper, but considering the position of secularism in post-World War II Western society may be helpful in future studies on the dissolution of State Shintō.

Keeping the motivations behind the Directive in mind, we can now analyze the way the Directive responded to State Shintō. I will be focusing on how the Directive defines militaristic and ultranationalistic ideology and guards against it.

In Section 2.f., the Directive states that doctrines that taught the superiority of the Japanese Emperor, the Japanese people, and the Japanese islands over other entities had supported the cause of extending Japan's "rule over other nations and peoples," and were hence militaristic and ultranationalistic.²⁰ Militaristic and ultranationalistic ideology also included "any other doctrine which tends to delude the Japanese people into embarking upon wars of aggression or to glorify the use of force as an instrument for the settlement of disputes with other peoples."²¹ The Directive targets such ideology specifically, stating that "all propagation and dissemination of [such] ideology in Shintō doctrines, practices, rites, ceremonies, or observations," as well as those "of any other religion, sect, creed, or philosophy," are "prohibited and will cease immediately."²² By appending a clause that extends this order to all other religions and beliefs, the Allied Powers acknowledge that militaristic and ultranationalistic ideology can also be found in other belief systems. This appears to indicate that the main target of the Directive was the ideology itself; State Shintō had

merely been the vehicle through which it was disseminated.²³ Most of the detailed provisions, however, dealt mainly with the prohibition of Shintō activities that were either mandated or sponsored by the government. No mention was made of regulating similar ideology in religious institutions that were unaffiliated to the Japanese administration. The terms of the Directive are hence vague in that, while condemning ultranationalistic and militaristic ideology under any circumstance, they do not explicitly provide concrete actions for institutions unaffiliated to the government.

The Directive also does not make clear why ultranationalist and militaristic ideology existed in State Shintō, and how central they were to it. In its attempt to eliminate all activities of State Shintō, the Directive suggests that the Allies found ultranationalistic and militaristic ideology to be central to State Shinto. For an explanation of this, we turn to *Religions in Japan*, which claims that Tennoism, ostensibly one of four aspects of State Shintō, ceased to exist after the Directive's implementation. Defined as the "belief in the emperor as...a manifestation of the Absolute,"²⁴ Tennoism is depicted as an unwarranted worship of the emperor that had in turn propelled the belief that the nation of Japan was "specially favored by the gods."²⁵ The fact that it is the aspect of State Shintō most affected by the Directive suggests, from the Allied Powers' perspective, that Tennoism is integral to the formation of militaristic and ultranationalistic ideology. The tone adopted in the description of Tennoism also made clear the extreme skepticism of the validity of such a belief,

²⁰ General Headquarters, "Translations and Official Documents: The Shinto Directive," 89.

²¹ *Ibid*, 89.

²² *Ibid*, 86.

²³ *Ibid*, 85.

²⁴ Bunce, *Religions in Japan: Buddhism, Shinto, Christianity*, 108.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 109.

which, the authors state as fact, had been “manufactured” by the “founders of the new Japan.”²⁶

Both the Directive and the Report of 1948 attribute Japan’s ultranationalism to the Japanese government’s artificial construction of State Shinto. The documents constantly refer to the Japanese government’s role in perpetuating the belief in the divinity of the emperor, and the accordingly elevated status of the Japanese empire. The government is deigned to have compelled the Japanese people into an officially designated religion or cult in the Directive, and the Report accuses the Japanese authorities for “mould[ing] the minds of the people to their own ends.”²⁷ As such, State Shintō was thought to be a tool through which the Japanese government commanded obedience and loyalty to the Japanese emperor.

Certainly, State Shintō displays some form of compulsion on Japanese subjects. In response to incidences of Japanese Christians’ refusal to participate in State Shintō rites, the philosopher Inoue Tetsujiro asserted that Christianity was incompatible with Japanese values, and pointed towards their belief in “a transcendent God” to prove that they could not be loyal subjects to the emperor.²⁸ Clearly, what was at stake here was a certain reverence and obedience to the emperor; the

lack of these attributes had “threaten[ed]... the internal cohesion of the nation.”²⁹

However, what is often glossed over is the fact that such instances were few and far between.³⁰ In fact, Japanese Christians were fairly accepting of State Shintō, and many attempted to show how Christianity conformed to the tenets of State Shintō.³¹ Hardacre also notes that most Christians “tended to see ... [Shintō] school ceremonies as acceptable social custom that could be distinguished from religious worship.”³² For the majority of Japanese Christians, State Shintō, even while propagating a sense of divinity around the figure of the emperor, seemed to be more about maintaining Japanese traditions – evident from the fact that they saw State Shintō rites as “social custom.”³³ Even for the people who were most exposed to Western thought, State Shintō was more of an expression of Japanese identity than an explicit acknowledgement of the superiority of the Japanese emperor, race, and land.

In its portrayal of Tennoism and, by extension, State Shintō as a single-minded propaganda campaign, the report of 1948 deliberately ignores the myriad discourses that had taken place in Japan’s grapple with the establishment of State Shintō. Far from being a uniform ‘venerate-the-emperor’ theology when it was first established in 1868, State Shintō appeared to be more of a means to create a national identity – the Imperial Rescript on the Hikawa Jinja (1868) states that the first priority of the Imperial Family was to

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Emily Anderson, “Christianity in the Japanese Empire: Nationalism, Conscience, and Faith in Meiji and Taisho Japan” (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 2010), <http://search.proquest.com.libproxy1.nus.edu.sg/docview/862064639/abstract/B239EE2501C34FFDPQ/1>, 55-56.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Hardacre, *Shinto and the State, 1868-1988*, 124.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

“revive the rites and re-establish the fabric of the nation upon the unity of worship and government (*saisei-icchi*).”³⁴ The subject of the matter here was not so much *saisei-icchi*, a term which has often graced discourse on the relationship between the Imperial Family’s supposed divine roots and its governance of Japan; rather, it was the re-establishment of national unity that was of larger importance. As such, the establishment of State Shintō started as an identification of things uniquely Japanese,³⁵ and not so much one that “[inculcated] loyalty and obedience.”³⁶

State Shintō’s role in facilitating ultranationalistic and militaristic tendencies may be incontrovertible, but a simple dismissal of State Shintō as an institution created purely to cultivate loyalty and obedience towards the Japanese monarch is problematic. Such discourse is perhaps indicative of a natural suspicion of the legitimacy of the Japanese Imperial Family through quasi-religious doctrines by the leaders of the Allied Powers. What was threatening was not merely the content of State Shintō; rather, it was also the perceived startlingly close relationship between the religious and the political spheres, which went against Western secularized democracy. The incompatibility of the Directive’s description of State Shintō with the Japanese experience further illustrates a gap in the Allied Powers’ perception. Preoccupied with their own notions of governance, the Allied Powers drafted a directive that was far

³⁴ Picken, “State Shinto and the Post-1945 Situation,” 91.

³⁵ James L Huffman, *A Yankee in Meiji Japan* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 112.

³⁶ Bunce, *Religions in Japan: Buddhism, Shinto, Christianity*, 107.

more concerned with disentangling the relationship between state and faith, and that, with all its condemnation of ultranationalism and militarism, failed to account for the presence of such ideology in institutions unaffiliated to the state. The continuing debates on remnants of State Shintō that are no longer related to the state (for example, the controversy surrounding the Yasukuni Shrine) are perhaps a consequence of these ambiguities.

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WE LIVE TOGETHER, WE FIGHT TOGETHER

Solidarity with migrants among the Southern-European radical left

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The Greek “Refugee Crisis” saw the emergence of a large international flow of volunteers and civil society organizations who mobilized to alleviate the dire situation of migrants and refugees. While most of these actors operate within the framework of humanitarian work, some groups ideologically affiliated with the radical left conceive of their activities as actively political, rejecting humanitarianism and adopting the concept of “solidarity” instead. This paper will examine their motivations, ideology, and rhetoric; building on Miriam Ticktin’s distinction between “care” and “cure,” I argue that activist groups see their work with migrants as part of a long-term “political cure” to larger social problems. Finally, the paper will consider the historical experience of fascism and the tradition of internationalism as features of the cultural identity of the Southern European left that have shaped this particular view of migration activism.

Introduction

The Southern European region recently came under the spotlight due to the 2015-2016 “Refugee Crisis,” which saw an unprecedented number of migrants, in particular Syrians seeking refuge from the ongoing civil war, arrive at the shores of Greece and Italy. It rapidly became painfully obvious that national or European Union (EU) institutions were completely unprepared to handle the situation, due to bureaucratic slowness as well as lack of political consensus. The crisis attracted a large flow of people from all parts of Europe who flew to Greece, and especially to the hotspot of Lesbos, to fill the gaps left by the dysfunction of official apparatuses.¹ Volunteers quickly started making headlines for their work,² and have often been described as “humanitarian”³ and animated by a “desire to make a difference when human suffering is tangible.”⁴

¹ Matina Stevis, “Volunteers Flock to Greek Island to Fill Void in Migrant Crisis,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 11, 2015, sec. Page One, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/volunteers-flock-to-greek-island-to-fill-void-in-migrant-crisis-1449802501>.

² United Nations News Centre, “Greek Volunteers Awarded Top UN Humanitarian Honour for Efforts with Migrants and Refugees,” June 9, 2016, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?newsid=54855#.wcvfbj95aq>.

³ John Psaropoulos, “The Impact of Humanitarian Volunteers in Greece,” *Al Bawaba*, March 22, 2016, <https://www.albawaba.com/news/impact-humanitarian-volunteers-greece-820222>.

⁴ Karen McVeigh, “What’s in It for Them? The Volunteers Saving Europe’s Refugees,” *The Guardian*, June 9, 2016, sec. World news, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/09/wh>

However true for many volunteers, this narrative conflates traditional large NGOs such as Doctors Without Borders with small, newly-founded non-profit groups, independent volunteers, local habitants, and political groups, grouping all efforts under the umbrella of “humanitarian work” regardless of the specific motivations driving different actors. Although some articles occasionally draw attention to the diversity of realities and organizational structures,⁵ and brief mentions of “anarchist-run squats” are common in coverage of the Greek situation,⁶ the idea of a politically-motivated mobilization for migrants has not been a dominant one in the mainstream collective imagination.

A closer look at radical leftist groups involved in pro-migrant activities, however, quickly reveals that the way in which they think of their work is far from, and most often directly in conflict with, the principles of humanitarianism. In this paper, I focus on this politically-charged form of pro-migrant action, often termed “solidarity,” and explore its characteristics and the motivations driving it. In the first part of the paper, I concentrate on the squats for refugees and migrants started by anarchist

ats-in-it-for-them-the-volunteers-saving-europes-refugees.

⁵ “Secret Aid Worker: Greece Has Exposed the Aid Community’s Failures,” *The Guardian*, September 13, 2016, sec. Global Development Professionals Network, <http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/sep/13/secret-aid-worker-greece-has-exposed-the-aid-communitys-failures>.

⁶ Helena Smith, “The Idealists of Lesbos: Volunteers at the Heart of the Refugee Crisis,” *The Guardian*, April 15, 2016, sec. World news, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/15/idealists-of-lesbos-volunteers-refugee-crisis-pope-francis>.

groups in Athens, examining their position on humanitarianism and the alternative they propose. The main evidence I use are social media posts published by one of the squats, the City Plaza Hotel, as well as accounts of the volunteers who worked there. These forms of expression are significant because they build the narrative through which activists choose to frame their work and put forth their political stances. I choose to focus on the Greek context because the urgency of the Refugee Crisis caused solidarity to develop from a purely ideological philosophy to an observable set of practices. In the second part, I suggest some factors characterizing the culture and sense of identity of the Southern European radical left which contributed to the rise of the concept of solidarity. I broaden the focus from Athens and the Refugee Crisis to the characteristics and historical experience of the radical left in Southern Europe, which I define as including Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal.⁷ My thesis is twofold: firstly, that solidarity is prompted by a perception of migration as part of a continuum of other political causes, rather than as a separate discrete issue; and secondly, that such perception arises from elements of the identity of the radical left, such as the historic experience of fascism and a tradition of internationalism.

A note on terminology

Among stakeholders in the international community working on migration issues, the

⁷ The region of Southern Europe has no clear limits universally agreed upon, and is sometimes expanded to include the south of France and countries in the Balkans. I choose a restrictive definition based on the political, cultural and historical similarities of these four countries, which make observations on the Left generalizable.

common understanding is that there exists a difference between migrants and refugees. Amnesty International defines a refugee as “a person who has fled their own country because they have suffered human rights abuses or because of who they are or what they believe in,” and a migrant as someone who “moves around within their own country, or from one country to another, usually to find work,” noting that “some move voluntarily, while others are forced to leave because of economic hardship or other problems.”⁸ This differentiation is based on the framework established by the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, which defines a refugee as someone who left their country “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted.”⁹ As many authors have pointed out, the distinction between the two is problematic, as it relies on supposedly objective criteria which in reality are context- and time-specific to qualify the “refugee,” and it creates categories of “deserving” and “undeserving” people by drawing a separation between voluntary and forced migration.¹⁰ Radical leftist groups, although familiar with these definitions, do not practically or morally draw a distinction, and use both terms

⁸ Amnesty International, “Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Migrants,” accessed November 17, 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/>.

⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,” accessed November 17, 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/basic/3b66c2aa10/convention-protocol-relating-status-refugees.html>.

¹⁰ Christopher Kyriakides, “Words Don’t Come Easy: Al Jazeera’s Migrant-refugee Distinction and the European Culture of (Mis)Trust,” *Current Sociology*, August 4, 2016, 001139211665808, doi:10.1177/0011392116658089.

interchangeably.¹¹ To reflect this practice, I only use the term “migrant” to refer to refugees and economic migrants alike.

Against humanitarianism

Sitting on the floor and doodling on the surface of a “table” made of a wood plank, I listened to the rest of the people in the room, all students of various European nationalities attending the same university in the UK, complain about the practices of the activist group they had come to Athens to help. Our daily breakfast meetings had mostly been dominated by grievances about the methods of the host group, perceived to be too charity-oriented and not political enough. The long, mostly circular discussion made me and my best friend roll our eyes, as we longed for the meeting to finish to go back to our projects.

In July 2016, I spent three weeks in Athens participating in the creation of a community center for migrants living in the city. The project was initiated by a group of volunteers from various parts of Europe who had already been running a social kitchen in Greece for several months, first in Lesbos and then in Athens. At the time I was there, the group was still in the initial stages of transforming the run-down six-story ex-factory that they had rented into a welcoming community center - which eventually opened in October 2016. Our work routine mostly consisted of painting walls, building furniture out of pallets, and clearing out old machinery. The nature of the daily activities had created tensions between the Athens-based group

and the UK-based group, who had travelled there to help for a few weeks. The criticism from the latter was based on the perceived insufficient involvement of migrants in the shaping of the project, the lack of links with the local anarchist community, and the provision of food, clothes, and medical services, which are seen as a typically humanitarian activity. Although I was familiar with the typical criticisms of charity and outside aid, the discussion seemed largely preposterous to me, as the two groups had virtually identical political ideologies - a mix of anarchism, socialism and communism - relations with state and EU institutions as well as large NGOs characterized by distrust and rejection, and a vision of a utopian solution to the Refugee Crisis: the opening of borders and an unconditional acceptance of all migrants, without distinction between refugees and economic migrants. Interestingly, the Athens-based group had similar accusations towards the UK-based group as well as other groups of volunteers, whom were negatively characterized by a member as “wanting to save the world by playing with children and teaching English” - the kind of activities commonly associated with voluntourism. I do not wish to dwell here on whether the criticisms were founded or not; rather, I want to draw attention to the fact that the mere possibility of closeness to humanitarianism was sufficient to cause conflict between groups with largely similar cultural backgrounds and political goals. The anxiety to avoid any association with charity had led to a high degree of scrutiny of each other’s practices. The hyper-awareness of one’s own positionality and the desire to escape the dynamics of hierarchy, Othering, and passivization of migrants, perceived to be prevalent in NGO and state practices, have been frequently noticed among

¹¹ Katerina Rozakou, “The Biopolitics of Hospitality in Greece: Humanitarianism and the Management of Refugees.” *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 3 (2012): 562-

politicized pro-migrant groups.^{12 13 14} This preoccupation, and the will to build a different model of relations with migrants, is well summarized by the words of a volunteer who worked at the City Plaza Hotel squat:

I could never have guessed that, despite all the information I had on the refugee crisis and all the awareness I had worked on raising, I still fell into some clichés and small racist acts during my coexistence with these people. In fact, I think some of my slip-ups were caused, partially, by the way the western world articulates the topic of helping refugees. We mustn't forget that two of the main pillars on which our countries were historically built are religion and imperialism, key

factors that lead to charity – a very, very different concept from solidarity.¹⁵

“We live together, we fight together”

Instead of humanitarianism, the radical left has been proposing an outlook on pro-migrant work based on the idea of “solidarity.” This concept preceded the start of Refugee Crisis and is not limited to mobilization for migrants: its use has been noted, for instance, in the context of “social clinics” providing free medicine and medical assistance to those affected by the economic crisis in Athens.¹⁶ Heath Cabot situates these social clinics within a “larger movement of solidarity networks, which include soup kitchens, time banks, anti-middlemen markets, and venues for the distribution of clothing and foodstuffs.”¹⁷ Evthymios Papataxiarchis defines solidarity as “a project, an ‘alternative horizon’ aimed at combating alienation and atomization,” and traces its emergence as a response-from-below to post-2008 austerity policies.¹⁸ According to Papataxiarchis, solidarity is both a pragmatic mode of political practices and a utopian project of reimagining

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Katerina Rozakou, “Socialities of Solidarity: Revisiting the Gift Taboo in Times of Crises: Socialities of Solidarity.” *Social Anthropology* 24, no. 2 (2016): 185–99.

¹⁴ Sotirios Chouris, “Pity, Solidarity & Justice in the Light of the Current Refugee Crisis: From Aristotle to Rawls, Hanna Arendt and Back. The Case of Volunteers in the Informal Camps of Eidomeni, Piraeus Port, and Victoria Square-Athens: Forming Interaction – Forming Identity,” *Borderland Security and Migration: Social and Cultural Challenges to Homeland Security*, accessed November 17, 2016, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305807895_Pity_Solidarity_Justice_in_the_light_of_the_current_refugee_crisis_From_Aristotle_to_Rawls_Hanna_Arendt_and_Back_The_case_of_Volunteers_in_the_Informal_Camps_of_Eidomeni_Piraeus_Port_and_Victoria_Squa.

¹⁵ Elisa Coll Blanco, “Ah, Poor Things’: The Mistake You Must Never Make with Refugees - No-Yolo,” *No-Yolo*, October 18, 2016. www.no-yolo.com/ah-poor-refugees (emphasis in the original)

¹⁶ Heath Cabot, “The Chronicities of Crisis in Athens’s Social Solidarity Clinics,” *Cultural Anthropology*, April 21, 2016, <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/860-the-chronicities-of-crisis-in-athens-s-social-solidarity-clinics>.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Evthymios Papataxiarchis, “Unwrapping Solidarity? Society Reborn in Austerity,” *Social Anthropology* 24, no. 2 (2016): 205–10.

society and social relations. It is thus not surprising that this concept has become the main keyword used by radical groups engaged in pro-migrant activities to describe their work, which is as much an affirmation of the ideology as it is a practical program. The importance of the idea of solidarity is manifest in the way it shapes language use, as shown by this call for a group meeting by the City Plaza Hotel squat:

Refugees and solidarians [...] will discuss the situation in the camps, in order to identify ways to organize refugee and solidarian struggles.¹⁹

Here the people whom the international press would commonly describe as “volunteers” are instead called “solidarians,” emphasizing their distance from the framework of humanitarianism that volunteerism is associated with. This practice is not unique to City Plaza, and has become common-place in Greece.²⁰ The term “solidarian” allows for one’s actions to be charged with political meaning, in contrast to the idea of the “neutral” humanitarian.²¹ Far from choosing a position of

¹⁹ “Refugee Accommodation and Solidarity Space City Plaza, “Detention Centers: State of Exception and Continual Apartheid on the Islands of the Aegean,” *Facebook*, December 11, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/sol2refugeesen/photos/a.1569641766661494.1073741828.1568287556796915/1640131902945813/?type=3&theater>.

²⁰ Katerina Rozakou, “Socialities of Solidarity: Revisiting the Gift Taboo in Times of Crises: Socialities of Solidarity.” *Social Anthropology* 24, no. 2 (2016): 185–99.

²¹ Miriam Iris Ticktin, *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

neutrality, the City Plaza collective explicitly states that their pro-migrant work is embedded in the political. A statement published on their Facebook page in October 2016 to celebrate the first six months since the opening of the squat reads:

We want to set an example for dignified refugee housing, but we also want to be a tool in the struggle for equal rights for economic and political refugees, in order to abolish the EU-Turkey deal and for the borders to be opened, in order for detention in camps and deportations to stop, [...] in order to bring down the fence on Evros, in order to grant political asylum to refugees fleeing war.²²

In her critique of humanitarianism, Miriam Ticktin makes a distinction between “caring” and “curing,” remarking that humanitarianism functions as an anti-politics machine because it conceives of caring as an end in itself, consequently preventing the imagination of a political cure: “rather than change the conditions in which people live and thereby improve human life on a broader scale, the focus is on alleviating pain in the present moment.”²³ The humanitarian conceives him- or herself as a neutral actor that does not choose a political side, but rather dispenses care unconditionally to all those in need. For solidarians, on the contrary, the emphasis is on a long-term vision, and the immediate work of care

²² Refugee Accommodation and Solidarity Space City Plaza, “185 Days and Nights of Solidarity and Dignity,” *Facebook*, October 25, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/sol2refugeesen/posts/1632991936993143:0>.

²³ Miriam Iris Ticktin, *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 62.

- providing housing, providing food, etc. - is not carried out for its own sake, but as a building block of the political cure. The rest of the statement reveals information about the “project of society remaking”²⁴ that solidarity envisions:

We all managed to create a complete counterexample for dignified housing, multiethnic cohabitation and social self organization, [...] a counterexample for the social integration of migrants and refugees, a springboard for demanding from the state itself to provide permanent and dignified housing conditions, a practical proposal for the movement and for society, not only for claiming the rights of refugees and migrants, but of all of us, from racism to unemployment and from closed borders to the memoranda.²⁵

This paragraph shows how the utopian social vision of the radical left and the pro-migrant mobilization merge through the project of solidarity: the cause of migrants is not perceived as a separate, external one, but rather as part of the broader struggle for a reimagined social organization. Cabot argues that the solidarity clinics she observed operate in a “chronicity of illness,” where disease was understood not as a simple pathology but a widespread, long-lasting condition arising from the marginalization and austerity of post-2008 Greece;

²⁴ Evthymios Papataxiarchis, “Unwrapping Solidarity? Society Reborn in Austerity,” *Social Anthropology* 24, no. 2 (2016): 205–10.

²⁵ Refugee Accommodation and Solidarity Space City Plaza, “185 Days and Nights of Solidarity and Dignity,” *Facebook*, October 25, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/solzrefugeesen/posts/1632991936993143:0>.

solidarity is thus a way to “care” for the pathology while providing a “cure” to heal the chronicity of the crisis. Similarly, for the radical left, the Refugee Crisis is not a one-off failure of official institutions, but is rather situated in the chronic malaise of neoliberalism. Therefore, the cause of migrants is a continuation of normal political activities, rather than an “external” battle affecting a distinct Other that is adopted out of compassion for suffering. This driving philosophy is perhaps best encapsulated by the central slogan of City Plaza and other Athenian squats: “We live together, we fight together” (see Appendix 1).

Identity factors

The hostility to charity and humanitarianism of local Greek groups and the significance of the concept of solidarity, although rarely highlighted by mainstream media coverage, have often been documented in anthropological literature.^{26,27,28,29,30}

²⁶ Katerina Rozakou, “The Biopolitics of Hospitality in Greece: Humanitarianism and the Management of Refugees.” *American Ethnologist* 39, no. 3 (2012): 562–77.

²⁷ Katerina Rozakou, “Socialities of Solidarity: Revisiting the Gift Taboo in Times of Crises: Socialities of Solidarity.” *Social Anthropology* 24, no. 2 (2016): 185–99.

²⁸ Heath Cabot, “The Chronicities of Crisis in Athens’s Social Solidarity Clinics,” *Cultural Anthropology*, April 21, 2016, <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/860-the-chronicities-of-crisis-in-athens-s-social-solidarity-clinics>.

²⁹ Sotirios Chroudis, “Pity, Solidarity & Justice in the Light of the Current Refugee Crisis: From Aristotle to Rawls, Hanna Arendt and Back. The Case of Volunteers in the Informal Camps of Eidomeni, Piraeus Port, and Victoria Square-Athens: Forming Interaction –

These works, however, have mostly focused on the practices of local Greek groups, the impact of these practices on the relations between volunteers and migrants, and how volunteers understand and attempt to shape their own positionality through their work ethics. I want to focus instead on the question of why the principle of solidarity was so successful in becoming a paradigm for pro-migrant work among the radical left. As shown, despite the apparent lack of any similarity in demographic, history, or background between European solidarians and African, Middle Eastern, or South Asian migrants, the solidarians conceptualize the cause of migrants' rights not as a separate self-standing issue but as part of their own struggles. This sense of identification and perception of sameness should not be taken as automatic, as other frameworks dealing with migration, like humanitarianism, rely instead on a construction of the migrant as the Other.³¹ What elements of their identity cause leftist political groups to carry such a strong sense of identification with the experience and destiny of migrants? Here I want to suggest that

Forming Identity," *Borderland Security and Migration: Social and Cultural Challenges to Homeland Security*, accessed November 17, 2016, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305807895_Pity_Solidarity_Justice_in_the_light_of_the_current_refugee_crisis_From_Aristotle_to_Rawls_Hanna_Arendt_and_back_The_case_of_Volunteers_in_the_Informal_Camps_of_Eidomeni_Piraeus_Port_and_Victoria_Squa.

³⁰ Evthymios Papataxiarchis, "Unwrapping Solidarity? Society Reborn in Austerity," *Social Anthropology* 24, no. 2 (2016): 205–10.

³¹ Miriam Iris Ticktin, *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

two issues that have historically defined leftist culture in Southern Europe - the relation with fascism and the ideal of internationalism - have provided ground for the incorporation of the migrants' cause within broader political struggles. I do not mean to imply a simplistic cause-effect relation, but rather show that these two elements have shaped the identity of the radical left in a way that facilitated the creation of a discourse of continuity around migration. I broaden my focus from Greece to the rest of Southern Europe as the historical similarities between the countries of the region cause these themes to be experienced similarly.

The fight against fascism

Historical memory, especially with regards to World War II,³² has been utilized as a tool - Western Europe "actively [fosters] social memories of the past in order to define national belonging in the present."³³ Italy, Spain, Greece, and Portugal all went through military and fascist dictatorial regimes during the 20th century; this experience left a deep, durable mark on the collective consciousness of these countries. Anti-fascism as a value and a practice is deeply embedded in the ideology and rhetoric of the radical left, which builds its identity on a sense of inheritance and continuity from the movements that resisted fascist dictatorships. The bridge between past and present represented by

³² Csilla Kiss, "Historical Memory in Post-Cold War Europe," *The European Legacy* 19, no. 4 (2014): 419–32.

³³ "Interview: Jonah S. Rubin and 'Re-Membering the Spanish Civil War,'" *The Wenner-Gren Blog*, December 6, 2012, <http://blog.wennergren.org/2012/06/interview-jonah-s-rubin-and-re-membering-the-spanish-civil-war/>.

anti-fascism does not exist only at a national level but across countries as well: the Italian guerrilla song “Bella Ciao” is still sung nowadays in Spain and Greece,³⁴ and the motto of the Republican fighters during the Spanish Civil War, “No pasaran” (They shall not pass), is included in a song of the Italian civil resistance movement against the construction of a high-speed railway.³⁵ The reutilization of this shared cultural heritage for contemporary battles also indicates that the resistance against fascism is not perceived as a historical fact but as an ongoing, lived experience, and the international links unifying the leftist movement across the region are constantly renewed: for instance, the leftist Greek rapper Pavlos Fyssas, who was killed by a group affiliated with the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn in 2013, is remembered and celebrated in Italy (see Appendix 2). Leftist groups, therefore, are characterized by a perception of fascism as a living, active threat. It is not surprising, therefore, that the wave of xenophobia and the rise of right-wing extremism across Europe triggered by the Refugee Crisis would have a strong resonance with the values and political struggles of the radical left.

In August 2016, the squat “Notara 26”, which forms part of the network of migrant squats in the anarchist neighborhood of Athens, was attacked with petrol bombs during the night. Although there

³⁴ Andrea Punzo, “Elezioni Grecia, La Piazza Di Alexis Tsipras Canta ‘Bella Ciao’ (VIDEO),” *Huffington Post*, accessed November 17, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.it/2015/01/22/tsipras-bella-ciao_n_6526384.html.

³⁵ “No TAV No Pasaran,” *Canzoni Contro La Guerra*, accessed November 17, 2016, <https://www.antiwarsons.org/canzone.php?id=42357&lang=it>.

were no victims, the interior of the building was damaged by the fire, forcing the occupants to move out. The City Plaza Hotel squat issued the following statement:

It is clear that the goal of the criminals was to spread terror among refugees and solidarians. In the sick climate created, on the one hand, by the evacuation of squats in Thessaloniki and, on the other hand, by the ceaseless smear campaign against the solidarity movement, fascists feel they are free to roam.

Yet they are mistaken! The refugee solidarity movement will not be held back by firebombs, as it was not by riot police either. The murderous attack on Notara 26 does not scare us, it enrages us. We remain on the side of refugees, we insist on a culture of solidarity against the barbarism of racism.

We live together, we struggle together,
we will win together.³⁶

The accreditation of the incident to fascists is due to previous incidents of clashes between pro-migrant activists and Golden Dawn. It is important to notice that the statement links the rise of fascist and racist violence to the behavior of the State, creating a parallel between “firebombs” and “riot police.” The racist violence suffered by migrants at the hands of right-wing groups is perceived to be on a continuum with the violence of the State: both ultimately affect migrants and solidarians alike, and occur within a

³⁶ Refugee Accommodation and Solidarity Space City Plaza, “The Murderous Attack on Notara 26 Does Not Hold Us Back,” *Facebook*, August 24, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/sol2refugeesen/posts/1608297819462555>.

longer history of conflict between the radical left and both fascism as well as official institutions.³⁷

No borders, no nations

For the celebrations of its six-month anniversary, City Plaza organized a series of workshops, one of which was titled “Internal and external European borders: internationalist solidarity and struggles for the freedom of movement”:

With the participation of comrades from European countries, we exchange experiences on the situation as it is currently unfolding [-] the multiplication of fences, the rise of repression and of the far right, the militarization of the borders, and the peak of the suspension of rights - with a view to identifying strategies and ways to overcome Fortress Europe and to escalate the struggle for internationalist solidarity.³⁸

³⁷ This hypothesis is beyond the scope of the paper, but it is possible that the weight of the threat of fascism might lead to a particularly strong degree of empathy with citizens of countries in the MENA region, often escaping from or having lived under authoritarian regimes with similar patriarchal structure as Southern European fascist regimes. Investigating whether the level of identification with migrants changes depending on their geographical provenience could constitute an interesting question for further research.

³⁸ Refugee Accommodation and Solidarity Space City Plaza, “Internal and External European Borders: Internationalist Solidarity and Struggles for the Freedom of Movement,” Facebook, December 11, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/sol2refugeesen/photos/a.1>

Internationalism is a core concept of communist, socialist and anarchist philosophies, characterized by the rejection of a sense of identity based on nationality - and often of the Nation-State altogether - and the forging of relations of brotherhood across national borders instead. In this workshop description, it is possible once again to notice the merging of traditional elements of leftist practices - such as the building of networks across countries and an internationalist outlook to political struggles - with issues unique to the migrant crisis, such as the tightening of border controls and the closure of Europe to outsiders. The fight against borders as an integral part of the leftist struggle is not obvious, given that solidararians are in most part European citizens who already enjoy freedom of movement, and are therefore not personally affected by the increase in border controls. Of course, non-politicized stakeholders involved in migration-related human rights work are also critical of the way European nations have been managing their borders during the Refugee Crisis: Amnesty International, for instance, calls for Europe to “create safe and legal routes so that people do not feel forced to make perilous sea crossings.”³⁹ For these groups, however, the problem is the way immigration law is created and enforced, not the *existence* of borders in itself; leftist groups, on the other hand, understand the failure of the European community to provide a humane solution to the Refugee Crisis as a damaging consequence of the existence of geographically-defined Nation-States.

569641766661494.1073741828.1568287556796915/1640129756279361/?type=3&theater.

³⁹ Amnesty International, “Hotspot Italy: Abuses of Refugees and Migrants,” accessed November 17, 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/11/hotspot-italy/>.

“No borders, no nations,” already a core motto of anarchism, has become a central slogan of pro-migrant movements (see Appendix 3). The pre-existing hostility toward state institutions and the ideological rejection of national borders have created fertile ground for the radical left to understand the migrants’ cause as an integral part of their own political struggles.

Conclusion

Hannah Arendt articulated the tragedy of statelessness as the loss of human rights due to the loss of a political community.⁴⁰ Humanitarianism might be read as a response to this loss: as a political cure to the situation of refugees and migrants, which would entail the reacquisition of their human rights, is made impossible by the absence of a state to appeal to, the focus shifts to immediate care instead. The services provided by humanitarian action are not envisioned to be a solution: Ticktin highlights how humanitarian professionals were largely aware that the “immediate, urgent, and temporary” care they were providing did not constitute a long-term political program,⁴¹ but chose to act in the present rather than toward an uncertain future solution. Humanitarianism does not propose itself as a tool for addressing systemic problems, but rather focuses on acting in the now while leaving the task of working toward a cure to other actors. Humanitarianism accepts working in a space where

human rights are suspended, thus implying a degree of confidence in the State and other political institutions, as it hands over to them the responsibility of breaking such suspension. Solidarity, on the other hand, can be read as a response to the situation of statelessness that places no trust in official authorities, and thus is driven by the imperative of working toward a cure in the now. I have shown how the various services offered to migrants are conceived as an integral part of the program of constructing a social utopia, and are therefore embedded in political meaning. The traditional rejection of official authorities and national borders, the violence suffered at the end of fascism, and the experience of post-2008 austerity which aggravated the dissolution of a social pact with the State all contributed to shaping the Southern European leftist identity in a way that proved optimal for the development of the solidarity model.

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⁴⁰ Hannah Arendt, “The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man,” In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1951), 267–302.

⁴¹ Miriam Iris Ticktin, *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 63.

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Appendix



Appendix 1

Photo of a poster in a street of Athens, publicizing a pro-migrant demonstration organized by several squats. The poster reads: “We live together - We fight together. Against concentration camps, against deportations, political asylum to all refugees/migrants, resilience in the urban fabric, freedom of movement for all”. Photo taken by me.



Appendix 2

Photo of a graffiti homaging rapper Pavlos Fyssas (aka Killah P) in the city of Bologna, Italy. Photo taken by my friend Christopher Saltmarsh and used with permission.



Appendix 3

Photo of an anti-borders, anti-police graffiti in a street of Athens. Photo taken by me.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN THE CHINESE EDUCATION SYSTEM TODAY AND ITS POTENTIAL REFORMS

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This paper questions, primarily through secondary research, whether the current affirmative action for ethnic minorities in the Chinese education system is able to serve its expected function; it then proposes amendments to the current collection of affirmative policies. This paper also adopts an analytical method that inquires into the challenges faced by policymakers and the likelihood of success of the proposed changes. Policies for ethnic minorities in China are under close scrutiny today, especially when ethnic conflicts intertwined with terrorism and separatism are on the rise, and the underlying tension between the majority Han and minorities over issues such as equality and religion is still simmering insidiously. The Chinese government has had a long history of offering the ethnic minorities affirmative action spanning across the rights to reproduction, education, religion, finance, and employment. Of all the supposedly favorable policies for the minorities, educational affirmative action is expected to fundamentally elevate their socio-economic status, and unite and stabilize the country. Although some educational affirmative action has benefited the minorities, others have actually hampered their advancement up the economic ladder, created reverse discrimination against the Han majority, and exacerbated the hostility between the Han majority and the minorities. This research discovers the inadequacy of current affirmative actions and advocates for educational policy changes and a related reform of the hukou (household registration) system.

Introduction

Ethnic minorities make up 8.49% of China's population, the rest of which is made up of Han majorities.¹ The same report points out that the minority population has grown at a rate of 6.92% since the last decade, higher than the growth rate of 5.74% of the Han majority. The faster growth of the minority population emphasizes the long-term significance of affirmative action in the unity and equality of Chinese society. Each minority group faces drastically different situations due to their varying sizes and distributions. The largest four groups with populations over ten million account for 42.8% of the total minority population, while the smallest group has only 3,556 members. The minorities generally reside and mix across the entire country, with some regions having a high concentration and variety of minorities. Some of these regions are institutionalized as autonomous administrative divisions due to the high density of minorities.

Various educational affirmative actions have caused unexpected unfavorable consequences, including unintentionally further depriving minorities of educational resources through artificial language barriers, creating new inequalities between the majority and the minority and even among different minorities, as well as encouraging ethnic segregation instead of harmony. This essay is concerned about the three main categories of

¹ "2010 年第六次全国人口普查主要数据公报(第 1 号)," *National Bureau of Statistics of China*, last modified April 28, 2011, http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/tjgb/rkpcgb/qgrkpcgb/201104/t20110428_30327.html

affirmative action in the current education system. Firstly, minority students enjoy preferential admission into high schools and universities. Some of the benefits include quotas, financial aid, and bonus points in standardized school admission tests, including Zhongkao (high school entrance exam), and arguably the most important Gaokao (university entrance exam). The extent of the preference for minority students and the applicability of this policy varies widely across provinces and minority groups. Secondly, in regions of high minority population density, minority students are offered a choice between a bilingual education (ethnic language and Mandarin), where the ethnic language is usually the language of instruction and the study of a third language (usually English) is optional, and a trilingual education (ethnic language, Mandarin and a foreign language), where the study of a third language (usually English) is compulsory. Both streams are available for minority students from primary and tertiary education. The students receive bonus points if they opt for the trilingual stream.² Lastly, there are special schools designated for minority students in minority communities, as well as inland boarding schools or classes for minority students to study together with the Hans.³ Such schools have special quotas, funding, and financial aid for the

² Zhao Zhenzhou, "Part III. 11. The Trilingual Trap: 'Imagined Empowerment among Ethnic Mongols in China,'" in *Minority Education in China: Balancing Unity and Diversity in an Era of Critical Pluralism*, eds. James Leibold and Chen Yangbin (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), 239-57.

³ Liu Chun, *Selected Works of Liu Chun on the National Question*. Vol. 2 (Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 2000).

students, aiming to achieve ethnic integration and political stability.⁴

Policy Analysis

China's educational affirmative action intends to facilitate the individual development of the students, whose contribution to their local communities could benefit the local economy as well as integration. Lower admission requirements into higher education institutions have compensated for minority students who are usually from distant and impoverished regions with inadequate educational resources. However, the difficulty in designing and implementing affirmative policies often renders them less effective, sometimes even harmful, for both the minorities and the majority Hans, prompting a rethinking of the policies.

Some of the most harmful policies impose extra burdens and hindrances on minority students deprived of educational resources and opportunities, placing the minority in a dilemma with no easy solution. Since the early days of the Republic of China, the central government has mandated that primary and secondary education for the minorities should be conducted in their ethnic languages, and the study of Mandarin should be on a voluntary basis.⁵ The central government has gone on to standardize the written ethnic languages for minorities as only the verbal ethnic languages, such as to enable their use as languages of instruction. Although the policy preserves ethnic minorities'

⁴ Chen Yangbin, *Muslim Uyghur Students in a Chinese Boarding School: Social Recapitalization as a Response to Ethnic Integration* (Laham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).

⁵ Xia Shiwu, *Zhongguo Shao Shu Min Zu Jiao Yu* (Beijing: Wu Zhou Chuan Bo Chu Ban She, 2007).

cultural roots and respects their autonomy, it actually limits the educational resources for minority students and hinders their participation in the economy. The number of minorities who have received higher education is relatively small compared with the Han majority, very few Hans can speak ethnic languages, and very few trained teachers are capable of teaching in ethnic languages. This severely restrains the quality of teaching and the individual attention each minority student can get from their teachers. Moreover, the sheer number of identified minority groups in China makes it formidable and unrealistic to implement separate curriculums and school systems for each minority group that commands its own ethnic language. Since primary and secondary education is mostly conducted locally, the local government could still adopt the main local ethnic language as the language of instruction to cater to the local communities. On the other hand, it is virtually impossible for tertiary education to provide tuition in the respective ethnic languages of different minority students, as universities admit students of all ethnicities across the country. Those who are educated in ethnic languages are, therefore, unable to attend mainstream universities.

Per Nye's theory of the three faces of power,⁶ the minorities are deprived twice, economically and educationally, by the majority of the society. Many minorities come from distant and less privileged communities. They have less economic and political power to gain educational resources and opportunities comparable with those enjoyed by the Han majority who reside in more economically prosperous regions. Researchers in the past have also attributed the unequal educational

⁶ Joseph S. Nye, "Power and Foreign Policy," *Journal of Political Power* 4, no. 1 (2011): 9-24.

opportunities for the minorities to the uneven distribution of wealth, human resources, and political power,⁷ which corresponds to the constraints in the first face of power faced by the minorities. By prioritizing ethnic language learning over Mandarin in primary and secondary education while not providing the same affirmative action in most universities, the government essentially excludes the minorities from entering higher education in China with the second face of power. The economic and educational challenges faced by minority students taught in ethnic languages collectively exert a third face of power on them, making Mandarin appear to be the only useful and convenient language to learn. By utilizing the third face of power, the government could accelerate the minorities' integration into the Han-dominated economy and civil society in the long term. However, students who are compelled to give up learning in their own ethnic languages could find the education institutions coercive and exclusive. In addition, a new Mandarin speaking generation of minorities might have generational and cultural fissures with their families, creating a new type of social tension.

The high cost of transferring from one language stream to the other also locks in those who have already studied in the ethnic language stream. If a minority student chooses to opt into the same stream as most Han students, a third language becomes compulsory, and he or she would have to finish within three years the third language curriculum that their Han counterparts finish within 6 years. The heavier course load impedes not only

⁷ Rong Xue Lan, and Tianjian Shi, "Inequality in Chinese Education," *Journal of Contemporary China* 10, no. 26 (2001): 107.

the language learning, but also diverts students' attention away from the other subjects tested in the standardized exam. Although the applicability of a third language in their future life and career is questionable, minority students have no choice but to go the extra mile in order to compete with Han students in the national standardized tests. As Pierson has stated in his work,⁸ once one proceeds in a certain path, a high cost of reversal and path changing would cause path dependence and compel one to continue in the same direction. On a similar note, the minority students who started off in the bilingual stream are likely to stay, fearing the daunting curriculum, and get rejected by the higher education system; those who find themselves already in the trilingual track would have to deal with the seemingly impossible competition from the majority, or forfeit their opportunities of higher education.

Also harmful is the policy of preferential admission toward minorities, which exacerbates hostilities between the majority and the minority, and causes unfair treatment across different minority groups and even within minority groups. The Ministry of Education of China (MOE) has revised its guidelines for preferential admission to release the responsibility of making preferential admission policies to each local government.⁹

⁸ Paul Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 2 (2000): 251.

⁹ “关于进一步减少和规范高考加分项目和分值的意见,” *Ministry of Education of China*, last modified

Therefore, across provincial districts, minority students enjoy different extents of preference. Within each provincial district, minority students would also enjoy different preferential policies depending on where their home addresses were registered. For example, in Hebei Province, minority students with home addresses registered in autonomous counties receive twice the bonus points compared to one living in a Han community.¹⁰ The difference in treatment is arbitrary, because home address is not a satisfactory indicator of the educational resources one has received. The arbitrarily different treatment among the minority students creates new inequalities across different minority groups. Assuming residents from the Han communities are monolithically more privileged - despite the fact that some underprivileged minorities indeed reside in Han communities - the distribution of affirmative action based on home addresses unintentionally dissuades minorities from living among the Han. This policy encourages ethnic segregation, and perpetuates the image of poor and uneducated minorities. On the other hand, bestowing all minority students with preferential admission regardless of their family income and educational resources risks overcompensating minorities that are better off than their peers. This gives the well-off minorities an unjustified edge in the competition with the Han majority. Leibold observes that this policy has caused wide discontent

<http://old.moe.gov.cn//publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s4559/201412/181754.html>

¹⁰ Wang Tiezhi, "Preferential Policies for Minority College Admission in China: Recent Developments, Necessity and Impact," in *Affirmative Action in China and the U.S.A Dialogue on Inequality and Minority Education*, eds. Minglang Zhou and Ann Maxwell Hill, 1st ed (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 71.

among the Han majority and a Han nationalistic backlash.¹¹ The policy not only fails to identify and benefit the target recipients with the imperative need for affirmative action, but is also against the fundamental principles of fairness, unity, integration, and societal stability.

The last category of affirmative action, inland classes for minority students, is less harmful for the students, but has also been unsuccessful. Most of the minority students are still taught separately from Han students due to differences in Mandarin and academic proficiency. After class, minority students live on campus, while most of their Han school mates do not.¹² The disparate cultural backgrounds and limited shared educational experience is not conducive for communication and understanding between the majority and the minority. In fact, the inland classes foster a distinctive identity. The inland class students are said to feel intellectually superior to minority students in the bilingual stream from their hometown, while feeling more rooted in their ethnic culture than those in the trilingual stream from their hometown.¹³ The inland minority

¹¹ James Leibold, "Han Chinese Reactions to Preferential Minority Education in the PRC," In *Minority Education in China: Balancing Unity and Diversity in an Era of Critical Pluralism*, eds. James Leibold and Yangbin Chen (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), 279.

¹² Chen Yangbin, *Muslim Uyghur Students in a Chinese Boarding School: Social Recapitalization as a Response to Ethnic Integration* (Laham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 5.

¹³ Chen Yangbin, "Towards Another Minority Educational Elite Group in Xinjiang?" In *Minority Education in China: Balancing Unity and Diversity in an Era of Critical Pluralism*, eds. Chen Yangbin and

students, thus, become a lost community that is unable and unwilling to fit in either the majority or the other minority communities.

Challenges in Policy Making

The current problematic policies present challenges in policymaking that arise from China's multi-ethnic reality. Future proposals have to address the problems by acknowledging and tackling these challenges.

The most fundamental challenge is that the diversity of ethnic groups and the large size of China lead to high administrative costs when formulating and regulating affirmative action policies in the education system. Each of the 55 minority groups has its unique needs, including but not limited to an ethnic language curriculum. Larger ethnic groups seek the preservation of their ethnic culture, while smaller groups with populations of only a few thousand require the facilitation of integration alongside anti-discrimination efforts. In addition, each group is not monolithic either; some members dwell together in ethnic autonomous districts that are usually distant and less affluent, while others spread all over China and reside in Han communities that are often more accessible and affluent. Although the power of making particular affirmative policies resides in the local governments, such that they could attempt to tailor their policies to best accommodate the actual needs of the local minorities, this decentralization compromises proper regulation, coordination, and fairness across different provincial districts.

James Leibold (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), 201.

Another challenge arises from the rationale behind affirmative action. There is often a gap between what the policy makers consider beneficial for the minorities and what the minorities really want. The largely unsuccessful attempt of the current trilingual education policy epitomizes the tough choice for minorities between participation in the economy and their cultural roots. The extra educational resources and options provided by the government to aid the minorities ironically turn into burdens and academic barriers for the students. Any new policy has to either align the interests of development with cultural preservation, or find a middle ground between the two demands.

The problems in China's controversial educational affirmative action cannot be understood in isolation as a purely ethnic issue. It has roots in China's imbalanced regional development and social stratification along ethnic and geographical divisions. The more economically developed provinces along the east coast coincide with small minority populations, while the less economically developed inland provinces near the border have larger and more diverse minority populations. For example, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, the two provinces with the highest GDP per capita in 2014,¹⁴ have extremely low minority population percentages of 0.33% and 0.86% respectively in the Fifth National Population Census.¹⁵ On the contrary, Gansu and Guizhou, the two provinces with the lowest GDP per

¹⁴ "2014 National Data," *National Data*, accessed November 27, 2016, <http://data.stats.gov.cn/>

¹⁵ "第五次人口普查公报—江苏," *National Bureau of Statistics of China*, last modified May 15, 2001, http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/tjgb/rkpcgb/dfrkpcgb/200203/t20020331_30354.html

capita in 2014, have higher than average minority percentages of 8.69% and 37.85% respectively.¹⁶ The difference in affluence, in Max Weber's theory of class, leads to different market situations and, therefore, different life chances for the minority and the majority.¹⁷ The life chances include the opportunities of receiving higher education and entering schools with bettering standing. Weber's theory suggests that the inequality might be unsolvable. Different market situations stratify the majority and minority into different classes that adopt different lifestyles, and keep them in the same class through marriage. If minorities cannot develop economically in step with the Han majority, they would face a perpetual inadequacy of educational resources despite affirmative action.

Proposed Policy Change

The proposed new policies seek to build on and modify the current affirmative action policy, tackling specifically the challenges identified in this paper. The different policies will interact with each other to achieve an equal education system and a united society.

The top priority in reforming the affirmative action is to privilege the learning of Mandarin, while implementing ethnic culture appreciation programs at schools from ethnic autonomous districts. Providing unique curriculums in ethnic languages is not sustainable considering the large number of minority groups with their own language, and the limited number of qualified teachers who can facilitate such education. A commonly practiced language is a foundation of a united and fully

functional dynamic society. Even if the government could implement an ethnic language education program, the job market in China lacks the appetite for a workforce that is not conversant in Mandarin. The lack of proficiency in Mandarin has been preventing minority students from receiving a fair amount of resources, accessing higher education, and participating in a more and more delocalized economy in the future. Mandarin should be used as the primary language of instruction in schools across China, while the study of a third language should be optional for the minorities who used to study in their ethnic languages. Those who choose not to study a third language should receive a waiver and be considered for admission into higher education institutions on the basis of their results for the other subjects of the standardized test. However, this is a temporary measure. The long-term goal of this policy is to make both Mandarin and English compulsory subjects of study for all, in order to equalize education for all, and enable both the majority and the minority to participate in the economy. At the same time, ethnic languages will recede to a supplementary status comparable to that of a dialect. Schools from autonomous districts could utilize the funds that were used to provide unique curriculums to implement non-academic local ethnic culture appreciation programs. Since the preservation of ethnic languages is motivated more by respect for the uniqueness of minority culture than a practical purpose, ethnic languages should not become a barrier in the personal development of minority students. This policy unifies the language path for all students, thus eliminating the high cost of shifting between streams that stems from path dependence.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Joseph S. Nye, "Power and Foreign Policy," *Journal of Political Power* 4, no. 1 (2011): 9.

Inland classes for the minorities could be maintained, but their implementation has to be more conducive to interaction and integration between the majority and the minority. This policy builds on the success of an all-Mandarin curriculum. When the minority students have already built a strong foundation of Mandarin and a third language in their native land, they do not have to be allocated into the same special classes to attend supplementary language courses. Hans and minorities studying in the same class would allow more interaction and mutual understanding among students. Moreover, early exposure to Mandarin and English would remove hindrances in studying other subjects taught in Mandarin. This allows an equal expectation of academic performance from both the Hans and the minorities, reducing the likelihood of discrimination based on academic performance.

The high administrative cost and unfairness of coordinating preferential admissions based on ethnicity, coupled with how class and ethnic issues intersect, determine that preferential admission should be abolished in the long term. If the previous two policies have been successfully implemented, minority students would be under a largely identical educational framework as the majority. A sweeping preference for the minority would no longer be applicable in this case.

Having said that, an equal educational framework does not guarantee equal opportunities and resources. Market forces should be wielded to enhance the development of minority students and the unity of society. This could be realized by reforming the “hukou system” (the household registration system that localizes one’s welfare, education and medical benefits) to facilitate the free movement of the minority population, that is willing and able to move, into regions and communities

that offer better education. A larger population could then enjoy a higher standard of education in the short run. In the long run, the spill-over effect of an over-demand for educational services in these regions could speed up the upgrade of educational resources in neighboring regions to benefit a larger population. Meanwhile, the central government should make a concerted effort together with the local government to redistribute wealth regionally through the transfer of payments, in order to improve educational resources and opportunities in distant and impoverished autonomous districts, thereby addressing their urgent need for a higher standard of education.

Conclusion

The current collection of educational affirmative action policies for minorities in China has not completely leveled the playground for students with different background and educational resources. Meanwhile, it has created new social challenges, such as a language barrier for minorities in tertiary education and unfairness across regions and different minority groups, and even within minority groups. In addition, the current sweeping preferential policy risks further ethnic segregation and hostility between the ethnic majority and minority.

China is a large state with many legally identified minority groups. Educational affirmative action in China is complex and is intertwined with unbalanced economic development across regions. The resulting uneven distribution of educational resources determines that a sweeping preferential policy is neither feasible nor justified in the long term. The successful implementation of Mandarin as the standard language of instruction across China can have the immediate effect of opening up tertiary education opportunities for the minority, although

the successful implementation would require trained manpower and support from minority communities which are inadequate at the moment. In the long run, the education and exam system must be separated from the hukou system to encourage the movement of minority students for access to better educational resources. The free movement of students would raise the demand for premium educational resources. The spill-over effect of the higher demand is expected to incentivize the upgrade of educational resources in regions nearby.

The effect of the proposed new policies could be evaluated by collecting data every ten years of minority students' performance in national standardized tests, teacher-to-student ratios in autonomous districts, and the percentage of minority students in tertiary education institutions, and by surveying both the minority and majority students on their understanding and closeness to each other. The data could be compared with data collected before the implementation.

There should be a realistic expectation of the time frame for the new policies to function. This is due to the diversity of China's ethnic groups and the complexity of intertwined economic and ethnic inequalities. A realistic expected period for the most foundational change in language policy to function should be a complete cycle of primary and secondary education, which amounts to 12 years. Subsequently, the effect of the other changes to affirmative action could be evaluated. The ultimate resolution of inequality in education and the social gap between the majority and the minority cannot be achieved without coordinated reforms in the "hukou" system and regional development. This extends the time frame for the new policies to function fully.

The proposed changes have not answered two underlying philosophical questions of affirmative action, however: firstly, how might we balance the interests of society and the individual? Secondly, should the beneficiaries of affirmative action be obliged to give back to the education system? Future studies should address these questions and suggest how beneficiaries could be more accurately targeted to overcome the diversity of the minority groups.

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GOVERN-MENTALITY & SCHIZHOPHRENIC HYPHENS

Challenges to Creative City Planning in Singapore

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This paper explores the topic of creative city planning in Singapore by comparing two educational cases for the Singapore Global Schoolhouse strategy: Yale-NUS College and NYU Tisch Asia. The partnership model, personified by the hyphens in the names of the liberal arts college Yale-NUS and medical school Duke-NUS, has demonstrated success in Singapore for its ability to merge the entre-preneurial enterprises and civic vision of a university. On the other hand, NYU Tisch Asia's failure, while also stemming from other various factors, is primarily attributed to a one-sided, import-model without a clearly defined vision. Though there are other successful university cases that do not fall on a partnership model, such as business schools INSEAD and ESSEC, my choice to focus on Yale-NUS and Tisch stems primarily from their direct relationship to Singapore's vision to be a creative city. Using both of these case studies, I argue that a schizophrenia between autonomy and re-striction has removed spontaneity from creativity in Singapore. Finally, I propose that a currency of trust is foundational to building not only a creative city but also a city that fosters creativity.

“Our vision, in shorthand notation, is to become the ‘Boston of the East’. Boston is not just MIT or Harvard... It is a focal point of creative energy; a hive of intellectual, research, commercial and social activity. We want to create an oasis of talent in Singapore: a knowledge hub, an "ideas-exchange", a confluence of people and idea streams, an incubator for inspiration.”

Speech by Teo Chee Hean, Minister of Education (2000)

According to the Martin Prosperity Institute (2015), Singapore is ranked ninth on the Global Creative Index, scoring high on domains like Talent (ranked 5) and Technology (ranked 7).¹ Yet, in January 2012, Singapore’s education minister, Heng Swee Keat, admitted he was surprised by the number of top CEOs who feel that Singaporean graduates lack the qualities a knowledge worker needs to succeed i.e. the drive to venture out of their comfort zone². This disconnect between rankings and everyday embodied performances and perceptions provide an avenue for reflecting on 2 aspects of creative city planning: 1) the challenges for creative city planning in a city-state like Singapore which holds a schizophrenic position on creativity, and 2) the interplay between Singapore’s

Foucauldian governmentality, and the creative yet pragmatic environment of a creative city. In order to grapple with the question on whether creative cities can be planned, I will begin by historicizing Singapore’s two-message position in creative city planning and comparing two cases: NYU Tisch Asia and Yale-NUS College. I will then evaluate how a Foucauldian governmentality and its pragmatic relations create an environment that makes it challenging for Singapore to be truly creative. I argue that the schizophrenia in navigating the global/local, liberal/illiberal, and creative/pragmatic tensions resulted in two approaches – containment and planned diversification – which complicate further the question of whether creative cities can be planned. Finally, I will evaluate both these approaches, raise concerns for creative city planning in Singapore, and propose options for moving forward.

Singapore’s definition of creativity is derived primarily from a global neoliberal imagination, wherein the terms ‘foreign,’ ‘creativity,’ and ‘talent’ are often used within the same phrase. This is in line with Florida who views ‘talent’ as a prerequisite for ‘creativity.’³ Commenting on China in 2012, Lee Kuan Yew states the importance of an environment of “free” expression and “contest of ideas” as preconditions of a creative city.⁴ Indeed, Richard Florida’s 3Ts framework—Talent, Technology and Tolerance—permeates the foundation of creative city

¹ Richard Florida, Charlotta Mellander, and Karen M. King, “The Global Creativity Index,” Rotman, Martin Prosperity Institute, last modified July 8, 2015, <http://martinprosperity.org/content/the-global-creativity-index-2015/>

² Chua Yini, “Environment to blame for lack of drive, risk-taking: students,” *Yahoo! News*, last modified February 1, 2012.

³ Richard Florida, *Cities and the creative class* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁴ Graham T. Allison, Robert Blackwill and Ali Wyne, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master's Insights on China, the United States, and the World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012).

planning in Singapore.⁵ Situated in Singapore's economic pragmatism, creativity is measured by how much it contributes to the economy, instead of the "elaborately performative creative human accomplishment" as defined by Wilson and Keil.⁶

Extending the pragmatics of creativity, the Global Schoolhouse strategy was formed in 2002 to realize Singapore's plan to be more reliant on a knowledge-economy. The policy is compatible with the Singapore government's definition and measure of creative success, in that its Key Performance Index (KPIs) are measured by attracting 150,000 international students into Singapore by 2015, and to lift the education sector's contribution to the GDP from 1.9% to 5% in the same timeframe.⁷ The strategy aims to create high quality "world class education." According to then education minister in 2000 Teo Chee Hean, the vision is to become the "Boston of the East," that goes beyond branded universities to form "an oasis of talent in Singapore: a knowledge hub, an ideas exchange, a confluence of people and idea streams, an incubator for inspiration."⁸ Large subsidies through the Tuition

Fee Grant are provided for international students who study in the three public universities in Singapore. Students who choose to take up the grant would have to serve a three-year service obligation by working in Singapore, directly contributing to the talent pool and Singaporean economy.

Led by the Economic Development Board (EDB), the 'Global Schoolhouse' is a planned effort to increase the diversity of education models and certifications for students to pursue. However, this effort is not without failed university ventures. Before the 2011 elections, deemed by scholars and the media as the turning point for the Global Schoolhouse strategy, Singapore was run like a client-state with entrepreneurial university ventures, thereby diluting the ideological purity of its project. The divorce in the 'Global Schoolhouse' strategy and practical finances has inevitably led to a range of costly failures including among others, New York University (NYU) Tisch Asia campus.

New York University Tisch Asia Campus: A Flop

In 2007, New York University (NYU) was invited by the the Economic Development Board (EDB) of Singapore to open an art college in Singapore called Tisch Asia. A transplant university from New York, Tisch Asia would grant a fine arts masters degree from NYU's renowned art school, Tisch. To ensure its success, EDB transferred about \$US17 million to Tisch Asia between 2007 and 2011 (\$US9.6 million in the form of a loan and \$US6.13 million as a grant to the campus to offset taxes on Singapore tuition). Despite the financial injections, Tisch Asia showed a \$US6 million deficit for the 2009 financial year, up

⁵ Richard Florida, *Cities and the creative class* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁶ David Wilson and Roger Keil, "The real creative class," *Social & Cultural Geography* 9, no. 8 (2008): 843.

⁷ Peter Waring, "Singapore's global schoolhouse strategy: retreat or recalibration?" *Studies in Higher Education* 39, no. 5 (2014): 875.

⁸ Gopinathan, S. L. M. H., and Michael H. Lee. "Challenging and co-opting globalisation: Singapore's strategies in higher education." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 33, no. 3 (2011): 293.

from \$US5 million the previous year.⁹ Part of the failure of Tisch Asia lay in the NYU administration's view of the Singapore government as a client-state, as well as the actions taken upon that view. "We were potentially too optimistic about the level of support we were going to get from the Singapore government, and the size of the market out there," Tisch spokesperson Shonna Koegan told NYU Local.¹⁰ In a letter to NYU Trustees, Tisch Asia students accused NYU of valuing profits over scholarship, and of selling its brand instead of its vision or scholarship.¹¹ The letter also revealed that the EDB in 2011 was willing to forgive outstanding loans worth US\$9.6 million and would consider further grants if Tisch Asia offered its programs exclusively in Singapore and started an undergraduate program. When Tisch Asia overestimated the demand for its graduate program, it demanded US\$40 million cash advance to discuss a possible collaboration with the National University of Singapore (NUS) on an undergraduate program. NYU President John Sexton requested that all the expenses of the undergraduate program be paid for by the Ministry of Education, and also that taxes be paid to NYU for the use of their brand name. The parliament rejected NYU's request.

⁹ Yojana Sharma, "US branch campus demise is a cautionary tale for Asian ambitions," *University World News*, last modified November 16, 2012.

¹⁰ Zoë Schlanger, "Anatomy of a Failed Campus: What Happened at Tisch Asia?" *NYU Local*, last modified March 5, 2013, <https://nyulocal.com/anatomy-of-a-failed-campus-what-happened-at-tisch-asia-4ffefoffof14?gi=dbe03cb422f2>

¹¹ *ibid.*

Growing Schizophrenia

Singapore portrays itself as a global city, tolerant and open to talent and diversity, yet puts forward a pragmatic 'Singaporeans First' cohesiveness and rootedness. For instance, the NYU case, along with other failed ventures, coincided with growing dissent and xenophobic sentiments in Singapore. The 2011 general election has revealed a gap between public perception and the government's policy of openness to foreign capital.¹² Mainstream and alternative media lament the effects of globalization, highlighting the concern that foreigners (and foreign students) are increasing the cost of living and limiting career and educational opportunities for local Singaporeans. This divide occurs even within Singaporeans, namely Singaporeans who reap the benefits of the knowledge economy and those who do not. As such, the divide between the globally mobile and creative 'cosmopolitan' and the general man-on-the-street 'heartlander' has resulted in the Singaporean government speaking two different languages to two different portions of Singapore society.¹³ As such, the government walks a tightrope between global and local, between liberally diverse yet illiberally pragmatic, and between free yet bounded. This schizophrenic position, arguably a sentiment that is shared even outside of Singapore, complicates the dynamics of creative city planning. How can Singapore foster a new breed of creative

¹² Peter Waring, "Singapore's global schoolhouse strategy: retreat or recalibration?" *Studies in Higher Education* 39, no. 5 (2014): 880.

¹³ Kenneth Paul Tan, "Sexing up Singapore," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 6, no. 4 (2003): 419.

class who will be more ‘connected to the world,’ yet still committed to ‘our best home’?¹⁴

Containing Creativity and Planning Diversity

I argue that it does so through a governmentality that manages “men in their relation to those other things that are customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking.”¹⁵ More precisely, Foucault defines governmentality as the “conduct of conduct,” regulating not just selves but the way in which the self and others are regulated.¹⁶ The tension between governmentality and Singapore’s schizophrenic desire to be a liberal creative city rooted in pragmatic Singaporean values manifests in its creative city planning. The internal contradiction pointed out by Liu & Lye highlights a tension between autonomy and restriction: how much freedom is granted to foreign corporations within Singapore?¹⁷ In answering that, Singapore adopts what I term a containment and planned diversification balancing approach to embrace neoliberalism while still committing to its illiberal and pragmatic policies.

¹⁴ Kris Olds and Nigel Thrift, “Cultures on the brink: Reengineering the soul of capitalism—On a global scale,” in *Global assemblages: Technology, politics, and ethics as anthropological problems*, ed. Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

¹⁵ Michel Foucault, James D. Faubion, and Robert Hurley, *Power* (New York, NY: New Press, 2000).

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Petrus Liu and Colleen Lye, “Liberal Arts for Asians: A Commentary on Yale-NUS,” *Interventions* 18, no. 4 (2016): 578.

Yale-NUS College: Balancing on a Hyphen

Yale-NUS College is a strong case demonstrating such a balancing act. The hyphen that links both Yale and the National University of Singapore (NUS) symbolizes a partnership not just of “two great universities” (as the vision suggests) but also an entrepreneurial and civic partnership. Broadly defined, ‘civic’ refers to the processes that affect people’s beliefs, commitments, capabilities, and actions as members of communities, while ‘entrepreneurial’ can be understood as practical and business realities. To the Yale counterparts, Yale-NUS is an experiment for higher learning. Bryan Penprase provides this perspective: “Yale-NUS College is a case study in the convergence of internalizing strategy from US University (Yale), and a recognized need for a new form of undergraduate education from the partner host country (Singapore).”¹⁸ The Yale-NUS Curriculum Report furthers this ‘civic’ notion by adding that “liberal arts do not ... prepare students for a single career path” but “aim to equip students the furniture of the mind and character that will help them in many different fields beyond their professional lives.”¹⁹ Meanwhile, swayed by

¹⁸ Bryan Penprase has written multiple blog entries in his website about the founding process of Yale-NUS College: Bryan Penprase, “Yale-NUS College—A New Community of Learning in Asia,” last modified November 2014, http://bryanpenprase.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Yale_NUS_College_history_chapter.pdf

¹⁹ Bryan Garsten, Charles Bailyn, Jane M. Jacobs, Kang Hway Chuan, Bryan Penprase, “Yale-NUS College: A New Community of Learning,” last modified April 2013, <http://www.yale-nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Yale-NUS-College-Curriculum-Report.pdf>

statistics of the career success of US liberal arts college graduates, Singaporean decision-makers are invested in the venture as part of a long-term strategy to create a variegated ecosystem of educational institutions, i.e. Boston of the East.²⁰ Unlike NYU, which I argue failed due to its one-sided investment lacking a clear civic vision, Yale-NUS aspires to be a full partnership, hybridizing the civic and entrepreneurial university. Far from being a mere import, the hyphen of Yale-NUS hybridizes the more practical business realities of NUS, a university serving the Singaporean public and economy, with the greater civic education emphasis of the Yale liberal arts model. As stated in the Yale-NUS curriculum report, “no college can survive without a dash of utopianism.”²¹

That is not to say that Singapore’s schizophrenia has not influenced the planning of Yale-NUS. Freedom of speech and, by extension, creativity, is bound within campus walls. In terms of student make-up, Singaporeans are ensured the majority at the College, while ‘a globally diverse student body with over 40 nationalities’ rhetoric pervades admissions material. The porosity of creativity is contained as a way of navigating local tensions. Kong questions the possibility of Singapore ever attaining “the cultural/creative ‘quotient’ rival

²⁰ Petrus Liu and Colleen Lye, "Liberal Arts for Asians: A Commentary on Yale-NUS," *Interventions* 18, no. 4 (2016): 580.

²¹ Bryan Garsten, Charles Bailyn, Jane M. Jacobs, Kang Hway Chuan, Bryan Penprase, “Yale-NUS College: A New Community of Learning,” last modified April 2013, <http://www.yale-nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Yale-NUS-College-Curriculum-Report.pdf>

to New York, London, or Paris” since educational spaces in Singapore operate in ‘bounded creativity’ due to government censorship of public spaces.²² The genuine unbounded spirit of the liberal arts is also dampened. To operate in Singapore, institutions have to accept some limits on expression, especially on racially or religious incendiary matters and those that interfere with local politics.²³ Furthermore, while Yale has requested for the lifting of the Tuition Fee Grant for Yale-NUS for preserving the unbounded spirit of the liberal arts, the Singapore government has opted to retain it.²⁴ This decision demonstrates the neoliberal pragmatic balancing act between globally minded yet Singapore-situated, portraying the schizophrenia of being “In Asia” yet “for the World.”

In so saying, containment is symbiotic with planned diversification. The knowledge-creative hub is engineered with a freedom that is tied to

²² Lily Kong, “Ambitions of a Global City: Arts, Culture and Creative Economy in 'Post-Crisis' Singapore,” *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 18, no. 3 (2012): 290.

²³ Kris Olds and Nigel Thrift, "Cultures on the brink: Reengineering the soul of capitalism—On a global scale,” in *Global assemblages: Technology, politics, and ethics as anthropological problems*, ed. Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 203, as cited in Petrus Liu and Colleen Lye, "Liberal Arts for Asians: A Commentary on Yale-NUS," *Interventions* 18, no. 4 (2016): 578.

²⁴ Bryan Penprase, "Yale-NUS College—A New Community of Learning in Asia,” last modified November 2014, http://bryanpenprase.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Yale_NUS_College_history_chapter.pdf

spatially-dependent. For instance, Singapore's containment approach is exemplified in the recent regulation of Speakers Corner for foreign involvement and foreign funding.²⁵ Voices of dissent, accusing the government of being too foreign-minded, are quelled by a broadening and diversification of academic pathways. Boundaries of creativity are made clear, rationalized with pragmatic reasons, as a way of fostering a creativity insofar as it contributes to the economy, instead of a genuine desire to embrace creativity along with all the benefits of the novelty, innovation, and surprise it offers.²⁶ This sentiment is captured in a speech by Cabinet minister George Yeo in 1991: "Singapore will always need a strong centre to react quickly to a changing competitive environment. We need some pluralism but not too much because too much will also destroy us"²⁷ Governmentality, enforced through the Singapore government, has left the power to define creativity reserved for a limited number of stakeholders. Sanctioned sites of creativity, such as Yale-NUS College, are awarded

²⁵ Singapore has prevented foreigners to be involved in local rallies, including Pink Dot and started imposing permits for foreign sponsors to local rallies. Read Linette Lim, "Pink Dot 'disappointed' by new Speakers' Corner regulations," *Channel NewsAsia*, last modified October 21, 2016, <http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/pink-dot-disappointed-by-new-speakers-corner-regulations/3225072.html>

²⁶ Dean Keith Simonton, *The Wiley handbook of genius* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2014).

²⁷ George Yeo, "Civic Society – between the family and the state," lecture at the NUS Society Inaugural Lecture, World Trade Centre Auditorium, Singapore, June 20 1991.

just the right amount of 'freedom,' bounding and limiting creativity for specific intentions.

My paper aims to draw attention to a tension that arises – in that there are 2 levels of creativity: 1) an infrastructural, planned, top-down form of creativity and 2) an embodied, spontaneous, bottom-up feeling of creativity. The answer to whether or not creativity can be planned, I argue, lies in the way in which creativity is defined, and its set boundaries. Matched up against its definition of creativity as economic, Singapore succeeds in being a creative city, achieving high points on many ranking metrics. However, the extent to which this limited definition of creativity translates into the talent pool remains to be seen. An environment of governmentality within a state necessarily stifles the creativity of its citizens. Pragmatism is rather incompatible with creativity as it deems risk-taking an undesirable trait – a trait much needed for Singapore to transition from a manufacturing-based economy to a knowledge-based one.

I propose that the focus on creative planning should not be on whether or not the city is creative, but whether its citizens feel the ability to be creative. Unfortunately, Singapore succeeds in the former but fails in the latter. Singapore's creative city planning rids value from spontaneous creativity or diversification, deeming spontaneity unworthy of contributing to the economy.²⁸ Singapore attempts to 'control' and 'bound' creativity through containment and planned diversification. Yet, both these approaches fail to account for cases where spontaneous and planned creativity interweave into one another. Instances such as vogueing from Harlem or jazz from New Orleans demonstrate how

²⁸ Jane Jacobs, *The death and life of great American cities* (New York, NY: Random House, 1961).

both spontaneity and structure are needed for creative city planning. Planned diversification, without a genuine understanding of creativity, falls short of merely accomplishing an illusory set of hyphens and diverse credentials. Hence, I argue, the success of Yale-NUS College is attributed to its ability to hybridize the entrepreneurial and civic university, allowing for planned and unplanned creativity to interweave into a “community of learning.”

How can planned and unplanned creativity be interwoven meaningfully in creative city planning? Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) Tharman Shanmugaratnam took an eloquent stab at this during an SG50+ Conference at Shangri-La Hotel: “The toughest question to ask ourselves ... is not what we add to the education system, but what we subtract.”²⁹ The task of subtracting, he said, requires “courage,” but will pay off. Subtraction of governmentality and containment, in other words, allowing for the spontaneous outburst of creativity and diversification, I foresee, will be the way forward for Singapore. The ‘courage’ DPM Tharman spoke about refers to a courage of trust. Indeed, the currency for an entrepreneurial vision is cash, while that of a civic vision is trust. Reflecting the needs of the time, Lee Kuan Yew has created an atmosphere of regulation and self-regulation that is impeding Singapore’s neoliberal transition into being a creative city. In his book *The Man & His Ideas*, Lee said: “They say people can think for themselves? Do you honestly believe that the chap who can’t pass primary six knows the consequence of his choice

when he answers a question viscerally, on language, culture, and religion? [...] We would disintegrate.”³⁰ What Lee failed to understand is how African slaves in America, many of whom did not undergo formal schooling, produced jazz, inciting one of the largest music industries in the world of that time. The same can be said of Silicon Valley and even Boston. These places are rhetorically cited and exist in the imaginations of many Singapore officials, yet the histories of creative American cities demonstrate a transition from spontaneous to planned creativity. It matters little whether Singapore reaches a point of being the ‘Silicon Valley’ or ‘Boston of the East.’ Instead, what matters more is developing a currency of trust, a trust that is foundational to spontaneity, and a trust that allows for all its citizens to feel free and creative instead of those educated few whose school names have hyphens.

²⁹ Ng Jing Ying, “Education system ‘has to evolve’ to spur creativity,” *Today*, last modified July 4, 2015, <http://www.todayonline.com/singapore/education-system-has-evolve-spur-creativity>

³⁰ Han Fook Kwang, Warren Fernandez and Sumiko Tan, *Lee Kuan Yew: the man and his ideas* (Singapore: Singapore Press Holdings and Times Editions, 1998).

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ECOLOGICAL BIOPOLITICS IN THE GARDEN CITY

Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism, and The Discourse on Natural Heritage

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The coherence of official environmental discourse in Singapore is torn apart by the continued existence of two conflicting visions of the state-led landscaping project. On one hand, the idea of the “man-made garden” favors exotic lifeforms at the expense of native biodiversity. On the other hand, the increasingly popular notion of the “ecological garden” seeks to create a sacred space for native species at the total exclusion of foreign ones.

This ideological incoherence directly contradicts the Foucauldian paradigm of ecological biopolitics which takes rational governmentality as its axiom. Consequently, this paper argues for a paradigmatic shift in the field of ecological biopolitics by proposing the “gardening paradigm” as a replacement for the mainstream Foucauldian paradigm of ecological biopolitics. Rejecting the Foucauldian paradigm’s assumption of a rationalist state, the gardening paradigm demonstrates how the aesthetic and ecological imperatives of gardening influence state biopolitical management of non-human populations. The ecological imperative seeks to create a nativist utopia for local biodiversity by entirely excluding all exotic species while the aesthetic imperative seeks to create a cosmopolitan microcosm which often privileges exotic ornamentals at the expense of native species. This zero-sum situation forces the state to practice biopolitics by making non-human populations live and die based upon their overall contribution to the garden.

At the same time, this paper will also account for the emergence of biopolitical tensions between the aesthetic and ecological imperatives by using the “gardening paradigm” to trace the historical evolution of official environmental discourse in Singapore. This narrative will illustrate how the ecological imperative, in the guise of “natural heritage,” has broken the continuity of Singapore’s environmental discourse. By creating a parallel discourse alongside the predominant aesthetic imperative, this discontinuity has resulted in the two discordant visions of the garden city.

Introduction: A Tale of Two Gardens

The field of ecological biopolitics is in need of a paradigmatic shift. Living under the shadow of the Foucauldian paradigm,¹ ecological biopolitics is simplistically treated as the mere extension of “state and corporate management of biological life” from human populations to the natural world.² Being the ultimate sovereign power, the state not only has authority over human populations, but also all non-human life within its territorial boundaries. As a result, the life and death of non-human lifeforms hinges upon impersonal technocratic decisions made by a purportedly rationalistic state.

The philosopher Mick Smith, for example, believes that ecological biopolitics objectifies nature as a “mere resource” to be managed just as biopolitics dehumanizes humanity as “bare life” to be governed. This allows the state to un sentimentally decide which non-human lifeforms live and die, based on their value as assessed by the state’s political calculus. For example, when the state declares non-human lifeforms as natural resources to be exploited for the survival of human life, the state allows millions to die. However, when the state affirms the value of non-human life by declaring a natural reserve, it makes millions live.³

¹ See Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-76*. David Macy, trans. (New York: Picador, 2003), 241.

² Mick Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty: Ethics, Biopolitics, and Saving the Natural World*. (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xi-xii

³ *Ibid*

Similar assumptions have been made by scholars of ecological biopolitics when they base their analysis around Foucault’s concept of governmentality as an inherently rationalistic means of policing society. Governmentality is defined as a “plane of thinking and acting concerned with the authoritative regulation of conduct towards particular objectives.”⁴ It often manifests itself in public parks in order to shape the bodies and conduct of the human population along state-dictated ideological lines. For instance, Terence Young argued that the 19th century urban park was seen as a biological “machine to transform a flawed society.” As a mode of social control, parks were “imbued with the power to overcome anarchy, immorality, crime and indolence” and were effectively the “lungs and ‘conscience of the city.’”⁵ Similarly, Chiara Certona also places great emphasis upon the “hidden rationality of planning” in public gardens. Building upon Bent Flyvbjerg’s ‘dark side of planning’ theory, he argued that the state has historically disciplined non-human nature through the public garden in order to shape human nature itself. ⁶ Consequently, Cotera observes that “different kinds of gardens materialized different planning rationality.” As he puts it,

⁴ Thomas Osborne and Barry Rose, eds, *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government*. (London: Routledge, 1996), 737.

⁵ Terence Young, *Building San Francisco’s parks, 1850-1930*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 3.

⁶ Chiara Certoma, “Expanding the ‘dark side of planning’: Governmentality and biopolitics in urban garden planning”, *Planning Theory* 14:1 (2015): 23-25.

...the 18th century ordered botanical gardens, for instance, mainly reflected mercantilist governmentality, while the leisure gardens of the 19th century marked the affirmation of liberal governmentality. While botanical garden biopolitics mainly consisted of the categorisation and imposition of order in the micro-cosmos of the garden which symbolized the order of the world; the biopolitics of leisure gardens made them stages for displaying plants, infrastructures and animals, so to fuel specific moral, political and social behaviours.⁷

Unfortunately, the continued existence of two conflicting planning rationalities within the official environmental discourse in Singapore seems to directly contradict the assumptions of the Foucauldian paradigm. This seemingly irrational mode of urban planning is best reflected by the state's contradictory usage of the term "natural heritage." A buzzword that was formally incorporated into the state's ecological rhetoric through the 2009 National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, "natural heritage" was initially intended to signal the beginning of the state's unprecedented focus on biodiversity conservation.⁸ Gone were the days when ministers could nonchalantly declare local biodiversity a secondary priority that has to "take into account the competing housing, economic[,] and other demands on our limited land

⁷ Chiara Certoma, "Expanding the 'dark side of planning,'" 34.

⁸ *Conserving Biodiversity: Singapore's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan*, National Parks Board. 2009, 3.

resources."⁹ Instead, these non-human lives would have to be valued as legacies to be preserved "for the present and future generations."¹⁰

Unfortunately, the state's latest effort at preserving "natural heritage" seems to do more harm than good for local biodiversity. In 2016, the government announced plans to redevelop the Mandai forest into "an integrated wildlife and nature heritage precinct."¹¹ Consisting of a rainforest park and a bird park, the project claimed to be "conserving and nurturing Singapore's natural heritage, so that it can be enjoyed and loved by generations to come." The Rainforest Park would immerse visitors in "the sights and sounds of the tropical rainforest of Southeast Asia" while the Bird Park would conduct research on the "captive propagation of critically endangered species from all over the world."¹² While the conservationist ethic of the two proposed attractions was highly commendable, a local newspaper editor pointed out that the project was ironically compromising local biodiversity in favor of foreign wildlife. By building

⁹ Abdullah Tarmugi, Speech given at the official opening of the Green Hub@Pulau Ubin at the Pulau Ubin Community Centre, Singapore, 2001

¹⁰ Thymio Papayannis and Peter Howard, *Editorial: Nature as Heritage*, in Peter Howard and Thymio Papayannis. Eds. *Natural Heritage: At the Interface of Nature and Culture*. (New York: Routledge, 2007), xi.

¹¹ Temasek Holdings (Private) Limited, *Temasek Partners Singapore Government To Rejuvenate Mandai Wildlife And Nature Heritage*, 2016, web, 9 Nov. 2016.

¹² Mandai Park Holdings, *Mandai to become integrated nature and wildlife destination for Singaporeans*, 2016, web, 9 Nov. 2016.

attractions stocked with “foreign wildlife” on the same habitat that “local biodiversity” occupies, the project is in a sense attempting to “replace native biodiversity with imported wildlife.”¹³

Viewed from the perspective of the Foucauldian paradigm, the Mandai Project is an anomalous instance of ecological biopolitics. While the state was indeed practicing biopolitics by consciously choosing between which non-human populations “must die” and which “must live,” it does not seem to be basing its decision on an impersonal cost-benefit matrix. Instead, it seems to be caught between the exclusionary nativist pretensions of “natural heritage” and an idealistic cosmopolitan desire to preserve the endangered species of the world. In fact, by wishfully attempting to realize both visions at the same time, the state exhibited a strong aversion towards destroying life, both native and exotic.

In view of the Foucauldian paradigm’s inability to satisfactorily explain the dynamics of ecological biopolitics in Singapore, I propose making a paradigmatic shift towards what I term as the “gardening paradigm” of ecological biopolitics. As I will explain in the following section, “the gardening paradigm” is a distinctive logic of governmentality from the mainstream Foucauldian paradigm. Rejecting the “Foucauldian paradigm’s” characterization of biopolitics as the cold blooded calculation of life and death, the “gardening paradigm” endeavors to emphasize the less rationalistic side of state governmentality by considering the biopolitical tension between aesthetic and ecological imperatives of gardening.

¹³ Audrey Tan, “Of sunbirds, hornbills and Singapore ecotourism,” *The Straits Times*, 15 September 2016, web, accessed 10 November 2016.

The aesthetic imperative seeks to shape the garden into an elegant landscape based upon human artistic sensibilities. By valuing life based on their contribution to the artistic whole, the aesthetic imperative reduces life into mere decorative ornaments. This usually results in native wildlife being displaced by more attractive ornamental exotics. Conversely, the ecological imperative seeks to restock the garden using native lifeforms, valuing life based upon their contribution to the local ecosystem. This usually necessitates the exclusion of exotic species.

This theoretical exposition will be followed by a narrative interpretation of Singapore’s environmental history that traces the development of official ecological discourse in Singapore since independence. This narrative will illustrate how the aesthetic imperative represents an unbroken line of continuity with the historic evolution of Singapore’s environmental discourse. Even with the state’s newfound focus on native biodiversity, the aesthetic imperative has managed to absorb the ecological imperative through the discursive shift from “Garden City” to “City in the Garden.” However, the ecological imperative, in the guise of “natural heritage,” has still managed to form a parallel discourse to the aesthetic imperative, pushing back the cosmopolitan vision of the “Garden City.”

The Gardening Paradigm of Ecological Biopolitics

Most existing works on ecological biopolitics are based upon the tried and tested Foucauldian paradigm.¹⁴ While this traditional framework is still

¹⁴ See Mick Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, p.xi-xvii; Connor J Cavanagh, “Biopolitics, Environmental Change, and Development Studies,” *Forum for Development Studies*, 4, 2 (2014): 273-294;

useful, it fails to provide a holistic understanding of state attitudes towards nature. For example, the philosopher Mick Smith believes that the state assesses the value of non-human life in terms of their usefulness as raw material.¹⁵ While this explanation might work on a macro level, it unrealistically assumes that states only involve themselves with nature for economic reasons. After all, not every native species is worth conserving based on its economic value and it simply makes no financial sense to import exotic species when native ones are readily available. More importantly, this paradigm does not hold especially in Singapore, which does not have any natural resources to speak of.

It is thus much more useful to adopt the gardening paradigm when studying the state's biopolitical relationship with non-human life. As a microcosm of ecological biopolitics, the gardener's power over life and death in his garden is analogous to the authority the state has over its natural environment. This comparison is particularly appropriate in the context of Singapore, where the state has "manipulated the natural environment to reflect their vision of a planned green, urban landscape...a city in a garden." Just as a gardener tends to his garden, the state has "contained, disciplined[,] and manipulated" its natural environment in order to ensure that "nature has flourished."¹⁶

4; R. Youatt, "Counting Species: Biopower and the Global Biodiversity Census," *Environmental Values*, 17, No. 3 (August 2008): 393-417

¹⁵ Mick Smith, *Against Ecological Sovereignty*, 129.

¹⁶ Timothy P. Barnard and Connie Heng, *A City in a Garden*. In *Nature Contained: Environmental Histories*

In my reading of the gardening paradigm of ecological biopolitics, I will show how the state's relationship with non-human life is also governed by what I term the ecological and aesthetic imperatives of gardening. The aesthetic imperative seeks to shape the garden into an elegant landscape based upon human sensibilities; on the other hand, the ecological imperative values life based upon their value to the local ecosystem. The ecological imperative is especially dangerous as it can easily degrade into ecological xenophobia whereby native biodiversity is celebrated while exotic lifeforms are demonized.

Here, I have placed the terms "ecological" and "aesthetic" in opposition to one another not to imply a divide between art and nature, but to convey two distinctive modes of gardening aesthetics. In his study on gardening, art critic Donald Crawford points out that the Western gardening tradition is based upon "harmonious relationships" between art and nature. The garden is not only modeled upon human aesthetics but also modeled upon nature itself.¹⁷ For instance, the "French-style" formal garden is modeled upon the classical aesthetic ideal of symmetry and balance, while the "English-style" nature garden is modeled upon the natural world. Similarly, the ecological imperative takes nature as its model while the aesthetic imperative is based upon human artistic traditions.

The dynamics of the gardening paradigm of ecological biopolitics are best explained in cultural geographer Franklin Ginn's study of the suburban

of Singapore. Timothy P. Barnard, ed. (Singapore: NUS Press, 2014), 283.

¹⁷ Donald Crawford, "Nature and Art: Some Dialectical Relationships," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 42 (1983): 49-58.

garden. To Ginn, the ethos of gardening encompasses “a seemingly paradoxical combination of care and killing.” While the gardener’s main goal is “cultivating plants and their possibilities,” he observes that “these positive life-affirming aspects of gardening cannot be divorced from questions of killing, violence[,] and exclusion.” As he puts it, “the garden, far from a form of a retreat, must take the form of an attack on pests: foxes, greenfly...sycamore trees, unknown microorganisms, ivy, squirrels and others.”¹⁸

Ginn’s observations suggest that the practice of gardening is inherently biopolitical. Analyzed from the perspective of Foucauldian biopolitics, the garden appears to be a microcosm of biopolitics in action. As the sovereign authority of the garden, the gardener has “the right to make live and let die.”¹⁹ Having taken all ornamental lifeforms in the garden under his care, the gardener has the responsibility to guarantee the life of his biopolitical subjects.²⁰ To achieve this goal, he subscribes to a form of biological racism to distinguish between the weeds and pests that “must die” and the ornamental plants that “must live.” As all life forms take up valuable space and nutrients, every weed destroyed by the gardener would allow the other plants to “live more.”²¹

¹⁸ Franklin Ginn, *Domestic Wild: Memory, Nature and Gardening in Suburbia* (Routledge, 2016), 110.

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended: lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, David Macey, trans. (New York : Picador, 2003), 241

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended*, 253.

²¹ Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended*, 252-255.

It is no wonder sociologist Zygmunt Bauman found the garden to be a compelling metaphor. He compares the state to a gardener and the human populations under its care to a garden. To Bauman, the garden is a utopian construct which exemplifies the “design for an ideal life and a perfect arrangement of human conditions.” In order to subjugate all lifeforms to the “better and necessarily artificial order” of the garden, the gardener classifies them in terms of their overall usefulness to the garden.²² On one hand, the “useful plants” are identified in order to be “encouraged and tenderly propagated.” On the other hand, the weeds are identified in order “to be removed or rooted out.”²³

Notwithstanding, Ginn contends that “the shifting circuits of life and death in the garden” are best understood through the concept of “awkward flourishing” rather than biopolitics. Ginn characterizes the gardener as a sentimental personality rather than a cold calculating strategist. As a result, the gardener does not treat unvalued life as “bare life” to be mercilessly slaughtered but rather as objects of ethical concern. Even as pests such as the slug evoke disgust within the gardener, the very act of killing is still an emotionally disturbing experience. Ginn thus observes that many gardeners “often reverse the biological imperative.” Instead of seeking to “secure their desired plants at the expense of unvalued life,” gardeners “begin [with] the question of how much killing they can do, given the constraints of

²² Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 92.

²³ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 21.

practicality, sentimentality[,] and regret they operate under.”²⁴

Ginn rightly points out that gardening does not operate under the Foucauldian biopolitical paradigm. However, Ginn’s failure to analyze the aesthetic imperative of gardening has resulted in a woefully incomplete description of garden biopolitics. Most gardeners do not set up gardens simply for the pleasure of watching things grow. More often than not, the main purpose of the gardener is to create an aesthetically pleasing landscape. As American ecologist Douglas Tallamy puts it, “horticulturalists are artists, and their medium is the garden. Their goal is to paint the landscape with beautiful plants.” This has resulted in the reduction of plant life to mere landscaping features. Tallamy notes that native plants are often removed from garden plots as “it is easier to paint a picture on a blank canvas than one already filled with existing plant communities.” On the other hand, foreign exotics are favored because they provide “a larger palette to work with.” As a result, Tallamy argues, the “wholesale replacement of native plant communities with disparate collections of plants from other parts of the world is pushing our local animals to the brink of extinction.” He thus champions a garden filled solely with native plants in order to create “a beautiful, highly functional landscape in which nature is happy.”²⁵

²⁴ Franklin Ginn, *Domestic Wild: Memory, Nature and Gardening in Suburbia*, 115-116.

²⁵ Douglas W. Tallamy, *Flipping the Paradigm: Landscapes that Welcome Wildlife*. In *The New American Landscape: Leading Voices on the Future of Sustainable Gardening*. Thomas Christopher, ed. (Oregon: Timber Press, 2011), 175-176.

Unfortunately, Tallamy’s rejection of the gardening aesthetic does not remove biopolitics from the practice of gardening. The ecological imperative that he champions has a disturbing tendency to degrade into radicalized wildlife xenophobia. One of the most extreme examples is the German *Naturgarten*. The *Naturgarten*, as German biologist Reinhard Witt writes, is “not an environment for exotic perennials or foreign conifer trees. By definition, local nature is privileged. This cogently means native plants and native material.”²⁶ Witt is vehemently against exotic plants as he believes that they have absolutely no ecological value and are in fact impeding rather than creating “chances for life” for native plants.²⁷ Unsurprisingly, Witt exhorts his countrymen to “tear out” exotic plants like the rhododendron which he characterizes as dangerous invaders attempting to “conquer the ornamental gardens of Germany.”²⁸

Notwithstanding, English gardener William Robinson ambitiously attempted to reconcile the two visions of the garden by proposing the “Wild Garden” in the same manner as the Mandai Project. According to Robinson, the Wild Garden is created by “taking the best wild hardy exotics and establishing them with the best of our wildflowers” in order to produce “the most charming results.”²⁹ While historian Anne Helmreich notes that Robinson places particular emphasis on the value of

²⁶ Reinhard Witt, *Naturoase Wildgarten*, (Munich: BLV Verlag GmbH & Co, 1992), 14.

²⁷ Reinhard Witt, *Naturoase Wildgarten*, 10.

²⁸ Reinhard Witt, “Reisst die Rhododendren raus,” *Kosmos*, 1986, 70.

²⁹ William Robinson, *The Wild Garden* (London: John Murray, 1881), vii.

British wildflowers as essential elements of the island nation's natural heritage, she argues that "Robinson had no interest in assembling a kind of national Swiss or German flora" as the proponents of the German Naturgarten wanted. Instead, he wanted to "visualize various 'plant natures' from many places around the world in his nature garden."³⁰ In a sense, Robinson wanted to seamlessly integrate native plant life within his gardening aesthetic while ensuring that exotic plant life harmoniously blend in with the local environment.³¹

In a sense, Robinson's "Wild Garden" was an attempt to balance the ecological and aesthetic imperatives by reimagining the garden as a heterotopia. The garden, as Michel Foucault notes, is "the oldest example" of a place which juxtaposes "several sites that are in themselves incompatible" within "a single real space." Using the traditional Persian garden as his example, he argues that the garden was both a sacred space and a microcosm of the world at the same time. On one hand, the garden was a site whose sanctity was defined against the profanity of the outside world. On the other hand, the garden also represents "the totality of the world" despite being "the smallest parcel of the world."³²

³⁰ Anne Helmreich, *The English Garden and National Identity: The Competing styles of Garden Design 1870-1914*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3.

³¹ Anne Helmreich, *The English Garden and National Identity*, 20.

³² Michel Foucault, *Of Other Spaces and Heterotopias. Architecture/ Movement Continuïte*, Translated from French by Jay Miskoweic, (October 1984), 6.

The garden as a sacred space is a utopian vision constructed by the ecological imperative. In this nativist utopia, local biodiversity is restored to its pristine primeval state through the exclusion of all exotic species. Conversely, the garden as a cosmopolitan microcosm is an alternative utopian vision constructed by the aesthetic imperative. In this cosmopolitan utopia, the garden is brought to the heights of artistic magnificence by drawing upon the unique aesthetic properties of every possible life-form that inhabits the earth. Being mutually exclusive by nature, any attempt to harmoniously balance the two contradictory gardening visions within the finite space of the garden would be ultimately futile. This tension is even more pronounced in small countries like Singapore.

Gardening Biopolitics: A Singapore Story

The biopolitical tension between the ecological and aesthetic imperatives seems to be a persistent feature of Singapore's environmental history. As early as November 1991, this tension had been already anticipated by outspoken journalist and academic Cherian George when he expressed his disapproval over what he saw as an "ideological conflict" between "two diametrically opposed" visions of Singapore's green areas.³³

On one hand, the newly established National Parks Board (NPB) marked an unambiguous paradigmatic shift in official environmental discourse towards the vision of the "ecological garden."³⁴ Consisting of nature reserves set aside

³³ Cherian George, "Manicured Lawns vs Untamed Wilderness," *The Straits Times*, 4 November 1991, web, accessed 20 August 2017.

³⁴ The Parks and Recreation Department was founded in 1973. See Neo Boon Siong, June Gwee and Candy

for the conservation of Singapore's natural heritage, the "ecological garden" was to be characterized by an "exuberant explosion of life that covered this place millions of years before man [had] appeared: the equatorial rain forests, wetlands[,] and mangrove swamps".³⁵

Yet, on the other hand, this discursive shift seemed to be directly contradicted by the continued existence of the Parks and Recreation Department (PRD), which embodied the state's historic obsession with turning Singapore into a "man-made garden." Consisting of the ever ubiquitous "housing estates and man-made parks" that perforate Singapore's physical landscape, the "man-made garden" was a highly artificial construct consisting of "loose-cropped lawns, pruned bushes[,] and orderly rows of trees." In this vision of the Garden City, local biodiversity was instead treated as pests that the state needed to "flatten, cut, control."³⁶

Despite categorically denying the existence of any ideological conflict between the PRD and NPB, the state seemed to have heeded George's warnings.³⁷ In June 1996, the PRD was subsumed under the NPB, signaling the apparent triumph of the

Mak, "Growing a City in a Garden" in June Gwee, ed. *Case Studies in Public Governance: Building Institutions in Singapore* (London: Routledge, 2012), 35-36.

³⁵ Cherian George, "Manicured lawns vs untamed wilderness."

³⁶ *Ibid*

³⁷ Ang Gek Choo, "No ideological battle between NParks, PRD," *The Straits Times*. 9 November 1991, web, accessed 20 August 2017.

"ecological garden" over the "man-made garden."³⁸ Even as the NPB now manages both man-made parks and natural reserves, its mission to preserve Singapore's natural heritage cannot be clearer. As the revised National Parks Board Act puts it, one of the main functions of the reconstituted NPB is "to propagate, protect[,] and preserve the animals, plants[,] and other organisms of Singapore and, within the national parks, nature reserves and public parks, to preserve objects and places of aesthetic, historical[,] or scientific interest".³⁹ Yet, institutional restricting has done little to resolve the ideological tension between the "ecological garden" and "man-made garden." In fact, as illustrated by the self-contradictory objectives of the Mandai Project, the same issues have manifested themselves almost two decades later.

In the following narrative, I will place this biopolitical tension in historical perspective by studying the development of official environmental discourse through the lens of the "gardening paradigm." My narrative begins on 12 May 1967, when then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew announced a bold plan to transform Singapore into "a Garden City beautiful with flowers and trees."⁴⁰ According to him, apart from making life more pleasant, a "Garden City" would more importantly "give Singapore a very good reputation abroad." By being one of the "most beautiful cities in Asia with trees, flowers[,] and shrubs in all the public places,"

³⁸ Neo Boon Siong, June Gwee and Candy Mak, "Growing a City in a Garden," 40.

³⁹ See National Parks Board Act (Chapter 198 A, 2012 Rev Ed), s 6 (1).

⁴⁰ "S'pore to become beautiful, clean city within three years," *The Straits Times*, 12 May 1967, pg. 4, retrieved from NewspaperSG.

Lee Kuan Yew hoped to reinforce Singapore's status as a First World "oasis in Southeast Asia."⁴¹ This would in turn attract more tourists and foreign investors to Singapore.⁴²

Since then, the state has always managed nature through the gardening paradigm. Notwithstanding, the state-led landscaping project is never static. The state is constantly revising its landscaping aesthetic, favoring different landscaping arrangements along with different plants at different times. This led Manson Tan to periodize Singapore's environmental history into three distinct "landscape periods."⁴³ By closely following the development of these "landscape periods," we would be able to observe the emergence of the biopolitical tension between the aesthetic and ecological imperative.

During the 1960s to early 1980s, the government managed nature by creating a "survival landscape." In this landscaping period, minimalism was the dominant aesthetic. As Lee Kuan Yew wanted Singapore to be transformed into a Garden

⁴¹ Lee Kuan Yew, *Transcript of Speech by the Prime Minister at a Celebration in the Toa Payoh Community Centre on 21st February, 1967, Held in Connection with the Conferment of Public Service Star Awards on Tan Tong Meng and Inche Buang B. Siraj*, 21 February 1967, retrieved from National Archives of Singapore.

⁴² Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First—The Singapore Story: 1965-2000* (Singapore: Singapore Press Holdings, 2000), 199-202.

⁴³ See Manson Tan Beng Jin, *Urban biodiversity and greening strategies in Singapore*, keynote lecture presented at Conference on Greening the City: Bringing Biodiversity Back, Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture, October 2003.

City "within three years",⁴⁴ the state needed to make Singapore look green as quickly as possible. This resulted in life being valued more for their function rather than aesthetic or ecological value. Under the "Standardization Planting" regime, exotic plants were valued over native life forms because they had a discernible purpose as defined by the state. For example, the *Bougainvillea* flower from South America was used for decorating overhead bridges while the creeping fig (*Ficus pumila*) from East Asia was used to cover the bare concrete of walls.⁴⁵

Notwithstanding, even as the state began its landscaping project with a minimalistic aesthetic, the aesthetic imperative quickly seeped in. In order to distinguish the "Garden City" from undeveloped nature, exotic plants were favored over native plants.⁴⁶ It was thus unsurprising that former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew imported nearly 8,000 species of exotic plant life from places as far abroad as Africa, Central America[,] and the Caribbean in order to beautify the streets of Singapore.⁴⁷ As life is now valued based upon their

⁴⁴ "S'pore to become beautiful, clean city within three years," *The Straits Times*, 12 May 1967, 4.

⁴⁵ Manson Tan Beng Jin, *Urban biodiversity and greening strategies in Singapore*, 242.

⁴⁶ See Turner, T., *English garden design: history and styles since 1650* (Antique Collectors Club, 1986) 147-9.

⁴⁷ Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First—The Singapore Story: 1965-2000* (Singapore: Singapore Press Holdings, 2000), p. 204; see also Timothy Auger, *Living in a Garden: The Greening of Singapore* (Singapore: National Parks Board, 2013), 30-37 for a detailed description of the exotic plant life introduced

aesthetic contribution to the Garden City, Tan compares the prevalent gardening aesthetic in that period to the “Gardenesque Planting” style.”⁴⁸

With increased economic prosperity in the 1980s, the gardenesque aesthetic was replaced by a “mosaic landscape.” Replacing the dull homogenous landscapes of the 1960s, “mosaic landscape” involved the creation of themed gardens. Ranging from Japanese gardens to Balinese gardens, Tan dismissed the “mosaic landscape” movement as “green spaces designed and planted in isolation of its larger context.”⁴⁹

The incessant replacement of the natural environment with “alien landscapes” resulted in exotic life flourishing at the expense of native biodiversity.⁵⁰ This was a source of concern to many. While foreign free-flowering species were generally acknowledged to be “superficially more attractive” than native plant life,⁵¹ eminent Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas thought otherwise. To him, these exotic species represented “the reconstructed

into Singapore by the National Parks Board during the 1970s and 80s.

⁴⁸ Manson Tan Beng Jin, *Urban biodiversity and greening strategies in Singapore*, 242.

⁴⁹ Manson Tan Beng Jin, *Urban biodiversity and greening strategies in Singapore*, 242-243.

⁵⁰ Manson Tan Beng Jin, *Urban biodiversity and greening strategies in Singapore*, 243.

⁵¹ Min Geh and Ilsa Sharp, “Singapore’s Natural Environment, Past, Present and Future: A Construct of National Identity and Land Use Imperatives.” In *Spatial Planning for a Sustainable Singapore*, Tai-Chee Wong, Belinda Yuen, Charles Goldblum, eds. (London: Springer, 2008), 187-188.

tropicality of landscaping” built upon a *tabula rasa* once occupied by native species.⁵² *Straits Times* editor M. Nirmala, on the other hand, was not particularly concerned about the artificiality of the “Garden City.” In fact, the journalist described this “artificial creation” as “marvelous.” Instead, he was more concerned about the unthinking manner in which the state “bulldozed through” Singapore’s “natural and architectural heritage.”⁵³ He was particularly pained by:

“the loss of part of the jungle to build the Bukit Timah Expressway; the partial destruction of the habitat for animals and plants because of the quarrying at Bukit Timah; the destruction of the coral reef formations at some parts of Singapore’s coastline ...”⁵⁴

While Nirmala appeared to be writing as a green activist, he makes it clear that he was no tree-hugger. As he puts it, he was “no kneejerker opponent of whatever officialdom does to the environment.”⁵⁵ What Nirmala was more concerned about was rather the erosion of the Singaporean sense of place. By associating jungles and reefs with recognizable place-names such as Bukit Timah, Nirmala was in fact attempting to

⁵² Koolhaas Rem and Mau BS, “Singapore Songlines: Portrait of a Potemkin metropolis ... or thirty years of Tabula Rasa,” in Koolhaas Rem, *Office for Metropolitan Architecture* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), 1075.

⁵³ M. Nirmala, “When Conservationists Do Not See People for the Trees,” *The Straits Times*, 26 Nov 1989, 32.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

⁵⁵ *Ibid*

reconnect the city dwelling Singaporeans with nature.

A sense of place is particularly important in Singapore given the highly erratic nature of the state-led gardening project. From austere tree-lined roads to manicured Japanese gardens, the landscapes inhabited by Singaporeans never seem to stay the same. This is particularly disorientating as there is nowhere for Singaporeans to identify themselves with. The natural environment “provides a safe haven from this psychosis” as it “remain[s] eternal, offering a stable reference point throughout.”⁵⁶ By destroying what remains of Singapore’s natural environment, the state is effectively subjecting Singaporeans to “the systematic erosion of ... tradition, fixity, continuity – a *perpetuum mobile*”.⁵⁷

Unsurprisingly, human geographer Harvey Neo observes that the rise in public support for the local conservation movement in the 1990s was motivated by a desire to fight “to secure a sense of place” and to foster a “broader sense of identity among the citizenship.”⁵⁸ For example, the Nature Society of Singapore managed to convince nearly 25,000 people to support its petition to save the bird sanctuary in Senoko.⁵⁹

In response to the demands of a more environmentally conscious citizenry, the state began to incorporate the discourse of natural heritage within its aesthetic imperative. Instead of creating “alien landscapes” that are “manicured and ordered,” the government now focused on using native biodiversity to create gardens that closely resemble nature.⁶⁰ The turn towards a “wilder look” is signaled by the discursive shift from “Garden City” to “City in the Garden” As Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong puts it, the “City in the Garden” consists of “green spaces” where local biodiversity such as “butterflies, birds, all sorts of interesting flora, fauna” are brought “closer to our homes and workplaces.”⁶¹

Unfortunately, natural heritage serves as a vehicle through which the ecological imperative slips into official discourse. Taken by itself, the ecological imperative is based upon the dry and abstract notions of food webs and taxonomic classifications. However, when presented as natural heritage, the ecological imperative becomes an irresistible means of grounding the Singapore identity with a sense of place. By linking nature with the Singaporean sense of place, “natural heritage” is able to tap into the emotional need to construct a parochial local identity.⁶² It was thus

⁵⁶ Min Geh and Ilsa Sharp, “Singapore’s Natural Environment,” 188.

⁵⁷ Koolhaas Rem, “Singapore Songlines,” 1035.

⁵⁸ Harvey Neo, “Challenging the Developmental State: Nature Conservation in Singapore,” *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* no. 48, 2 (Aug. 2007): 187.

⁵⁹ “25,000 Appeal for Senoko Bird Habitat to be Saved,” *The Straits Times*, 21 Oct 1994, 3.

⁶⁰ Manson Tan Beng Jin, *Urban biodiversity and greening strategies in Singapore*, 243-244.

⁶¹ Lee Hsien Loong, “The People’s Garden, In Our City in a Garden,” speech by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the opening of Gardens by the Bay, Singapore: Prime Minister’s Office, 28 June 2012.

⁶² Harvey Neo, “Nature and the Environment as an Evolving Concern in Urban Singapore” In *Changing landscapes of Singapore: Old Tensions, New Discoveries*, Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho, Chih Yuan Woon &

unsurprising that the state started to incorporate native lifeforms within its landscape designs. According to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, local biodiversity is used to ensure that the manmade canal in Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park becomes “naturalized.” With the presence of “water plants”, “waterfowl” and “*longkang* (Hokkien for canal) fish,” the canal would look more like a “naturalized river” that had been in existence “since time immemorial.”⁶³

The entry of natural heritage into official ecological discourse is a potentially dangerous discursive move. By appealing to natural heritage, the state is in fact legitimizing the ecological imperative and by extension an identity based biopolitics. The once cosmopolitan “Garden City” is now bearing an increasingly uncanny resemblance to the xenophobic German *Naturgarten*. In his proposal to make natural heritage the basis of “a definitive Singapore garden style,” Manson Tan suggests that local wildlife be given a degree of sacredness.⁶⁴ He argues for the establishment of “ecological treatment zones,” which are effectively exclusionary sacred spaces dedicated solely to native biodiversity. Within these virgin natural spaces, local species would be given a chance to thrive so as to heal Singapore’s fragmented “local identity.” Exotic species, however, were to be kept out of these

spaces and “confined to the more culturally related rural and urban communities.”⁶⁵

Manson Tan is not alone. The dangerous dream of natural heritage has already infected many. *Straits Times* journalist Natalie Huang, for example, essentializes the arbitrary categories of native and alien species. Using the fine grained comb of citizenship to differentiate between native born common mynahs from foreign born Javan mynahs, she demonizes the Javan mynah as an “aggressive” and “invasive” intruder while characterizing the common mynah as “shy, sensitive to disturbance, rare[,] and threatened.” Based upon this shaky argument, she asserts the importance of ensuring that “exotic species do not enter our more pristine forests, where our rarer species live.”⁶⁶ Marcus Chua’s celebration of native biodiversity goes one step further. He gives native species honorary citizenship as “Temasekians.” Exalted as the “original Singaporean[s],” “Temasekians” were described to be “the life and soul of the land first known as Temasek.”⁶⁷ By adopting the exclusionary discourse of citizenship, Chua’s work is also implicitly implying that alien species have no place in Singapore.

The rigid native/alien dichotomy created by the discourse of natural heritage has resulted in several ecological dilemmas. Take for example the

Kamalini Ramdas, eds. (Singapore: NUS Press, 2013), 72.

⁶³ Lee Hsien Loong, “The People’s Garden, In Our City in a Garden.”

⁶⁴ Manson Tan Beng Jin, *Urban biodiversity and greening strategies in Singapore*, 246.

⁶⁵ Manson Tan Beng Jin, *Urban biodiversity and greening strategies in Singapore*, 244.

⁶⁶ Natalia Huang, “When nature’s feathers are ruffled.” *The Straits Times*, 8 May 2015, web, accessed 5 November 2016.

⁶⁷ Marcus A.H Chua. ed. *Temasekia: 50 Plants and Animals Native to Singapore* (Singapore: Armour Publishing, 2015), 12-13.

presence of the Asian Arowana as alien species in local reservoirs. While the fish is highly endangered in its native habitats throughout Southeast Asia, the government is highly reluctant to take any positive action to conserve this species. As the Arowana is an alien species that is not part of Singapore's natural heritage, the state appears to have no responsibility to save it. Yet, from a more internationally minded perspective, all endangered species have the right to be saved.⁶⁸

It is worth noting that natural heritage is actually an "invented tradition" rather than a scientific reality. In Eric Hobsbawm's formulation, natural heritage is "an attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historical past" which is more often than not "factitious."⁶⁹ Natural heritage is based upon nostalgia for a pristine natural environment "before the human footprint made its mark" by introducing alien species.⁷⁰ Unfortunately, such a past is non-existent. Far from a virgin tropical rainforest before the arrival of Raffles in 1819, Tony O' Dempsey notes the

existence of human habitation since the 14th century.⁷¹

Even the supposedly unassailable native/alien dichotomy is questionable. In reality, the concept of alien species is a fluid one. What we think to be a native species today might actually be an alien one in the past. *The Natural Heritage of Singapore*, an authoritative textbook on biodiversity conservation, notes that the tiny carp *Rasbora altoni* which was long thought to be an "endemic freshwater fish" was later found to be a food fish introduced into Singapore by Chinese immigrants during the 1800s.⁷²

Fortunately, the state usually treats natural heritage as a rhetorical strategy rather than as a static ideology. In fact, it is still very much committed to the cosmopolitan tendencies of the aesthetic imperative. Even as recently as 2011, the state spared no expense to build the Gardens by the Bay. As the very embodiment of cosmopolitanism, the garden boasts nearly 225,000 species of plants "ranging from species in cool, temperate climates to tropical forests and habitats."⁷³ The Garden even placed special emphasis on the fact that the plants were "not commonly found in Singapore."⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Kiat, Hun and Hun, Joseph, *The Asian Arowana*, web, LSM4262 15 April 2013, accessed 5 November 2016.

⁶⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-2.

⁷⁰ Hugh T.W Tan, L.M. Chou, Darren C.J Yeo, Peter K.L Ng, *The Natural Heritage of Singapore*, 3rd ed. (Singapore: Pearson Education, 2010), 5; Tan Kiat Wee, *Naturally Yours, Singapore* (Singapore: National Parks Board, 1992), 6.

⁷¹ Tony O' Dempsey, "Singapore's Changing Landscape since c. 1800," in *Nature Contained: Environmental Histories of Singapore*, Timothy P. Barnard, ed. (Singapore: NUS Press, 2014), 17.

⁷² Hugh T.W Tan, L.M. Chou, Darren C.J Yeo, Peter K.L Ng, *The Natural Heritage of Singapore*, 250-251.

⁷³ Gardens by the Bay, "Our Story," accessed 24 February 2017.

⁷⁴ Gardens by the Bay, "Fascinating Facts about the Iconic SuperTrees," accessed 24 February 2017.

Unsurprisingly, such unabashed embraces of globalization were not well-received by Singaporeans. A particularly scathing critique by blogger Joanne Leow described the garden as “an imposed, artificial construct of nature and history.”⁷⁵

In order to avoid attracting similar criticisms in the future, the state attempted to use the emotive appeal of “natural heritage to legitimize the Mandai project. By associating its project with local biodiversity conservation, the state hoped to deflect public attention away from the project’s other focus: the conservation of non-native endangered species. Admittedly, such a weak discursive move appears to be counterproductive. Not only did the state fail to legitimize its Mandai project, it also damaged its public reputation as its statements look suspiciously like official hypocrisy.

In a sense, the biopolitical tension between the aesthetic and ecological imperatives reflect a governmentality in transition. Pitting the pull of nativism against Singapore’s long established cosmopolitan ethos, this tension is in fact the ecological embodiment of Singapore’s “social schizophrenia”, a term used by prominent businessman Ho Kwon Ping to describe the city-state’s severe identity crisis. On one hand, Singapore aspires to be a “Global City” in order to remain on par with its competitors. Yet, on the other hand, the same immigrants which make the “Global City” cosmopolitan dilute Singapore’s distinctive national identity. In a bid to make sense of its dual identities as a “global city” and as “a parochial *kampong*” (Malay for village), Singapore’s public discourse has increasingly been defined by

⁷⁵ Joanne Leow, “On Supertrees, Neo-Colonialism and Globalisation,” 5 July 2012, web, accessed 24 February 2017.

the “tension between the Singaporean core and foreign talent.”⁷⁶ From this perspective, the alien/native species dichotomy is merely a reflection of the local/foreign divide that has surfaced in nearly all areas of public discourse.⁷⁷

Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to contribute to the nascent sub-field of ecological biopolitics by proposing the gardening paradigm as a replacement for the mainstream Foucauldian paradigm of ecological biopolitics. Rejecting the Foucauldian paradigm’s assumption of a rationalist state, the gardening paradigm demonstrates how the aesthetic and ecological imperatives of gardening influence state biopolitical management of non-human populations. I then went on to trace the biopolitical tensions between the aesthetic and ecological imperatives within the historical development of Singapore’s official environmental discourse. On one hand, the ecological imperative seeks to create a nativist utopia for local biodiversity by entirely

⁷⁶ Lee Yen Ne, “Local-foreigner tension can make Singapore irrelevant: Ho Kwon Ping,” *TODAY*, 05 Nov 2015, web, accessed 10 November 2016.

⁷⁷ See William Chong Kian Wee, “It is about overcrowding, not xenophobia,” *TODAY*, 16 January 2014, web, accessed 10 November 2016; Malcom Moore, *Singapore’s ‘anti-Chinese curry war,’ The Telegraph*, 16 August 2011, web, accessed 10 November 2016.

See also Lai Ah Eng, *Viewing Ourselves and Others: Differences, Disconnects and Divides among Locals and Immigrants in Singapore*, report prepared for the CSC-IPS The Population Conundrum-Rountable on the Singapore Demographic Challenge, 3 May 2012. for a detailed discussion on the local/ foreigner divide.

excluding all exotic species. On the other hand, the aesthetic imperative seeks to create a cosmopolitan microcosm which often privileges exotic ornamentals at the expense of native species. As a result of the contradictory visions of the two imperatives, the “ecological garden” and “man-made garden” are fundamentally incompatible.

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POSITIONING MAY 13, 1969 IN THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN MODERN

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This paper demonstrates how a politically significant Southeast Asian art-piece, Redza Piyadasa's May 13, 1969, has been diminished in importance through its curation at the National Gallery Singapore. I engage in a thorough comparison between the same work's presentations in two different contexts—its inaugural exhibition at the Manifestasi Dua Seni in Malaysia and its exhibition in the National Gallery Singapore alongside other modern Southeast Asian works. The presentation in the latter context detracts from the work's political message because the curation prioritises the work's representation of modern form. The problematic curation of May 13, 1969 is a microcosm of the larger initiative to construct an autonomous Southeast Asian canon of art—museum agents struggle to distinguish Southeast Asian artworks on Western terms.

Introduction

In an online article titled “Singapore’s New National Gallery Dubiously Rewrites Southeast Asian Art History”, *Hyperallergic* art critic Bharti Lalwani panned the newly opened National Gallery Singapore for downplaying the influence of Western architectural design in the museum project, and for deploying “Disneyesque” theatricality to appeal to the Singaporean public.¹ According to Lalwani, the museum had been explicit about their attempt to “reflexively [(re)write]” artistic narratives to serve the Southeast Asian region, but the curatorial team seemed to support, rather than challenge existing narratives.² She criticised specifically the display of Redza Piyadasa’s *May 13, 1969* (1970), stating:

“...I was surprised to find Malaysian Modern artist Redza Piyadasa’s “May 13, 1969” dismally lit in a corner. The museum label and publication lists the wrong date Piyadasa’s piece was originally made—1969 instead of 1970. An honest mistake, but this is an art-historically significant work that some scholars argue may well be the first piece of installation art ever made in the region... ... the work is so poorly presented without *any* socio-political context, that I am left feeling embarrassed for the institution that has

assumed the authority to establish the regional canon.”³

Her bases for criticising the National Gallery Singapore resonated in later social media backlash against the Gallery’s second international exhibition, *Artist and Empire: (En)countering Colonial Legacies*.⁴ As indicated in the stylised title of the exhibition, the curators sought to counteract dominant colonial narratives in works which were loaned from London’s Tate Modern museum. The exhibition’s collateral fundraising event, The Empire Ball, however, appeared to be a reinforcement of decadent colonial ideals. The wealthy elite were invited to finance a cultural institution through a lavish gathering in the polished City Hall Chamber.⁵ Publicity material did not suggest any critical response towards the British Empire and their consolidation of power in Southeast Asian colonies. The Gallery’s ambitious project of establishing an autonomous Southeast Asian canon was, from then on, tainted either with their perceived hypocrisy or their negligence.

It is this contentious aspect of the Gallery’s canonisation project that I will investigate in this paper, and I will do so in specific relation to the

¹ Bharti Lalwani, “Singapore’s New National Gallery Dubiously Rewrites Southeast Asian History,” *Hyperallergic*, last modified February 1, 2016, <http://hyperallergic.com/271919/singapores-new-national-gallery-dubiously-rewrites-southeast-asian-art-history/>.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ “National Gallery drops ‘empire’ theme for its gala,” accessed November 20, 2016, <http://www.straitstimes.com/lifestyle/national-gallery-singapore-drops-empire-theme-for-its-gala>.

⁵ “National Gallery Singapore named fundraising event ‘Empire Ball’, saw nothing wrong with it,” accessed November 20, 2016, <http://mothership.sg/2016/09/national-gallery-singapore-named-fundraising-event-empire-ball-saw-nothing-wrong-with-it/>.

aforementioned “art-historically significant” work by Redza Piyadasa, *May 13, 1969* (1970). Redza Piyadasa is a Malaysian art historian and artist whose work references the eponymous May 13 racial riots following the 1969 Malaysian General Election. The night’s incidents of sectarian violence are memorialised in Malaysian history as regrettable bloodbaths, and the ugliness of the riots serve as a graphic warning to neighbouring Singapore, which shares similar racial tensions between the local Chinese and Malays. Piyadasa’s sculptural artwork references, through its title, the racial riots and their impact, but it also functions as a Modern display piece in the National Gallery Singapore’s narrative of Southeast Asian art. This paper will discuss how the iconography in *May 13, 1969* interacts with the work’s presentation in the museum and the museum’s branding to produce meanings for audiences in a postcolonial context. I argue that the work’s potential to communicate internal political strife has been overshadowed by its symbolism as a Southeast Asian endeavour into Modern, and ergo Western, art forms.

Methodology

My investigation of *May 13, 1969*’s narrative role will proceed from the use of Erwin Panofsky’s iconographical method.⁶ In Panofsky’s method, he proposes a systematic, multi-level reading of aesthetic material. I will first identify the “primary or natural subject matter”⁷ in the work—the sculpture’s formal qualities, the colours, the material and the object plainly used. Then, I will connect

⁶ Erwin Panofsky, “Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art,” in *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955).

⁷ Panofsky, “Iconography and Iconology,” 28.

these observations to “secondary or conventional subject matter”⁸, which refers to the function of these primary properties as recurring motifs in the sculpture’s particular context.⁹ I will then use these induced ideas to arrive at “intrinsic meaning or content”, which is “apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion”.¹⁰ This investigation requires knowledge of the National Gallery Singapore’s institutional ideologies, as well as the acknowledgment of musealisation, as described by Andreas Huyssen in “Escape From Amnesia: The Museum as Mass Medium”¹¹. I will compare the work’s inaugural display at the Manifestasi Dua Seni¹² exhibition in Kuala Lumpur’s Dewa Bahasa san Pustaka¹³ to demonstrate how changes in the exhibition environment affect the sculpture’s narrative.

In the evaluation of artwork outside European or North American creation, the iconographical method runs the risk of depending solely on isolated cultural vocabularies that are specific to the geographic region. This limits artistic inquiry to the purview of “authentic” or “traditional” artistic conventions, and will not give sufficient

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 28.

¹⁰ Ibid., 30.

¹¹ Andreas Huyssen, “Escape From Amnesia: The Museum as Mass Medium” in *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (Florence: Taylor and Francis Books, 1995).

¹² Manifestation of Two Arts

¹³ National Language Institute

consideration to the politics of cultural transactions between the imagined East and West. I will thus not interpret Redza Piyadasa's sculpture and its involvement in the Gallery through its associations with "pure" Malaysian or Southeast Asian traditions. Instead, I will cast my focus on a contemporary Southeast Asia that is aware of its position vis-à-vis the hegemony of Western art.

The analysis of *May 13, 1969* within the National Gallery Singapore's context will not be complete without considering the biography of Redza Piyadasa and the artistic ideologies he sought to promote. Piyadasa was himself a prominent art historian who, together with pioneer Singaporean art historian T. K. Sabapathy, defined the Nanyang Style emerging from Modern Singaporean paintings.¹⁴ According to *Pameran retrospektif pelukis-pelukis Nanyang*¹⁵, the Nanyang style was heavily influenced by material culture in Bali, and was exclusive to a group of Singaporean painters from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. He was heavily invested in crafting an autonomous history of Southeast Asian art, an undertaking not unlike that of the Gallery. His ideology and its organising principles would colour his personal brand as an artist, and this in turn participates in the museum's larger conversation on the artistic significance of Modern regional pieces.

The examinations in this paper are grounded on theoretical dialogue between the Western art canon and the National Gallery Singapore as the author of its own curated narrative. The analyses in

¹⁴ Redza Piyadasa, *Pameran retrospektif pelukis-pelukis Nanyang* (Kuala Lumpur: Muzium Seni Negara, 1979).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

this paper speak of the position of an anticipated audience in relation to these overarching narratives, but cannot deterministically account for the experiences of empirical audiences in their interactions with *May 13, 1969*. Such a scholarly approach would require the statistical consideration of an audience's practical habits and infinitely varied social positions across a spectrum. This approach, while admittedly valuable in the investigation of reception or identity politics, would detract from the paper's focus on the construction of narratives.

Reflection at the Manifestasi Dua Seni (1970)

May 13, 1969 welcomed audience interaction at its initial presentation at the Manifestasi Dua Seni (1970) in the Dewa Bahasa san Pustaka.¹⁶ The visual artworks at the exhibition were curated as parallel responses to local literature, and Redza Piyadasa chose the poem "Kambing Hitam (sebelum dan sesudah Mei 13)"¹⁷ by Usman Awang to accompany his sculptural piece. The poem is organised into three sections: before the racial riots, the day of the riots, and after. Each section describes, through metaphor, the sights at the given point in time. For example, in the "Mei 13" section, Usman Awang describes a poor boy in red dress¹⁸ and a red dusk¹⁹, referencing the bloody carnage in the early hours of the day. Usman Awang proclaims that democracy has died on the day of the racial

¹⁶ "Black Goat," accessed November 20, 2016, <http://imageswithoutbodies.tumblr.com/post/85564731151/black-goat>.

¹⁷ Black Goat (Before and After May 13)

¹⁸ merah baju si anak malang

¹⁹ merah senja

riots.²⁰ The poem laments the darkness of the day, articulating the suffering through visceral, tangible symbols.



Figure 1: Viewers gather around Usman Awang's poetry at the *Manifestasi Dua Seni (1970)* in the *Dewa Bahasa san Pustaka*.²¹

“Kambing Hitam (sebelum dan sesudah Mei 13)” was presented in two slabs of text on the floor next to Redza Piyadasa's *May 13, 1969*.²² The viewer is first confronted by the poetry at their feet (figure 1), and the poem sets the sombre tone for interpreting the May 13 racial riots. The poem provides sociopolitical context and thus the conceptual grounds for the sculpture to be received. In this presentation of the work in Malaysia, viewers are encountering the sculpture in the same country where the racial riots occurred a mere year ago. Usman Awang's vivid poetry recalls the memory of the riots, conjuring the parameters around the artwork to address the recent trauma. The time and location of the exhibition characterises the work's presentation as part of an urgent plea for national healing. The position of the poem beckons for the viewer to modify their gaze—viewers bow their

heads to read the poetry. Their eyes do not rest easily at the eye level because the poetry interrupts their activity and draws them into the dialogue between the poetry and Redza Piyadasa's sculpture.

The poem on the floor directs the viewer's eyes to the adjacent ground, where the mirror base for *May 13, 1969* rests. The square mirror forms a reflective perimeter around an otherwise vertical sculpture, reflecting the viewer's prodding gaze. The mirror draws the viewer's self-image into the rhetoric of the piece, such that the viewer's interaction completes the circuit of the artwork. This is the feature that distinguishes the artwork in its inaugural exhibition from its later presentation in the National Gallery Singapore. Here, the artwork more than welcomes audience interaction. It requires it. The sculpture does not provide its audience with the comfort of ambiguous signs and subtlety, such that they can achieve analytical distance from the work. The erect black coffin, painted with fragments of the Malaysian flag, is an obvious and almost vulgar reference to the death of their nation. The universal symbol for nationhood, a country's flag, has been warped and distorted around a plain black vehicle for corpses. The sculpture provokes the audience and captures their response in its own material (the mirror). In this work, the literal connects immediately to the figurative; the mirror creates space for reflection.

²⁰ demokrasi telah mangkat

²¹ “Black Goat.”

²² Ibid.



Figure 2: A 2006 reconstruction of Redza Piyadasa's *May 13, 1969*, as displayed in the UOB Southeast Asia Gallery, National Gallery Singapore²³

A Modern Southeast Asian Sculpture

The mirror that incorporated the audience at the *Manifestasi Dua Seni* now serves a different purpose in the sculpture's exhibition in the UOB Southeast Asia Gallery at the National Gallery Singapore. The sculpture occupies a space in the corner of the gallery. Black tape cordons off the area around the sculpture in a rigid square, and the distance between the tape and the mirror base of the work is just enough to prevent viewers from peering into the mirror. The square perimeter of the black tape sits at an awkward diagonal to the corner of the walls so viewers cannot comfortably walk around the work. The mirror no longer reflects the prodding faces of viewers, and this is symptomatic of the National Gallery's overbearing museal project.

Andreas Huyssen describes this phenomenon in "Escape from Amnesia: The Museum as Mass Medium"—"the museum emerged as the paradigmatic institution that collects, salvages, and preserves that which has fallen to the ravages of Modernisation. But in doing so, it inevitably will construct the past in light of the discourses of the

²³ "Singapore's New National Gallery Dubiously Rewrites Southeast Asian Art History"

present and in terms of present-day interest."²⁴ Redza Piyadasa's *May 13, 1969* has transformed into a museum artefact through its presentation at the National Gallery Singapore. The National Gallery Singapore serves the purpose of documenting developments in visual art through a linear progression. It selects, collects, and re-presents items of art as physical evidence of key moments in our present-day narrative of Southeast Asian art. The *May 13, 1969* that sits in the National Gallery is a 2006 reconstruction of the original 1970 sculpture. The physical form of the work has been resurrected to give audiences an immediate visual impression of the original *May 13, 1969*. The work, however, no longer has to operate to interact with viewers and carry out its artistic function. Now, the work is static. The area around the sculpture is cordoned off to museum-goers, because, as a physical reconstruction of an older art piece, it is important for the work to remain unmolested by the hands of the present. The National Gallery exhibition declares that the work's key moment is now over, and that it can retire within the confines of the museum walls. What then does the museum select to be *May 13, 1969*'s key moment? What is the reconstruction evidence of?

The reconstructed *May 13, 1969* is not about the post-election Malaysian racial riots. *May 13, 1969*'s museum label in the UOB Southeast Asia Gallery space does not provide information on the work's incendiary sociopolitical context. Divorced from its context, the work cannot be received as a cynical response to critical Malaysian poetry, nor social commentary on the divisiveness in the Malaysian population. This is not to say that the museum has hidden or misconstrued the work's

²⁴ Huyssen, "Escape from Amnesia", 15.

conception—a hint of the work’s topic still resides in the title. The National Gallery has, however, in presenting a more polished and removed museum front, shifted the focus away from the raw emotion of the May 13 events. What remains before the viewer is the physical shell of the former *May 13, 1969*. This shell is ominous but also vague and elusive. Without the work’s context, the work’s significance lies primarily in its form.

In the UOB Southeast Asia Gallery, the upright coffin is a provocative symbol of death, but it is also a salient example of the use of readymades. The work appropriates a coffin, an otherwise functional object in a different set of rituals, and transforms it into a work of Modern art. The coffin maintains its recognisable physical shape. The work also appropriates a mirror for its reflective properties. These elements of the sculpture finds its predecessor in Marcel Duchamp’s *Fountain* (1917)²⁵ in the Western canon, where a urinal was appropriated and stuck upside down to be transformed into a controversial art piece. In *May 13, 1969*, the distorted and fragmented Malaysian flag is painted on with cheap acrylics, and one can make out the dry woodgrain of the coffin underneath the thin layers of white. The material of the sculpture does not disguise itself. It does not seek mimesis in the portrayal of something external to itself. Clement Greenberg writes in his essay on Modernist painting that “Realistic, naturalistic art had dissembled the medium, using art to conceal art; Modernism used art to call attention to art.”²⁶

²⁵ “Marcel Duchamp,” accessed November 20, 2016, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/duchamp-fountain-to7573>.

²⁶ Clement Greenberg, *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian, vol. 4 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 86.

May 13, 1969’s formal properties visibly fit this description of Modernism, and thus the sculpture is a suitable candidate for demonstrating Southeast Asian efforts in Modern ways of art-making.

The National Gallery Singapore seeks to preserve and document *May 13, 1969* as a significant step towards Modern sculptural installations in the region. The work’s reference to the 1969 Malaysian racial riots is only secondary, and is overshadowed by the sculpture’s formal contributions to the present-day discourse on locating contemporary artwork in Southeast Asia. The National Gallery Singapore is a large commercial venture that describes itself as the overseer of the “largest public collection of Modern art in Singapore and in Southeast Asia.”²⁷ It is positioned at the forefront of art institutions in Singapore, and seeks to centre Singapore as an “international hub”²⁸ for the visual arts. The museum’s ambitious institutional mission would inevitably colour its treatment of individual art pieces. The inclusion of Modern-looking pieces in the museum’s collection demonstrates that Southeast Asia is participating in current and international discourse on art, and that it is not merely preoccupied with “low”, “traditional” forms of visual culture.

Redza Piyadasa and the Southeast Asian Modern

James Elkins determines in “Why Is It Not Possible to Write Art Histories of Non-Western Cultures?” that crafting a Southeast Asian art canon is impossible without resulting in “Western narratives that serve Western purposes and are

²⁷ “About the Gallery,” accessed November 20, 2016, <http://nationalgallery.sg/about/about-the-gallery/>.

²⁸ Ibid.

supported by Western ideas.”²⁹ It is indeed difficult to shine a spotlight on an important Malaysian sculpture without hailing Greenbergian ideas of Modernism and other Western academic art terms. According to James Elkins, periodisations and other principles of organisation in art history are irrevocably Western.³⁰

Redza Piyadasa analysed Southeast Asian artwork and sought to create a space for these works in academic discourse, but he too did so by, inevitably, using established Western art terms. In Redza Piyadasa’s definition of the Nanyang Style, a unique, Southeast Asian style of painting emerged from a combination of Chinese landscape painting and Post-Impressionist techniques.³¹ In Piyadasa’s writing on Southeast Asian “decorative impulses”, he describes how Western high art had established a tyranny over the art world and had dismissed the importance of Eastern “crafts”.³² He writes that the latter has however seen a revival following postmodern resistance to the myth of the “genius artist”, and then goes on to describe the unique formal quality of artisanal crafts in Balinese painting and Malay jewelry.³³ In both instances, though he

²⁹ James Elkins, “Why Is It Not Possible to Write Art Histories of Non-Western Cultures?” in *The Past in the Present: Contemporary Art and Art History’s Myths* (Bratislava: Nadacia Centrum Sucasneho Umenia, 2002), 243.

³⁰ Elkins, “Why Is It Not Possible to Write Art Histories of Non-Western Cultures?,” 244.

³¹ “The Nanyang Style,” accessed November 20, 2016, http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1626_2009-12-31.html.

³² Redza Piyadasa, “S-E Asia’s decorative impulses.”

³³ *Ibid.*

has articulated the importance of Eastern styles, he has not created a new vocabulary for non-Western discussion.

This is not to suggest that the creation of a non-Western art canon is inherently impossible (as Elkins would have believed), or that any use of Western art terms is reprehensible. What this suggests, however, is that Redza Piyadasa’s name as an artist is particularly susceptible to being overshadowed by Western comparisons. Like in his writing, his sculpture takes on a subject that is close to home in Malaysia, but it takes on a defiant form that is recognised as Western. This causes the work’s meaning to teeter between the East and the West, internal political strife and the external art world, and finally, the work’s curation in the *Manifestasi Dua Seni* and in the UOB Southeast Asia Gallery tips it over in either direction.

Conclusion

The crafting of a Southeast Asian art canon involves addressing inevitable Western influences in the region. Artworks are cultural products that contain traces of a region’s history. Southeast Asia, with its colonial past, will not be able to create or discuss works that are absolutely free of Western establishments. Artistic agents in the region, such as the National Gallery Singapore or Redza Piyadasa himself, struggle to strike a balance between acknowledging the West and moving on to build an autonomous Southeast Asian future. This struggle is ever-present and inherent in the production and presentation of any object that claims an identity as Southeast Asian art. The curation of non-Western art is already a challenge, and the National Gallery Singapore’s categorisation of artwork according to Western terms of “modern” form certainly does not help the case.

May 13, 1969's presentation at two different exhibitions (Manifestasi Dua Seni and the permanent exhibition in the UOB Southeast Asia Gallery) shows how the structuring of the museum environment interacts with a work's form and content to deliver significantly different experiences. One creates a reflective space for locals to discuss a rift in the social fabric of Malaysia, and the other emphasises that Southeast Asian art has participated in Modern art. If the National Gallery Singapore lays claim as the authority of regional art, it has to abandon its project of proving itself on Western terms of modernity, and set its eyes on Southeast Asia.

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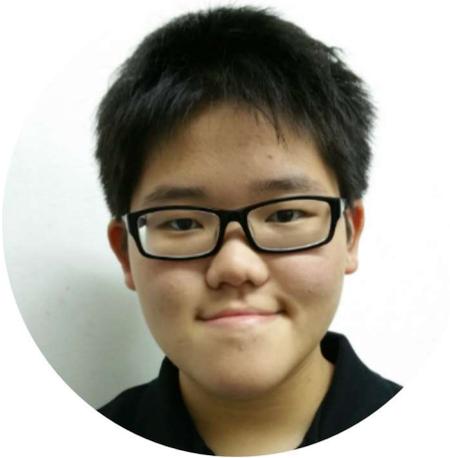
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