Transactions – define, fungible, zero-sum.

Agency - authorhship

Schisms / Schizophrenic “fissures” (Chong) (not thorns)

Yet throughout, ….. (Lim trio)

Personal Opinion (acronyms)

* Myths
  + Confucianism (contested by Terence and Linda, hinted by Catherine)
    - Terence: Confucianism as cultural basis
    - Catherine: so straitjacketed as to be ethical / morally upright
      * “The familiar PAP stance is: better to be unpopular and do a good job than to be popular and lead the country into chaos and ruin.”
      * Uses moral ground to justify
        + Equation of “Economic Prosperity and Party Continuity” (Cat)
        + “much of our pre-nation-state identity was erased - most notably through language policy - to forge a 'new' national identity that would not conflict with survival and prosperity in a globalised world “ (Linda)
        + “twining of national survival and economic growth”
    - Linda: abandoned Confucianism, leading to below
  + Moneytheism / Atomism (cannot be a common imagination)
    - Cat: Even paternalism implies family! Big Brother -> Big Boss.
      * Doing this in *your* best interests -> your = atomistic individual. Also in PAP’s best interests.
    - Linda:
    - Shirley:
* Explicit transactions
  + Cat: Subtly hints at government propaganda – double bookkeeping on the side of the Government as well (cynical)
  + Shirley: Exhortations to maximize potential and learn English -> no sentiment / imagination
  + Shirley: contradictions in LKY -> transactions are transient -> not sustained
  + Shirley: Possibly overplays curriculum -> people didn’t care about humanities at all. Purely transactional. “surprising paucity of literary achievement”? why the surprise?
    - “Many Singaporeans see 'no use' in learning or thinking about our own past or present” -> no sentiment (Linda)
  + NS
  + “worth of citizenship” (Chong)
  + But no choice -> Hobson’s Choice
    - Ideology of survival / Confucianism / Moneytheism
* Authenticity

Political

* Agency (Shirley unpacked)
  + Linda: “It is when I stick around when a place cannot guarantee me a good life, or I am concerned with the welfare of others in that place, and try to improve things even at a risk to my own good life (say, I join the political opposition), that I can say I am of the nation, and not just the place.
  + Cat, Terence: Didn’t happen
  + Cat: “subterranean hostility”
  + Terence: no true cosmopolitan liberalism
  + Shirley: “Singaporean schools must move to Singaporean stories”
  + Not just fiction
  + Shirley: Sg identity already present, hidden -> at risk of extinction
  + Unpack -> kept under wraps by authorship of Sg gov
    - Is the identity itself present, or just its potential?
  + Linda: economic agency -> local entrepreneurship -> centres of power
  + “Counter[ing] government expressions of nationhood and identity” (Chong)
    - Only avenue left
    - Singlish
  + Humanities, art, education
  + “like arts and culture, sports was not deemed valuable for sports’ sake but for its supposed character-building exercises
  + Crisis mentality, “ideology of survival” -> Hobson’s choice
  + Garrison mentality -> ‘staging of crises’ -> Speak Mandarin, race, economic
  + People will forget that they even had a choice
  + Even the government was forced to change course in adopting “bigger Singapore”
  + Dilemmas -> allow for explosion of agency, grassroots, visceral
* Democracy
  + People’s Action Party
  + “by the people, for the people, of the people”
    - Doesn’t satisfy the latter. PAP is alienated. Parachutes in elites / converts people to elites. Not a cadre-based, grassroots party anymore.

Community (schisms)

The moment we conceptualize Singaporean society as different planes, we cannot create a complete nation.

* Local / global
* Shirley: Search for universality -> search for constancy in a fluid nation
  + Abandonment of local
* Shirley: no local emphasis; literature; art; songs;
* Linda: STEM (global) over humanities (local)
  + “Singapore the place and global city would overweight technical training of commercial value in subordinate parts of global value chains, and underweight the study of Singapore history, languages and literature which, like its security and economic future, are inextricably linked with those of its South-east Asian neighbours”.
  + “I believe that national identity must have an irrational and not just an economically rational component, coming from emotional ties rather than pragmatic self-interest.”
* Bigger Singapore (perils)
  + Different imaginations for different ethnicities (atomisation)
  + Global city – Linda Lim contests
* Cosmopolitan / Heartlander
  + “good life” 🡪 enjoyed only by cosmopolitans
  + Catherine: cosmopolitans are dissenters yet not Sg
  + Shirley: discourse is irrelevant; they don’t bother to dissent
  + Linda: Draws parallels about the power imbalance
    - * “A 'global city' also requires leadership by a cosmopolitan elite able to navigate the complexities of a global economy, further legitimating continued political control by the members of such an elite. We may even end up with a situation where Singaporean 'heartlanders', emotionally committed to their birthplace and relatively immobile in the global job market, are ruled by potentially footloose 'foreign talent', while members of the Singapore-born elite, raised to be 'global', depart for foreign shores”.
  + Heartlanders & cosmopolitans -> each incomplete, in different ways. Provides this myth of “our social values” to cast the heartlanders as more emotional / cultural. Together they complete the Singaporean whole.
    - This distinction of localness & cosmopolitan are crippled / restricted
      * No true cosmopolitan liberalism
      * No Singlish / dialects
* Economic / Emotive
  + No synergy even on the economic plane (Catherine Lim) -> economy run as a place, not as a nation
  + “it is only the disentanglement of place from nation that makes the casino enterprise justifiable“
* Generational schism -> young & old
* What the state does is absent of authenticity
  + - * Simulacra (Shirley Lim)
      * National Flag (Catherine Lim)
      * “regimes of authenticity” (Terence Chong), shifting sands of gloobalisation
      * Linda: “National identity has been reshaped to serve economic and political goals” -> not authentic

Is “fluid nation” an oxymoron? Lim trio disagree with Chong about fluid “nation.” However, Shirley points out the latent undercurrent of a nation already exists, although she provides a more cynical view later. Catherine and Linda would disagree. All agree that stability (and instability) comes with PAP.

“Regimes of authenticity” that inscribe a nation with timeless values which make the nation eternal and timeless. But the Lim trio would disagree here too – nations are constantly evolving along with the external environment.

Personal opinion

**Dilemmas**

* foreign workers
  + can unite Singapore. Not a myth -> tangible threat to nationhood (Chong).
  + Foreign workers -> cannot assimilate if Singaporeans don’t have a strong sense of identity (what do they assimilate into?)
  + “foreign talent”; “CECA”, “all schools are good schools”, “heightened alert”
* Inequality
  + Perhaps “loyalty” is a continuing desire too -> the desire to belong.
    - Directed toward “good life” -> but what happens when someone else has a “better” life? Lim only posits that this loyalty dissipates when Singapore becomes absolutely poorer (“when the good life diminishes”). Income inequality.
* COVID was transactional
  + - Lockdown -> circuit breaker, heightened alert
    - Restrictions -> percentages conditioned on behavior -> self interest

**------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**

**To Add**

* Ideology of survival (crisis mindset)
* Implicit obfuscation
  + Nation = State = Party
    - Cat: cannot love nation without also loving PAP
      * “Government has become synonymous with the country. Indeed, Singapore is often seen as the creation of the PAP, made to its image and likeness. Hence, dislike of the PAP, even though it does not translate into dislike of Singapore, effectively blocks out any spontaneous outpouring of patriotic emotion.”
        + Multiple voices don’t exist

**Catherine Lim**

* Is it really Westernization that has enabled a new generation to aspire for the qualitative?
  + or a different version of the same search that the PAP is now beginning to address?
  + Didn’t the past generations also savour the qualitiative? (dialect groups, Chinese)
  + Isn’t the present also burdened with quantifiable inequality? (Chong)
* “unbottled resentment” at government rallies -> not translated into votes at the ballot box

**Shirley Lim**

* Modernity has reached; but post-modernism has not

**Terence Chong**

* Remembering-through-forgetting
  + “only a state-sponsored construction of nation and national identity, purged of inconvenient narratives, stood the best chance of producing a harmonious society”