

Introduction

Global Asia, a Wayward Postcolonialism

In 2007, a *Smithsonian Magazine* article declared, “Singapore Swing: Peaceful and Prosperous, Southeast Asia’s Famously Uptight Nation Has Let Its Hair Down.” Remarking on his return trip to Singapore, David Lamb, former Southeast Asia bureau chief of the *Los Angeles Times*, marveled, “This tiny nation—whose ascendancy from malaria-infested colonial backwater to gleaming global hub of trade, finance and transportation is one of Asia’s great success stories—is reinventing itself, this time as a party town and regional center for culture and the arts.”¹ Implicit in Lamb’s fawning language is recognition of Singapore’s wealth: in 2021, Singapore boasted a gross domestic product (GDP) higher than that of 80 percent of the world’s nations, a feat the former British colony accomplished within roughly fifty years of independence.² After its ejection from the Federation of Malaysia, Singapore gained independence in 1965 and became one of the wealthiest countries in Southeast Asia under the leadership of former prime minister Lee Kuan Yew and the People’s Action Party (PAP), the governing party that still manages Singapore today. Even more impressively, Singapore in “the early 1990s . . . reached rough parity, in terms of per capita Gross Domestic Product, with the United Kingdom, its former colonial power.”³ Though many may not know these exact details of Singapore’s economic ascendancy, most are by now familiar with its “Third World to First World” arc.⁴ It is at this point well worn, almost a cliché.

Although other Asian nations, such as India, South Korea, and China, similarly position themselves as vibrant sites of capitalist flourishing, Singapore stands out for its constant citation as an economic model for political leaders to reproduce elsewhere. “Africa’s Singapore Dream,” announced one recent *Foreign Policy* headline in an article detailing Rwandan president Paul Kagame’s admiration for Singapore’s first prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew.⁵ In contrast to Rwanda, where Singapore is held up as an aspiration, Singapore is used as evidence for Jamaica’s

economic failures. “When you consider that in 1967, Jamaica and Singapore had about the same per capita GDP,” Jamaican Parliament member, Dr. Peter Philips, declared, “and that today, Singapore is in the order of 10–12 times higher than ours, it is an indictment, collective indictment on Jamaica and its political leadership on all sides over the four decades.”⁶ Ironically, the former British colony has become so compelling that “Singapore-upon-Thames” was floated as a possible post-Brexit model by a British member of Parliament.⁷ In an even more unlikely wielding of the nation-state as exemplar, in 2019, Jared Kushner of the Trump administration cited Singapore in his “Peace to Prosperity” plan as the economic model for Palestine to follow.⁸ The geographic and geopolitical diversity of these brief examples demonstrates the strength of Singapore’s appeal, rooted in the implausibility of its rags-to-riches narrative. More importantly, it demonstrates how crucial Singapore is to global fantasies of economic success and effective governance.

But more than just another instance of praise for Singapore’s economic story, the *Smithsonian* feature article marks a different transformation: the nation is now regarded as a globally significant bearer of *cultural* capital. Considering that Singapore’s reinvention of itself as a site of art and pleasure comes in the shadows of the 1997 Asian financial crisis, a time of economic pain and uncertainty, Singapore’s flourishing may seem the stuff of melodrama. The magnitude of Singapore’s cultural transformation, as Lamb writes, is even starker when considering what Singapore used to be:

This, after all, was Singapore, long ridiculed as a prissy, soulless place, with no DNA for fun, culture or the arts. Singapore? Isn’t that where chewing gum is illegal and *Cosmopolitan* magazine is banned as too racy? Where bars closed before anyone starts having a good time, and everyone is so obsessed with work that the government launched a smile campaign to get people to lighten up?⁹

Lamb’s assumptions about Singapore repeat the science fiction writer William Gibson’s perceptions of Singaporean governance as technocratic and overly focused on economic profit. Infamously dubbing the country “Disneyland with the Death Penalty,” Gibson lampooned the island nation’s “white-shirted constraint,” “absolute humorlessness,” and “conformity” in a 1993 essay for *Wired* (proving Gibson’s point, the magazine would go on to be banned in Singapore).¹⁰ For many years, the speed and thus exceptionality of Singapore’s trajectory as a so-called Asian Miracle nation was attributed to the authoritarian state’s punitive and repressive governance.¹¹ The no-spitting and no-littering laws, drug offenses punishable by death, restrictions on free speech and assembly, and vandalism offenses punishable by caning (as made famous by the American Michael Fay) came to signal a strong state government that bordered on a dictatorship.¹² Such representations depict Singapore as overly engineered, mechanical, and profiting off of its robotic, compliant citizenry—its economic success more of a point of denigration than



FIGURE 1. A typical sign at a subway station in Singapore, "Singapore MRT Fines." Photo by Steve Bennett, Wikipedia.EN [cropped]. Free to use under a CC BY-SA 3.0 license, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>.

celebration.¹³ But as Lamb notes, “Suddenly people are describing the city with a word that, until recently, wasn’t even in the local vocabulary: trendy.”¹⁴ Not only does Singapore appear at the top of various ranking lists for “Ease of Doing Business” and “economic freedom,”¹⁵ it also now appears on US cable television and social media as a desired travel destination with abundant shopping, exotic food, architectural wonders, and cultural diversity. In other words, Singapore is lauded for its economic capital *and* regarded as a site with cultural capital. From HBO to Bollywood, Singapore alternately serves as a futuristic cityscape and romantic destination getaway. Its cultural appeal has been further confirmed by the movement of the global elite into the city-state: billionaires such as the Facebook cofounder Eduardo Saverin, for example, have settled in Singapore.¹⁶ As indicated by its recent role in the global cultural imaginary, Singapore is gaining a new kind of power to accompany its authoritarian governance and accumulated wealth.

SINGAPORE AS “GLOBAL ASIA”

Collectively, the various admiring depictions of Singapore index its transformed reputation as “Global Asia,” the perception of Singapore as an alluring Asian setting for capitalist flourishing. Such a setting, in this instance, is hospitable to finance, corporations, and the global elite while also productive of a diasporic, cosmopolitan workforce for the global economy. The labels “Global Asia” and “Global Asias” may be more familiar to readers of this book as interdisciplinary academic subfields, with the former seeking to free knowledge production about Asia from the limitations of the East/West binaries that reproduce parochial notions of Asia and the latter aimed at the intersecting subdisciplines of Asian, Asian diasporic, and Asian American studies.¹⁷ My usage here is a historical gesture toward the name of the broad strategy adopted by Singapore’s Economic Development Board (EDB) in 2010. The EDB formally named “Global-Asia” as their strategy to establish Singapore as a “home” for multinational corporations and their activities.¹⁸ The naming of this strategy was somewhat belated, considering that many economic programs were already being implemented during the preceding decade with the goal of reinventing Singapore to accrue global capital. But as with other post-colonial Asian contexts (e.g., Malaysia, Hong Kong, the Philippines), the 1997 Asian financial crisis became an occasion to catalyze the island nation into a “knowledge economy.”¹⁹ In declaring a transition into this new economy, the then prime minister Goh Chok Tong called for a “reorient[ing of] society to meet the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, cultural and social needs of our people.”²⁰ Knowledge economies, with their emphasis on services, from “health care, education, and finance, to transportation, entertainment, and advertising[,] [are] characterized in general by the central role played by knowledge, information, communication, and affect.”²¹ But as various policy reports and recommendations from this period show, the post-1997 economic transition was not simply about training a population



FIGURE 2. The Singapore skyline, including a view of Marina Bay Sands. Photo by Hu Chen on Unsplash.

for new forms of labor. The *Renaissance City Report*, for example, proposed “establish[ing] Singapore as a global arts city . . . and a cultural centre in the globalised world. The idea is to be one of the top cities in the world to live, work and play in, where there is an environment conducive to creative and knowledge-based industries and talent.”²² More than renovating Singapore’s image, the economic transition to a knowledge economy would mean making Singapore productive of a “creative class.”²³ Achieving such an aspiration, the *Renaissance City Report* further noted, would mean a reduced role for the state: “Cultural development is a domain in which [the government] is less likely to succeed purely by its control and dominance.”²⁴ Taken together, what we see is that the knowledge economy of Global Asia would require new kinds of economic ideologies and modes of governance.

But as the *Smithsonian* article illustrates, understanding the possibility, functioning, and success of Singapore as Global Asia entails more than a study of Singapore’s state rule and social engineering. The many celebratory depictions of Singapore above, in other words, not only index Global Asia but are also constitutive of it. Global Asia is an aestheticized, transnationalized narrative that exceeds the Southeast Asian nation itself. Critically comprehending Global Asia’s allure and “soft power,” as Joseph Nye terms it, is an aesthetic matter.²⁵ As I will

further show, Singapore's soft power and increased cultural capital is made possible by Singapore's anglophonic legibility, or its cultural readability as Westernized.²⁶ English is crucial for understanding the globalized dynamics of power in the Singaporean context, and, indeed, this is the key mode through which Singapore differentiates itself from other Global Asia sites; Shanghai, for example, could be understood more as a sinophonic Global Asia. In Singapore, English is the language of governance, the most prevalent literary language, and a language fraught with class privilege because of its uneven distribution among Singapore's multiracial constituents. It is also, of course, a language with colonial baggage and a language that continues to bring legibility to the island-nation. Through English, imperialisms, both past and current, play out. It is thus a linguistic medium that presents multiple scales of power, mirroring how the state and Singaporeans navigate global, national, and historical terrains.²⁷

To study the aestheticized significance of Singapore as Global Asia, this book examines the anglophone forms and genres that materialized concomitantly with Singapore's post-1997 transformation: demographic compilations, coming-of-career narratives, and the princess fantasy. Each chapter defines the formal characteristics of these contemporary genres in order to give readers a sense of my objects of study rather than to stake a claim to their originality. More at stake in my analysis is *why* they make an appearance after 1997 and how the materials offer insights into new narrative logics, aesthetics, and the political unconscious that underpins Global Asia and Singapore's transition to a knowledge economy.²⁸ I identify these emergent genres as they appear in a diverse range of materials, including government policy documents, political ephemera, state newspapers, literary magazines, tourism industry promotional materials, short stories, film, and novels. While Singapore has long been a special locus of capital accumulation as the result of its history as a global port city, these materials elucidate the ideological shifts that have accompanied Singapore's reputation as Global Asia. Yet, as I discuss later, such newness does not mean Singapore as Global Asia is without history. Rather, Global Asia is a cultural and political veneer requiring deeper historicization and cultural analysis.

THEORIZING POSTCOLONIAL CAPITALISM

Many of the literary works this book studies emphasize Singapore's anglophonic legibility as a problem of interpretation; they also critique understandings that oversimplify Singapore's readability as evidence of US or British hegemony. Take, for example, Jeremy Tiang's depiction of a Swiss McDonald's as an emotional refuge for his protagonist, who is in distress about her marriage, in the short story "Sophia's Honeymoon." One interpretation might assume that Tiang is critiquing Overseas Singaporeans like Sophia, who find meaning and comfort in the factory-produced food from a Western corporate franchise like McDonald's.

Sophia, in other words, evidences the deleterious, culturally homogenizing effects of Westernization. And yet, in Singapore, McDonald's can also serve as a nostalgic cultural setting. For many, the fast-food restaurant's air-conditioning offered a place to comfortably study with friends for national exams. In this frame, a different kind of interpretation emerges, one that might otherwise get lost when assuming that McDonald's only signifies Western capitalism: McDonald's is a childhood site of friendship, a site of learning, and a respite from the experience of scholastic stress shared by many Singaporeans. Certainly, that McDonald's means something different across local contexts is not necessarily a unique insight in itself. But Tiang and the many other Singaporean writers under study in this book invite us to consider the limitations of Eurocentric interpretations of global signifiers. Undoubtedly, signifiers of Global Asia in Singapore—whether they are corporate franchises or the English language—*can* be attributed to the West. Singapore might appear *as if* it is Western, the texts tell us, but that is not the whole story, for that attribution to the West can operate as a cover for the real maneuvers of power.

At the same time, the state curation of Singapore as Global Asia means that the island nation Singapore presents itself as quintessentially “Asian.” The cultural representation of Singapore's multiracial, multilingual, and multireligious constituents—Chinese, Malay, Indian, Eurasian, and Peranakan—is at once touted as a point of multicultural distinction from other Asian countries, evidence of Singapore's racial difference from the West, and as pan-Asian exotic cultural appeal to the West. Eng-Beng Lim cogently writes, “It is precisely because Asia and Asian do not exist in any stable terms that Singapore needs and wants to be a part of it and identified as such.”²⁹ In this spirit, many of the writers in this book subtly and humorously play with the codes of Asian legibility, critique the state's Asian essentialism (particularly as it manifested during the Asian Values era), and call attention to the ways *readers* desire and maintain Asia and Asians as coherent. In this way, we see how the critiques of Singapore as Global Asia—whether through global signifiers or essentialized notions of Asia—rest not simply on the fact of its construction, but on how its very representation is interpreted.

Academic critics must contend with such problems of interpretation: the machinations of Global Asia compound the existing difficulties of reading Singapore, obstacles shaped by the limitations of critical paradigms offered by neoliberalism, postcolonialism, and empire to apprehend the unprecedented nature of Singapore's economic trajectory. While analyses of Singapore and other Asian Tiger sites commonly apply the descriptor “neoliberal” to Singapore, doing so can reproduce what Naoki Sakai describes as an emanation model,³⁰ whereby capitalist formations originating in Euro-America in the late 1970s spread to the non-Western world. Such is the charge that Aihwa Ong makes of David Harvey, who she argues presents neoliberalism's instantiations in East and Southeast Asian contexts as exceptional and against the norm.³¹ Understanding Singapore as an exceptional

economic success (as the state would like it) can carry troubling implications, for it suggests that Singapore is untheorizable or outside the trajectory of history.

Notably, in work preceding the critique she makes of Harvey, Ong rejects the postcolonial explanatory frameworks for Singapore's economic trajectory, arguing that Singapore and other Asian Tigers "would not consider their own engagements with global capitalism or metropolitan powers as postcolonial but seek rather to emphasize and claim emergent power, equality, and mutual respect on the global stage."³² For Ong, "postcolonial" problematically marks "an analysis based on colonial nostalgia or colonial legacies,"³³ which is an inadequate framework for capturing the dynamics of countries like Singapore and for studying "how economic and ideological modes of domination have been transformed in excolonial countries."³⁴ Ong's rejection of postcolonial frameworks resonates with general perceptions of Singapore. Indeed, when I have taught any of the Singaporean literary texts discussed in this book in courses on postcolonial literature, undergraduate students expect the literature to depict "a rationalization of and pragmatic adjustment to, if not quite a celebration of, the downturn in the fortunes and influence of insurgent national liberation movements and revolutionary socialist ideologies [of] the early 1970s."³⁵ Encountering images of Singapore's gleaming, modern skyline and wealth, my students wonder: How can this be postcolonial?

Not only does Singapore present theoretical and conceptual difficulties for understandings of neoliberalism and postcolonialism; it is also an unlikely site of consideration in Americanist fields that engage with Asian nations and postcoloniality, most notably, Asian American studies and US empire studies. Though Singapore was aligned with the United States during the Cold War, it has not experienced the brutal violence of US empire through war or militarization like other East and Southeast Asian nations like Japan or Vietnam. Neither has Singapore produced a particularly large immigrant population in the United States. And while Singapore is economically successful, it does not pose a threat to the United States in the way that China does.³⁶ Yet US empire is the context from which Singapore's independence, economic policies, and ensuing trajectory has formed. Singapore, in other words, is a post-British/Japanese imperial formation *and* a nation continually re-forming in the milieu of US empire. As Jini Kim Watson writes, the decolonization struggles in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Korea are formations "*simultaneously* postcolonial and the result of bipolar complications [of the Cold War]."³⁷ As Wen-Qing Ngoei further shows, Singapore played a significant but underexamined role in American attempts to contain communism in the region.³⁸ Moreover, when considering how Singapore is a regional power,³⁹ as Viet Thanh Nguyen and Janet Alison Hoskins write, one whose desirability, I would add, works in tandem with the perceived threat of China to produce a sense of "Rising Asia" or the "Asian Century," it emerges as a necessary site for comprehending the broader cultural and political dynamics of the transpacific, of which the United States is a part.

Singapore's economic and political trajectory thus challenges the normative assumptions and typical methodologies of the very fields usually engaged to understand Singapore as Global Asia. Even as Ong advocates for a pluralized understanding of neoliberalism to counter its Eurocentric discourse, she rejects postcolonialism as the appropriate critical approach for comprehending a site like Singapore. To be fair, the field of postcolonial studies itself rarely engages Singapore (and other Asian Tiger sites); after all, how often do the literary or political works from these sites feature in introductory courses to or readers on postcolonial literary and theory?⁴⁰ Nonetheless, as the archive I examine continually returns us to themes of nationalism, nation formation, cultural difference, and developmental lag, I show throughout this book that Global Asia *is* postcolonial, though not the kind that is occupied with established questions of political or cultural resistance, subalternity, or cultural hybridity.

Rather than affirm Singapore as an exemplar of Westernized neoliberalism or as an economic exception, I argue Singapore serves as but the latest instantiation of *postcolonial capitalism*. This is the term I use to describe how capitalist cultures are motivated, rationalized, and strategized through a consciousness of colonial subordination and racial capitalism, both past and present. Whereas Ong suggests that "the postcolonial" is antithetical to or irrelevant in a state's drive to global capitalism, I analyze the strategic ways in which states leverage their postcolonial status to "claim power, equality, and mutual respect."⁴¹ In the case of Singapore, Global Asia builds on earlier phases of postcolonial capitalism, namely, state developmentalism (1965–85) and Asian Values (1985–2000), which I discuss in more depth in chapter 1. One might describe Global Asia as the economic phase of neoliberalism in Singapore—and to be sure, neoliberalism is conceptually interrelated with knowledge economies—but doing so would periodize it with respect to Euro-American developments. Postcolonial capitalism offers Global Asia a different kind of historical gloss than neoliberalism by situating it within the trajectory of decolonizing nationalisms following the post-1945 restructuring of the world into a three-world order.

My thinking about the culture of postcolonial capitalism finds its way between theorists who emphasize the multiplicity of capitalism (e.g., Sandro Mezzadra, Kalyan Sanyal) and those who call for a stronger grappling with the history of race and colonialism (e.g., Couze Venn, Cedric J. Robinson).⁴² While both schools of thought share a critical perspective of Eurocentrism, they diverge in their handling of how to read colonialism in the present: Does it figure as the empire in new clothes, or does it figure as the violence whose legacies have not yet been fully grappled with? To my mind, it is not an either/or proposition: the thesis of multiplicity is not eroded by the fact of colonialism so long as we acknowledge that colonialism is one among many influences at work. While the expressions and techniques of postcolonial capitalism are context dependent and change over time, a consciousness of colonialism helps represent capitalism as a politicized, moralized,

and curative response to historical injustices, even as capitalism reproduces the very economic systems that facilitate the spread of extractive, colonial violence. “Helps” is the key word here because it situates the question of colonialism as not one where we are evaluating the significance or totality of its power. Rather, we are looking to the ways that postcolonial cultural and political formations are interpreting and retooling colonial history for its *own* expressions of power.

The emergent genres I study are not only crucial for tracking new logics of Global Asia, but for historicizing Global Asia with respect to postcolonial capitalism since genres are themselves a “process of textual change.”⁴³ To track the continuity across different iterations of capitalism in Singapore, my readings of Global Asia texts take a historical and formal approach to the representations of the nation. I trace the structural pattern between the nation as a consolidating and identity-making form for Singapore’s export-oriented, industrial manufacturing economy to a branding technique that sells Singapore as distinct for its knowledge economy. Tracking such shifts of the nation enables my palimpsestic analysis of “the postcolonial” as a shorter, heterogeneous historical period of distinct economic ideologies. Because of its importance as a political form for independence from empire, the nation and nationalism have long been central concepts in postcolonial studies for comprehending governance, solidarity, kinship, and culture. While many critical works discuss the significance—and insignificance—of the nation in a globalized world, it is not my intention to enter those discussions. Rather, I see the nation as the form through which postcolonial capitalism in Singapore makes itself historically legible and nationalism as the ideology through which postcolonial capitalism expresses and normalizes itself. The nation thus forms the basis of my reading methodology. Approaching the nation as a mutable form that performs different kinds of capitalist functions is what makes it possible for me to bring together, as I do in the next section, two very different kinds of nationalist texts—one more conventionally nationalist and the other less so—to track the ways the trauma of colonial occupation can be mobilized toward postcolonial capitalist ends. In other words, my point here is not to be either for or against the nation or to make claims about its strength or weakness. Rather, I recognize the nation as a variable form that changes over time according to the imperatives of postcolonial capitalism, in much the same way that Marxist formalists view literary genre as a register of political and historical change. In this way, genre operates throughout this book as a selection principle for the archive I study, an organizing principle for the chapters that unfold, and a critical orientation through which I read my archive.

At the core of postcolonial capitalism is the seeming tension between the terms of the appellation. Because many former colonies are now major players in the global economy, “postcolonial” cannot be assumed to imply an “anticapitalist” stance, as Aimé Césaire once intimated.⁴⁴ In Singapore, postcoloniality is regarded as an obstacle to national aspirations, whose Third World/class connotations must

be overcome for the nation to succeed rather than a state of political and economic freedom. Such rags-to-riches narrative structures in “Asian Century,” “Rising Asia,” and “New India” discourses similarly frame postcoloniality as a condition to get over. Globally, postcoloniality is becoming the basis for forming economic blocs like BRICS, which only further amplify some of the most oppressive and exploitative effects of unregulated capitalism.⁴⁵ Consequently, postcolonial capitalism is what I call a “wayward postcolonialism,” or a postcolonialism that has come unmoored from the traditional political, economic, and cultural significations of its original and still-dominant usages, reminding us of the need to more precisely disaggregate concepts of the “postcolonial,” “anticolonial,” and “decolonial.”⁴⁶

This centering of “the postcolonial” rather than “the colonial” as the active agent of capitalism and thus a locus of power is the key theoretical provocation of the term “postcolonial capitalism.” But I do not celebrate the exertion of reclaimed power inherent in postcolonial capitalism, since it wields Singapore as an economic wedge against the Global South. Nevertheless, treating the postcolonial as the agent of postcolonial capitalism moves us beyond a theoretical impasse noted by many scholars. When Ong argues that “we must move beyond an analysis based on colonial nostalgia or colonial legacies,”⁴⁷ she is registering a certain frustration with imperial-centrism. And indeed, “placing colonialism/imperialism securely in the past [or] suggesting a continuous line from that past to our present,” Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak warns, “sometimes serve[s] the production of neocolonial knowledge.”⁴⁸ Those economic transformations to which Ong refers cannot be adequately explained by theories of colonial mimicry, which might posit that these states are unwittingly parroting colonial powers in their drive to capitalism, nor is it simply the result of a draconian state and a conservative or deluded populace. In fact, in an apparent sign of protest against Global Asia, in 2011, the PAP, the party responsible for the policies advancing this economic image, lost the largest number of parliamentary seats since it took power in 1965. Certainly, as I argue, imperial legacies persist in Global Asia, but empire is no longer the center of this story of power.

Singapore as Global Asia insists that it is *not that kind* of postcolonial, with vague strawman references to bedraggled Third World countries ubiquitous in local political rhetoric. In a 2002 National Day Rally speech, for example, Goh rationalized the need to bring in “foreign talent” to build Singapore up as Global Asia: “But if we now shut our doors to talent, we will soon become like any other Third World city of 3 million people. Then we will find life quite different. We will become a small fish—a guppy—in a small pond.”⁴⁹ Here we see the characteristic flattening of postcoloniality as a condition of underdevelopment in service of the promotion of postcolonial capitalism and as a slight to the Global South. Official state histories attribute the beginning of Singapore’s history to its “founding” by Sir Stamford Raffles as a British trading post in 1819, a historical narrative roundly criticized by Singaporean writers, academics, and political commentators and yet

one that continues to be upheld, as demonstrated by the state-sponsored bicentennial celebration of Raffles in 2019. Faris Joraimi, Siew Sai Min, and Alfian Sa'at, moreover, point out how Singapore's postcolonial independence is "regarded as a dangerous predicament" and how Singapore is "constantly spooked . . . by multiple threats of failed nationhood—of which colonialism is not one."⁵⁰ Such an observation resonates with C. J. W.-L. Wee's remarks: "[For Singapore,] the *imperial past* is not necessarily a debasing one, for it laid the foundation for present sociopolitical developments. . . . Singapore is probably distinct among postcolonial societies in its *valorization* of the imperial."⁵¹ Besides having the effect of making Singapore appear forgiving of colonialism, such historical narratives attempt to obscure both the actual role that the anticolonial platform played for the PAP in the 1950s and 1960s and the exact ways in which postcolonial governance shapes capitalism. By valorizing the imperial, the Singapore state implies that it is simply following a tutelage model and, consequently, abdicates its influence. Of course, there is hardly anyone with illusions about the state's role in constructing Singapore into a haven for capitalism. That the state is representing Singapore as the paragon of *colonial* capitalism should invite us to consider why it so readily deploys the narrative of colonial complicity.

Besides performing its continuity with colonialism, Singapore's use of "the global" often acts as another way of erasing postcoloniality. Take, for example, the state's presentation of diasporic Singaporeans as the protagonists of Global Asia. The emergence of a cosmopolitan, diasporic workforce seemingly aligns Singapore more with the ideological priorities of a deregulated, globalized free market economy and has the further effect of dissociating Singapore from traditional markers of postcoloniality that insist on a nationalist sense of sovereignty. And there is the rub: tracing postcolonial capitalism through representations of Global Asia is the conceptual challenge precisely because Global Asia does not intuitively register as "postcolonial." This book takes that challenge head-on in its focus on what are ostensibly genres of Global Asia—that is, post-1997 texts that easily lend themselves to neoliberal or global approaches. Certainly, that is what they are and this book elucidates how biopolitical governance, neoliberal individualism, and neo-orientalism function for Global Asia. But *Becoming Global Asia* also demonstrates how genres of Global Asia put pressure on our conceptions of "new," as these contemporary texts consistently reference earlier moments of Singapore's independence and nation formation: they must *also* be read as contemporary genres of postcolonial capitalism. Centering postcolonial capitalism counters the colonial alibi. My book therefore retheorizes postcoloniality to clarify its crucial role in the material and ideological movement of global capitalism. I argue that it is precisely the obfuscation of postcoloniality's entanglements with global capital that has enabled Singapore to be reduced to an imitative colonial state rather than a postcolonial state. Ironically, this obfuscation has been promoted both by the

Singaporean state and by its critics, each having their own reasons for tying postcoloniality to a particular time, locale, and politics.⁵²

Postcolonial capitalism understands postcoloniality as an ongoing, globally uneven condition. For its more contemporary instantiations, postcolonial capitalism thinks through the ways that Singapore's economic trajectory develops in the aftermath of British and Japanese imperialisms alongside the assertion of US empire in Southeast Asia. In pursuit of a methodology that grapples with US empire while not inadvertently recentring it, I follow the "transpacificism" developed in Nguyen and Hoskins's work. In their formulation, Nguyen and Hoskins offer the transpacific as a way of breaking free of an Asian American or American studies that insists "on the United States as the primary object of inquiry."⁵³ *Becoming Global Asia* contributes to this project of transpacificism by thinking through the more attenuated role of US empire. At times, this means reckoning with the *context* of US imperialism as it interacts with the global economy rather than examining a relation of power that is connoted by understandings of the transpacific as a contact zone. At other times, reckoning with such a context appears in brief historical details or notes, as in chapter 1, when I discuss how initial perceptions of diasporic Singaporeans as national traitors were in part shaped by the ways US immigration policies were unsettling Singapore's worker pool. Still at other moments, understanding the attenuated role of US empire simply means not assuming that all things Western should be read as a symptom of Singapore pandering to or glorifying the United States. For example, in forming language policies so that Singapore could offer the world a workforce fluent in English, the state was able to attract transnational corporations to set up headquarters in Singapore in the 1980s and 1990s—American ones among them. Obviously, English as a language has an audience beyond the United States. Still, of course, the United States is a significant and desired audience. The point is that through the English language, we can see how Singapore's governance was negotiating and constantly aware of its positionality within a US-led global configuration. Rather than directly responding to US power, it was devising ways to benefit from that world order.⁵⁴ The book demonstrates that the goal of transpacificism does not simply mean leaving the fact of US empire to Americanists.

Although *Becoming Global Asia* is routed into Asian American studies as the result of Singapore's transpacific geography, it is more directly indebted to Asian Americanist theories and methodologies that situate the significance of Asian racialization—of both people and place—within systemic frames of oppression and inequality.⁵⁵ When perceived as a nation that has successfully transcended its postcolonial condition of underdevelopment and therefore one worthy of emulation, Singapore, in its prescribed role as a model nation, is vital in symbolically reinforcing global inequality and rationalizing postcolonial capitalism on a global scale. Distinguishing Singapore as "model" nation operates as an economic wedge

between the Global North and the Global South, much in the way that model minority Asian Americans serve as a racial wedge and anti-Black buffer in the United States. This wedge function obscures the subaltern forms of migrant labor that build the cityscape and maintain homes to keep Singapore functional at all. When Jared Kushner cited Singapore as an economic model for the Peace to Prosperity plan, he minimized—if he did not completely erase—the role that Israeli occupation plays in Palestine’s ability to “meet the daunting challenges” of determining a “better future,” thereby positioning Palestine as incompetent (and we know that is exactly the point).⁵⁶ Like Kushner, Lamb’s unctuous admiration for Singapore appears to be based in part in his disdain for other postcolonial nations: “At independence, instead of tearing down the overt symbols of colonialism in a burst of ultranationalism, Singapore accepted the reality of the past.”⁵⁷ Studying Global Asia and postcolonial capitalism is never simply what *Singapore* or its wealth is about; it is about the many scales of power that Singapore makes possible.

HISTORICIZING GLOBAL ASIA; OR, READING FOR THE CONTINUING LOGIC OF POSTCOLONIAL CAPITALISM

What does postcolonial capitalism look like in literary narratives? Let us first turn to “The Japanese Invaders,” a chapter from the famed 1998 memoir, *The Singapore Story*, by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, who shares his harrowing experience of living under Japanese occupation during World War II. The memoir itself tells the story of Singapore’s postcolonial nation formation and helps us establish a historical perspective on postcolonial capitalism. Alongside Lee’s memories of terrifying encounters with Japanese soldiers are his reflections on running a chewing gum business, construction firm, and trade company. In describing the challenges of the time, Lee muses, “But one needed capital to get richer. I was able to raise some money and quickly accumulated more. I knew that the moment I had cash, the important thing was to change it into something of more permanent value.”⁵⁸ In the same way that a CEO’s memoir might surreptitiously pass off interior dialogue as advice for its readers, the subtext of Lee’s ruminations is that his thinking under such duress—what some would describe as Lee’s “pragmatism”—is what enabled the eventual economic success of Singapore. Lee writes that the “three and a half years of Japanese occupation were the most important of my life” because of the way they provided “vivid insights into the behavior of human beings and human societies, their motivations and impulses.”⁵⁹ This suggests that occupation was a lesson in the workings of and responses to brutal power. In what may come as a surprise, Lee goes on to praise the “smart and the opportunistic” individuals who worked with the Japanese, and he singles out the Shaw brothers as “the luckiest and most prosperous of all” for the gambling farms they were licensed to run.⁶⁰ Rather than condemn these individuals for war profiteering or detailing the

difficult choices they may have faced in aligning themselves with the Japanese, Lee's language takes on a congratulatory if not wondrous tone. In this way, Lee attributes the "survival" of Japanese occupation to business acumen.⁶¹

For Lee, Japanese occupation was, moreover, the catalyst for his anticolonial thinking. As the historians Hong Lysa and Huang Jianli put it, the dominant account of Singapore's postcolonial history "begins with the harsh years of the Japanese occupation, when the people of Singapore realized that as long as they were ruled by foreigners their interests would be secondary to those of their colonial rulers."⁶² Indeed, Lee's account of Japanese occupation tells not only of the Imperial Army's brutality but also of the British Empire's fallibility; the latter proved profoundly disappointing to him. Japanese occupation destroyed the myth of "the superior status of the British . . . [as] the greatest people in the world,"⁶³ inspiring Lee to later advocate for independence from them. Japanese occupation thus represented the beginnings of Lee's decolonizing political consciousness, one that is intertwined with his valorization of the survivors who had the necessary "improvisational" abilities to thrive during this dark period of history.⁶⁴ In other words, capitalist accumulation is rationalized as fundamental to a decolonizing political consciousness and process.

Two decades later, echoes of Lee's thinking resound in an unlikely literary work that thematizes Singaporean survival under Japanese occupation: Kevin Kwan's 2017 *Rich People Problems*. In this final installment of Kwan's popular *Crazy Rich Asians* trilogy—paradigmatic texts of Global Asia and Singapore's cultural capital—the protagonist, Nicholas Young, is given the old diaries and private correspondence of his recently deceased grandmother, Su Yi. After reading a letter from King George VI, Nicholas realizes that Su Yi and her family were World War II heroes who used their wealth as a ruse to forward anticolonial causes. Their family business justified travel and allowed them to help others escape Singapore during Japanese occupation and "hide some of Singapore's most crucial anti-Japanese activists."⁶⁵ Tyersall Park, the gigantic family estate, was used as an "Underground Railroad" and "a place for secret high-level meetings and a safe house for some of the key people who were being hunted down by the Japanese."⁶⁶ Historically, Tyersall Palace, or the Istana Woodneuk, was the headquarters for British and Australian armies fighting the Japanese Imperial Army. In Kwan's trilogy, Tyersall Park is notably hidden away; Singaporeans have never heard of it, and it is impossible to view on Google Maps. Tyersall Park thus emerges as an invisible symbol of the immense accumulated capital through which anticolonial endeavors are made possible. That Tyersall Park is invisible even though it is located in the middle of the island further comments on the unconscious centrality of such logic in Singapore: to be properly post- and anticolonial requires immense capital.

While one of the novel's plotlines gives wealth an anticolonial motivation, Japanese occupation explains and justifies unfettered consumption as a symptom of colonial trauma in a different subplot, taking Lee's notion of anticolonial capitalist

survival to its logical conclusion. Charlie, the former boyfriend of the other protagonist, Astrid, notes his mother's childhood experience at a wartime concentration camp in Malaysia, musing, "I'm sure that's why my mother is the way she is now. She makes her cook save money by buying the discounted, three-day-old bread from the supermarket, but she'll spend \$30,000 on plastic surgery for her pet fish. It's completely irrational."⁶⁷ Notably, the Endau settlement Charlie refers to was famed for the success of the "Grow More Food" campaign. In order to prepare for the possibility of food shortage, the Japanese had the prisoners grow food crops. The settlement's eventual self-sufficiency earned it the name, New Syonan Model Farm.⁶⁸ The history of the Endau settlement thus reads as an allegory for Singapore itself insofar as state narratives often present the city-state's movement toward political autonomy as enforced by circumstance. While this juxtaposition of wartime-inspired frugality alongside lavish extravagance seems to illustrate some kind of contradiction, Charlie draws a causal relation between the colonial trauma of Japanese occupation and his mother's consumptive behaviors. The excessive wealth expressed by Charlie's mother's consumption—and any new oppressions or exploitations caused by it—is vindicated by trauma.

In this unlikely pairing of a revered statesman's memoir and a bestselling novel, a distinct rationality of postcolonial capitalism emerges. Wealth and business strategy signify autonomy from colonial power and are attached to a decolonial imaginary. Consumption is posed as a means of working through and overcoming colonial trauma. Taken together, these texts point to the ways that capitalism is a logical redress for colonialism. Since the Japanese occupation, the state has expanded on the kernel of this logic in varying ways. Sometimes it wields national precarity and the potential return of colonial inferiority to facilitate its economic agenda, moments that invoke what Geraldine Heng and Janadas Devan describe as state "narratives of crisis" to justify its hard rule.⁶⁹ At other times, the state exploits the colonial-era East/West binary to justify paternalistic governance. At yet other times, it uses the history of colonial dispossession to sell Singapore's "Third World to First World" narrative to emphasize its status as a model postcolonial nation. What these different state expressions of postcolonial capitalism illustrate is how Singapore's colonial experience and its postcolonial desires for autonomy and respect are instrumentalized to galvanize the nation's citizenry for the purpose of capital accumulation.

Literary narratives offer a way of tracking postcolonial capitalism's different historical manifestations. Indeed, it is our objects of study that result in the divergence between my literary/cultural theorization and Ong's ethnographic theorization of Singapore—as examples of postcolonial capitalism and "small *n*" neoliberalism, respectively. Although I primarily focus on how postcolonial history moves through to our present, literary texts like Lee's and Kwan's can also help historicize Singapore's soft power as Global Asia. Through Lee's status as the mastermind of Singapore's success and Kwan's as a bestselling, Hollywood-adapted author, we

see different kinds of cultural capital propelling Singapore's exalted status. Studying postcolonial capitalism and Global Asia together through literary and cultural materials offers insights into the cultural imaginary and historicity of capitalism, insights that can only be accessed by means of literary methodologies that study language and narrative.⁷⁰

GLOBAL ASIA PRODUCTIONS OF DIASPORA

Key for Singapore under Global Asia is the reimagined form of diaspora. Such a reimagination is partly a way of recruiting diasporic citizens into the national fold, but more significantly for this book is their role in building Singapore's cultural capital by styling the nation as global and cosmopolitan. In this way, diasporic Singaporeans—often highly professionalized, anglophone subjects—are cast as Global Asia's main protagonists. Indeed, many of the Global Asia texts under study in this book are also diasporic ones. The significance of diasporic Singaporeans for the transition into the Global Asia knowledge economy became apparent after a controversial 2002 Singapore National Day Rally speech, when former Singaporean prime minister, Goh Chok Tong, questioned the loyalty of Singaporeans living abroad:

Fair-weather Singaporeans will run away whenever the country runs into stormy weather. I call them "quitters." . . . I take issue with those fair-weather Singaporeans who, having benefited from Singapore, will pack their bags and take flight when our country runs into a little storm. . . . Look yourself in the mirror and ask, am I a "stayer" or a "quitter?" Am I a fair-weather Singaporean or an all-weather Singaporean?⁷¹

Responding to the nation's economic uncertainty after the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Goh's speech invoked typical nationalist rhetoric. In contrasting "stayers" and "quitters," he asserted that Singaporeans at home were somehow truer than their overseas compatriots, traitors who had deserted the nation in a time of need. Capturing the ever-present consciousness of Singapore's status as a relatively young and small island city-state, Goh's remarks revealed a long-standing anxiety of the Singaporean state: the loss of human capital, purported to be Singapore's primary natural resource.

Given Goh's firm admonition, it might seem shocking that the government reversed course only a few years later, launching in 2006 the Overseas Singaporean Unit (OSU) as a "directorship under the National Population and Talent Division of the Prime Minister's Office . . . [and a] part of the Singapore government's overall efforts to engage its citizens."⁷² Distancing itself from the alienating sentiments expressed in Goh's speech, the government, in establishing the OSU, demonstrates the state's clear attempt to foster more positive relations with Singaporeans living abroad. Instead of traitors and quitters, the diaspora was heralded as necessary for Singapore's future as Global Asia.

The state's positive attitude toward, treatment of, and instrumentalization of diasporic Singaporeans signify a pivotal change accompanying Singapore's increased orientation to a knowledge economy following the 1997 Asian financial crisis.⁷³ This instrumentalist function of the diaspora is especially evident in the language Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Wong Kan Seng used at the launch of the OSU: "I believe in and share the unit's mission—to create an interconnected Overseas Singaporean diaspora with Singapore at its core."⁷⁴ The diaspora would come to represent the "Singaporean of the 21st century" as someone "who is familiar with global trends and lifestyles and feels comfortable working and living in Singapore as well as overseas," as put by the *Singapore 21* report.⁷⁵ Put a little differently, the twenty-first-century Singaporean, who was also described as the "Renaissance Singaporean,"⁷⁶ is a cosmopolitan subject. Cosmopolitanism, as figured by the Overseas Singaporean, is a key part of presenting Global Asia as new, unprecedented, and no longer postcolonial; moreover, it allows Singapore to be represented as an economic model with global reach and influence.

In the Global Asia context, cosmopolitanism and diaspora operate not as descriptors of its values or characteristics but as ideological tools. This is apparent in Wong's use of the word *create* when describing the "Overseas Singaporean diaspora." That is, this diaspora is one that must be claimed by the state, toward particular benefits and advantages. This vision for the "diaspora" is akin to Ong's observation, whereby it is "increasingly invoked by elite migrants in transnational contexts to articulate an inclusive ethnicity that includes disparate populations across the world who may be able to claim a common racial or cultural ancestry."⁷⁷ But as Ong points out, "diaspora" "is loose on the information highway and political byways, and elite diasporic subjects have picked up the term in order to mass customize global ethnic identities."⁷⁸ While Wong's language underscores the profitability of diaspora, his thinking is not idiosyncratic to him or the Singaporean state; such mass customization is also evident in "diaspora marketing" and "diaspora strategy," terms used in business and public policy, respectively. Even while the instrumentalist logics might appear politically distasteful, they are a constitutive part of diasporic representation. For better or worse, the Singaporean state's diaspora strategy has catalyzed the legibility of its diaspora. That the category "Overseas Singaporeans" is now even legible as constituting a diaspora speaks to the effectiveness of the state's strategies.

Recognizing the ideological significance of diasporic Singaporeans for Global Asia both in state materials and in literary and cultural materials, this book approaches the people making up this "diaspora" less in terms of their changing attachments to the national homeland and more in terms of how they function in the national project as valued representatives on a global stage. My readings therefore focus on how the concept of diaspora is being used, what it does for the nation, and what it gives voice to rather than on how diasporans feel.

To be clear, however, these questions of instrumentality are not limited to the state. Literary productions likewise leverage diasporic Singaporean characters to critique the state.

READING GOVERNANCE IN CONTEMPORARY GENRES OF POSTCOLONIAL CAPITALISM

In this book, genre and form act as selection principles for each chapter but also as an aesthetic mode of synthesizing disparate political positions. That literary forms like demographic collections and the coming-of-career narratives (themselves outgrowths of anthologies and bildungsroman) also appear in state texts demonstrate how governance traffics in culture. Because my archive includes a number of policy recommendation reports and state-authored texts from an authoritarian government, it might appear that I am setting up a power dynamic that centers the state and that positions literary texts as simply reactive to its rule. However, my interest in soft power assumes a tempered role for the state in the Global Asia context. When we consider that Global Asia is a cultural formation that operates within a symbolic order or, as the *Renaissance City Report* puts it, a site “imbued with a keen sense of aesthetics,”⁷⁹ the state is situated as but another cultural producer among many and not one that typically holds that much sway. These often well-designed, glossy, English-language texts replete with graphics and photographs look more like corporate brochures inviting a public readership; indeed, they are very accessible materials and can generally be found in public libraries or circulating around the internet.⁸⁰ Some of the policy recommendations are more directly aimed at the general population, as indicated by their translation into Singapore’s other official languages. Even while some of these reports are not necessarily aimed at the everyday Singaporean, since they offer granular detail on how various governmental bodies or civil servants should implement policy, they are meant to be read, by virtue of their circulation, accessibility, and design.

Some may simply dismiss these state texts as propaganda, undeserving of critical attention because their agenda is straightforward or because there is little evidence that they have explicit effects on the Singaporean populace. In other words, their significance cannot be measured by circulation or reception. But my reading methodology treats state texts as important repositories of governing logics: they are less an expression of dominating power than a grasping for power. They do not articulate the rule of law. Policy papers, speeches, and political ephemera are often meant to be persuasive, which is to say, aspirational. Indeed, many of the reports read like manifestos. Such government materials are cultural texts that contribute to capitalism as a cultural formation.

Notably, many of the literary texts I examine also represent the state in a more tenuous position of power. They are often obliquely critical of the state and do not overtly represent Singaporean governance, as is the case in *Mammon Inc.* and

Crazy Rich Asians, which use subtle passing historical references to socioeconomic policies. While I suspect that many writers want to resist portraying Singaporean life as completely overdetermined by state power (as so often perceived in the West), these texts also remind us that the Singaporean state is but one institution working within a matrix of power.⁸¹ To be clear, I am not suggesting that disciplinary or oppressive power is no longer operating in Singapore as Global Asia. Whether suppression of political dissent, capital punishment, or restrictive immigration laws for migrant workers, there are clear and current examples of authoritarian governance. Yet I contend that state power *does* operate differently under Global Asia and that the top-down models of power, even in this authoritarian context, cannot capture important nuances.

The organization of the book can be described in a few different ways. The first half of the book focuses on compiled literary forms; the latter half examines adapted novelistic genres. Roughly speaking, the chapters proceed chronologically, with the first chapter focused on the period before 1997 to establish historical precedent; the subsequent chapters look at post-1997 Global Asia texts. Each chapter also has a thematic focus that has been central to understandings of the postcolonial nation: global order, territory, work, and cultural difference. Regardless of organizational logic, when taken together, the chapters track the ideological workings and historical operations of Global Asia with respect to postcolonial capitalism.

Tracking earlier permutations of postcolonial capitalism, the first chapter turns to the anthology, an especially prevalent literary form and genre in Singapore. The anthology is, as I argue, an underexamined form of postcolonial nationalism, one that is outward-facing and conscious of the colonial-turned-global gaze. The chapter examines how this compiled form and pedagogical genre changes according to the prevailing economic ideologies of two periods: state developmentalism (1965–85) and Asian Values (1985–2000). The production history of Singapore anthologies exposes the global and local scales of postcolonial capitalism through the ideological and economic influences of UNESCO, local writing competitions, oil and petroleum corporations, and the manufacturing economy. Yet, I argue, it also reveals some of the more utopian national visions of Singapore. For this reason, I suggest that even while the anthology might seem a compromised genre because it seeks to make Singapore legible to the world for capitalist development, it inadvertently established the anthology as an important generative and generous genre that creates the conditions for local writing.

The chapters that follow focus on contemporary genres of postcolonial capitalism to track the emergence of Global Asia. Chapter 2 studies the transformed role accorded to diasporic Singaporeans and how they expand territorial understandings of the nation in service of Global Asia. As with the previous chapter, I examine compiled forms, in this instance what I describe as demographic compilations: the state-controlled newspaper series “Singaporean Abroad” (2008–12)

and the literary nonfiction magazine *be movement* (2015). Demographics are not based in a sense of belonging, kinship, or political commitments but instead portray recurring characteristics of a population, recalling the administrative logics of colonialism that continue into postcolonial, biopolitical governance. I show how the “population aesthetic,” or the noncontinuous, serialized representation of flat characters, is used in demographic compilations as part of the Singaporean state’s efforts to cultivate a cosmopolitan ethic. I also show how this statist genre is retooled by Overseas Singaporeans themselves to critique postcolonial capitalism. The chapter closes with Jeremy Tiang’s *It Never Rains on National Day* (2016), a short story collection that thematizes the denouement of diasporic Singaporean fictional narratives as a way of critiquing the formal conventions of demographic compilations.

Chapter 3 centers the analysis on the changing notions of work ethic by showing how the postcolonial nation allies with neoliberalized corporations to compel labor from its subjects. It focuses on the “coming-of-career” genre in Hwee Hwee Tan’s *Mammon Inc.* (2001), a satirical novel critical of the state’s valorization of Overseas Singaporeans, and *Conversations on Coming Home* (2012), a state promotional booklet encouraging Overseas Singaporeans to return. I examine how postcolonial work is an aestheticized and pleasurable mode of asserting self-sovereignty and protesting empire and how it is also the mode through which Global Asia obscures its postcolonial associations. In *Mammon Inc.* and *Conversations*, this erasure happens when the pleasures of contemporary, corporate work are read as the ideological power of transnational corporations rather than as the rejection of the postcolonial state. As a reminder that the implications of transnationalized, neoliberal work is not limited to the professional classes, I then turn to *Ilo Ilo* (2013), an award-winning feature film about a middle-class Singaporean Chinese family and their Filipina domestic worker. The erasure of the nonelite classes, I argue, is the consequence of posing Singapore as economically exceptional and thus disassociated from the Southeast Asian region and the Global South.

At the center of chapter 4 is the legacy of Singapore’s Asian Values discourse and the way in which the perception of Asiatic difference plays out in our current juncture. I argue that a shorter rather than longer view of history is necessary for understanding the workings of postcolonial capitalism. As I show in my readings of Kevin Kwan’s novel *Crazy Rich Asians* (2014) and its Hollywood feature film adaptation (2018), portrayals of Singapore’s economic success as originating with British colonialism obscures the historical specificity of capitalism and conflates capitalism with colonialism. The chapter demonstrates how postcolonial capitalism exploits colonial fantasies of Asia and in doing so works with histories of orientalist difference to enshrine Singapore’s cosmopolitan veneer. Kwan’s presentation of Singapore in what I describe as a “princess fantasy,” or a fantasy of being the center of attention, having all desires met, and being revered by all, enables us

to see the multifaceted appeal of Kwan's work while also diagnosing the changing dynamics of the West's reading of the East.

In the brief conclusion, I examine the controversial closure of Yale-NUS (National University of Singapore) College to discuss the implications of Singapore's soft power as it meets the state's repressive state apparatus. Even in the face of authoritarian, disciplinary rule, I contend, we must think through the entire assemblage of power at the disposal of the modern state.