

Singapore, State Nationalism, and the Production of Diaspora

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**Cheryl Narumi Naruse,**  
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**Abstract:** In her article "Singapore, State Nationalism, and the Production of Diaspora" Cheryl Narumi Naruse examines *The Straits Times* series "Singaporean Abroad" and analyzes how conceptions of national time, space, and community are restructured by state concerns of economic survival within the era of globalization. In "Singaporean Abroad," readers find a curious amalgamation of feature writing, travel writing, and advertising about cosmopolitan, transnationally connected citizens of Singapore. Naruse shows how positive representations of overseas Singaporeans as "national heroes" reflected in the content of the series evidences efforts by the Government of Singapore to refashion cultural values and to advance beyond national space. Further, Naruse examines how the narrative structure of the series accommodates neoliberal values of knowledge economy and biopolitical aesthetics within a nationalist framework.

**Cheryl Narumi NARUSE**

### **Singapore, State Nationalism, and the Production of Diaspora**

During a 2002 Singapore National Day Rally speech, Prime Minister of Singapore Chok Tong Goh 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?" (39-40). Goh's speech — much of which was responding to the nation's economic uncertainty following the 1997 Asian financial crisis — framed Singaporeans living abroad as "traitors" who "deserted" the nation in a time of need. Goh Chok's use of "stayers" and "quitters" made clear that Singaporeans at home were somehow truer than their overseas compatriots and that the "quitters" were not seen by the state as important contributors to the nation's welfare because such individuals were no longer connected to their homeland. In 2008, the Prime Minister's office launched the Overseas Singaporean Unit (OSU) <<http://www.overseasingaporean.sg>>, a government agency created for the purpose to engage overseas Singaporeans. The establishment of OSU made clear that the government was attempting to foster more positive relations with overseas Singaporeans and was separating itself from alienating sentiments like those expressed by Goh's speech. Since 2008, overseas Singaporeans have been embraced by the state as necessary and important for the nation. Through several cultural projects managed by OSU — including heritage festivals, websites, advertising — those in what the government has named the "Overseas Singaporean Diaspora" have been the target of state interest and are framed positively as future Singaporeans.

I argue that following the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the Singaporean government has been fostering a new national identity by articulating a narrative based on this state-legislated Singaporean diaspora. Within the context of this new state-sanctioned Singaporean diaspora, I examine the newspaper lifestyle series "Singaporeans Abroad" published in *The Straits Times*, the leading English-language newspaper in Singapore. The series began in June 2008 and is still running and spotlights an overseas Singaporean and the city in which he/she resides. Further, I analyze the "Singaporean Abroad" series against the state's efforts to construct an official "Overseas Singaporean Diaspora" and show how that diaspora is used within state nationalist discourse to unify human capital with cultural capital. In other words, the diaspora is used to "culturalize," normalize, and nationalize economic values for the national body (see Harvey's *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* for discussion of the relationship between neoliberalism and cultural ideology). This timely construction of the so-called diaspora correlates with the nation's transition to a globalized knowledge economy since the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Because the "Singaporean Abroad" series appears in what is often regarded as a state-controlled national newspaper (see Tan, Tarn How), the series provides a way to understand how the state attempts to shape public and cultural discourses in response to the pressures of neoliberal globalization. I refer to "neoliberalism" as economic policies which promote unregulated and free market capitalism and to "neoliberalization" as cultural and political discourses that surround such economic policies — something that Aihwa Ong describes as "the infiltration of market-driven truths and calculations into the domain of politics" (4). Thus, within the context of the production of the Singaporean Diaspora and "Singaporean Abroad" series cultural expression and culture should be understood as a site where the state articulates its power and pushes neoliberal ideologies and values. Nationalist culture is used as a force for economic and political state power and it is not a popular formation.

I begin by giving some of the historical and political context to understand how and why the positive representation of overseas Singaporeans in the "Singaporean Abroad" series ought to be understood as part of the state's neoliberal agenda and as a cultural expression of the state's biopolitical strategies of government. Neoliberal ideologies are endorsed not only by the representation of the overseas Singaporean but through the formal narrative structure of the series. I examine how the narrative privileges transnational space through the overseas Singaporean and shows a nationalism reworked to accommodate global capitalism. In the move away from the

construction of a singular, linear national time — the typical ideological form of the nation according to Benedict Anderson and Etienne Balibar — "Singaporean Abroad" exemplifies an ideological form of the nation that is multiple and webbed. Moreover, through a discussion of the series' episodic narrative structure, I show how biopolitics is a useful — and necessary — theoretical lens to understand emergent and contemporary forms of Singaporean nationalism. Michel Foucault's rendering of biopower as a "political strategy" means that biopolitical analyses often involve examining policy and governmental structures. However, by focusing on cultural and textual forms through which biopower is expressed, I am arguing for an understanding of biopolitical aesthetics and form. Because the Singaporean state works with forms of storytelling and print culture to accommodate the knowledge economy, "Singaporean Abroad" speaks to issues of culture, nationalism, biopolitics, and neoliberalism. Although biopolitics and neoliberalism are associated with economic and political structures, "Singaporean Abroad" offers an understanding of how these structures are at work within an affective realm. I assume that the form through which biopower and neoliberalism is asserted in this series is as important as the content of the articles themselves — that is, the language and the method are important to understanding how processes of global capitalism are at work within state produced cultural logics.

In a 2008 speech during the launch of OSU, Wong Kan Seng, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs stated that he believes and shares "the unit's mission — to create an interconnected Overseas Singaporean diaspora with Singapore at its core. There are now more than 140,000 Singaporeans spread across the world" ("The Launch" <[http://www.mha.gov.sg/news\\_details.aspx?nid=MzIy-WzpmKhqwnZs=>](http://www.mha.gov.sg/news_details.aspx?nid=MzIy-WzpmKhqwnZs=>)). For those working in diaspora studies, Wong's speech might appear especially curious — particularly the use of "diaspora" which seems to be interchangeable with "network." Moreover, "create" is suggestive here, connoting an idea of deliberate construction, which is peculiar given that this speech was made by a government official. I am dubious about whether we can describe accurately the growth of the number of Singaporeans living and working abroad as "diaspora" (for debates on definitions of diaspora, see Cohen; for discussions on the uses and "lures" of diaspora, see Ang; Chow; see also Tötösy de Zepetnek and Wang; Tötösy de Zepetnek, Wang, Sun). But regardless of whether or not overseas Singaporeans constitute a diaspora, more notable are the ways in which such a term is being deployed by the state. Further, for those familiar with the Singaporean context, it is odd how people seen to be within the diaspora are represented to the Singaporean public in "Singaporean Abroad" considering how overseas Singaporeans were represented by the state in the past.

The "Singaporean Abroad" series presents short biographical sketches and interviews with overseas Singaporeans about the cities in which they now reside, ranging from New York, Seoul, London, Mumbai, and Tokyo to smaller and lesser recognized cities such as Neuchâtel, Astana, Lappeenranta. To date, there have been over two hundred articles written in "Singaporean Abroad" of *The Straits Times* <<http://www.straitstimes.com/>> (the said articles are not published in a specific category, but often featured in the newspaper's Premium subscription category "Life!"): each article is a full-page story — sometimes a double-page feature — complete with color photography. Although several different journalists have written articles for the series, the structure and format of the stories have been consistent. After each headline, the article includes an inset with what looks to be a small self-selected headshot and listing of the interviewee's name, age, occupation, and length of stay in the city where he/she now resides. Following a short blurb on the city and its history and how the featured Singaporean came to live there, each story moves into questions and answers: the overseas Singaporean is asked about the types of activities in the city that local Singaporeans might enjoy, the nightlife, the food, and how the city compares to Singapore.

In contrast to the larger discourse that promotes Singapore as a global, modern, and cosmopolitan business hub, "Singaporean Abroad" presents the image of itself as a global city through its focus on other cities abroad. The elevation of the social and political status of the overseas Singaporean is partially the effect of the interview format of the article. Through the genre of the interview, the interviewees are positioned as cultural authorities on the city they live in and on Singaporeans themselves. Interview questions and answers are organized by subheadings which include "Getting Around," "Food," "Culture," and "Shopping." The use of first person voice in the interview responses

focuses the attention on the overseas Singaporean in a way that builds his/her ethos as knowledgeable and worldly. Many of the articles feature questions asking the interviewee to comment on what Singaporeans would like about the city or to remark on interesting differences between Singapore and the city in which the interviewee resides. Such questions reassert the overseas Singaporean as an authority to comment on the Singaporean national body while interpellating Singaporeans in Singapore as a distinct, recognizable, and coherent group of people. Thus the imagined community is formed through the overseas Singaporean, which in turn affirms his/her idealized status: the Singaporean nation is imagined and projected through the overseas Singaporean. Further, by positioning interviewees as international ambassadors, the interviews create comparativists out of the interviewees in a way that requires them to think back in time to their experience of Singapore, thus positing Singapore as an origin and homeland. Through this imagining of Singapore, the interviewees create a national history while simultaneously maintaining their status as global, cosmopolitan citizens.

The positive and idealized representations of diasporic Singaporeans in this series is a far cry from when overseas Singaporeans were framed as traitors as in the aforementioned 2002 National Day Rally Speech. Similar sentiments were expressed through the newspapers in the 1970s and 1980s, mainly through criticisms of wealthier Singaporean families who sent their children abroad for a Western education. Such censure was at its height in the newspapers in the late 1980s and 1990s when emigration and a so-called brain drain was put to Parliament as a national concern. For example, in 1991, when Members of Parliament suggested initiatives to encourage Singaporeans abroad to come home, education officer K.S. Yuen stated that "these people have betrayed their country and are ungrateful. If they want to go, let them go. We shouldn't encourage them to come back" (Yuen qtd. in Fernandez 19). Prior to the financial crisis, Singapore enjoyed its status as one of the four "Asian Tigers," a designation used to describe the successful economies of Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Korea characterized by economic growth for a period of thirty years, rapid industrialization, high exports, and foreign investment (see Sarel 1). Although the impact of the financial crisis and consequent economic recession was relatively minor in Singapore compared to the rest of the Southeast Asian region, the Singaporean state deemed the Asian Tiger model inadequate to handle "new global pressures to deregulate markets" (Ong 178). Such changes have required political, social, cultural, and spatial re-imaginings of the nation and its inhabitants through new forms of power and governmentality in order to accommodate this change. In August 1997, only a month after the Asian financial crisis began, then Prime Minister Goh assembled a working group known as the *Singapore 21* Committee to "articulate a vision that Singaporeans can reach out for together to build the society we want for the year 2000 and beyond" (8) as part of what was ostensibly an economic and social development initiative created in response to the financial crisis. As the 1999 release of the *Singapore 21* Committee report stressed, a knowledge economy, where "information and knowledge, rather than material resources, drive activities" (9) was the way of the future. The push towards a knowledge economy has made Singapore highly reliant on "human capital," a term widely popularized by the Chicago School of Economics to describe knowledge and skills as economic assets.

Following the shift to a knowledge economy came a nation now more dependent on accruing human capital, and the production of a Singaporean diaspora as a recuperation technique is one attempt to resolve issues of a declining local population. The state has also been encouraging human capital accumulation through relaxed immigration laws for those who qualify as "foreign talent" and urging Singaporeans to have families through financial incentives (see *Singapore: Hungry for Foreign* <<http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/countrydata.cfm?ID=570>>; see also Yap). The rate of increase in the past twenty years is especially noteworthy: in 1980 the population was about 2.4 million, in 1990 the population of Singapore was about 3.05 million, and in 2000 about 4.02 million (Department of Statistics <[http://www.singstat.gov.sg/statistics/browse\\_by\\_theme/population/time\\_series/pop2012.xls](http://www.singstat.gov.sg/statistics/browse_by_theme/population/time_series/pop2012.xls)>). In other words, the population has increased about one million people per decade in the last twenty years. In 2001, the Urban Renewal Authority, a branch of the government that oversees land use and development, stated plans to accommodate a population of 5.5 million, in 2007 the Minister for National Development, Mah Bow Tan, argued that the figure should be increased to 6.5 million (2) and

in June 2010 the Department of Statistics released census data reporting the Singapore population to be at 5.08 million

(<[http://www.singstat.gov.sg/statistics/browse\\_by\\_theme/population/time\\_series/pop2012.xls](http://www.singstat.gov.sg/statistics/browse_by_theme/population/time_series/pop2012.xls)>).

With the vast increases in population have come comments which show some of the neoliberal logic of the knowledge economy at work. In 2002 Goh claimed that "because of the quality of our people, and our economic success and social progress, we are taken seriously by other countries. We enjoy an influence disproportionate to our size. 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. To swim among the big fishes in the ocean, we have to top up our population with international talent" (19). Goh's use of the ocean metaphor underscores the problem of biological survival: the use of ocean as global capitalist market further signals a sense of the inevitability of death, of being swallowed up by the ocean. While equating economic survival with biological survival might seem like rhetorical flourish, it is in fact symptomatic of the biopolitical governing strategies which have accompanied the shift to knowledge economy. As argued by scholars such as Aihwa Ong and Pheng Cheah, we can understand these Singaporean governing strategies as what Michel Foucault has described as biopolitical. In *Security, Territory, and Population*, Foucault describes biopower as "the set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy" (6). Foucault argues that expressions of biopower are used to maximize the potentiality of life and consequently, planning rather than the importance of individuals (34). Such logic, he points out, moves mechanisms of power away from modes of social control or biological destiny (25). Biopolitical societal planning is instead "a matter of maximizing the positive elements, for which one provides the best possible circulation, and of minimizing what is risky and inconvenient, like theft and disease, while knowing that they will never be completely suppressed" (Foucault 34). Biopower does not operate according to "a static perception" (Foucault 35), as is the case with discipline, but instead is turned towards a more general outcome as the language of "maximizing" and "best possible" indicates.

To many political theorists, Singapore is likely a straightforward example of biopolitics, especially when examining how state policies focus on population growth to resolve economic issues. However, there is some difficulty in theorizing Foucault's notion of biopower from a position of cultural criticism. Ong's and Cheah's work as examples of biopolitical analyses, however, is less concerned with the relationship between cultural production and biopower. This is not to suggest that government and policy are not part of culture but that such analysis tends to disregard aesthetics. To truly understand the reach and the extent through which biopower operates, I am suggesting that we must look at how cultural production works in the service of biopower. By considering the nationalist context in which cultural production, biopower, and neoliberalism converge, I suggest that a reading and theorizing of "Singaporean Abroad" as an extension of the diaspora must account for the state's neoliberal logics and biopolitical governance. On the one hand, the production of the Singaporean diaspora can be read as part of the state's push to accrue human capital and on the other hand the production of the diaspora can also be read as part of the state's push to change national ideologies. It is clear that the Singaporean state has realized that in order to successfully transition to a knowledge economy, its own citizens must buy into the government's ideology. In other words, neoliberalism and biopolitics must be nationalized and normalized.

While we can understand the positive representation of overseas Singaporeans within a biopolitical framework, such representations are also state attempts to assimilate the neoliberal values of globalized knowledge economy. The *Singapore 21* Committee report provides a sketch of the ideal Singaporean of the future: "The Singaporean of the twenty-first century is a cosmopolitan Singaporean, one who is familiar with global trends and lifestyles and feels comfortable working and living in Singapore as well as overseas" (45). Moreover, according to the report, Singaporeans must "be encouraged to explore foreign languages, literature, geography, history and cultures throughout their school years, so that they will grow up 'world ready,' able to plug-and-play with confidence in the global economy" (45). Given how the expatriate Singaporean fits the vision of the state and how the Overseas Singaporean Diaspora is at the nexus of this transition to a knowledge economy, it becomes clear that the diaspora has an ideological function and performs work for the state. As I argue,



"Singaporean Abroad" is an example of state nationalist cultural expression within a global context that is an attempt to restructure national time. My argument draws on the work of Anderson and Balibar, who make a case for the relationship between narrative form and imaginings of the nation through constructions of time. In arguing that the narrative form of "Singapore Abroad" does the cultural work for neoliberal governing strategies, I compare how the Singaporean context provides a counterpoint to the ways that nation-formation has been typically theorized as a singular, linear narrative.

Since theorizing the notion of the nation as an "imagined community" Anderson's work has provided the means to comprehend how collective kinship comes to be understood as a nation. The notion of imagined communities relies on what Anderson calls the imagining of homogenous, simultaneous national time that — within the eighteenth-century context Anderson examines — hinges on an understanding of how print capitalism revolutionized the dissemination of vernacular languages. What I think is missing in Anderson's work is how the means for the national imagination in fact relies on an understanding of the novel form rather than of the newspaper. Before Anderson even starts to discuss the newspaper, he discusses how the novel form provides a complex gloss upon the word "meanwhile," how the novel is able to create different types of temporalities, and how the protagonist of the novel or whom he calls the national hero navigates space in a way that provides the stuff of what we come to term imagined communities (25, 30). Only after working through examples from four different novels does Anderson turn to the newspaper, which he even then describes as having a "novelistic format" (33). What is significant about this element of Anderson's argument is his emphasis on language and narrative in relation to the material elements of print capitalism. Anderson's work reminds us that we should not take for granted an analysis of form when speaking about the political entity we call the nation. In this regard, scholars of literature and culture are particularly well positioned to discuss how globalization affects the imaginings of the nation.

Like Anderson, Balibar views the narrative construction of time as necessarily constitutive of the ways the nation and nationalism are imagined. While Balibar does not refer to a particular literary or aesthetic form as Anderson does in his examination of the novel, Balibar's analysis of how the notion of the national is constructed relies on an understanding of how time is sequenced to create the fiction of national unity. Continuity, according to Balibar, is created by narratives which link myths of national origins (87) with the fulfillment of a "'project' stretching over centuries, in which there are different stages and moments of coming to self-awareness" (86). This is not unlike Anderson's position, which discusses the implications of the national imaginings of a journey and ideas of destiny (12, 53). Inherent in Balibar's and Anderson's arguments is that the notion of national time and history is necessarily singular, linear, and developmental. In Anderson's thinking this is partly a result of a reliance on the novel, while in Balibar's it is a result of his consideration of the "one single founding revolutionary event" (87) of the nation. Given the context of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, we must necessarily consider how the material developments associated with the era of globalization — increased economic flows and finance capital, travel, communication, and media technology — have changed the experience of time, space, and play into a nationalist narrative. To retain the significance of Anderson's and Balibar's analyses, we must consider how constructions of time have changed in order to understand how expressions of nationalism function in relation to the values of the contemporary context. In this regard, we might consider the work of geographer David Harvey who uses the term "time-space compression" to describe the contemporary "processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves" (*The Condition* 240). Harvey's work reminds us that alternations in our understandings of time and space have an effect on social and cultural processes. How, then, might we read "Singaporean Abroad" with an eye to understanding national time and space in a globalizing context? What new insights can an analysis of literary form provide when examining globalization?

Unlike the representation of a singular national hero in the novel Anderson discusses or the myth of the singularity of national origins of Balibar's argumentation, the narrative of "Singaporean Abroad" is diffused across repeated articles and its narrative is carried through multiple overseas Singaporeans. This shift from singularity to multiplicity suggests the ordinariness of the ideal citizen —

no longer is the nationalist narrative filtered through the exceptional life achievements of an individual: now anyone has the potential to be a "national hero," a notion implied in the articles of "Singaporean Abroad." The articles also present this visually: the "ordinariness" of the overseas Singaporean is mitigated by the headshot every story features and the pictures are candid from personal albums by the interviewee. When juxtaposed with the larger and often higher resolution professional stock photography of the featured city, the headshots seem starkly commonplace. For example, a feature on Sydney, Australia, shows overseas Singaporean Terrence Yiew casually posing in a green t-shirt with his arm perched upon a handrail with the Sydney Harbor Bridge in the background. The resolution of the shot is not particularly clear and the photo is neither glamorous nor remarkable. However, the picture memorializes Yiew's visit to a famous Australian landmark and above the inset of Yiew's picture is a photo of the Sydney Opera House during an evening lightshow and an action shot of a Puccini opera. Below is a long shot of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park and a close up of a wallaby and her joey. The photography is crisp and shows impressive detail such as the beading on the opera performers' extravagant costuming and the animated expressions on their faces. The visual contrast in the photography constructs the featured overseas Singaporean as a regular, everyday person, thus creating the impression that reaching such an elevated status is possible and thus the overall visual impact generates the impression that everyone can be a "national hero," particularly the Singaporean in diaspora. Overall, the series' reliance on such strategies seems fitting for the nation's shift into the knowledge economy because within this economy all citizens have the potential to be successful capitalists, thus "heroes": heroism is read through those who uphold capitalist economic success for the nation.

Besides a change in how citizens come to be valued, the shift from singular to multiple heroes transforms an understanding of time. In "Singaporean Abroad" instead of a temporally organized progressive plot movement unfolding through the action or character development of a single hero, we have a spatially organized narrative that relies on repetition through multiple heroes outside of Singapore. Usually we understand plot to refer to the design and arrangement of events within a narrative that provides the framework for a theme. Plot movement, then, is a change within the plotline where readers are able to distinguish between different events and to understand the relationship between them. The focus on the overseas Singaporean's location in each article collapses the formal elements of character and event within its narrative structure because the Singaporean living abroad is at once the character and the event. Thus, the heroes of the "Singaporean Abroad" series are doubly structural because they are both character and event. Further, because the narrative is structured by imagined traversals of geographic space through multiple heroes, the overseas Singaporean as "national hero" is a device to map out Singaporean transnational connections. The spatial imagination created by the narrative traverses vast geographical distances and the space of the nation is imagined to extend beyond the borders of the nation-state vis-à-vis the overseas Singaporean. No longer is the nation imagined as limited within national territory and the imaginings of space external to the Singaporean nation is transformed by representation and narrative — textual and visual — in the articles of the series.

While on the one hand the narrative structure of the series is complementary to the neoliberal values of a knowledge economy through its emphasis on transnationalized space, its episodic structure also embodies the biopolitical logic of populations by focusing on what constitutes a useful life for the nation. The overseas Singaporean's life abroad is framed as a major accomplishment for the person featured and for the nation of Singapore and this is significant in terms of how the state shapes national imaginings. Of equal importance is the plot structure of the series, which might be described as episodic because each article can stand on its own and has no bearing on the next. Each article is connected by the use of generic features which are repeated and its legibility as a series — much like that of a population — is made possible through its repetition. The language of the articles does not create any transitions (for example, "to be continued" or "next week"). Despite the structural integrity of each article on its own, the repetition, similarity, and regularity of each article creates a unity across them through expectation.

Unlike the novel where plot is built through action and causal relations and thus follows a progressive structure that reaches a climax, the plotline of "Singaporean Abroad" might be described



as a series of climaxes because the focus of the article suggests that the very act of living abroad is a climactic point in each featured Singaporean's life. However, the state is invested in representing the Singaporean's overseas status as a major achievement, but little attention is given to historicizing each accomplishment. Life and the way that it is narrated are, instead, structured by the notion of accomplishment. The lives featured in this series have little to do with each other and are never framed as community. The lack of relationality between each story in the episodic structure of the series compels us to think of overseas Singaporeans as a desirable population rather than as a desirable community of which to be a part.

The form of "Singaporean Abroad" creates a sense of a population through its repetition and also because it lacks a discernible beginning and end. Readers come into the narrative in *media res*: the middle of things in this case, however, is not eventful, but is the middle of multiple lives. The first article of the series hardly called any attention to itself beyond a short line: "In our new column Singaporean Abroad, he [Huang Eu Chai, the interviewee] talks about the best ways to experience a place he calls his 'second home'" (Shetty 56). Here, the use of the word "new" only points to the appearance of the article and not to the beginning of a narrative: were the "Singaporean Abroad" series to stop being published, this would not suggest the end of Singaporeans living abroad. Owing to the lack of a definitive end — or even an imaginable end — the narrative structure suggests an infinite series or at least an open-ended narrative structure. Week after week readers are provided with another overseas Singaporean suggesting that the newspaper is able to choose another person and city to feature from a large pool. Thus, the series mimics a population in that when taken together, the series represents a group that belongs to the same type. With the repetition of the feature's layout, color scheme, and narrative the visual similarity of each article further creates the effect of viewing a population.

Biopolitical logics are further replicated in "Singaporean Abroad" through its treatment of life. Although "Singaporean Abroad" elevates the social status of the overseas Singaporeans to "national heroes," the lives featured are used as a means to deploy tourist information and readers do not get any sense of the social or historical person. While the interview with the overseas Singaporean might seem to bring the subject's life into the text in a significant way, the answers are rendered generic because of the focus on information. For example, in an article about Copenhagen Ian Choo is asked "Which places in the city excite you?" The answer reads, "Free concerts at the famous theme park Tivoli (Vesterbrogade 3, 1630 Copenhagen V, [www.tivoli.dk](http://www.tivoli.dk)) everyday Friday" (Choo qtd. in Chee 10). In the article "Tivoli" has been bolded for easier reference for the reader: presumably, Choo was not able to rattle off the location's address and website off the top of his head and this information was added in after the interview. Readers are provided with no interpretation of the life presented in part because the mainstay of the article is the featured city. While these overseas Singaporeans are certainly documented, they are not interpreted in a way that brings any individuating substance or history to the life being presented. Instead, overseas Singaporean lives are conduits for state power.

The example of "Singaporean Abroad" shows how processes of globalization have both affected and demanded new forms of nationalism. The content and form of the series shows how imaginings of national time and space are reconfigured in a global capitalist context. Singapore is an especially apt case to study because of the state's insistence on attaching the national to the global. Working with an example like Singapore shows both the staying power of Anderson's arguments about national imaginings and narrative form and the necessity to reconsider the primacy of the novel as sole literary vehicle through which such imaginings are achieved. For those in literary and cultural studies, analyzing the forms through which nationalism is expressed is critical to understanding the connection between the political and the aesthetic. While I have argued for a different and better understanding of nationalism as it is tied to processes of globalization, I have also tried to show how the state's biopolitical impulses are embedded in issues of form of "Singaporean Abroad" to demonstrate the particular ways that biopower can manifest itself in cultural and aesthetic expressions.

"Singaporean Abroad" represents a significant change in the content and form of traditional nationalist narrative. Interestingly, similar types of journalistic, episodic life writing features have emerged in other sites in Singapore. For example, the Overseas Singaporean Unit's webpage also runs an occasional feature article in "OS Snapshots & Hotshots," which focuses on the lives of overseas

Singaporeans. *The Straits Times* also features a series known as the "Expat Files," which features expatriates living in Singapore. Taken together, there seems to be a clear move towards employing journalistic, episodic forms to represent the shifting values in state nationalist discourse. Although it remains to be seen whether these series will have popular impact, there is something subtle at work in the fleeting narrative form of "Singaporean Abroad," a series that reveals the need to be attentive to emergent and contemporary forms of nationalism and the cultural and textual forms through which they are deployed.

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