Displacing the 'Authentic Account'

Historical Trauma, Political Subjectification and the Overdetermination of Tibetan Youth Subjectivities and Agencies

By

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A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the reputedly constitutive effects of violence and (intergenerational) loss on youth political subjectivities and agencies, with specific regard for young Tibetans of the refugee-diaspora of Northern India. While the effects of violence on socialisation and agency are currently a significant concern, prevailing clinical, cultural, and even radical psychoanalytical explanations tend –in universalising the traumatic event- to advance underdetermined accounts of experience, subjectivity and agency, leading to depoliticisation of the young or overstatement of their agency. In contrast, this study draws on the Foucauldian concept of political subjectification to reflect on the displaced wider overdeterminative material-discursive field through which young subjects, their subjectivities, and agencies are constituted. Through an ethnographically-informed genealogical method I attempt to trace the signification and affective-internalisation of a specific masternarrative of (national) loss, and the displacements the advent of this account has caused –with specific regard for the displacement of classed, gendered and generational experiences of loss. Finally, drawing on Foucault's *parrhesia* as a heuristic for decentred agency, I consider how far young people in exile are able to resist patrifilial hegemony through indexing alternative forms of loss.

For Ivy, James, Marian & Bob

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the end I began to understand. There is such a thing as absolute power over narrative. Those who secure this privilege for themselves can arrange stories about others pretty much where, and as, they like.

Chinua Achebe

The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character.

Paul Ricoeur

The author does not precede the works.

Michel Foucault

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FOREWARD

There was a point, sometime toward the middle of my fieldwork in the informal Tibetan settlement of McLeod Ganj, India, that news of another self-immolation in Tibet became an almost ordinary weekly occurrence. It usually came in the evening as the light faltered and the early monsoonal rains eased off. On hearing the tell tale clamour of the car-mounted loudspeaker winding its way through the muddied streets conversations would halt mid-flow, punctured, as people strained to hear. At first most of us *injis*[1] could not understand what was being said, so we relied on Tibetan friends to translate. Before long, this was unnecessary: you could feel it – a visceral tug of anticipation that augurs news of misfortune. Afterward, such announcements would be followed by a candle-lit procession that led around the central temple and down pot-holed Temple Road to Tsuglakhang –the residence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Turnout, at first, was considerable. Standing on Tsuglakhang balcony looking up Temple Road, a thread of butter-yellow lights (like floating candles) could be seen dipping up-and-down toward the Temple. The cold night air was charged with the electric-resonance of several thousand sorrowfully defiant voices lifted in prayer.

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It is hard to articulate the feeling of those days in Dharamshala, and harder still to express the acute sense of loss Tibetans feel for those who 'chose' to end their lives in this agonising way. In a similar manner as the ghosts of the self-immolators *haunted* the community in exile – photographs of their faces strewn across the town acting as a constant reminder of their loss – I could say that these events haunted my time in the field, providing an ineludible (and instructive) context for my work. Indeed, while the impact of self-immolations of young Tibetans in Tibet was, by itself, profound, this was only intensified in early March 2016 by what felt like the infinitely closer self-immolation of sixteen-year-old Dorjee Tsering from Manali. Throughout my research I met innumerable young Tibetans like Dorjee – one young man, as I discuss in the Introduction, who confided to me his conflicted desire to self-immolate – his death,

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[1] 'Foreigners'
[2] These include, most significantly: Mills (2012); Lewis (2013); Vahali (2009); Diehl (2002); Swank (2014); Roemer (2008); Frechette (2007); Hess (2009); Dahlstrom (2005); Anand (2000; 2003; 2008); McConnell (2012); McGranahan (2005; 2010); Yeh (2007a; 2007b; 2009) Goldstein (1986; 1987; 1989; 1973; 1991; 2007; 2009; 2010; 2013; 2004;

occurring during the final stages of my write-up, returning me to the urgency of the issues with which I was grappling.

The supernatural notion of 'haunting', of course, has an odd resonance with the modern, clinical concept of 'trauma'. As I discuss, trauma refers precisely to the effects of an intrusive, parasitic past that 'haunts' individuals, communities, and even whole societies, defining them, and their capacity for agency. This work takes issue with this naturalistic, anti-mimetic conception of trauma, arguing that – while no less real for it – traumas are products of symbolic construction rather than encounters with the 'Real'. It is, as such, perhaps truer to say that I have instead *chosen* to be haunted, because, as with the community in exile, identification in this way legitimises certain kinds of politics. In her *The Politics of Haunting and Memory in International Relations*, Auchter (2014:4) explores this political dimension of haunting, identifying 'the traces of statecraft in the way certain lives and deaths are rendered visible within a larger narrative of memorialisation [and] the traces of ghosts that might disrupt the privileging of certain lives'. Indeed, it is precisely this concern for such privileging that drives my exploration of how alternative accounts of past and present loss in the Sino-Tibetan conflict are displaced by the masternarrative of national loss, and how alternative forms of agency are similarly seized upon (to profound psychological effect) to legitimate and advance 'the cause'.

There is however a risk that in focussing on self-immolation over other forms of agency I risk complicity in precisely the same displacement of alternative forms of youth political engagement that I critique. While this is in some ways a valid criticism, this focus remains justified. First, as illustrated in the vignette above, the self-immolations and their effects on the exile community during my fieldwork were in many ways an ineludible structuring element of the ethnographic context in which this work took place. To downplay such acts in a work that purports to consider youth agency, or to join chorus with the large number of academic works that emphasise the unusual resilience of Tibetan refugee youth, would be odd and even unethical given this context. Second, the focus on 'radical' Tibetan youth agency chimes with a wider empirical occurrence of extreme agency in contemporary global politics. Of course, while it is true (as I will emphasise within this work) that there is today an unhealthy preoccupation with 'radical' youth agency

over other forms of political engagement, it is also true that radical youth agency has a renewed status as both empirical phenomenon and rhetorical category in contemporary society – the emergence of this social fact warrants consideration (albeit, as I will discuss presently, from what I see as a more ethical perspective here). In addition, while there has been much sound criticism of how narrow accounts of 'terrorism' neglect the heteronomous constitution of young subjects participating in (for example) Jihadist violence, this is less evident when accounting for agency in reputedly positive political projects. There have, for instance, been few efforts to challenge accounts of immolation as nationalistically inspired acts of defiance or desperation by recognising the complex overdetermination of self-sacrifice among Tibetan youth.

While western sympathy for the Tibetan cause has meant that young Tibetans and their agencies have historically been constructed in 'positive' political terms, the indeterminate moral status of agency is clearer with how appeals to historical trauma by indigenous north-American peoples is allowing transformation of young subjects from 'clinical' to 'political' subjects. While in many ways welcome and overdue, we must still identify how this post-colonial account is in no way neutral, and in its efforts to naturalise *the* authentic account risks displacements – including, as is my concern here, of the psychological history of the child. This brings me to my third justification for focussing on self-immolation: namely that it is not the *fact* of self-immolation with which I am concerned, but the historical *emergence* (and appropriation) of self-immolation as a specific form of agency within a specific narrative context. Indeed, in answer to my examiners I do in fact focus on other kinds of youth agency (including protest and protest writing and art, education and of course flight itself), but in-line with my Foucauldian scepticism of sovereign agency focus less on identifying the 'real' motivation and significance of these than for how they are co-opted and accounted for by the nationalist narrative. Self-immolation is the most extreme instance of such appropriation, and a form of 'agency' that – at least in normative terms – has the greatest cost.

Moreover, as I will emphasise, the *epistemological* concern for representation within the discursive field (Fassin 2008), while important, is not my main concern here. More pointed, is the concrete 'subjectifying'

effects of these processes of representation – or, as Ricoeur's quote above puts it, how the 'narrative constructs the identity of the character'. From this perspective the focus on self-immolation reflects what I perceive as the historical emergence of this extreme practice as a particular kind of agency within the nationalist account, and the feedback effects of this on youth subjectivity in exile and Tibet itself. Put otherwise, it is not the ontological fact of immolation *being* a special form of nationalistic agency, but the consequences of it *emerging* in the collective consciousness of Tibetans in these terms that concern me: the prospect, as one Tibetan put it, of immolations emerging as a 'risky blueprint' for 'ethical' action. Of course, a primary element of the argument here is that, while powerful, such narratives cannot entirely account for such actions – which are truly overdetermined by a multiplicity of material-discursive forces operating in the historical field. Indeed, following Auchter, *allowing* this work to be haunted by the self-immolations in this way allows identification of the dissonance between nationalist accounts of various forms of agency and an almost infinitely more complex constitutive truth irreducible to nationalism alone.

The critical position taken here has, however, caused me some anxiety. As Peteet (2005) notes in her *Landscapes of Hope and Despair*, balancing scepticism of nationalism's potentially chauvinistic tendencies with recognition that it often forms a profound source of solace for dispossessed persons is difficult. Indeed, while I remain sympathetic toward the Tibetan cause, it would be dishonest not to admit scepticism toward the sanitised nationalist account of Tibet's history, lassitude with the uncritical support and celebration of the nationalist cause, and even concern for the elitism and – generally neglected – violences of exilic nationalism. This is, to some extent, a side effect of my own – particularly classed – positionality, which has instilled a distrust of emancipative nationalist discourse. While, following Gramsci and Foucault, I am equally distrustful of the emancipative potential of subaltern forms of identity-politics, this distrust manifests here in what is possibly an overemphasis of the significance of class relations in Tibetan history and society. Still, this is to some extent defensible, not least by the scarcity of classed accounts of the Tibetan community in exile and the prospect that this is *not* accidental but symptomatic of a broader 'Tibetan exceptionalism' (Hansen 2003). This distrust of nationalism is indeed more empirically

justified when considering, as I do here, the displacement of alternative forms of loss and identity, and what Hansen regards as the totalising tendencies of the nationalist account. Finally, this critical position is also partly pragmatic. While such fatalism will not satisfy activists, it seems there are few signs that the People's Republic is going to change its position on Tibet's status anytime soon. While this is no reason to stop challenging China on its treatment of Tibetans or other minority peoples, it might force us to untie such concerns from nationalist rhetoric. Indeed, as has been true historically, overt displays of international sympathy for the nationalist cause and attempts to shame China could be counter-productive, leading the PRC to take a harder-line on Tibetans in Tibet. While the apparent tightening on Tibetan freedoms under Xi Jinping's administration may give cause for concern, the representation of benevolent Tibetan nationalism and malevolent Chinese occupation is also, as I will argue, reductionist, with views among Tibetans of Tibet's status vis-à-vis China being more complex than is usually portrayed.

At the same time, theoretical and empirical justifications have done relatively little to mitigate personal feelings of self-doubt in carrying out this research. This is all the more surprising given the fact that my work remains, despite its critical concern, decidedly *pro*-Tibetan. This is in part, of course, a side effect of the substantial socio-psychological force of nationalist 'border-policing' (Hansen 2003), regulating what is and what is not permissible to believe and say. In a more everyday capacity, however, it is also an effect of the real human bonds established during fieldwork – and an irrepressible sense that, while my enquiry is inspired by real care for my Tibetan friends and respondents, it also somehow betrays them. Throughout my fieldwork I struck a number of enduring friendships with people that not only went to some lengths to assist me in my work, but also supported me personally. I have, assisted by social media, continued many of these friendships, and relied on Tibetan friends to keep me updated of vital developments in the field. Maintaining a degree of impartiality in the face of this very sincere and human variety of Robben's (1996) more cynical notion of 'ethnographic seduction' is always hard, but it is particularly difficult in the Tibetan context where a critical method risks de-stabilising the narratives that (while in some ways destructive) are vastly meaningful for people, and provide a real source of solace in crisis. In this way, while many young Tibetans have a more nuanced and critical understanding of the issues that face them and the community, a deep commitment to the nation and a relatively narrow account of history remains prevalent. As noted, I

do not intend to refute this account or the significance of the nation, but merely temper its transcendent authority. Still, for much of my research I have struggled with feelings disloyalty. Managing this has been a challenge, and has involved relying on an ethics constructed from the points above. First, while critical of nationalism I define my ethics – taking inspiration from Bourdieu – through a passion for the welfare of young people, and stress that my responsibility lays here first, rather than with the nation. As I emphasise later, I find the reluctance of the exile community, its leaders, foreign activists and intellectuals to raise concerns – as they doubtless would in other contexts – over the self-sacrifice of young people (and in some cases *children*) profoundly troubling. Indeed, some would even celebrate such actions as legitimate and sovereign responses to oppression of the nation. Second, following the point above about the broader 'Tibet Question', I have come to believe that it is important to recognise *at least two* 'Tibet Questions'. On the one hand there is the ongoing, although not immutable, issue of Tibet's occupation by the PRC; the injustices inflicted on the Tibetan peoples, nation, and culture that have followed, and the question of self-determination that inspires many Tibetans in exile and in Tibet. This, of course, is the question we know well. There is however another question, one that involves how we should ethically engage with the larger population of Tibetans in Tibet itself for whom 'the Nation' (as defined in exile) may not be an adequate answer to the challenges of everyday life. While the exile community remains important politically, sociologically, and for humanitarian reasons, and while academic neglect of Tibetans in Tibet has been largely due to restrictions on researching in the region, I follow Fischer (2014) in identifying the need for research in Tibet that, while remaining sensitive to the historical and trans-Himalayan significance of the nationalist question, does not rely on this as the main lens for analysis. This realisation, of course, came too late to significantly alter my research design, which remains focussed on exile. It is, however, reflected throughout this work, not just in my caution of the explanatory authority of the nationalist account, but also by my sensitivity to possible alternative constitutive contexts emerging from Tibet itself – something evident in my shift from privileging the ethnographic, to considering the broader material-discursive field.

JANUARY 2017

PLATE 1: PROTEST & POLITICAL SOCIALISATION (1)

A young girl joins protests against the detention and execution of Tibetan political prisoners in China. The participation of young people in such forms of social practice is vitally important in the transmission and internalisation of the master-narrative of loss.

INTRODUCTION

POLITICAL SUBJECTIVITY & (MARGINAL) AGENCY AFTER LOSS

We then seek no longer to know what his true experience
of violence is, but rather, what the various ordeals of truth
to which he is submitted by political authorities or
humanitarian officials or psychiatrists, correspond to.

Didier Fassin

This thesis encompasses an ethnographically informed genealogy – or perhaps more accurately historical ontology (Hacking 2002) – of massive loss, political subjectivity and agency in a 'culture under siege' (Robben & Suarez-Orozco 2000; Benjamin 1940). Broadly, this responds to a call for improved understanding of how young people experience, make sense of, and respond to political violence, and how they develop ideological commitments in contexts of social upheaval or 'siege' (Boyden & de Berry 2004; Barber *et al* 2009). It focuses not just on young people's direct experience of violence, but also on the putative structuring effects of loss through *historical trauma*, and the extent to which such experiences enable agencies productive of progressive social-political orders. At heart, it involves how political subjectivity is *formed*, and how this in turn inspires youth agency. I am especially interested in how subjectivity and agency are enmeshed with experiences and representations of collective historical traumas and the social significances attached to them. Structures of meaning – *e.g.* 'historical consciousness' (Wexler 2009) – are vital for how young people experience, cope with and respond to the violence and suffering caused by historic and ongoing injustices, playing a role in shaping moral agency, and forming an alternative to the clinical 'war literature' (Boyden & de Berry 2004). *But who makes and defines cultural meaning* (Keesing 1987: 161)? While rejecting the pathologising idea that 'violence begets violence' (the idea that conflict, displacement, and young people's responses to it is *inherently* negative) I am also cautious of valorising the terms of cultural recognition, the identitarian causes they relate to, or agential sovereignty. Indeed, while mutual identification (or construction) of a *universal* (*e.g.* 'national') historical trauma and the designation of subjectivities and agencies attending it may be politically enabling, this might also displace the scales and alternate histories of violence and loss (Fassin & Rechtman 2009) and, as an *under-determined*

account, elide the wider material-discursive context more fully constitutive of suffering, subjectivity, and agency.

I am specifically concerned here with efforts (usually by adults) to *account* for young people's agency, especially through describing a specific kind of psychological status in relation to a violent event. Drawing on the post-Marxian concept of interpellation or political subjectification (Foucault 1984; Fassin 2008) my concern, on the one hand, is for the *political* rather than neutral nature of all such attempts at explanation, and their role, unconscious or otherwise, in advancing certain interests and social orders and reproducing inequalities – *i.e.* in assuring hegemony. We must therefore remain alert for how the displacement of the wider constitutive material-discursive field – or, more concretely, the seizure, reworking or exclusion of generational, classed, or gendered experiences, subjectivities and agencies – through advent of a teleological causal account, is structured rather than arbitrary. Such 'memoro-politics' (Hacking 1996) can also be constitutive however, and on the other hand political subjectification refers to how, rather than being only misrepresentative, descriptions can, through various technologies of others and self (Foucault 1984), become principal modalities –or, with respect to the Tibetan self-immolations, 'risky blueprints'- through which subjects are constituted and constitute themselves. In light of the sincerity of 'passionate attachment' (Butler 1997) for causes that may not be in subjects' best interests, part of my concern here, is for the affective-discursive (Wetherall 2012) practices through which social normativity becomes psychic reality (Pirskanen 2008:1), the role of *power* in structuring such interpellation, and the socio-psychological displacements that can ensue. This has profound implications for agency – which is outwardly foreclosed by the fundamental sociality and historicity of the subject, and the contingency of any 'teleology of positive freedom' (Dumm 1996:6). This is not wholly true, however, and in reimagining it as *practice* – as a *decentred*, reflexive process of 'acting otherwise' (Caldwell 2007) – we may rehabilitate a historicised kind of agency.

Here, I reflect on these issues of historical loss (or trauma), political subjectification, and marginal agency with respect to young Tibetans in the Sino-Tibetan conflict. My first concern here is for the arrogation, reworking, or exclusion of generational, gendered, and classed experiences, subjectivities and agencies, by

a masternarrative of national social suffering that in becoming *doxic* (Bourdieu 1984), conceals its hegemonic nature. While fraught, illuminating the possibilities for other kinds of identification – the alternate ways experiences of past and present loss might be indexed – reflects a 'responsibility to difference' in a marginal community where scholarship has often centred on reproving Tibet's 'effective occupation' (Fischer 2014) by China. My second concern attempts to recover subaltern (marginal) agency in this context, and in this regard I appeal to Foucault's *parrhesia* (truth-telling) as a heuristic of decentred agency among exile youth, to explore how far 'patrifilial' hegemonic nationalism may be challenged through appeal to alternative kinds of political identification. My main research question, then, involves exploring how young people are constituted and work to constitute themselves through discourses of national loss, the costs of this process in terms of social difference, and the extent of marginal agency. I ask: **(1)**, how is the masternarrative of historical trauma produced, transmitted, and inherited? **(2)**, How absolute is the masternarrative? Are alternative histories of loss available? And **(3)**, how are young people made, and how do they make themselves, as refugee subjects of the lost nation? How total is this process? What evidence of agency?

(EXTREME) YOUTH AGENCY & THE AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT

Recent years have seen meteoric rise in concern for youth agency, especially in crisis. While fears over the supposedly inherent vulnerability and instability of youth have historical precedent, they have intensified in the era of 'new wars' (Kaldor 1999), and with the alleged rise of destabilising 'youth bulges' in the global south. Concerns for a trend of extreme youth agency today – often tied to the immanent or historic effects of violence, conflict, and dispossession – do seem empirically justified. As I write, 'moral panic' (McLuhan 1964; Cohen 1972) over Muslim youth (often from immigrant or refugee families) deserting their homes to join the violent circus of Daesh continues to unfold – their *criminal* actions, while individualised, popularly ascribed to (religious) 'radicalisation' of 'vulnerable' youth. In a different way, in 2012 at least 56 indigenous youth in Brazil (the youngest only nine) were reported to have committed suicide, and in 2015 it was likewise claimed that, in the first quarter alone, one South Dakota hospital had treated 241 (first-nation) patients under 19 for suicide – in this case their usually 'pathological' actions (again individualised) attributed either to dissociative disorders tied to poverty, abuse or racism, or

(increasingly) to 'historical trauma' caused by legacies of colonial violence (Wexler 2009; Jilek-Aall 1988; Wexler, Hill, Bertone-Johnson & Fenaughty 2008). This last account comes closer to how many account for the self-immolation of 145 mostly young Tibetans – including most recently sixteen-year-old Dorjee Tsering – since 2009. These acts of self-sacrifice, alongside youth involvement in protests and subtler forms of resistance occurring in China since 2008, as well as, of course, the flight from China into exile by so many young Tibetans over the years are –contrary to cases where young people are pathologised or criminalised- framed as acts of *sovereign* agency. Yet, while intuitive, how truthful is this? While the contexts differ, why are the actions and underlying subjectivities of each of these young people framed so differently? What *actually* marks the fifteen-year-old Tibetan 'martyr' from the 'suicidal' indigenous child, or the 'radicalised' youth? How can we better understand youth socialisation and agency in conditions of crisis?

As is true here, past exposure to conflict, displacement, or other forms of (traumatic) violence is often implicated as a determinant of 'melancholy agency' (Frost & Hoggett 2008) later in life – a relationship that has been of central concern to the extensive 'clinical war literature' (Boyden & de Berry 2004) that has emerged since Freud and Burlingham's 1943 report into the deleterious effects of the Second World War on children. Aside from its physical costs, an implicit worry has been for how violence impairs the psychological and especially *moral* development of the young, especially during critical formative periods like adolescence (Barber 2009:11). In recent decades this relationship has often been described in terms of *trauma* and sequelae such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). More recently still, trauma has been extended through the concept of *historical trauma* to theorise the effects of loss on those at spatial or temporal remove from the traumatic event. Yet while the clinical literature has been vital for identifying and rousing support for young victims of violence, problems remain (Boyden & de Berry 2004; Barber 2009). First, the reputed objectivity of clinical approaches elides how, in validating the material reproduction of violence,they can be exploited to support expedient shifts in representations of youth 'at risk' (and in need of therapeutic interventions) to portrayals of youth 'as risk' in need of discipline (Korbin 2003) –*i.e.* their *political* nature. Second, much clinical work is mechanistic, ethnocentric, and deterministic –pathologising the young and overlooking the prospect that vulnerability does not in and of itself preclude

ability (Boyden & de Berry 2004). Clinical theory, in this way, disregards socio-historical and cultural *context*; an issue that is not only epistemological – involving for instance conversion of political agents into clinical subjects (Fassin 2008) – but *ontological* – ignoring how culture is *constitutive* of experience, subjectivity and agency. While perhaps counter-intuitive, research is increasingly revealing how experience depends on processes of cultural representation (Bowker 1997:363; Kirmayer, Lemelson & Barad 2007; Morris 1998).

Indeed, while some see contingent systems of meaning (*e.g.* 'historical consciousness') as offering insulation against the worst effects of historical trauma (*e.g.* Wexler 2009), for others meaning is more deeply constitutive. For Alexander (2004; 2012), the traumatic quality of experience is produced through cultural representation itself –traumas are *constructed* through the faculty of the collective imagination -they do not already exist 'out there'. The production of cultural or inter-generational trauma is therefore the result of a social, rather than natural, process –it is *imagined*, and allows us to reimagine identities *vis-à-vis* the collective history of loss. The collective wound (*constructed* through social practices) can serve as a forge for collective agency (Alexander 2012) –it can be transformative, letting individuals and groups 'renarrate their foundations' (Hale 1998:6), and emerging as an affective point around which a polity and politics can nucleate. *Trauma* has, as such, become a 'unique way of appropriating the traces of history and one of the dominant modes of representing our relationship with the past' (Fassin & Rechtman 2009:15). It signals the entangling of individual with collective loss *vis-à-vis* collective identity, and allows understanding of the most extreme kinds of behaviour as specific (*sovereign*) responses to political conditions. Yet does this constructivist account, its optimistic view on the solidary potential of the traumatic event, and its voluntarist conception of agency trivialise suffering, and return us to another *underdetermined* account of experience, subjectivity, and agency? We may, following Fassin and Rechtman (2009), ask whether 'identification' of trauma displaces alternative accounts of loss here, and also, of course, whether power relations and inequalities drive, and reproduce through, the production of a masternarrative (Edkins 2003). With this in mind, it is important to consider how while valorising the terms of cultural recognition (*e.g.* marginal *nationalist* self-determinations struggles) may seem empowering, communities that have experienced loss, and the political causes that ensue, are often typified by exclusory, even chauvinistic,

identity politics (Zizek 1999; Yuval-Davies 2011). By appropriating, reworking, or excluding experience so that it conforms to the demands of power (Kleinman 1998:318), and in defining which losses are grievable (Butler 2003) and which are not, the rise of an *official*, structuring account of loss both reflects and reinforces this order.

<p style="text-align:center">❖</p>

In accounting for youth subjectivity and agency after loss we hit an impasse. On the one hand, clinical theory is depoliticising, ignores culture, and is largely blind to its normative bias. Similarly, we should beware reports that frame participation as only the result of coercion or manipulation – a point that, in the Tibetan case, where China accuses religious elders of such manoeuvrings, is particularly razor-edged. Indeed, such accounts too easily reduce possibly political acts of protest against *structural* injustice, to individual pathology. On the other hand, in valorising *cultural recognition*, cultural theory disregards the irreducibility of the event, flattening context and excluding different lived experiences of violence by weaving a unitary narrative of suffering and collective identity backwards through history. As such, as an *underdetermined* thesis that emphasises the terms of cultural recognition (*e.g.* nationalism), the constructivist account may not be so emancipative, threatening to displace wider forms of historic and present-day loss that may be related but not reducible to the masternarrative. While both accounts are political and reductive, it is the cultural that is most applicable to the Tibetan case –as is evident by the framing of the 145 cases of self-immolation that have occurred since 2009 in *national* terms, with little regard for the social epidemiology of the 'national heroes' (*pawo*) –including their age, gender, or class. What of these alternative markers of identity, what do they tell us about the differential constitution of subjectivity and agency in the conflict? What, also, do they tell us of the cost of sacrifice to some groups relative to others?

This potential cost was brought home when I met three young Tibetans (two teenaged boys and a girl) at the Tsuglakhang during my first week in Dharamshala. I was enjoying spiced-chai with the young people when the conversation turned to the issue of the self-immolations. There was a tangible excitement to the boys voices – the young woman, it should be noted, appeared very shy and said very little – behind the real concern for the martyrs, something that took a troubling turn when the one, jostling his friend's

shoulder, said: *this one wants to do it, he speaks of it all the time; he wants to do it*. Dissembling, his friend denied it, but nevertheless argued for the value of self-immolation as a mode of raising awareness for Tibet – of doing *something*. A few days later I met this young man for an informal English conversation class at a local coffee shop. After a while he returned to the subject of the immolations and, with a palpable sense of distress about the plight of Tibetans in Tibet, asked me what I thought about such sacrifices. Remembering his friend's comment the gravity of the situation and an intense sense of responsibility struck me. About a month later, on the March 10th memorial rally, I learned that a young man had been hospitalised after protestors spotted him slip behind a shed and ingest gasoline. On hearing this I thought immediately of my young interlocutor. While it had thankfully not been him, the event forced consideration of how young people and their profound, but cultivated, passionate attachments to the cause may be instrumentalised for a relatively narrow political agenda that does not always serve their 'best interests'.

There is no doubt that the immolations are saying *something*, but their significance over time and space, and the complex range of social-historical and cultural forces that determine their social distribution and the interpretive context against which it occurs and is made meaningful, is not self-evident (Makley 2015). The advent of accounts that *explain* action through underdetermined narratives of transeunt causality elide the wider context, and part of our critical effort must be to examine the discursive field through which the young are represented, and to consider the *politics* of representation, rather than establishing *authentic* accounts (Fassin 2008). Determining this may involve less identifying *real* differences between, than political variations in *surface* descriptions of, minds and behaviours. While veiled, this politics is irrefutable –as the differential representation of the young people above shows. While they do indeed cause more harm than self-immolators, for instance, would it not be possible to frame those joining Daesh in terms of voluntarist agency (i.e. as resistance against marginalisation) or as pathology owed to the disillusionment and alienation of Muslim youth in Europe? Alternatively, could we not see suicides of indigenous youth around the world as protest against legacies of cultural marginalisation or an effect of historical trauma? Or may we, equally, see the immolations in Tibet as determined according to age, class, or gender, or by

processes such as poverty, social exclusion, abuse, and racism related, but not reducible, to the trauma of national loss?

Putting aside questions of psychological 'truth', I submit that efforts to describe subjectivities and agencies *vis-à-vis* violent experience – a 'struggle' over the minds of individuals – often reflects less the practice of science than of (memoro) politics (Hacking 1996). Alternatively, through isolating and designating cause and effect, this can be seen as an effort to maintain a particular episteme sustaining of the social-political order. This is not anti-scientific; but only tries to resist the psyche becoming the site where (political) underdetermined 'transeunt' explanations are naturalised at the cost of an *overdetermined* subjective and social reality. We should beware teleologies of pathology or ideology ('caused' by a traumatic *event*), from dissolving the wider determinative socio-historical, cultural and political context. We should also beware, however, of assuming models of agent-causation that reduce action to ideas of causeless 'will', and elide the 'causal effects of the personal [and subaltern] psychological past and intrusive social present' (2013:75). We need a theory that accommodates the emergent role of historical loss (as narrative) in structuring human agency, but that does not elide the range of wider material-discursive forces productive of suffering and responses to it. Put otherwise, we need a way to theorise experiences of and responses to violence that resists depoliticising young people by either ignoring their facility for participation *or* by inflating the autonomy of ideological attachments -and thus eliding their material subjection as classed, gendered (*etc.*) subjects in the historical field. In short, we need to theorise youth agency in a way that 'accounts for a subject who is both determined by and to some extent free from external determination' (Rothenberg 2013:92).

THE MATERIAL-DISCURSIVE FIELD:
POLITICAL SUBJECTIFICATION & OVERDETERMINATION

How, then, should we theorise the effects of loss on political socialisation and agency among the young? Here, I invert the terms of enquiry, *decentring* experience (of the event and its significance), the subject (and her subjectivity), and agency (and its sovereignty), to identify their *historical* constitution, and then how loss (within discourse) marks the constitutive process – *i.e.* in contrast to asking how objective traumatic events mark sovereign subjects. This reverses clinical accounts of how events mechanically structure

subjectivity and behaviour to consider how traumas and attending 'traumatised' subjects and agencies are produced by discursive practice. In considering this historical constitution of the subject and her agency through *national* loss, I turn to the concept of *political subjectification* which – *via* a local historicism (Hacking 2002) that assumes the porosity of subjects and how descriptions can become constitutive of them – involves the various historical conditions and rationalities through which subjects, subjectivities, and agencies are made possible and emerge on the political scene. As I discuss in Chapter Two, this is very different to the humanist view of the subject –even in more unconventional psychoanalytical approaches- requiring reflection not of what subjects *are*, or what their experience of violence *is*, but how they are *fashioned* by the material-discursive practices of political authorities, humanitarian agencies, religious officials, psychiatrists, *etc.* (Fassin 2008) We should be under no illusions about the role of social *power* here, which *effects*, and is *an effect of*, the terms through which subjectification occurs. In this way, this allows us to identify the wider significance of memoro-politics (the fundamentally *ideological* struggle for young subjectivities) discussed earlier, describing how social normativity may *via* interpellation (Althusser 1976) become psychic reality.

Indeed, the shift to *discourse* does not imply subjectivities are just misrepresented: subjectification describes a *material* process of constitution through embodied and institutional practices. Concern on one hand then involves identifying the technologies of power (Foucault, 1988) through which subjects are *affectively-discursively* (Wetherall, 2012) made traumatised refugee subjects of the fallen nation and, following Butler (2005), 'at what price'. On the other, in discussing subjectification both Fassin and Butler hint at the curious agential dimensions of the process -subjects aren't just made, but also *make themselves* subjects: a (startling) capacity for agency consistent with Foucault's (1984) hermeneutics (or 'historical ontology') of the self. Yet while it is tempting to identify a voluntarist trend here –an opportunity for new forms of rebellious identification and action to emerge as manifestations of contradictory conscious- Foucault's reluctance to recognise an emancipable universal subject, and his aversion emancipative teleologies of positive freedom (Dumm 1996:6), deter seeing self-constitution as voluntary in the usual sense –regardless of actor's own claims. For Foucault (1991:108), there is no sovereign agency: the author, he notes, does not precede the works. As Butler (1997) explains, so profound is the role of power in forging our

passionate attachments that we cannot – in attempting to 'account' for ourselves – determine between 'authentic' desire and 'distillations of power' in the psyche (Kim, 2007:137). This is not to totally preclude possibility of (a decentred) agency. The 'historical ontology of ourselves' refers to how we may cultivate reflexivity to how we are 'indebted to the past, to each other, to ourselves' (Dumm 1996:3), and how we may 'act otherwise' in selecting gentler terms for constituting ourselves and others in realising social projects.

But what of loss? From this perspective trauma, for instance, is creatively reframed as a discursive mode of subjectification that is imposed on individuals but also one through which they can exist politically (Fassin, 2008). But does this remove the ontological weight of loss, making even less tangible displaced 'hidden injuries' of class *etc.* of concern here? *Loss*, here, is contentiously seen as *within* discourse, but this neglects neither its materiality nor the fact that the field of material-discursive relations exceeds the capacities of description and the masternarratives parsed from it. In contrast to psychoanalytical trauma theory, for instance – indicating, albeit at risk of universalising meaning and underdetermining agency, the at once determined and undetermined nature of the traumatised with reference to an ahistorical 'real' – recognising the *overdetermination* of experience, subjectivity, and agency allows for the emergent validity of the masternarrative as *an* account of agency, while still identifying the constitutive effects of other forces that cannot be reduced to this. Moreover, because it is unlikely that any narrative can fully displace this field, differentially positioned actors may be able to index these histories in performances of *marginal* agency. As a culturally salient heuristic I draw on the theme of 'truth telling' (*parrhesia*) here, to explore how far young Tibetans of different backgrounds are able to resist patrifilial hegemony by indexing alternative histories and accounts of loss, and in so doing enable the advent of new kinds of (subaltern) subjectivities.

PLATE 4: PROTEST & POLITICAL SOCIALISATION (4)

A young boy in a Free Tibet hat and clutching a Tibetan flag watches speeches delivered to an audience of school children, elders and tourists on National Uprising Day.

THE TIBETAN CASE

In this thesis I consider loss, political subjectivity, and agency among young people living largely within the Tibetan refugee community of northwest India. While complex, the cause of exodus for these young people is well known. In 1949 Mao's People's Liberation Army (PLA) advanced into eastern-Tibet to restore the region to Beijing -an act that compelled the young Dalai Lama to forfeit Lhasa's *de facto* independence to China. Over subsequent years, the introduction of socio-economic and political reforms led to the alienation of many Tibetans and, in March 1959, to uprising in Lhasa and the flight of HHDL and the government (*kashag*) of Central Tibet to India. Over successive decades further reform resulted in the restriction of civil, political and religious liberties, persecution, and more general rights violations and human security threats like famine, economic marginalisation, and environmental destruction –prompting flight to India of many thousands of Tibetans over the past sixty years. Despite facing substantial loss however, whether directly or indirectly through the presence of intergenerational historical trauma, the Tibetan community in exile is often seen as extraordinarily successful, and their young people as well adjusted relative to those in similar predicaments. In a way theoretically consonant with Wexler (2009), such success may be attributed to the presence of both material and crucially *ideal* institutions; in particular a masternarrative of *national* loss through which experience, subjectivity, and agency – including the recent forms of suicidal protest – past and present are explained. While this is in part justifiable, this masternarrative, as discussed above, has not emerged naturally as a record of an objective or singularly significant event that uniformly affected Tibetans (especially given the dubious salience of the concept of nation in 1950s Tibet) but has, along with attending national subjects, subjectivities, and agencies, been *constructed* in exile. For all the very defensible positives of this project, reifying national loss, subjectivity, and agency, enables the displacement of alternative accounts – to the extent that even subaltern Tibetan histories are framed within the nation' (McGranahan 2010:572) – while valorising the cause has led to a revisionism (Goldstein 1986) and an exceptionalism (Hansen 2003) that institutionalises disregard for the chauvinistic or elitist potential of the nationalist project, the hegemonic power relations it reproduces, and the inequalities resulting from its instrumentalisation and/or exclusion of difference. In questioning national agency I am careful to avoid what Yeh (2009) –in response to several leftist scholars (*e.g.* Sautman

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2006; Zizek 2008) who attribute Tibetan protest to incitement by subversive foreign forces or the 'black hand' of an elder elite terms 'radical reductionism'. Simultaneously, not only does morally ontologising the conflict in terms of Tibetan 'victims' and Chinese 'perpetrators' mask real issues of exclusion, inequality, and social reform in Tibetan history, but framing agency in sovereign national terms also incurs a different kind of depoliticisation by invisibilising the overdetermination of Tibetan suffering and agency – some of it caused by the national project. The concern, then, is not to question the validity of national subjectivity and agency, but in recognising its contingency and politicisation to identify its exclusions, and its differential costs.

While I am indebted to many Tibetanists[2], in exploring issues of representation, history, alterity, and the politics of belonging in exile I have gained most from work by Tiljander Asa Dahlstrom, Emily Yeh, Dibyesh Anand, Fiona McConnell and Carole McGranahan. First, in contesting community homogeneity, and in reframing diaspora as a *continuation* of the Sino-Tibetan conflict, Dahlstrom (2005) draws particular attention to how the violence of the Sino-Tibetan conflict and deprivations of displacement manifest in sometimes-embittered internal fractiousness, a problem aggravated by efforts to reify and impose internal unity from within and outwith the community. Prefiguring my interest in the relationship between individual and collective suffering, Dahlstrom offers reflection of the dissonances between them, noting that, while there exists the possibility of individual 'peace' in exilic life, diasporic 'legacies' of collective suffering generate very real psychological challenges –impeding the possibility of real 'peace of mind'. Second, Yeh (2007) continues on the theme of fractiousness by focussing on *intra*generational tensions between new arrivals from Tibet and those born in exile. Drawing on Bourdieu's habitus, she sees the tension in terms of a politics of authenticity encoded in differentially embodied markers of belonging (*e.g.* language, taste, and affect). Like myself, Yeh problematises the moral representation of Tibet's past through constitution of the 'mythico-history' (Malkki 1995). Also as I do, she notes how belonging is

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[2] These include, most significantly: Mills (2012); Lewis (2013); Vahali (2009); Diehl (2002); Swank (2014); Roemer (2008); Frechette (2007); Hess (2009); Dahlstrom (2005); Anand (2000; 2003; 2008); McConnell (2012); McGranahan (2005; 2010); Yeh (2007a; 2007b; 2009) Goldstein (1986; 1987; 1989; 1973; 1991; 2007; 2009; 2010; 2013; 2004; 1997); Schaik (2013); Shakya (1999); Fjeld (2005); French (2002); Houston and Wright (2003); Bass (1998); Powers (2004); Smith (2008).

affectively (materially) embodied. The dangers for exploiting this are also raised, and for Yeh (*op cit.* 665) compel identification of the limits of the 'liberatory potential of diasporic political projects'. While interestingly noting the classed dimension of intragenerational tension, Yeh does not however attempt reflection on how these may be tangled with struggles over the social order –an issue I discuss with regard to *politicising* hysteresis. Third, Anand (2000:275) underlines the *processual* nature of Tibetan identity, focussing on the structural and ideational factors shaping Tibetanness. He claims that the Tibetan diaspora must be seen as a 'particular social form, a type of consciousness and a mode of cultural production'. In this way, identification is also strategic –a means for securing external assistance, but also through commodification, as a mode of resistance. While he is sanguine about strategic essentialism and discursive plurality, Anand retains concern for power in constructing identities. Like Yeh, he also considers intragenerational tensions, and also signals *inter*generational ones related to rising militancy among youth frustrated with 'Middle Way'. Still, in a postcolonial style, Anand's view of identification is in the last instant valorising. He sees the 'trauma' of Chinese invasion and occupation as unifying, and thus affords less time for the 'politics of belonging' and the possible exclusions of 'reimagining nationalism'. Fourth, McGranahan (2005; 2010) also examines cultural governance in exile but, focussing on the elision of difference through 'arrest' or 'dispossession' of narrative, is more critical of how 'loss and displacement lend an urgency to collective histories, identities, and memories that prohibit […] challenges to hegemonic versions of community'. Focussing first on the 'forbidden' histories of the *Chushi Gangdruk* resistance, and second on women's histories of resistance, she is like Edkins interested in how the state reasserts hegemony through the appropriation or exclusion of experience, but also in how the 'cultural organising of history […] affects not just how we record the past, but also how people live their lives in the present, including how people and communities make, remake, and give account of themselves' (2010:771). Fifth, McConnell (2011), drawing on Foucault's governmentality, explores the reverse side of this by considering how the TGiE realises statecraft from a position of statelessness. Her work offers analysis of the 'ordering' techniques used by the TGiE to 'observe', 'normalise' and 'regulate' Tibetans in exile as both a living populace and as 'archival objects'. In theoretical orientation, empirical concern, and critical support of the community, I align closely with these scholars, but move to consider the internalisation of the social

order, how this patterns and is patterned by subjective experiences of violence and loss, and how these converge in the constitution of political subjectivity and agency.

DEFINING KEY TERMS

This work considers the subjectivities and agencies of Tibetan refugee youth of different gender and class backgrounds. The sociological significance of this – whether in terms of the scientific and ethical concern for young people affected by violence, or the relation of personal to collective identities – has been mentioned and will be explored further in Chapter One. It may however be helpful here to offer brief clarification of how these are broadly understood in this work and how this understanding is affected by their significance in the Tibetan socio-historical and cultural context. Of course, the socio-historical and cultural *construction* of such concepts is an overarching concern of this work, and as such will be considered throughout this thesis. However, while I am careful that any definitions remain responsive to the inherent mutability and porosity of concepts, I believe Derrida is right to recognise that it is impossible not to think at least 'partly' in categories (Calhoun 1994); and indeed, from a dialectical realist or dynamic nominalist position, it is likely that such categories even acquire a relatively material 'historical' ontology. In lieu of strict definitions, the following briefly reviews how 'youth', 'refugee', 'class' and 'gender' are understood in this thesis:

Childhood, Youth & Young People

Young people form the primary – albeit not exclusive – concern for this work. This concern is one that is both scientific (clinical and sociological) and ethical, reflecting an interest in the purportedly unique effects of violence and loss on young people's subjectivities and agencies, and the understanding that the young are, for some inhering quality, a group with elevated entitlements and deserving of special regard. For any good constructionist this assumption is, of course, disingenuous, and socio-historically, culturally and even biologically inaccurate. Indeed, while there are certainly 'biological and physiological facts that constrain and shape children's lives, particularly in early childhood', categories of 'childhood' (0-17) and 'youth' (15-24) are largely normative *social* renderings (Ansell 2005:9). Children and youth are not 'natural, universal categories'; the 'difference between children and adults in society cannot simply be read off from physical

difference […] movement from one status to another is not simply a matter of physical change' (*op cit*). Attempts at psychological or sociological definition are even more problematic. With the former, despite the influence of developmental psychology, efforts to identify universal cognitive qualities of children and youth have been criticised for limited cross-cultural validity (Barber 2009; Lancy 2015). With the latter, research has similarly revealed significant socio-historical and cultural variation in the qualities, behaviours, and social understanding and treatment of the young (Arriès 1962; Pollack 1983; Postman 1982; Clarke 2010). Furthermore, the contemporary totemic status of these labels can obscure constitutive differences within them. Ansell (2005:4) notes, 'while a 24-year-old has little in common with a three-month-old baby, a 17-year-old shares little more', and 'even within societies there are considerable differences in what is expected of children between different social classes and ethnic groups, and between boys and girls'. Class, gender, sexuality, disability and ethnicity differentiate the category, mediating lived-experience. As Holloway and Valentine (2000:4) argue, 'the category child is inscripted on the body through a lengthy historical process'.

Simultaneously, removing all ontological weight from these categories would be a mistake. As mentioned, a certain materiality to the 'child' is self evident, and it is imperative to recognise that 'childhood integrates biological and social processes' (Scheper-Hughes & Sargent 1998:1). From a cultural perspective, similarly, it is clear that most societies have some concept of childhood – even if, and especially among the poor, it is much shorter and looks different than in the West (Ansell 2005) – and while it is a very different kind of materiality, such concepts can gain 'weight' through constitutive inter-generational forces. Indeed, while recognising 'youth' as 'just a word', Bourdieu would argue that the constructedness of something does not remove its material effects. Certainly, categories of 'childhood' and 'youth' are socio-historically and culturally variable. But, '[as] conceptualisations of childhood vary over time and space, so too do experiences of being a young person. These two aspects are, of course, related. Expectations concerning the part that children *should* play in society both reflect and influence the roles they *do* play. Social constructions of childhood and youth are both products of historical circumstances and have real effects on young people' (Ansell 2005:9). My turn here to the dialectical realist/dynamic nominalist concept of historical ontology attempts to resolve the reputedly intractable ideal-material impasse by recognising how

discourse brings things into existence as social-psychological phenomena at particular historical junctures. This allows accommodation of both the essential mutability *and* materiality of discourse, averting the risk of essentialism whilst preventing potential abandonment of the 'embodied, material child' (James *et al* 1998:28).

The changing historical constitution of childhood – or more accurately 'youth' – in the wake of conflict and displacement is of course a key concern throughout this thesis. Yet it is also important to identify the implicit normative basis that has guided my analytical and ethical focus and that informed, among other practicalities, the selection of respondents. This is all the more relevant considering the need to take into account the constitutive force of local cultural conceptions of childhood and youth. It may be noted that Tibetan socio-historical and cultural conceptions of childhood and youth do not differ radically, and as I discuss in Chapter Six, have aligned further with global notions since the upheavals of the mid-Twentieth century. However, I also suggest that concerns for the internationally recognisable figure of the 'suffering child' reflect a new – and politically strategic – concern that was not evident in pre-occupation Tibetan society. Ideas of 'youth' are similarly conflicted, with representations of the young as 'seeds of the future' clashing with perceptions of a 'rebellious' youth that do not defer to their elders in the way expected in a paternalistic social order. An evident fluidity in how 'youth' is defined within Tibetan culture and society may be helpful here in reconciling this tension. In one memorable instance I was told by the head-teacher of a school that youth were the key to Tibet's future, and that I must interview a youth he knew well – an individual, it turned out, who was in his early forties. This is not to say that those who are more traditional 'youth' (15-24) are any more unified in their beliefs – quite the contrary, one of my main arguments here is that views of the cause differ appreciably between young people – however, it does imply a relationship between age and perceptions of legitimacy. The definition of 'youth' used here tries to balance normative 'global' definitions, with local understanding and also a more complex judgement about one's generational location within the patrifilial social order of the exile community. In this way, this work is largely aligned with, and reflective of, the definition of youth used by the United Nations Secretariat.[3] While the precise ages of young people from Tibet are sometimes uncertain, and while I will occasionally cite contributions

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[3] http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf

from younger children, older adults, and elders, the mainstay of my formal interviews are – for practical and ethical as much as sociological reasons – with young people aged between fifteen and twenty-four. However, to ensure responsiveness to my broader research concern and the particularities of the Tibetan socio-historical and cultural context, my focus on 'youth' here more correctly refers to those aged between thirteen and thirty-five.

(Tibetan) Refugees

The material-ideal impasse noted above affects not only conceptualisation of 'youth', but also other forms of identity. This is especially true for the concept of 'refugee'. Indeed, as I will discuss in Chapter One, the ontological weight of 'refugee' is – far more than 'childhood' and 'youth' above, or 'class' and 'gender' below – subject to contestation, being largely an unhappy side-effect of, and legal-political reaction to, failures within the socially constructed 'national order of things' (Malkki 1995). There are, as such, good reasons to be sceptical of the scientific value of the 'refugee' concept, which rather than a description of anthropological or psychological status is more truly a political ascription that can be used to recognise or refuse the legitimacy of specific forms of violence and loss (*i.e.* through the designation of 'real' or 'fake' refugees). While it is of course true that those categorised as refugees often do experience violence and privation following exodus, this is not an inevitable effect of refugeeness, but a result of specific discursive framing and catastrophic mismanagement of human migration. At the same time, aside from these basic material privations of exile caused and perpetuated by the national order, the concepts of refugee and refugeeness *do* appear to have some emergent sociological and psychological significance, not least among many of those subject to forced displacement. While some communities, for instance, reject the label of refugee for its associations of failure and otherness, others actively identify with it – including Tibetans in exile. In a feisty criticism of 'anti-sedentarism', Kibreab (1999:385) argues that 'in a world where rights such as equal treatment, access to sources of livelihoods, social services, rights of freedom of movement and residence, etc. are apportioned on the basis of territorially anchored identities, the identity people gain from their association with a particular place is an indispensable instrument to a socially and economically fulfilling life'. As such, 'by ignoring existing patterns of identification with place and the desire to return to locality of origin, anti-sedentarists engage in politically dangerous forms of wishful thinking, mistakenly

concluding that identities are nowadays increasingly detached from territory in a global move towards a-national, deterritorialized citizenship' (cf. Jansen & Lofving 2009:4). As I will discuss, I have sympathy here with concerns over the apparent postmodern trivialisation of exilic loss, and celebration of diasporic flux – which, I feel, insufficiently account for the materialities of loss and even dangerously valorise 'new' forms of exclusory identity politics. Simultaneously, *pace* Kibreab, I also argue that identity – especially in relation to space – has no immutable ontological status, and that while belief in such status has profound and even causal power, this efficacy cannot be understood in the terms of conventional social-scientific 'realism'. Identification with the refugee label in the Tibetan case is useful for nuancing this debate. For while, on the one hand, there are many Tibetans in exile that, while passionately identifying as 'refugees', are in realist terms *not* (having being born in India and never undergoing the 'refugee experience'), there are at the same time Tibetans that, while regarded by others as refugees (having risked the perilous journey from Tibet to exile), do not necessarily recognise this as a truth about their own experience or identity. I was surprised to discover during fieldwork, that while many do undergo extraordinary hardships in their flight from China, the nature of movement between Tibet and exile is not nearly as kinetic or one-way as is often portrayed. As I will discuss, identification with refugeeness is also in this way valuable for lending legitimacy to the collective history and charge of injustice, and to a nationalist cause that displaces other forms of material loss. While in no way disputing very real historical wrongs perpetrated against Tibetans by China, I argue that in identifying as refugees, and in citing comparisons with and imitating aesthetics of loss used by Jewish and Palestinian Diasporas, Tibetan exiles attempt to universalise – through *performance* – a specific narrative of identity in relation to loss. This does *not* de-ontologise the social or psychological force of such loss, nor justify claims that it is fabricated – not at all. The turn to dialectical realism avoids reducing understanding to polarised debates over 'true' or 'false' consciousness, enabling recognition of how individuals are historically constituted (through processes of subjectification) as 'refugees', and how such injunctions, while contingent, also have very real effects. In using the term 'refugee' in this work, I imply neither a *real* (spatial-political) identity produced as an effect of a *real* (spatial-political) form of individual or collective historical experience, nor a mere epiphenomenon. Instead, I use it parenthetically, respecting its ethnographic validity and value as an identifier used by exile Tibetans, but also to highlight

how, conversely to the realist perspective, the practice and performance of refugeeness enables a narrative of collective historical experience to *become* real at the level of identity. This does not refute the materiality of loss. However, while I do not dismiss the profound heartache affiliated with an *emergent* nationalist loss (for which 'refugeeness' is usually a proxy), I do attempt to recover the displaced materialities of alternate, *non-national* forms of social suffering.

Class & Gender

Age (of which I have already spoken), gender and class form, to different extents, the principal examples of 'unrecognised alterity' that I attempt to recover from 'beneath the rhetorical rubble' (Shalin 2011:169) of the nationalist master-narrative in this work. While perhaps not 'unrecognised', alternate gendered and especially classed accounts of past or present loss – and potential political futures – are routinely displaced by the masternarrative, and actively denounced where they threaten to undermine its orthodoxy or right as the prevailing account of identity and history. Yet again, however, the ontological orientation of this work prevents glib reference to essentialised 'gender' or 'class' categories, and throws any idea of 'recovering' historically authentic accounts in such terms into question. Certainly, class and gender might be argued, like age, to have a greater materiality than a concept such as 'refugee'; and while class has until recently been a largely unfashionable subject for scholars, the *reality* of sexual difference has been a divisive issue between feminists who see this as imperative for explaining the structural inequalities faced by women around the world and maintaining an emancipatory gender politics (New 2005). However, while efforts to reify such concepts form an important counter-current to the tide of deontologising postmodernism, such efforts – even in the sophisticated form of critical realism – offer inadequate solution to the theoretical or empirical weaknesses of essentialism, and are fatally undercut by an inability to isolate universal material foundations to categories. With the *metanarrative* of gender, constructionist theory is increasingly supported by psychological and biological research suggesting the fluid and socio-historically and culturally variable nature of gender differences. With that of class, the material (economic) basis of social reality and identity has for some time been disputed for neglecting the multiple forms of identification – and multiple forms of subjugation – that exist in the socio-historical field. This variation is, of course, especially relevant when considering the relevance of such modalities of analysis in a markedly different socio-cultural context –

such as Tibet. While, as with children and childhood, globalised metanarratives of class and gender *do* have an impact at the local level, it is imprudent to assume that these look the same as they do in a 'western' context, or that they can be viewed through the lens of an analytical framework that has emerged from an alien epistemological tradition. As I will discuss, the ways in which gender (and especially femininity) is socio-historically and culturally constructed in the Tibetan context in some ways might be argued to differ from elsewhere, with several historical accounts of traditional Tibetan society (*e.g.* Bell 1928) emphasising the relative autonomy and equality of women – a point the exile community are keen to emphasise. With the contentious issue of class too, there are a number of Tibetan and western commentators (*e.g.* Khetsun 2008; Fjeld 2003) that dismiss the relevance of western 'Marxian' categories of analysis, and others that emphasise the comparatively 'classless' nature of contemporary exile society. However, while there may be differences in the ways in which these categories are constructed, it is the contention here that arguments such as these are heavily skewed by political sensibilities. The construction of gender in traditional Tibetan society and contemporary exile is not nearly as progressive as this narrative maintains, and leaves women facing very real and sometimes serious inequalities. The concept of class is more challenging, contingent on overlapping if intertwined judgements regarding the socio-economic status and cultural dispositions of self and others that are subject to change over time. However, as I argue, while traditional Tibetan society was in no way as cruel as is claimed by Chinese propaganda, neither was it a 'friendly feudal' social order. It is clear from historical records that traditional society was intensely stratified, and that Tibetans of lower class and caste faced significant hardships. While acute stratification is not evident in contemporary exile society – and while strides towards equalisation are evident – the legacies of symbolic distinction do still remain, even if their impact is limited. Moreover, new forms of distinction (*e.g.* between established exiles and 'new arrivals', or between those residing in the West and those that remain in South Asia) have also emerged. While beyond the scope of this work, the question of whether there is a relationship between these new forms of distinction and historic designations of status would be an interesting topic for further research. Indeed, while class may have a diminished significance in contemporary exile society – in this way resembling a series of traces without an inventory (Gramsci 1971:324) – I suspect that its structuring effects over time has played (and plays) a more important role in structuring the welfare, dispositions, and

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agencies of Tibetans than has been recognised – possibly reflected in the geographic distribution of exiles, their present affluence and life prospects, and even their political persuasions and reasons for flight from China. This is not to dismiss the inherent fluidity of class and the relative autonomy of its socio-economic, symbolic and cultural dimensions: it is clear that some previously 'low status' families have become very wealthy in exile, for instance, even if they remain despised by their social 'betters' (see Chapter Five). At the same time, it is also clear that many exiles remain extremely poor, and it is the contention here that such penury should *not* be seen as accidental. Again, dialectical realism offers a persuasive solution to the material-ideal impasse, encouraging recognition of the emergent, relatively coherent reality of concepts such as class and gender and their material effects, but also reimagining them as emerging not from *real* extra-discursive foundations but as articulations of porous, mutable and historically contingent discursive formations.

CONTRIBUTION

In attempting to provide an illumination of youth political subjectivity and agency this thesis, drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, semi-structured interviews and discourse analysis, explores how young people experience, make sense of, and respond to political violence and displacement in the context of the Sino-Tibetan conflict. This includes young people's direct experience of violence, conflict and the so-called refugee-experience, but also the more complex effects of intergenerational historical trauma and its transmission through postmemory (Hirsch 2012). I turn to *meaning* (as a durable 'structure') in helping to understand how young people *learn* or are *produced* as subjects of political communities and social movements –a process of subjectification. But I am also concerned for hegemony. How complete is this process? How representative? Whither difference? And what of material or symbolic inequality? Do social actors have control over the discursive constitution of self and society, over accommodating the material traces of violence into a coherent narrative, or do historic forms of suffering as they pertain to different groups persist to structure their welfare? Can the suffering of others, that is, be narrated out –or do traces remain, albeit inarticulable? Focussing specifically on the young, but also on class and especially gender differences, I enquire into dissonances between the masternarrative and other histories and contemporary experiences of loss, concentrating on the various ways through which young people are made, and make

themselves, refugee subjects. My argument is that, despite hopeful claims to the contrary, the traumatic event does not necessarily provide impetus for progressive social change, and that the construction of a masternarrative of national loss, and a national cause, will reflect and work to reiterate a specific social order. I am, in this way, quite doubtful about the prospects for youth (or indeed any) agency, but remain hopeful over the prospect for certain points of nodal resistance to hegemony. More generally, I affirm the dangers of efforts to account for youth subjectivity and agency –charging such accounts in relation to the self-immolations not only with distortion for political ends, but also providing a 'risky blueprint' for similar acts.

STRUCTURE

This thesis is composed of two theoretical chapters, a history chapter, and three empirical chapters. In Chapter One I offer a narrative Literature Review discussing research dealing with young people's political socialisation and agency in the wake of violence and massive loss, moving to provide more intensive consideration of cultural and critical approaches to collective trauma. The chapter broadly concludes that while culturalist approaches form more powerful and politically sensitive means of accounting for loss and young people's responses to it than individualising clinical theory, they also tend to valorise specific forms of cultural recognition over others and lose sight of the multiple ways in which people are constituted and dominated. In Chapter Two, I attempt to chart a way through this apparent impasse between the fatalism of clinical theory and more agentialist cultural constructivism, drawing on poststructural (constructi*onist*) concepts of overdetermination and subjectification to construct an alternative conceptual framework for theorising experience, subjectivity and (decentred) agency. With this framework in mind, in the following parts of the chapter I outline my genealogical methodology, my analytical framework, research design and methods, and significant ethical issues. In Chapter Three, I offer an (parenthetical) analysis of the history and historiography of violence, loss, and subjectivity in the Sino-Tibetan conflict, with a particular focus on youth suffering and coping in the context of historical trauma. While intended as a relatively impartial history chapter – and to some extent serves the purpose of familiarising readers with the recent history of the Sino-Tibetan conflict – a fundamental argument of this thesis is that such efforts at impartiality are impossible, and that any such attempt to articulate history necessarily plays a role in the constitution of

trauma in the 'scientific arena' (Alexander 2012). As such, Chapter Three plays a further role in revealing the emergence of a *natural* national trauma, and documents the various ways – positive and negative – in which this trauma affects the young. While the structure of the thesis is relatively orthodox to this point, the remaining empirical chapters are structured more idiosyncratically around three decentrings that reflect the terms of enquiry, the supposed teleology of violence, and the narrative flow of the literature review. In this way the flow of my argument follows my personal intellectual journey in attempting to work through the puzzles generated by my onto-epistemological persuasions and ethical priorities. Reflecting the flow of the Literature Review, the remaining three chapters first reimagine trauma through the constructivist lens, second deconstruct this cultural trauma to reveal the alternative histories and accounts that are subsumed by the national account, and then finally attempt to 'recover' alternate forms of agency. Using Alexander's (2004; 2012) 'cultural trauma', Chapter Four broadly offers a decentring of the traumatic event by exploring how the 'historical trauma' identified in Chapter Three is in fact a *contingent* socio-psychological 'truth' produced, transmitted, and internalised *via* affective-discursive practices that lend it force through significance, site and substance. In Chapter Five, I deconstruct this narrative, decentring the *national* subjectivities it affects by trying to illumine alternative histories (*i.e.* of age, gender and class) and present-day realities of loss and suffering elided (sometimes purposely) through the historical practices vital for producing the nation and dutiful national subjects. The final part of the chapter asks whether the production of memory has as such led to the *re*production of the 'patrifilial' order or its transformation. Finally, Chapter Six, reflecting my imperfect efforts to recover agency noted in Chapter Two, reconsiders socialisation through political subjectification, exploring the discursive constitution of young people as 'victims', 'martyrs' and 'rebels', and the extent to which they are able to resist hegemonic processes of subjectification, and create the space for a more progressive cultural politics in exile through indexing alternative kinds of loss.

ONE

THE AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT
POLITICAL SOCIALISATION & YOUTH AGENCY AFTER LOSS

The struggle to *account* for youth agency (or 'behaviour') has implicitly or otherwise emerged as a central concern for research and policy. Often, such accounts involve defining, in particular, how violent past experiences influence socialisation and determine psychological status. Violent behaviour is often seen as a result of violence, and in explaining radical subjectivity and extreme agency, violent past experience is routinely held as formative. In dissecting young minds, specialists can determine a young person's true experience of violence, and the cause and status of her agency –*i.e. pathological*, *criminal* or, as with the Tibetan self-immolations, an intelligible expression of sovereign national defiance. I refute this humanist view of the subject, subjectivity and agency -each regarded here as *historically* constituted and *overdetermined* (Resnick & Wolff 2013) by a material-discursive field irreducible to single causal accounts (clinical, cultural *etc.*) –which while constitutive (Hacking 2002) reflect 'memoro-politics' (Hacking 1996) more than science. Simultaneously, in a thesis that explores how young people experience, make sense of, and respond to experiences of violence and loss it is crucial to consider the wider literature –work that in any case offers context and establishes the basis for the position set out in Chapter Two. As such, this chapter examines two prevailing paradigms of how experiences of loss may mark political socialisation among young people.

In **Part One,** I review *humanist* (*i.e.* clinical psychological) work specifying the (usually pathological) effects of conflict and displacement on youth subjectivity and agency. Central here is a mechanistic idea that (*naturally* traumatic) events have a (universally) constitutive effect on subjectivity; explaining the *reproductive* quality of violence (Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004) by the idea that, either through its injurious effect on fragile psychic tissue or its advent as a new social norm, 'violent experience begets violent behaviour' (Barber 2009:11). While this tends to focus on individuals, in recent years interest in the effects of deracinating violences of modernity (*e.g.* displacement, dispossession, ethnocide, and genocide), have led to increasing clinical focus on intergenerational suffering and even the prospect of *genetic* trauma. However, while persuasive and influential, several criticisms (including charges of reductionism, mechanism, and ethnocentrism) beset such approaches (Boyden & de Berry 2004) -reducible to a neglect

of context, and a disregard for the emergent power of social and cultural systems. In the second section, I introduce a cultural critique, noting how while the humanist concerns for young people's psychological health can be progressive, pathologisation can also underestimate their resilience as agents in even the most violent social processes, misidentify the sources of their suffering (naturalising political causes), and more troubling, work to depoliticise and de-legitimise their subjectivities and agencies. While the effort to understand the constitutive effects of violence and loss on socialisation and agency is valuable, the universalism and methodological individualism of the humanist paradigm – especially where it comes to intergenerational loss – blinds research to the *contingent* and *relational* ontologies of experience subjectivities, and agencies.

In **Part Two**, I turn to cultural theories that emphasise the irreducibility of the social or the psychological to material nature, and roots individual and collective loss in processes of cultural representation. *Cultural* trauma theory (Alexander, 2012) stresses how actors *produce* trauma *through* institutionalised practices. No event is naturally traumatic, argues Alexander, but is *made* so by *performance* and narrative transmission. Such processes have solidary potential. While they might be painful, historical traumas are seen as a way of reconstituting a political community and cause through recognition of shared suffering in the terms of identity (Fassin & Rechtman 2009). Yet, while this seems to provide an framework for understanding acts of individual or collective agency, its implicit voluntarism fails to account for and even trivialises the loss underpinning the melancholic agency of indigenous suicide (for instance), and the valorisation of culture risks neglecting the role of *power* in determining meaning. *Radical psychoanalysis (e.g.* Caruth 1995; Zizek 2008; Badiou 2009; Edkins 2003) seems to offer solution for the first of these – accepting the encultured nature of subjects, but theorising – in an anti-mimetic fashion – how certain events defy representation, exposing subjects to an inassimilable 'real' that can 'destroy the symbolic identity of the affected person (Bistoen *et al* 2014) but also for some (Badiou 2005), offer a *real* foundation for progressive social movements.

While compelling, I am sceptical here of both the return to an anti-mimetic approach *via* the ahistorical and universalising concept of the 'Real' (Leys 2007), and the optimistic belief in the solidary promise of

'the event'. Indeed, trauma, I argue, risks naturalising *underdetermined* accounts of experience, subjectivity, and agency that displace alternative scales and histories of loss (Fassin & Rechtman 2009) in non-arbitrary ways. As such, in **Part Three** I enquire into prospects for a critical theory of trauma by exploring how constructing and privileging a certain account of social suffering at the expense of others may reproduce power relations and inequalities. For Fassin, reification of trauma – either *via* appeal to an inassimilable 'real', or to a consensual schema of meaning – risks neglecting how identification of a traumatic singularity risks displacing alternate histories of loss. We should consider, for instance, the differential ways loss may be constituted and experienced *vis-à-vis* social variances in gender, race, ethnicity, or class? Such groups surely have their own histories that will be inevitably elided by the masternarrative? Like cultural trauma theory, the 'traumatic' event (and the 'traumatised' subjectivities attending it) are held to be artefacts of a socially constituted 'horizon of affect and meaning' (Alexander 2012:12); unlike it, however, this is a horizon contingent on concrete power relations operating in the historical field –and one potentially productive of a hegemonic archepolitics (Zizek 2000). Respecting the overdetermined constitution of the event, the subject (her subjectivity), and agency, possibly enables illumination of displaced histories and contemporary experiences of loss, and leads to my re-theorisation of subjectivity and agency in Chapter Two.

VIOLENCE, SOCIALISATION & AGENCY: CLINICAL THEORY

The acute violence of the twentieth century 'has left a terrible legacy at the dawn of the twenty-first, [with] political hostilities [becoming] firmly entrenched in many parts of the world' (Boyden & de Berry 2004:xi). Such hostilities have also brought 'the battle more immediately, more systematically, and more massively to the core of the civilian population' (Machel 2006:6), with the young especially suffering indirectly or as direct targets for elimination, abuse, and enlistment (Machel 1996; 2006; UNICEF 2009; Kaldor 1999). Despite improvements, in 2014 UNICEF estimated that fifteen million children were ensnared in violent conflict, and a further 230 million were claimed to be living in areas affected by it. In addition, UNHCR calculates that over fifty per cent of the fifty-nine million people thought to be displaced overseas or internally in 2014 were children with thousands of these subsisting as 'warehoused refugees' in a state of protracted displacement (Smith 2004; Loescher & Milner 2009). Yet, as this implies, violence and loss are

not limited to war-time, and we must consider exposure to everyday forms of violence, as well as to the debilitating legacies of historic loss, including genocides and colonial dispossessions – modernity's 'Janus face' (Hinton 2005) – and the historical traumas they cause; what Nordstrom (2012) describes as the 'tomorrows of violence'. This has led to alarm over the deleterious effects of loss on the physical, psychological and social welfare of the young, and here I review work on the cost of violence on their physical, psychological, and *moral* development, alongside how biomedicine theorises youth vulnerability, before contrasting this with research emphasising their resilience and agency.

Violence, Trauma & Youth

Since Freud and Burlingham's (1943) study on the effects of the Second World War on orphan children, a sizeable clinical literature tracing the 'grim effects of warfare' (Boyden & de Berry, 2004) on the young has emerged. Indeed, for researchers in this tradition the effect of conflict and displacement on young people is 'resoundingly negative', introducing risks to physical (see: Lustig *et al* 2004, for an overview), social (*e.g.* through the disruption of education, health or other public services) and psychological welfare. Indeed, while concern over physical and social threats is significant, there has been particular regard for the adverse psychological and consequently *moral* effects of violence, even at considerable generational remove. Children growing up in war, Berman (2001:245) says, 'are typically exposed to multiple stressors including physical harm, intimidation or other forms of psychological trauma, loss, deprivation, malnutrition, bereavement, or abuse'. Exposure to violence, killing, or torture note Ehntholt and Yule (2006:1198), 'as well as the subsequent losses suffered, increase the risk for psychological distress and the development of psychiatric disorders' among children and young people. The discovery of PTSD and related traumatic sequelae has led to particular concern in clinical circles and the public imaginary-for how violence and the wider privations of 'war conditions' put young people at risk of 'lasting psychological malformations' (Freud & Burlingham 1943:11). This is marked among young refugees – that most 'symptomatic' of groups (Arendt 1970) – who, some argue, must contend with both 'the *compounding stressors* of childhood', and 'the extraordinary and traumatic experiences of displacement' (Bronstein & Montgomery 2011:44), putting them at greater risk of 'psychological distress' (Rutter 1985; 1988).

Extensive research now offers illumination of the numerous material risks and psychopathologies of forced displacement.[4]

However, for some, vulnerability to traumatisation is more alarming for its impact on *moral* development – and its relationship to development of dysfunctional behaviour. 'There is now substantial evidence' claim Leavitt and Fox (2014:xi), 'that the legacy of family violence and trauma is passed down through generations -adults who were abused as children are more likely to perpetuate this violence upon their own children'. While concerns over 'lasting psychological malformations' here are sincere and may lead to therapeutic interventions for young victims, the inference that '*exposure to violence begets violence*' (Garbarino 1995; Garbarino *et al* 1992; Shaw 2003; cf: Barber 2009; Punamaki 2009) may also perversely enable the transformation of young people as a cohort 'at risk' into one that *poses* risk (Korbin 2003; Stephens 1995). Such concerns are especially evident with refugee youth. As one UNHCR (2004) report into protracted displacement shows, concern rests not only with the risk of 'wasted lives' and 'squandered resources', but the 'increased threats to security' posed by such groups. In much academic and lay discourse, there remain entrenched beliefs over the psychologically, socially and morally destructive effects of displacement. For Stein (1981:321), refugees comprise a 'social-psychological type', a group 'with identifiable and often

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[4] Using Stein's 'refugee experience' for organizational convenience (1981; see also: Miller & Rasco 2004), several meta-analyses, literature reviews, and systematic reviews (Lustig *et al* 2003; Porter & Haslam 2005; Fazel *et al* 2005; Ehntholt and Yule 2006; Bronstein and Montgomery 2011; Rousseau 1995; Berman 2001; Lustig *et al* 2004), chart the formidable literature dealing with the problem of psychological distress –which is defined in terms of 'post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and other symptoms such as irritability, restlessness, sleep problems, somatic symptoms, and conduct disorders' (Bronstein and Montgomery, 2011: 45)- owing to conflict and displacement. At the 'pre-flight' stage, studies express particular concern for: separation from parents (Hollins *et al* 2007; Bean *et al*, 2007), witnessing the disappearance, violent death or torture of family members (Hepinstall *et al*, 2004; Kuterovac, Dyeregrov & Stuvland 1994; Quirk & Casco 1994), perceptions of personal vulnerability (Garbarino & Kostelny 1996), and the physical and psychological consequences of personal involvement in violence, either as victim or perpetrator (Peters and Richards 1998; Macksoud *et al* 1993). During 'flight' and for post-migration, studies also express concern for: unaccompanied minors (Loughry & Flouri 2001; Garbarino *et al* 1991; Sourander 1998; Rousseau *et al*, 1998); physical stresses of flight and potential psychological consequences, the threat of *refoulement* (Duffy 2008), the unique stresses, privations, and dangers of refugee camps, detention centres, and other institutional living conditions (Nezer 2000; Geltman *et al* 2005), psychological problems owing to the uncertainty of issues such as asylum application and other bureaucratic or legal arrangements (Hepinstall *et al* 2003; Ellis *et al* 2008), financial hardship and unemployment, language issues, and experiences of social isolation, discrimination, or racism (Noh *et al*, 1999), issues of 'cultural bereavement' related to estrangement from culture, country, material belongings, family and friends, and related processes of 'acculturation' (Eisenbruch 1984; Tobin & Friedman 1984; Gil, Vega & Dimas 1994; Rumbaut & Ima, 1988; Berry *et al*, 2010), and the concern for 'coping' with the physical and psychological implications of previous experience, loss, and psychological impairment. These stressors have been linked to a range of psychopathological sequelae, including: 'anxiety and depression, anger and violence, psychic numbing, paranoia, insomnia, and a heightened awareness of death' (Garbarino & Kostelny 1996; Jablensky *et al* 1994; Lustig *et al* 2004: 24), long-term depression (Kinzie *et al,* 1984; 1986; 2004), the propensity toward self harm (Patel & Hodes, 2006), impaired moral development (de Silva *et al*, 2001; Rousseau *et al*, 2007) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

identical patterns of behaviour and set of causalities' brought about by the kinetic force of displacement. The presumed threat to *identity* is partly to blame here. As Stein (1981:67) notes, refugees 'will confront the loss of their culture, their identity, [and] their habits' (see also: Ager 1999). Where they fail to assimilate, profound alienation will ensue. As Rose (1993:9) argues, for many, '[the] normative order has broken down, old rules no longer obtain, social groups have been torn asunder, and there is often nowhere to turn. For many refugees *anomie* [emphasis his own] is born of alienation, alienation in its most literal form'. Stein conceives a natural and universal relationship between displacement and dysfunctional socialisation here –one that, despite individuals' efforts to help themselves,[5] is determined by the 'trauma of flight', 'hardship and loss'. As such, experience produces a volatile (even dangerous) subjectivity. He notes (323):

> The trauma of flight produces residual psychological states in the refugee that will affect behaviour for years to come. Because they usually endure the greatest hardship and loss, those who are late to flee are likely to come out of the experience with three residual characteristics: guilt, invulnerability and aggressiveness […]. The new aggressiveness may be displayed in the form of increased violence, crime and suicide.

Despite a recent turn to resilience (Bonamo 2004; Daud, Klinteberg & Rydelius 2008; Agaibi & Wilson 2005; McAdam-Crisp 2006; Harvey 2007), concerns for the particular vulnerability of the young remain acute in clinical work and popular discourse –underpinning vacillating portrayals of youth *at* risk and *as* risk. *Trauma* offers a powerful means for articulating this relationship, enabling understanding of how events compel (aberrant) individual behaviour as a 'parasitic' memory (Kirmayer, Lemelson & Barad 2007). Despite the individualist methodological constraints of clinical theory, in recent years concern for the apparent clustering of pathologies in groups that have experienced past adversities has led to speculation over possible mechanisms for the *intergenerational* transmission of traumatic loss -including signs of pathology among those that have not directly experienced violence. *Historical trauma* –involving 'a combination of acculturative stress, cultural bereavement, genocide, and racism that has been generalised,

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[5] Stein's 'patterns of adjustment' presents a 'bleak' view of the 'refugee condition' worth citing for its broader resonance: 'in the initial period, the refugees will be confronted by the reality of what has been lost. From a high occupational and social status at home they will plunge downward in their new land – from professional to menial, from elite to an impoverished minority. They will confront the loss of their culture –their identity, their habits. Every action that used to be habitual or routine will require careful examination and consideration. […] During the next period […] refugees display an impressive drive to recover what has been lost, to rebuild their lives. […] After four or five years the refugee has completed the major part of adjustment. […] After ten years the refugee group will have achieved certain stability. […] The sum total after the first decade is one of decline. Despite the drive and determination, the effect of exodus is to produce lower status'.

internalized, and institutionalized' (Wexler, 2009 –see also: Atkinson, 2002; Brave Heart & DeBruyn, 1998; Kirmayer, Brass & Tait, 2000; Robin, Chester & Goldman, 1996), refers to the capacity of violence to extend beyond the original event to structure bodies, minds and societies over time. While the intergenerational transmission of 'victimization-related pathology' has not yet been officially recognised, several scholars note its clinical value (Dekel & Goldblatt 2008; Lev-Wiesel 2007; Krystal & Danieli 1994; Kestenberg 1989; Davidson 1980; Klein 1971; Trossman 1968 –see: Krell & Sherman 1997), claiming that without recognition children's behaviour may by 'misdiagnosed, its [aetiology] misunderstood, and its treatment, at best, incomplete' (Danieli 1998:3). This once more signals how, through its effects on subjectivity, violence is believed to adversely structure moral agency. In the search for a material foundation to this relationship new work on epigenetics (see: Yehuda & Bierer, 2009) hypothesises a genetic component to such trauma. Such a finding offers further indication of the structuring role of violence and suffering in processes of socialisation, and the constitution of subjectivity.

Theorising Vulnerability

A primary assumption of much of the 'clinical war literature' (Boyden & de Berry 2004) then, has been that the 'experience of chronic danger appears to be [naturally] associated with truncated moral development' and various forms of 'vendetta mentality' (Garbarino & Kostelny 1993) or psychopathology. What, however, determines youth vulnerability in this way, and what mitigates it? For Ansell (2005:15), the assumption of vulnerability here may be traced to early psychological theory of moral-cognitive development that '[focus] exclusively on the cognitive' and see children as natural kind whose maturity follows an 'inevitable process'. At 'critical periods' of neuroplasticity (*e.g.* adolescence), young minds are especially susceptible to experiences that subsequently shape their ideological stance and behaviours later in life (Harding *et al* 1969; Lambert & Klineberg 1967; Clark & Clark 1939; Easton & Dennis 1969; see: Sears and Levy 2003:60-61). The period to one's late twenties – especially the hormonal stage of adolescence (Griffin 2001) – is especially volatile; a time of 'storm and stress' (Arnett 1999) where young people, 'unmoored' in society and undergoing identity crises (Arnett 2000; Carlsson & Karlsson 1970; Erikson 1968), are deemed more prone to rebellion (Feuer 1969), social vices, and delinquency (Finn 2001 – see: Sears and Levy, 2003). Predictably, 'negative experiences' during these 'impressionable

years' (Sears & Levy 2003) are thought to trigger dysfunctional socialisation, with research emphasising how the 'socially toxic' (Garbarino 1997) 'moral vacuum' of conflict and exile damages child development by 'disrupting their construal of moral agency' (Posada & Wainryb 2008; Wainryb & Pasupathi 2010; Ardila-Rey, Killen & Brenick 2009; Dawes 1994; Garbarino 1997). With refugees, Reed *et al* (2011:1) explains:

> The mental health of children who have been forcibly displaced is of particular concern because of their experiences of insecurity at a formative stage of child development. The combined weight of socioeconomic adversity and exposure to violence in their countries of origin, followed by migration and finally resettlement into a new context, exposes them to several and cumulative risks to their physical, emotional and social development.

For the clinical paradigm, healthy socialisation and behaviour depends on a physical, moral, and 'ontological' (Giddens 1991) security apparently denied by conflict. For Garbarino, Kostelny and Dubrow 1991:383), 'war and chronic community violence produce "social disaster", in which there is a dramatic and overwhelming destruction of the infrastructure of daily life at precisely the time when children need reliable social structures to reassure them and to offer moral interpretation'. In particular, they argue, the psychological absence of an adult community capable of reassuring, protecting, clarifying, and interpreting, leaves the young especially open to violent ideologies (*op cit*). Yet Garbarino and Kostelny depart from clinical theory here to note that, while ideology can hamper rational moral development and even lead to polarisation and intensification of hostility, it can also, in providing a vital source of *meaning* for violence and loss, be a source of resilience, 'particularly when held to with fanatic intensity, which it often must be to defend against the crushing weight of reality in a concentration camp, a prison, or a refugee camp' (*op cit*. 383). Situations of chronic danger *may*, they argue, help 'moral development if they are matched by an interactive climate created by adults (and endorsed, or at least not stifled, by the larger culture through is political, educational, and religious institutions) and if the child is free of debilitating psychopathology (*e.g.* PTSD)'. While promising, however, this does not entirely resolve the faults of clinical theory, failing first to identify how 'meaning', less than a salve that may be applied to mitigate an inherently traumatic event, might in fact itself be a *source* for its 'crushing weight', and second how 'moral rationality' – whether defined in terms of hegemonic social norms, or as an *insurgent* subjectivity owing to a

'psychology of oppression' (Fanon 1961) – is less a *quality* threatened by violence and salvageable by 'appropriate' intervention, than a construction. The foremost criticism of clinical approaches here is their failure to identify the *historical contingency* of subjectivity and agency and, more pointedly, their *irreducibility* to a singularly constitutive event.

The Cultural Critique: Youth, Normativity & Meaning

Despite its influence, several scholars (Boyden & de Berry, 2004; Barber, 2009) have criticised the methodological insufficiencies of the clinical literature for understanding political socialisation and agency after loss –emphasising its mechanistically pathologising, individuating, universalising, positivistic, and ethnocentric nature. Normative assumptions over *right* psychosocial and moral development, or what an 'appropriate' environment for children might be, compound the materialist tendencies of clinical theory resulting in a reductionist account that: **(1)** depoliticises and decontextualises conflict and those experiencing it, overemphasising the passivity of young people as victims; **(2)** neglects 'the broader range of attitudinal, emotional, developmental and behavioural effects in children and adolescents'; **(3)** dehistoricises the complex, shifting nature of conflict over time, and the various forms of suffering it produces; **(4)** overemphasises the universal and transhistorical validity of psychiatric diagnoses; and **(5)**, largely neglects culture, social power and identity –or how wider social structural processes continue to work in, and in dialectic with, conflict (Boyden and de Berry, 2004:xiv-xvi). While such neglect can also be a failing of cultural approaches, this last point identifies how, in addition to framing the effects of loss as fundamentally negative, they are also problematically regarded 'as consistent; since it is generally thought that child development and wellbeing are based in biological and psychological structures that are fairly uniform across class and culture […]'.

Clinical approaches may be contrasted with *culturalist* accounts that: **(1)**, *recontextualise* violence, conflict, and displacement as complex, multivalent socio-historical and cultural processes with (plural) local significances; **(2)**, dispute the pathologisation of loss and expectations over its effect on subjectivities and agencies –instead noting the intervening role of *culture* in determining the force and effect of adversity; and **(3)**, *repoliticise* (in this case young) people in conflict, recognising their potential for agency. From a

culturalist view, the clinical objectification and pathologisation of social danger and responses to it neglects first that, while undesirable, violence and stress are for many around the world an all-too-common, feature of life[6] (Honwana 2005; Desjarlais & Kleinman 1997). Second, while alarming, violent social processes are not alien or universally consistent, but variable products of specific socio-historical and cultural conditions, that can have concrete (even positive)[7] significance for individuals and societies (Richards 2005). And third, that not only do individuals fail to display a universal response to certain stressors –with what is held to be 'traumatic' historically, culturally, and interpersonally variable (Konner 2007; Summerfield 2001; Layne *et al* 2008)- but pathologising distress also removes people from 'the wider social context of violence and its normative suffering' (Barber 2009:15), effectively depoliticising them and their agencies.

I will return to this last point shortly. First, however, I note how the pathologisation of social danger, and the inscription of political and historical processes 'in the bodies and psyches of the people who are undergoing them' (Malkki, 1995:511), obfuscates their socio-political significance as effects of intersecting local and global power relations in turn promoting these discourses and the interventions (military, therapeutic *etc.*) they sanction. This is especially evident with displacement that, as discussed above, is regarded as exceptionally deleterious to psychological welfare and (thus) security. The depiction of refugees as a 'social problem' (Robin & Kushner 2002:3) here, while possibly linked to fears over the domestic availability of resources (Zetter 1991) is less a material problem[8] than a cultural one, governed by entrenched fears over the *moral* threat of the displaced (Malkki 1992; 1995). For Malkki, what Bauman (2006) might term a pervasive 'liquid fear' of the displaced in modernity is not 'rational', but reflects a sedentarist bias against placelessness naturalised by a metaphysics of place she calls the 'national order of things'. As Cirtautas (1957:731, in Malkki 1992) illustrates, to be outside of this order invites dehumanisation:

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[6] Indeed, the very notion that stress must be cured rather than *endured* reflects privilege –even in the west where access to counselling or other therapeutic interventions can be limited by resources (see: Kleinman & Desjarlais 1995).

[7] In cases of revolution against tyrannical states, for instance.

[8] Fears, however, fuelled and exploited by 'sensationalist journalists and right-wing politicians [who] map out dire consequences such as rocketing crime rates, fundamentalist terrorism and overstretched welfare systems' (Robin & Kushner 2002:188).

> Homelessness is a serious threat to moral behaviour. […] At the moment the refugee crosses the frontiers of his own world, his whole moral outlook, his attitude toward the divine order of life changes. [The refugees'] conduct makes it obvious that we are dealing with individuals who are basically amoral […]. They no longer feel themselves bound by ethical precepts that every honest citizen […] respects. They become a menace, dangerous characters that will stop at nothing.

Concerns for 'moral breakdown' reflect deep assumptions about the relationship of wellbeing to place. 'The point to be underscored', Malkki notes (1992:32), 'is that these refugees' loss of bodily connection to their national homelands came to be treated as *a loss of moral bearings*'. While the *sense* of emplacement is certainly important for identity and welfare (Eisenbruch 1991) this relationship is far less fixed (Anzaldua 1999; Malkki 1995), indicating a deeper *political* value to the perpetuation of norms sustaining the pathological nature of displacement and the rightness of emplacement. Naturalisation of these routinely allows the 'power of topography' to mask 'the topography of power' (Gupta & Ferguson 1997:35). While the macro-political value of this is clear, it also enables biopolitical regulation based on *a priori* assumptions about an individual's moral-psychological status as determined by their position relative to this order. While those with 'refugee' status here often fare better than those classified as 'illegal' (*i.e.* 'economic') migrants, it must be noted that such ascriptions are politically ascribed rather than self-evident, and that the depoliticising effects of either label distracts from the injustices that produce suffering. This is also true of 'therapeutic interventions' that, while in some cases '[enabling] refugees to survive' (Peteet 2005:50), can mask, naturalise, and compound the *structural* sources of social suffering (Pupavac 2001; Hughes & Pupavac 2005). For Kleinman, Das and Lock (1997:x), while '[the] cultural processes of rational-technical analysis that describe human defeats at times are effective, […] all too regularly [they] end up normalizing social pathology or pathologising the psychophysiology of terror'. Our 'assumptions about attachment to place', notes Malkki (1992:33), 'lead us to define displacement not as a fact about socio-political context, but rather as an inner, pathological condition of the displaced'. But, she notes (1995:510), 'there is nothing inherently wrong with being 'out-of-place'. Of course, 'it would be foolish to claim that displacement does not cause distress of many kinds [but] we cannot assume psychological disorder or mental illness a priori, as an axiom, nor can we claim to know, from the mere fact of refugeeness, the actual sources of a person's suffering'. Far from naturally pathological, some have actually

emphasised the subversive and progressive potential of diaspora as a site for identification and resistance. For Mitchell (1997:257), 'these liminal spaces are theorised as important positions in the tactical war against dominant hegemonies. In particular, they are conceptualized as key sites of intervention in narratives of race and nation and as the chiasmatic spaces of a progressive and liberatory transnational culture'.

This view, more broadly, insists that those caught in processes of conflict and displacement are not just 'victims' of abnormal states, but possible agents of *meaningful* social processes –something that, while discomforting, is true for the young. Indeed, from the relativist perspective, the clinical ontology of children and childhood – which 'scientifically' establishes their inherent, universal vulnerability and incapacity – reflects norms that disregard socio-historical and cultural variance in their perception and nature. As *constructed* categories, however, the definition and expectation of children and childhoods 'varies between societies, as well as between individual children within societies' (Ansell 2005:65). So, notes Ansell, neither the metric of numerical age, nor the developmental phases assumed by psychologists, are universally valid: *adolescence*, argues Barber (2009:6) for example, 'looks fundamentally different across the globe, [or] at least different from the archetype that has been shaped heavily by U.S. and/or European scholars'.[9] Convictions over the incapacity and essential vulnerability of the young are also unsound. While in the West (most) children may be psychologically valuable but economically worthless, in many parts of the world they work or perform other socially useful functions, something differentiated by class, gender or minority status (Ansell 2005; Scheper-Hughes 1999). While we are as such accustomed to seeing conflict participation here as abnormal and productive of abnormality the truth is more complex: 'some young people assume a voluntary role in combat even while others are abducted or otherwise cajoled into taking up arms, note Boyden and de Berry (2004:xv), 'moreover, children and adolescents can be very active in defining their own allegiances during conflict, as well as their own strategies for coping and

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[9] Indeed, he argues, 'it is not just the putative incompetence or troublesome nature of adolescents that needs to be challenged. [...] There is no evidence to suggest that adolescents across the world are concerned with the largely self-oriented, classic preoccupations with emotional turmoil, psychic separation, or autonomy, or with inordinate peer influence that have driven definitions of adolescence in the West'. He continues, '[the] label does not fit well in many of the world's societies where readiness for personal and social autonomy, maturity for work and family formation, and participation in civil service (volunteered or coerced) occurs with substantial variation across the age span'.

survival'. Indeed, clinical theory –reinforced by pre-coded research instruments used to record 'trauma'- in this way relegates young people's own complex reactions to loss. Furthermore, in assuming the universality of stress, they also can misidentify the actual *source* of a young person's distress or, in homogenising 'the young', neglect how the challenges they face are mediated by designations of ethnicity, age, class, gender, disability, *etc.* Simultaneously, while we must recognise young people's differential experiences and capacities for agency, and while we should not reduce participation –even where detrimental- to exploitation, we should remain cautious of overemphasising the sovereignty of *any* subject and losing sight of how ideological attachments displace various forms of material social difference. Indeed, it is important to recognise here that while culturally variable, most societies *do* have a concept of childhood (Ansell 2005). While we must admit that children and youth are *not* 'natural, universal categories', that 'the difference between children and adults in society can't simply be read off from physical difference (Ansell 2005:9; Holloway & Valentine 2000), we shouldn't neglect that 'childhood integrates social *and* biological processes' (Scheper-Hughes & Sargent 1999:1) – the latter constraining children's lives particularly in early childhood' (Ansell 2005). While the role of material loss is not rejected, I temper the idea of greater vulnerability based on 'real' cognitive difference. The young 'may indeed be vulnerable, have certain special requirements and face particular risks […] but this is a structural position, a product of the interrelation of biological features and social constructions. It is not an inherent value' (Kirby & Fraser 1997:10).

A Mirror for Violence? Pathologising Youth Agency

By blurring wider pathologies of the socioeconomic and political order and reducing political action to symptomology, pathologising loss and those affected by it allow pretensions of scientific objectivity to obscure the political. So, Hughes and Pupavac (2005:873) argue:

> Perspectives on conflict emerging from psychosocial foundations frame out of analysis questions of political or economic structure […]. The complexity of inter-relations […] is subordinated to the simple metric of the rationality of individual agency. […] Societies are viewed as formed of violated or violating individuals, whose actions spring in a hopeless cycle of conflict from psychological processes rather than from political beliefs or economic needs.

The *depoliticisation* of subjectivities and agencies is particularly marked with respect to the young, whose perspectives and agency throughout social crisis are largely dismissed by clinical research as artefacts of traumatic experience. That young people may *wilfully* join in conflict (that conflict might be meaningful for them, or that they may see themselves as having a role in it) is difficult to reconcile with the humanist ideal, and so is often reduced to manipulation or psychopathology. As noted, this is due to assumptions over youth impressionability and vulnerability to moral injury, something that while possibly progressive can enable the more iniquitous transformation of young people 'at risk', to young people 'as risk' (Korbin 2003; Stephens 1995). Yet, as Barber (2009:10-14) notes, the negative correlation between 'exposure to violence and impaired psychological functioning' – the idea that 'demonstrable psychopathology in children is the nearly inevitable consequence of exposure to or participation in violence' (Shaw 2003) – needs clarifying. If the relationship exists at all, we must ask 'why or how (*i.e.,* by which pathways or mechanisms) does political violence place the individual experiencing it at risk for negative outcomes, [and] for whom (which individuals or specific groupings of individuals) does the risk exist more or less strongly?'

For Punamaki (2009:74) in this way, 'despite the fact that war is unhealthy and places tremendous burdens on child and adolescent development […] the human mind is not merely a mirror for external violence'. As such, psychological work is now offering increasingly nuanced insight into 'moderating influences' such as socio-cultural mechanisms (*e.g.* parenting, family-support, historical orientation, religion, and as noted, ideology) and forms of social difference such as race, social class, or gender (Punamaki 2009; Slone 2009; Barber, 2009; Layne *et al* 2009), leading to a more refined view of adolescent experience, resilience, and participation during conflict (Sherrod, Flanagan, & Kassimir 2005; Eccles & Gootman 2002; Feinstein, Giertsen & O'Kane 2010). Yet even here 'agency' is often reduced to mechanistic psychological processes governing how young people experience and cope with objectifiable violence and its mutilations, with little recognition for how violence itself, and the ways young people experience, make sense of, and respond to it, are enmeshed in socio-historical and cultural processes. Respect for pre-conflict meaning systems ('*e.g.*, historical, cultural, religions'), and the meaning young people attach to experiences (Barber 2009:13), is vital. *Culture*, it might be argued, is not just a 'moderating' but a

'constitutive' force 'shaping not just the effects of conflict but its understanding and resolution' (Barber 2009:16). The 'artificial isolation' of the individual in research, notes Barber, neglects how 'political conflict (its causes, locus, and consequences) is inherently social in nature, and its suffering is *interpersonal* […] with adults and children collaborating to understand, cope, and envision futures, and work out cultural and national moral narratives'. This, as I discuss in Part Two, extends to the very experience of loss and its effect on individuals. For Summerfield (2003:459), 'how human beings experience an adverse event, and what they say and do about it, is primarily a function of the social meanings and understandings attached to it'.

We should thus be wary of 'dysfunctional' or 'moral' agency –which, rather than real, reflect prevailing socio-political norms. While pathologisation depoliticises wider social processes and individuals within them, the *particular* concern for young minds compels regard for how control over defining psychological truth can serve conservative purposes in delegitimising 'dysfunctional' dissensus. Overstating 'positive' youth engagement, without first defining the political significance of 'negative' agency here, risks collusion in perpetuating *intergenerational* inequality. The entire category of *moral* agency is contentious. Agency is *always* political but not always positive: agency can hurt. While some, for instance, claim the inability of the young to 'distinguish between competing causes' (UNICEF 2002:23) in conflict, others note that 'to treat them merely as deluded or wayward children would be to depoliticise their project and to fail to address their grievances (Ansell 2005:1999; de Waal 2002)'. The spectre of suicide-martyrdom among young Tibetans looms large here, but while agency here may be *overstated*, this is rare. Young suicide-bombers, for instance, are either seen as 'neurotics' or 'criminals', or both. Similarly, suicide among indigenous youth (while undergoing change in representation) is often framed as pathological. But the ascription of agency is theoretically and ethically complex in each of these cases. While the cultural approach is persuasive in emphasising meaning, ascriptions of pathology or resilience can be seen as a political struggle over young minds and an attempt to de/legitimise certain projects: a practice of 'memoro-politics' (Hacking 1996). It is to the *representation* of youth subjectivity and agency and its *interpellative* effects that I turn in Chapter Two. In the next part, I consider further the role of *meaning* in mediating the relationship between violence and subjectivity.

HISTORICAL TRAUMA, COLLECTIVE IDENTITY & THE TRANSMISSION OF LOSS: CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

In Part One I reviewed clinical accounts of loss and its effects on youth socialisation and agency. Despite their influence, such approaches were found to be theoretically, methodologically, and ethically inadequate. The culturalist critique offers a compelling alternative. But how can culture be understood to intervene in what appear to be concrete processes of violence and suffering, and what does it mean for agency? Here I offer closer examination of culturalist approaches. In the first section I consider the socio-historical and cultural construction of violence and loss, moving beyond either material-monism or idealism to recognise, through the rubric of 'social suffering', how culture and somatology are entangled. In the next I move to *politicise* violence and loss by exploring the solidary effects of suffering, and the mutually constitutive effects of adversity and community. While enlightening, however, I argue that the reification of historical trauma here risks a return to an anti-mimetic tradition, and in the third section draw on Alexander's *cultural trauma* theory to consider how trauma is *performed*. In the last part, I reflect on how constructivist or psychoanalytical accounts of the event imagine it to offer unique impetus for agency and social transformation.

Beyond *Systema Nervosum*: Constructing Violence and Trauma

At the end of the last part it was argued that *culture* (defined as processes of meaning making) plays a crucial role in determining how young people experience, make sense of, and respond to, violence (Boyden & de Berry 2004; Barber 2009; Punamaki 2009). Contrary to the notion that subjectivities and agencies may be reduced to an 'authentic account' of how an objectively violent event materially structures the psyche, socialisation depends on cultural context. This is not to dismiss the 'ontological weight' of loss. We cannot just dismiss violence or the suffering it produces, and neither should we. Suffering constitutes a profound dimension of life, a testament to injustice, and a 'vital force in the dialectics of social change' (Wilkinson 2005). It is crucial to 'consider how subjectivity –the felt interior experience of the person that includes his or her positions in a field of relational power- is produced through the experience of violence' (Das & Kleinman 2000:1). But we can no longer frame this as an extra-social relationship between a material event and psyche. Instead, we must identify how neither violence nor loss

is self-evident and natural, but depend on cultural representations that enable their recognition and give them force.

Given its seeming physicality (Dewey, 1980; Coady, 1986; Pogge, 1991; Reiss & Roth, 1994; Neidhardt, 1986; Steger, 2003), the idea that 'violence' is in the enculturated 'eye of the beholder' (Beck 2011; Scheper-Hughes & Bourgois 2004) is controversial for some. Several scholars (Benjamin, 1921; Arendt, 1969; Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2004; de Haan, 2005; 2008; Buffachi, 2005), however, challenge the constitutive physicality of violence as unfounded 'even in ordinary language' (Schinkel, 2005). It neglects, for instance, the broader continuum of 'emotional and psychological pain that result from domination of some over others, […] harm against individuals by institutions or agencies, […] the violence of social processes, […] institutionalized racism and sexism, [or] the 'symbolic violence' of domination' (de Haan, 2008:31). 'Violence is essentially contested', notes Robben and Nordstrom (1995:5), 'everyone knows it exists, but no one agrees on what actually constitutes the phenomenon. Vested interests, personal history, ideological loyalties, propaganda, and a dearth of first hand information ensure that many "definitions" of violence are powerful fictions and negotiated half-truths'. As Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (2004:2) argue: 'What constitutes violence is always mediated by an expressed or implicit dichotomy between legitimate/illegitimate, permissible or sanctioned acts'. For Beck (2011:353), consequently, the constitution of violence depends on an observer, who is key for breaking the 'hermetic cycle of injuring and suffering', and drawing the process into the 'realm of judgement, debate, and memory'. This signals those 'processes and techniques that either deliberately stage 'violence' [or suffering] or attempt to invisibilise it' (*op cit.* 353).
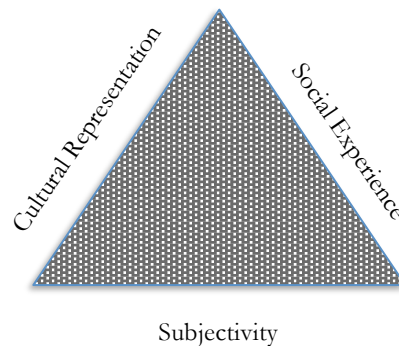
Things are more complex with suffering, which for many is a mute fact of our corporeality. Startlingly, however, recent work reveals how cultural *perceptions* of suffering influence its experience (Morris 1998; Wilkinson 2005; Kleinman, Das & Lock 1997). Research on *social suffering* (Kleinman, Das & Lock 1997; Das *et al*, 2001; Wilkinson 2005; Bourdieu *et al* 1999; Frost & Hoggett 2008), defined as 'the 'assemblage of human problems that have their origins and consequences in the devastating injuries that social force can inflict on human experience' (Kleinman, Das & Lock 1997), traces the profuse harms inflicted on people *and* how these 'are experienced by individuals as *social* forces and *cultural* phenomena' (Wilkinson 2005:84). This does not deny the materiality of loss, but recognises the *social* aetiology of certain kinds of suffering (Bowker 1997), and for how even pain can 'take place as a product of the interaction between neurophysiological processes, social contexts and cultural meaning' (Kotarba 1983; Morris 1991).[10] *Trauma* –referring to damage caused by an event so severe that it is repressed by the subconscious from where it 'haunts' the sufferer and structures her behaviour-[11] is a specific kind of modern suffering in this way

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[10] As Wilkinson explains (2005), 'the emergent paradigm in pain research is understood to require that we abandon Cartesianism in favour of a conception of bodily sensation that gives due recognition to the ways in which our physiological experience of the world is moderated not only by psychological disposition, but also by the social dynamics of cultural reproduction and exchange'.

[11] As categorised by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – 5* (DSM-V), PTSD may be diagnosed following: (1) personal and direct; or (2), personal repeat exposure to 'death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence'; (3), witnessing such experience befall another; or (4), learning of kin experiencing this. The patient must present with symptoms of: (1), intrusion (including nightmares, flashbacks and dissociative symptoms, involuntary and intrusive memories; (2), avoidance (including 'trauma related thoughts or feelings'); (3), negative alterations in cognitions and mood (including memory

(Hacking 1996; 2002; Young, 1996; Summerfield, 2001) -a 'major signifier of our age' (Fassin 2009:xi). At the border of violence, loss, and politics, it specifies a unique relationship between suffering and past experience (Kirmayer, Lemelson & Barad 2007). For some, in comprising inscription of a *naturally* traumatic event on psychic tissue (cf. Leys 2000) traumatisation reflects a special kind of experience lying, unlike ordinary loss, *outside representation*. This implies events with universal significance, and memories that, while inaccessible to *victims*, are veridical and literal (Leys, 2000): proofs of the event. This forms a constitutive tension here; but must we accept it? Several scholars (Leys 2007; Hacking 2002; Kirmayer, Lemelson & Barad 2007; Young, 1996; Summerfield 2001) argue not, noting first the fallacy that an event can be innately significant (Alexander 2012), second, the 'dazzlingly implausible' idea that we are formed by what we forget (Hacking 1996:70), and third, that no memory, however traumatic, can ever be veridical.[12]

While it may be imagined, trauma is not, however, imaginary. Hacking's (2002) 'dynamic nominalism' (or 'dialectical realism') frames trauma as real within spatial and temporal horizons – they have, for him, a contingent *historical ontology* produced by material-discursive (looping) practices. This, notes Young (1995:6), explains 'how it [has] been *made* real' and '[acquires] facticity [to] shape the self-knowledge of patients, clinicians and researchers'. Crucially, however, we must question how the emergence of trauma is tangled with power and subjectivity over time (Edkins 2001): the *politics* of trauma. Trauma is ineludibly political (Hacking 1996:68-69), '[involving] a power struggle built around knowledge or claims to knowledge'. It is a struggle involving beliefs in, and claims to, 'depth knowledge' (Foucault 1972): the idea that 'there are certain sorts of truths about memory and forgetting, that makes the politics possible'

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loss, alienation, constricted affect); and (4) alterations in arousal and reactivity (including self-destructive or aggressive behaviour, hypervigilance and sleep disturbance). Please refer to:
http://www.dsm5.org/Documents/PTSD%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

[12] This, of course, is deeply contentious -undermining the validity of 'recovered' memories as evidence of injustice. The potential for hypnotic-induction of confabulated memory (*i.e.* False Memory Syndrome), underpins the bitter – and ongoing- 'memory wars' (Hacking 1996), involving queries over the reliability of memory, and manifesting in a series of malpractice cases in the 1990s where testimonies of traumatic childhood abuse elicited by therapists were found to be false (see: McHugh 2008; Loftus 1996; cf. Whitfield 1995). While I sympathise with the political case of the recovered memory movement, my convictions over the role of mimesis, alongside the mounting evidence for the presentist case, leads me to accept challenges against the prospect of essentially veridical traumatic memories. This is emphatically *not* to say that memory, while potentially confabulated, are *fabricated*. For many the memory, while grounded on an event that did not occur, is felt and experienced as real –with real effects. Shalom Auslander's novel *Hope: A Tragedy* –where the protagonist's mother suffers trauma from an interment she never actually experienced- is instructive.

(Hacking 1996:69). In claiming verisimilitude, the anti-mimetic principal implies the truth of an event and who is liable for it (Kirmayer, Lemelson & Barad 2007). This can be emancipative. '[Three] times over the past century', notes Herman (1992:9), 'a particular form of psychological trauma has flourished in affiliation with a political movement'. From here, explains Fassin (2008), 'trauma is not only a clinical description of a psychological status, but also [*via* the 'fact' of this status] a political expression of the state of the world'.

Collective Trauma

This (political) enmeshing of social experience, subjectivity and representation, allows individual losses to be felt collectively, and collective loss to manifest in individual bodies and minds (Fassin & Rechtman 2009).[13] On one hand, social angst can follow from individual loss: 'the suffering of the survivor is private but it is also public, a more generalised political experience which impacts terribly on their lives and those of their community' (Levy 1999:240). On the other, experiences (or *representations*) of shared loss can mark those who did not experience it. 'The concept of trauma has thus been extended to events 'that disrupt whole cultures, such as war, occupation […Events which] not only irrevocably alter the lives of the individuals in the social body, but the culture itself' (Daschke 2014:458; Kirmayer, Lemelson & Barad 2007). For Fassin and Rechtman (2009:15), collective or *historical trauma* (Alexander *et al* 2004; Caruth 1995; LaCapra 1994; Neal 2005; Erikson 1994) is now the 'dominant mode' for signifying our relation to the past. While limited in time, 'historical trauma' is not limited in space (Fassin & Rechtman 2009).[14] Since the Holocaust, legacies of violent colonial dispossession, ethnocide, and even genocide suffered by colonised people, 'have also spawned memories – "re-memories" writes Toni Morrison about "the six

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[13] Indeed, continue Fassin and Rechtman (2009:18), while it is *individuals* that actually experience pain, this can be sourced from wider forms of non-somatic loss. They continue: 'the event supplies the substance of the trauma which will be articulated in individual experience; [and] in return, individual suffering bears witness to the traumatic aspect of the collective drama' –blurring the line between individual and community.

[14] So, note Fassin and Rechtman (2009) since its advent the concept of 'historical trauma' has been applied retrospectively to 'the colonization of Latin America and Africa, the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, apartheid in South Africa, the Palestinian Intifada, the Soviet regime in Lithuania, the Troubles of Northern Ireland, the civil war in Sri Lanka, and the industrial disasters at Bhopal in India and at Chernobyl in Ukraine'.

million and more" lost to slavery and the Middle Passage – of ancestors, ghosts, and haunting presences' (Taylor 2011:31).[15]

Enlightenment and psychoanalytical theory presently govern understanding of such trauma (Alexander 2004:3). In the enlightenment tradition, 'trauma is a kind of rational response to abrupt change, whether at the individual or social level. The objects or events that trigger trauma are perceived clearly by actors […]. When bad things happen to good people, they become shocked, outraged, indignant'. Enlightenment approaches underline the emergent, structuring quality of collective trauma. For Erikson (1994), trauma is a result of the 'rupturing' effect of traumatic events on social relations –encompassing the individual and collective *perception* that the community has been irrevocably changed, and no longer offers the support it once did. The *social*, nature of trauma is also accepted by psychoanalytic theory (Caruth 1995; Zizek, 1989; Kristeva 1989; Friedlander 1979). For Edkins (2001), trauma unravels mythologies sustaining the imagined community. '[In] what we call a traumatic event this group betrays us. We can no longer be who we were, and the social context is not what we assumed it to be' (Edkins 2003:8) –it undermines ontological security. While psychoanalysis differs in locating traumatisation not in the experience of an event but in the inassimilable nature of a memory so terrible that it is repressed beyond conscious recall (Eyerman 2001), it retains belief in the 'power and objectivity of the originating traumatic event' (Alexander 2004:6). Like clinical theory, 'the core issue in trauma is reality […] it is the truth of the traumatic experience [an experience that the subject cannot leave behind] that forms the centre of its psychopathology' (Leys, 2000:230). Critically, 'in trauma, experience may be stored in the body *without mediation of consciousness*, and return as flashback […]'. In this way, trauma structures lives through 'its consequences, its aftermath, and effects'.

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[15] Of course, as Jeffrey Alexander (2004) asks, vital questions remain over why some events become cultural traumas, and others do not. Why, for instance, has the Holocaust (*Shoa*) arisen –despite early resistance to it by many Jews- as a specific –and structuring- form of ethnic suffering, but has failed to assume similar valence in Romani, Slav, gay or disabled communities? Such selectivity is curious for what it says about affected communities (the 'victim') as well as the wider global audience. Dangerously, however, it also risks collapsing the wider rationality and material-discursive contexts of violence. The Holocaust was, of course, predicated partly on genocidal ('ancient hatreds') racism, but the systematic execution of other groups implies a wider (and extremely *modern*) rationality to violence obscured by this nativist and primordialist account.

The intergenerational effects here can be grave. With indigenous peoples, note Kirmayer, Lemelson and Barad (2007:10),[16] transgenerational transmission at both individual and collective levels may link current social and mental health problems [*incl.* alcoholism, substance abuse, domestic violence and even suicide - see: Wexler 2009; Dashke 2014] to the effects of colonization and policies of forced assimilation'. While risking pathologisation over external and *internal* injustices, trauma helps theorise reproduction of violence. In positing a 'social subject with agency, though not necessarily in a position to exercise this reflexively', psychoanalysis theorises how violence determines a 'melancholic agency', one 'haunted by a past that cannot be represented' and that reflexively compels re-enactment of violence against others – something Frost & Hoggett (2008:450) refer to as the process of 'double suffering'. Resilience, however, also has social origins, with studies ' [finding] robust correlations between positive affiliation and engagement with […] culture, wellbeing, and resilience' (Wexler 2009). For Wexler (2009:269) *historical consciousness*, collective meanings relating to 'who [a people] are, where they came from, and what future direction they should take', can restore (positive) agency here.[17] The psychoanalytical tradition advocates similar forms of identification as an antidote to the delaminating effects of traumatic loss, stressing the need for a cathartic 'working through' that may take place *via* 'public acts of commemoration, cultural representation, and public political struggle [allowing] pent-up emotions of loss and mourning to be expressed' (Alexander 2004:7).

Cultural Trauma and Transmission

Some, however, criticise what they see here as the naturalistic (anti-mimetic) fallacy of clinical and psychoanalytic trauma theory, arguing that it underpins misrecognition of what trauma *is* and how it may be transmitted. *Events*, notes Alexander (2004:8) in the first case, 'are not inherently traumatic. [They] do not, in and of themselves, create collective trauma'. Even where millions may have perished, he argues, trauma is not inevitable but 'the result of an exercise of human agency, of the successful imposition of a new system of cultural classification'. In his *cultural trauma* theory, social traumas are seen not as an effect

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[16] See also: Atkinson, Nelson & Atkinson 2010; Brave Heart & De Bruyn 1998; Kirmayer, Brass & Tait 2000.
[17] For Wakefield and Hudley (2007) 'adolescents with an achieved ethnic identity [who] have a working knowledge of their ethnic heritage, a clear idea of the meaning of their ethnic group membership, and a commitment to their ethnicity and the role it plays in their lives' fare better than those who do not.

of past events, but as 'symbolic renderings that reconstruct and imagine [events]' –*i.e.* the products of *representation*. Imagination is intrinsic to representation, he argues, 'it seizes upon an inchoate experience from life, and forms it, through association, condensation, and aesthetic creation, into some specific shape'. This attribution, 'may be made in real time, as an event unfolds; it may also be made before the event occurs, as an adumbration, or after the event has concluded, as a post-hoc reconstruction. [Indeed], events that are deeply traumatizing may not actually have occurred at all; such imagined events, however, can be as traumatizing as events that have actually occurred'. Events, then, are traumatic 'not because of their actual harmfulness or their objective abruptness, but because these phenomena are believed to have abruptly, and harmfully, affected collective identity' by '[dislodging] the patterned meanings' fundamental to the collective. Put otherwise, 'trauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity. Collective actors "decide"[18] to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to their sense of who they are, where they came from and where they want to go' (*op cit.*). This does not lessen its intensity. Indeed, it is *precisely* their enmeshing in the 'horizon of affect and meaning' (Alexander & Smith 2012:12), that lends events force.

The constructivist position may be unsettling, for shifting trauma from material event to social process weakens the claim to verisimilitude 'fundamental to the very sense that a trauma has occurred' (Alexander, 2004:9), creating reason for doubting victims. In this regard, however, 'trust' is built on an anti-mimetic view of memory that is, regrettably, empirically unviable. *Memory*, of course, is the basis and 'connective structure' (Asmann 1992:293) of self and society -without which 'the world would cease to exist in any meaningful way' (Catell & Climo 2002:1). Enlightenment and psychoanalytic accounts see memory as the 'linchpin' (Kirmayer, Lemelson & Barad 2007) holding together trauma, collective identity and cause, and framing traumatic memory as literal recall of the past. Yet memory, 'constructed and reconstructed by the dialectics of remembering and forgetting, shaped by semantic and interpretive frames, and subject to a panoply of distortions' (Catell & Climo 2002: 23)- comprises *not* a 'dissection of the past but an experience in the present' (Sundholm 2011:123). 'Recollection is not simply veridical recall but a process of

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[18] As I will discuss, some (*e.g.* Sundholm 2011) question this, querying the extent of individual power and sovereignty in signification.

reconstructing and reorganizing experiences according to cultural models or templates' (Kirmayer *et* al, 2007:296; Hacking 1996; 2007). For 'presentists', individual memory is in this way 'always group memory'. While we may 'retain sensory impressions', 'no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections' (Eyerman 2001; Edkins 2001; Halbwachs 1925).

Remembrance is seen here not as retrieval of the past, but as a contemporaneous social process. While for some the turn to memory and 'counter-memory' (Foucault, 1981) over teleological (and hegemonic) 'History' (Huyssen 1995; Olick & Robbins 1998; Olick 1998; Novick 1988; Iggers 1997) is emancipative, for others the risk of reifying *myth* as memory – through enabling '[manipulation] by the dominant sectors of society through public commemorations, education systems, mass media, and official records and chronologies' (Misztal 2003:64) – may itself reinforce hegemony: an especially keen fear with respect to the 'bewitching power of nationalism' and its 'governing myths' (Bell, 2003; Olick & Robbins, 1998; Spencer & Wollmon, 2002; Balibar, 1990; Duara, 1995; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). For Bell (2003), memory must be pared from the mythscape: 'the temporally and spatially extended discursive realm wherein the struggle for control of peoples' memories and the formation of nationalist myths is debated, contested, and subverted incessantly', a task he entrusts to *history*. Yet while his critique is incisive, and this tension between the material past, individual and collective memory is vital to this thesis, his belief that 'real' memory must be 'anchored in experience' and 'is not transferrable (as memory) to those who have not experienced the events that an individual recalls', offers a too naturalistic view of experience, subjectivity and processes of representation, and generally neglects the ways in which they are complexly interrelated.

Indeed, notes Zerubavel (in: Olick & Robbins 1998:224), 'being social presupposes the ability to experience events that happened to groups and communities to which we belong long before we joined them as if they were a part of our own past'. Much of what we "remember", 'we did not experience as individuals' (Olick 1998:123). For Hirsch (1997; 2008; 2012), this relationship or 'sense of living connection' shared by successive generations to 'experiences that preceded their births but that were

nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right' may be termed *postmemory* (2012:104). Postmemory describes, '[…] the relationship that the "generation after" bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before – to experiences they "remember", *but* crucially, 'only by means of the stories, images, and behaviours among which they grew up'. This aligns with 'poststructural' accounts of the socially constituted nature of the subject and her subjectivity (Edkins, 2001). The porous nature of the subject here allows for a unique view of traumatisation and transmission, allowing memory (as *narrative-discourse*) '[…] to be inherited and passed on, continuing to function in the minds of others after the 'original' rememberer has gone' (Hodgkin & Radstone 2003:10). Importantly, it is not only memory that 'travels' (Creet 2011:6), but also emotion. *Affective-Discursive* practice (Wetherall 2012), which enables the entangling of the individual with the social *via* the embodiment of socio-biographical memory, forms the key 'mechanism through which we feel pride, pain, or shame with regard to events that happened to our groups before we joined them' (Olick 1998:123), and is vital for mobilising and sustaining social movements (Polletta 2004; Goodwin, Jasper & Polletta 2001).

Cultural trauma theorists regard transmission as reducible not to a crude material pathology, but as reliant on *storytelling* practices:[19] a socio-cultural process of cultural reclassification[20] '[taking] place in-between event and representation'; one that 'takes time and requires agents, mediations, and a community of carriers and 'caretakers' (Sundholm 2011:124), but that is 'at the same time, a complex and multivalent symbolic process that is contingent, contested, and sometimes highly polarising' (Alexander 2012).[21] While

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[19] Indeed, cultural trauma theory fits well here with interests for how collective identities –*e.g.* 'nations'- are imagined (Anderson 1982) into being through linguistic, aesthetic, poetic, performative, and narrative processes (Bhabba 2008; Balibar 1990; Berger 2007; Shapiro 2012). As is relevant for this thesis, this includes artistic as well as more routine discursive practices. Cambell (2003:57) writes: 'If we assume that the state has no ontological status apart from the many and varied practices that bring it into being, then the state is an artefact of a continual process of reproduction that performatively constitutes its identity. The inscription of threats to its sense of self can be located in and driven by the official discourses of government. But the can equally be located in and driven by the cultural discourses of the community, and represented in sites as 'unofficial' as art, film and literature'.
[20] For Alexander, as I will detail in Chapter Four, this encompasses harmonising cultural narratives with regards to: first, the nature of the pain; second, the nature of the victim; third, the relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience; and fourth, an attribution of responsibility.
[21] He details the various stages of trauma construction, from the claim making of 'carrier groups' within 'institutional arenas' (*e.g.* religious, aesthetic, legal, scientific, media, bureaucratic), to the stratificational hierarchies that intervene in agents' differential capabilities to make successful claims. He notes, 'symbol creators of all kinds make competing claims. They identify protagonists and antagonists and weave them into accusatory narratives projected to audiences

this appears to be an *idealist* move, there is also however, an ineludible *material* dimension here. While constructivism tends to sublimate the material within 'narrative bindings' (Harré 1994, in Alexander 2008:784), we should also, Alexander (2011:11) 'learn to be energetically enthusiastic about materiality, [for] 'is it not the sensuous surface of stuff that allows us to see, hear, and touch their narrative bindings?' 'When a signifier is made material', Alexander (2010:11) argues, it is 'no longer in the mind, […] but something experienced, something felt, in the heart and the body'. The material *matters*. For Hirsch (2008:115), 'photographic images that survive massive devastation and outlive their subjects and owners […] function as ghostly revenants from an irretrievably lost past world. They enable us, in the present, not only to see and to touch that past but also to try to reanimate it by undoing the finality of the photographic "Take"'. Things can also be *made* material – as with the embodying of narrative in museums, monuments, or memorials, (Beckstead *et al*, 2011; Edkins 2003; White 1997) – something especially relevant for those without a space of their own. As Peteet (2005) argues, for instance, the displaced are in this way often surprisingly resourceful in 'recuperating' the material in attempts to 'inventory' and 'narrate' identities.

Solidarity of the Shaken: Trauma & Agency

Irrespective of their differences, for constructivist and natural theory, collective trauma –despite its mutilations- also serves as a source of solidarity and collective agency. In naturalistic theory, by rupturing social bonds traumatic events may *create* community. 'Traumatic conditions are not like the other troubles to which flesh is heir', argues Erikson (1994), 'they move to the centre of one's being and, in doing so, give victims the feeling that they have been set apart and made special. [...] For some survivors at least, this sense of difference can become a kind of calling, a status, where people are drawn to others similarly marked'. 'The human chemistry at work here is an odd one, he writes, 'but it has been noted many times before: estrangement becomes the basis for communality'. In constructivist theory, traumas also offer

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of third parties. Which narrative wins out is a matter of performative power'. Indeed, notes Alexander (2012), we must ask 'who can command the most effective platform to tell the trauma story? Some stories are repressed by ruthless states, while others are materially sustained. Some stories are enriched by long-standing background representations; others seem so counterintuitive vis-à-vis established traditions as scarcely to be believed. Some trauma narratives address homogeneous audiences, others face fragmented and divided audiences; for others, there is nobody listening at all' (see *fn*. 13).

sites around which originary mythico-histories (Malkki 1995) may nucleate, forming a basis for collective identification (Alexander 2004; 2012). Fassin and Rechtman (2009:15-16) explain how in every instance of such trauma:

> Collective memory is articulated as a traumatic relationship with the past in which the group identifies itself as a victim through its recognition of a shared experience of violence. Notwithstanding the different contexts, the moral framework that emerges is the same: suffering establishes grounds for a cause; the event demands a reinterpretation of history.

The emergence of 'a cause' reveals how trauma may work as a 'forge' for agency (Alexander 2012). As such, we may identify how even with the very young experiences of, and responses to, violence and loss are mediated by wider structures of cultural meaning. Such structures can condition extraordinary agencies. In communities of *political destiny*, notes Weber (1978:903), 'the individual is expected ultimately to face death in the group interest. This gives to the political community its particular pathos and raises its enduring emotional foundations, [giving rise to] groups with joint memories which often have a deeper impact than the ties of merely cultural, linguistic or ethnic community'). The rise of self-immolation among Tibetan youth signal related issues of 'political self-sacrifice' (Fierke 2014) here. Acts so antithetical to self-interest might be framed as pathological (see: Kramer 1990; Merari 1990; Post 1990) but – as may also be relevant to suicides at Pine Ridge – we could also claim a wider significance for such acts as struggles against ongoing structural injustices and forms of social suffering tied to the institutionalised effects of historical trauma (DeLeo, Milner & Sveticic 2012). The understanding and representation of the self-immolations in cultural terms –either as acts of desperation or resistance against colonial occupation- is, of course, the position of Tibetans in exile, their supporters, and evidently many of the self-immolators themselves. Yet just how accurate is this? As Fierke (2014) argues, there is no prior ontological difference between 'suicide' and 'martyrdom'. While the pathologising of 'suicidal' action depoliticises actors, overstating agency risks a similarly underdetermined account that displaces wider socio-historical forces constitutive of their subjectivity and agency. The agonising self-sacrifice of young Tibetans is itself under-theorised here, but incertitude over the culturalist account is even clearer when we contrast these acts with those of the young people at Pine Ridge -whose suicides surely cannot be seen so clearly in terms of cultural resistance? Identifying the contingency of children and childhood may temper mawkishness, but

overstating resilience also risks abandoning the material child. Is locating suffering in the discursive practices of actors too voluntaristic here? What of the reproductive quality of violence that leads it to structure lives intergenerationally, beyond the control of actors? Can we acknowledge the materiality of the past without returning to materialism? And how equal is signification? What of power, hegemony, and alterity?

POWER, HEGEMONY & ALTERITY UNDER SIEGE

What is no longer archived the same way is no longer lived the same way.

Derrida

In Part Two, I reviewed cultural accounts of violence, political subjectivity and agency, reflecting specifically on collective trauma. Such approaches offer sophisticated insight into how culture mediates experiences of and responses to violence, and enable recognition of the surprising kinds of agency facilitated by the solidary effects of loss. Yet, in overstating the consensuality of unities enacted in the wake of the traumatic event, and in valorising the identity politics that emerge, we also risk naturalising the masternarrative, and with it the relations of power that at once produce and are produced by it, at the expense of alternative accounts of loss it displaces. Affective loyalties to the cause may be *real*, but 'there is nothing automatic about the creation of such subjective feelings or loyalties' (Spencer & Wollmon 2002:22) which are, of course, an effect of *power*. We must ask 'who creates and defines cultural meaning, and to what ends' (Keesing 1987:161), and how far are relations of power reproduced through remembrance and the production of memory -however traumatic (Edkins 2003)? Here I introduce power and alterity as factors in the experience and representation of violence, and as dimensions of subjectivity and agency —enquiring into how different material pasts fit beside hegemonic attempts at signification and identity construction 'under siege'. In the often-conservative politics of such communities, we can consider how experiences dissonant with the masternarrative (*e.g.* those indexing internal problems) may be subject to appropriation, reworking, or exclusion (Kosicki & Jasinska-Kania 2007; Edkins 2001; Tal 1996). In the first section, I consider how the production of meaning *via* memory (*i.e.* 'archontic practice') can displace alternate histories of loss, identities, and political projects, in a way that reflects and reasserts wider hegemonic 'archepolitics' (Zizek 2000). In the second, I review the 'radical' (Fassin & Rechtman

2009) psychoanalytical view of the traumatic 'event' as an emancipative singularity, noting my preference for a critical approach deriving from the poststructural-*historicist* tradition that accounts better for the complex materiality of loss.

Displacing Difference: Memory, Alterity & Meaning Under Siege

Meaning, then, plays a vital role in the way young people experience, make sense of, and respond to violence and loss. In the preceding part I discussed how collective memories of historical loss as structured *and* structuring structures are vital for collective identification. As with trauma (see below), masternarratives of social suffering can be unifying, '[transcending] boundaries of culture and social group' (Edkins 2003:5) -to the extent that the existence of certain communities exist *because* of shared memories of loss (Butler 2006). Yet, in valorising the terms of *cultural recognition*, do we miss how signification is neither neutral nor democratic? In assuming unity in loss and valorising cultural causes, do we risk overstating the contiguity of subjectivity, and with it elision of how different experiences are appropriated, reworked, or excluded from the signifying process? Indeed, 'to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognise it 'the way it really was" (Benjamin 1940). 'All meaning frameworks have histories', notes Olick (1998:108), '[and since] past-oriented meaning frameworks are prominent modes of legitimation and explanation […there exist] questions about the transmission, preservation, and alteration of these frameworks over time'.

Misgivings for how *power* 'bends discourses [i.e. history and memory] to its needs and so revises our conception of the past' (Misztal 2003:65), are especially keen in the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davies 2011) under 'siege' (Suaraz-Orozco & Robben 2000).[22] Groups under siege can be chauvinistic (Hall 1986; Said 1984). '[Loss] and displacement lend an urgency to collective histories, identities, and memories that prohibits challenges to hegemonic versions of community (McGranahan 2005:571). '[Where] a particular category of identity has been repressed, de-legitimated or devalued in dominant discourses, a vital

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[22] I refer (unsystematically) here to a concern for politics –or the suspension of politics- during a state of siege or emergency –or during what Agamben (2003) terms the 'state of exception'. Specifically, this reflects alarm for the ways crisis might be exploited and prolonged to perpetuate a political order through suspension of democracy and rule of law. Perceptions of threat and loss, of course, are emotive, and thus such concerns also encompass how individuals acquiesce to, or even celebrate, such exception and the dominations and inequalities it invariably entails.

response may be to claim value for all those labelled by that category' –a totalising process of catachresis Calhoun (1994:17) calls *risking essentialism*. While seen as emancipative, such projects, in valorising transcending rationalities of identity and action and enabling certain forms of reactive cultural preservation, can be hegemonic, disciplinary, and exclusory (Pandey 2001). This raises concerns for 'archepolitics' (Zizek 2000): a deferral of *real* politics *via* appeal to 'an archaic, prelapsarian, form of community' (Sharpe & Boucher 2010:167). Yet, while justified as a *temporary* deferral (or 'narrative closure') necessitated by the state of siege, and vaunted as a means of preserving the 'pure origins' of an endangered community, such essentialism elides how archivisation '*produces as much as records the event*' (Derrida 1995:17), and reinforces a politics of belonging already structured by social power relations. The archive's ability to command from the point of origin (to offer an *authentic account*) here makes it 'at once institutive and conservative' (Derrida 1995:7). As Vosloo (2005:382) notes, '[…] archives are monuments to the way in which power is reconfigured. It not only stores and includes, but also testifies to a narrative of exclusion'.

Indeed, even margins have margins; excluded histories their own histories of exclusion (McGranahan 2010). In privileging certain losses over others through socially organised forgetting and socially organised remembering (Misztal 2003), we risk displacing these histories and authorising a 'hierarchy of grief' (Butler 2004:20) where 'some cultural representations of suffering [are] endowed with recognition while others [are] not'. In war, notes Olson (2004:146), the autobiographical is often lost in the need to create order'. In reflecting on meaning production and the restoration of political community after loss, we must attend to the elisions enacted by the appropriation, reworking and exclusion of experience so that it 'conforms to the demands of power' (Das 1990; in: Kleinman 1997:318). The 'structural invisibility' (Turner 1967) of certain groups is seldom chance, with 'ideas of race, class, gender and sexuality' (Stevens 2005; see: Walker in Broderick & Traverso 2011:52) *etc.*, often determining the ability to 'claim injury and the right to recompense'. The war literature has not totally ignored this -emphasising 'refugee children' and, more recently, the 'girl-child' (Ansell 2005). But work often fetishizes such groups –missing their complex experience, agency, and significance. Vulnerability, for instance, shifts spatially, temporally and dialectically with conflict. Age, for example, 'is not necessarily the only factor of vulnerability', with certain contexts

(over)determining better prospects for children of different ages (Boyden & de Berry 2004:xvii). The vulnerability of *girls* during crisis (especially in terms of their vulnerability to sexual abuse) has also been stressed (Callamard 1999; Crawley 2001; Machel 1996). Yet here too, variance due to class may intervene (Swaine & Feeny 2004; Mann, 2004).[23] Risk depends not on innate qualities of groups but their *construction*. Boys too, may be targeted for sexual or other abuse; a risk often overlooked given beliefs over girls' exceptional vulnerability.

While *culture* is vital, we can still question the representativeness of certain cultural narratives as 'authentic' accounts of experience, subjectivity and agency. Indeed, notes Kleinman (1997:318), the production of meaning may to some extent be 'understood as a largely bourgeois preoccupation, incongruent with the sheer exigency of surviving that is the destiny of the one-fifth of humankind existing under the grinding deprivations of extreme poverty'. As Das (in Kleinman 1997) argues, the poor often have meaning 'thrust upon them' to 'serve the interests of the state rather than local, let alone personal, concerns'. Thus, notes Das (1997:138), we must 'examine the social mechanisms by which the manufacture of pain on the one hand, and the theologies of suffering on the other, become the means of legitimating the social order rather than being threats to this order'. Such alarm for the arrogation, reworking, or exclusion of experience is especially acute with regard to *nationalism* which, 'despite internal divisions along generational, regional, religious, and other lines', has been privileged as the 'primary form of organizing social identity' (Olick 1998:123). With nationalism, 'historical chronologies solder a multiplicity of personal, local, and regional historicities and transform them into a unitary national time' (Alonso 1988:40). '[National] history', notes Duara (1995:4), secures for the contested and contingent nation the false unity of a self-same, national subject evolving through time [enabling] conquests of historical awareness over other, 'non-progressive' modes of time'. The effect can be profound, 'binding accounts together so tightly that even subaltern histories are framed within the nation' (McGranahan 2010:572).

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[23] While the vulnerability of poor or lower status youth is usually considered greater here, this is not always true, and, while they often do retain greater resources for coping with adversity, we should be wary of dismissing the suffering of elites in certain conflicts. In the Tibetan case, for instance, it was *elites* and *elite* children that were often the target of reform, punitive sanctions, and revolutionary violence –histories of loss that, while vital for structuring normative accounts of loss, are nevertheless depoliticised in this way likely to distract from questions over the nature of Tibet's traditional social order (see Chapter Three and Five).

Individual or marginal accounts may be arrogated (*via* mythologisation or medicalisation), arrested or vanished, so that while 'events may be memorialised differently in elite and subaltern cultural spheres […] master narratives of these events may ultimately displace others to forge a powerful single narrative of the nation' (Ray & Radhakrishnan 2010:39; Edkins 2001; Todeschini 2001; Tal 1996; Pandey 1989; Ramphele 1997; Olson 2004; Amin 1984; Bourdieu 1997).

The cost can be significant. 'In the literature on social suffering', notes Wilkinson (2004:93), 'a heavy emphasis tends to be placed upon the extent to which the personal experience of suffering is greatly intensified in relation to the dominant ways in which it is symbolically represented in the realms of public life. Time and again, people 'in' suffering report that it is the 'everyday' language and social practices that they are forced to live by in the aftermath of painful events that make the brute facts of their affliction most violating'. This has been especially clear with gender, and for Todeschini (2001:104), 'the public acknowledgement and appropriation of illness, loss, pain, and grief, and the establishment of gender categories in connection with suffering, are profoundly political acts, which draw boundaries and determine "appropriate" expressions of suffering'.[24] While little work considers the young, much offers insight into the challenges faced by women as symbols of the nation (Chaterjee 1990; Yuval-Davies 1997). In any case, while power is seldom so absolute, the displacement of marginal histories of loss with the hegemonic masternarrative threatens not only to elide alternate kinds of loss but also the causes it can rouse. 'To grow up with overwhelming inherited memories' notes Hirsch (2012:5), 'is to risk having one's own life stories displaced, even evacuated, by our ancestors' -resulting even in the '*loss of loss*': that 'somewhere, something was lost, but no story can be told about it; no memory can retrieve it' (Butler 2003:467). While this isn't to dismiss forms of cultural recognition like nationalism, we might ask what kind of status the alternative and *materially* significant – if inarticulable – symbolic orders they eclipse may be left with.

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[24] Todeschini's remarkable work on young '*hibakusha*' women (survivors of the atomic bombs in Japan), for example, considers the hardship caused on the one hand, by their celebration as national heroes, and on the other by their exclusion as (irradiated) women unfit for sexual reproduction.

The Materiality of Loss & Critical Approaches to the Event

There is, thus, need for a *critical* trauma theory. As noted, for some, while shared traumas can instigate 'new rounds of social suffering', they can also be transformative, '[triggering] significant repairs in the civic fabric' (Alexander 2012), or inciting '[narration] of new [social] foundations' (Hale 1998:6) -a more progressive social order (cf. Pirskanen 2008; Stavrakakis 2007). In radical or humanist theory, note Fassin and Rechtman (2009:19), exposure to the 'same traumatic kernel in all social systems' allows *universalisation* of trauma as a 'common front'. For constructivists, 'in constructing cultural traumas, social groups, national societies, and sometimes entire civilisations, not only cognitively identify the existence and source of human suffering, but may also take on board moral responsibility for it' (Alexander 2014:1). For psychoanalysis, exposure to *the Real* (as that which can't be symbolised) through trauma disrupts the 'social fantasy' (Zizek 1997) on which hegemony – as an effort to forestall politics by refuting the 'constituted, provision and historically contingent nature of every social order, of every ontology' (Edkins 2001:14) – depends.[25] Empirically, I have for instance already discussed how processes of displacement may be seen as emancipatory. Even Bourdieu, often cynical about the prospects of transformation, recognised the potential for change when embodied 'dispositions encounter conditions (including fields) different from those in which they were constructed and assembled' (2002:29-31). The material effects of violence in inflicting casualties, dispersing institutions, and separating families, is likely to disrupt social reproduction. In displacement, furthermore, exposure to host cultures and the forces of globalisation undoubtedly influence subjectivities and social structures beyond the 'glacial pace of habitus' (Biehl, Byron & Kleinman 2007).

With displacement, however, while some change is inevitable (McGranahan 2010), we must note how processes of distinction, class-consciousness and class relations continue after crossing (Donnan & Wilson 1999:114-115). The implicit voluntarism of constructivism (Olick 1998) joins clinical theory in providing an underdetermined account of social suffering among groups affected by massive loss here. Whereas

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[25] Badiou (2003), for instance, in this way notes how 'the event' has a damascene de-subjectifying force as a *singularity* of truth that is at once constitutive of new subjectivities and inspiring of a new, and more progressive, political movement (Newman 2007). The 'common front' of a loss beyond representation and incapable of being assimilated into available schemas of meaning, in this way offer a source for creative social changes –a source for transgressing processes of social reproduction (see: Bistoen, Vanheule and Craps 2014).

clinical theorists have been insensitive to material differences of class, gender *etc.*, post-modernists, in celebrating the subversive possibilities of what is for many an injurious state of diasporic 'flux', reveal elitism (Newman 2007; Zizek 1999; Kibreab 1999).[26] Similar doubts may be raised with (over)emphasising the resilience of young people to adversity, especially in the south. Of course, challenging pathologisation and accepting the agency of the young is important, but we should avoid '[abandoning] the embodied material child' (James *et al* 1998:28) and overstating their agency. Indeed, the 'child', while constructed, is no less material (Bourdieu 1986). There is thus potential for disjuncture between the material experience of subjects differently positioned within society, and the masternarrative of suffering. That some forms of historic and present loss are recognised and others are not is, of course, significant for the reconstitution of political community. As such, we should consider the role of loss (as meaning) as a disciplinary governmentality for the 'reconstellation of sovereignty in [new forms]' (Butler 2004:97).

For these reasons I remain sceptical of the solidary and emancipative role of the event. While often seen as validating, the history of trauma 'is also and above all a history of hierarchy and inequality which, more cruelly than many other aspects of human life, distinguishes between individuals who have suffered painful events' (Fassin & Rechtman, 2007:30). Persuasive efforts to rehabilitate trauma have been made – with Edkins (2003), for instance, advocating the cautious 'encircling' of events in a way that retains their transformative potential while remaining attentive to the role of power in defining them. In either humanist or radical theory, however, in marking the ontological primacy of identity in relation to a universal experience the concept of trauma risks reifying an 'authentic account' of subjectivity, and in so doing risks displacing alternate histories and legacies of loss. For Fassin and Rechtman (2009:19), 'the universalisation of trauma results in its trivialisation.' They continue, 'every society and every individual suffers the traumatic experience of their past', 'not only do scales of violence disappear, but also their

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[26] As Zizek (1999:220) contends: 'Unfortunately, two totally different socio-political orders are condensed here: on the one hand the cosmopolitan upper- and upper-middle class academic, always with the proper visas enabling him to cross borders without any problem in order to carry out his business, and thus able to 'enjoy the difference'; on the other hand the poor (im)migrant worker driven from his home by poverty or […] violence, for whom the celebrated 'hybridity' designates a very tangible experience of never being able to settle down properly and legalize his status, the subject from whom such a simple task as crossing a border or reuniting with his family can be an experience of anxiety […]'. Indeed, we might in this way question the elitist vein of postmodern attempts to valorise displacement.

history is erased'. Events, of course, are more diffuse and multivalent, and we must look beyond trauma's nimbus to isolate the wider forces that 'precede, accompany, and endure conflicts' (Barber 2009:22). For Barber (2009:23), we must identify the wider 'matrix of other strong forces –social, ethnic, historical, or cultural', mediating conflict. [27] A *historicist* critique eludes the 'self-deceptive confrontation with transhistorical structural-trauma' by assuming its 'historical, social, and political specificity' (Fassin & Rechtman 2009:19), tempering but not refusing its constitutive role by recognising the *overdetermination* of subjectivity and agency.

CONCLUSIONS: PROBLEMATISING THE AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT

This chapter reflected on various approaches to understanding political socialisation and agency among the young after loss. In considering how young people experience, are affected by and respond to social danger, I contended that the clinical approach remains too individualistic, ethnocentric, and mechanistic. The idea that *violence begets violence* is not only depoliticising, dehistoricising and ethically dubious, but also offers no cogent mechanism for transmission. The constructivist emphasis on *meaning* is, in this way, persuasive, enabling respect for the cultural mediation and narrative transmission of loss, and young people's agential role in political causes. In cultural trauma theory, even this most pressing of experiences is denaturalised and reframed as the product of human agency –serving, all the same, as a profoundly affective force in inspiring solidarities, identities, and agencies. While this effort at denaturalisation is useful, this account is also problematic. Constructivism can be voluntaristic, underestimating the constraints on signification and trivialising violence and loss. In valorising the terms of cultural recognition and sovereignty of 'passionate attachments' (Butler 1997) to causes and the sacrifices made for them, such approaches risk eliding alternative interests (*e.g.* of gender, class, or age) and the power relations such elision sustains, alongside neglecting how such attachments are themselves not 'natural'. With the last of these, while attempts within the 'new sociology of childhood' (see: Ansell 2005) to move

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[27] Indeed, accounts of violence –clinical or cultural- in this way tend to displace such contexts. This is problematic, for these forces are likely vital forces in producing and differentiating the significance and effects of the event. Some of these forces', notes Barber, 'give particular meaning to the conflict (*e.g.* the history of relations between the conflicting parties) or inform how to navigate and cope with it (*e.g.* cultural beliefs, practices about conflict, suffering, peace, *etc.*)'. Others, he continues, 'such as economic disadvantage and other disparities related to ethnicity, are often part of the genesis, maintenance, perpetuation, or resolution of the conflict'.

beyond deterministic pathologising clinical discourses and those that frame young people only as products of socialisation – in turn demanding focus on young people's own voices and narratives – are progressive, *poststructural* accounts of *historically constituted* subjects refuse any sovereign subjectivity or agency. I raise concern here with the failings and ethicality of attempts to describe the 'authentic account' of subjectivity and agency after loss – especially as regards the young – which often reflect not scientific 'depth truths' about youth subjectivities, but *political* biases. Both clinical and cultural approaches here involve different kinds of depoliticisation, the first by individualising and pathologising young people's accounts and responses, and the second by co-opting (and sometimes exploiting) young people into wider causes and invisibilising their interests as a group. In assuming the universality of trauma and its structural role in (exclusively) producing identity, they risk displacing alternative histories of the event and alternative kinds of agency. Drawing on post-Marxian or poststructural-historicist theory, I prefer here to identify the much wider overdeterminative field of social forces to which such descriptions add or are parsed, even if subjects are not aware of them. This does not deny the force of emergent kinds of signification like nationalism. Through what Hacking (2002) terms a 'dialectical realist' lens, such accounts emerge as a structuring discursive field through which people are made, and make themselves, subjects. It is, as such, this 'discursive field' rather than young minds that should form our principal object of scientific enquiry and analysis (Fassin 2008). Yet what of agency in the determinative context of this material-discursive field? Acts such as self-immolation, for instance, are framed here as irreducible to pathology, sovereign will, or coercion –instead being overdetermined by numerous forces. While perhaps more valid and ethical, this leaves little space for traditional accounts of agency. It is to this question that I turn in Chapter Two.

TWO

THEORY, METHODOLOGY, METHODS

In Chapter One I raised concern with clinical and culturalist theories of youth socialisation, both of which presuppose a reductionist model of causality – *i.e.* one that collapses the complex constitution of subjectivity and agency into a single teleological narrative. But this leaves an impasse. How may we theorise how experiences of violence or historical loss affect socialisation and agency among the young if, on one hand, we dismiss mechanistic clinical approaches and, on the other, we accept the wider accuracy of mimetic cultural-constructivist theory, but dispute the potentially trivialising implications for the materiality of loss and the naïve assumption of sovereign ideological attachments? In this chapter I attempt four tasks. **First**, I consider how we may better frame subjectivity and agency in the wake of historical loss by proposing a theoretical framework alongside an appropriate ontological and epistemological position, and set of concepts within an intellectual tradition. Following a *decentring* of the event, the subject (and her subjectivity), and agency, I invert the terms of enquiry to consider first the ways subjects and their subjectivity and agency are constituted through *discursive* practices, before then considering the materiality of loss. Lastly, I consider how we may salvage a *decentred* marginal agency with regard for Foucault's notion of *parrhesia*. **Second**, I outline, and offer some critical reflection on, my eclectic but primarily genealogical methodology. **Third**, I outline my design, methods, and analytical strategy as determined by the methodology. Finally, **fourth**, I discuss the ethical implications for working with marginal communities and young people that are experiencing or have experienced violence and loss.

DECENTRING THE EVENT, SUBJECTIVITY & AGENCY

A concern for *political socialisation* after loss is central to this thesis. At its broadest, this involves questions over how young people experience, make sense of, and respond to direct or historic (and vicarious) experiences of violence and loss, and how such experiences shape (if at all) moral development, ideological orientation, and behaviour. Despite its intricacies, at root this invokes a casual claim over how a (traumatic) event (E^1) governs an effect (E^2) at individual or collective levels –*i.e.* social-psychological sequelae. As such, Chapter One traced the limits of existing paradigms in explaining the subjectivities and

behaviour of young people affected by adversity. On one hand, in reducing young people's behaviour after loss to effects of 'the event' (an idea shared by radical psychoanalysis), material-mechanist clinical theory was argued to be theoretically, empirically, and ethically flawed. On the other, while seeing loss as constructed allows culturalists to identify local-level variations and emphasise the agency of (even very young) people in social processes, the turn to causation leads to voluntarism (and trivialisation of loss), and risks underdetermination through valorising certain cultural terms (*e.g.* nationalist) as transcendent. In rooting subjectivity or agency (explicitly or otherwise) in the traumatic event, three problems emerge. First, the reification of the event neglects its processual, indefinite, and *relational* nature, something that leads, second, to the *universalisation* of trauma, and thus to elision of the multivalence and structurally differentiated effects of an event and displacement of alternative kinds of loss (Fassin & Rechtman, 2009). Third, while such descriptions *do* have structuring effects, efforts to root agency in subjectivities shaped by reified events are constrained by politically motivated practices of seizure and reworking, especially of the young.

In theorising the relationship between an event, subjectivity, and agency, I require a causal model that: (a) refuses underdetermined accounts of sociality (but accepts a *contingent* materiality to suffering), but (b) also refutes libertarian agent-causation (but accepts social-cultural construction). Assuming a *structural* (Althusser & Balibar 1970) model of immanent causality here I stress the *over* rather than *under* determined nature of experience, loss, and agency which, in a poststructural way, accepts the 'rhetorical [*discursive*] foundations of society' (Laclau 2014) but also the materiality of a finite but irreducible and positively constitutive discursive field. This causality is immanent –so far as agency depends on specific spatiotemporal processes- but *not ideal* –for the agent is, *pace* Chisholm (1966), an *effect* as well as a cause. On one hand, the event, the subject (and her subjectivity), and agency must be decentred and historicised –seen as mutually constituted through 'naming practices', and divested of essential, immutable or discrete causal properties- but on the other, we must identify how such *discursive* practices also assume a durable, structuring, *historical ontology* (Foucault 1984; Hacking 2002). While the tension between the material urgency of loss and processes of cultural representation are not easily resolved here (see below), we can see how it is the cultural representation of loss, rather than direct experience, that is constitutive of

traumatised subjectivities and agencies, but also that these representations are neither autonomous nor absolute –being politically parsed from the wider overdeterminative historical field.

In reframing socialisation I move from biophysical or cultural theory to a sociological *theory of practice* (Bourdieu 1972; Schatzki 2001; Ortner 2006). Practice Theory concerns how subjects are shaped by and work to shape the social, offering a way for reconciling structure with agency by '[conceptualising] the *articulations* between the practices of social actors 'on the ground' and the big 'structures' and 'systems' that both constrain those practices and yet are ultimately susceptible to being transformed by them' (Ortner 2006). For Ortner, it thus '[lays] out the mechanisms by which the seeming contradiction –that 'history makes people, but people make history- is not only a contradiction, but is perhaps the profoundest truth of social life'. For Bourdieu (1972), the individual here is secondary to history, for while history is an effect of individual practices, such practices are governed by heteronomously given dispositions. The practices that produce individuals –*rather than being caused by them*- are linguistic but ineludibly material, for language is itself an effect of material (embodied) action, and *via* institutionalisation –and affective embodiment (Wetherall 2012)- has material, and psychological effects. With loss, practice thus has resonance with cultural trauma theory, which isolates how trauma and traumatised subjects and agents are not effects of a natural process, but artefacts of a masternarrative of loss shaped *via* various embodied, literary, and artistic practices occurring within various institutional arenas (Alexander 2012). Yet in contrast to the Erlanger constructivism of cultural trauma theory, I am concerned here for how processes of construction are always-already structured by, and structure, a certain social order, and how 'practical sense' (Turner 1996) is acquired not consensually, but through *discipline*. To account for this, I emphasise a theory of practice that sees the subject, her subjectivity and agency, as *effects* of power.

Political Subjectification: Subjectivity without a Subject

Putting aside questions of how loss affects subjectivity and agency for now, I reimagine the subject, her subjectivity and agency through a theoretical prism that, while variously described as poststructural,

historicist, or constructionist,[28] is essentially *post-Marxian* (Sim 2000).[29] Central to such theory is a concern for the role of discursive practice in constituting the (social) world, subjects and subjectivities. While 'discourse' here includes language –'the set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events'- it extends 'beyond the immediate context in which language is being used by a speaker or writer [to include] the way that the forms of language available to us set limits upon, or at least strongly channel, not only what we can think and say, but also what we can do, or what can be done to us' (Burr 2004:63). Discourse in this way, notes Laclau (1998:9), is an 'unconscious grammar' 'within which possible objects are constituted and that mediates any kind of contact with reality'. This *constitutive* role is vital. For Foucault (1972:49), discursive practices 'form the objects of which they speak'. Epistemologically, everything is constituted within discourse –so 'there is nothing in nature that determines the being of an object' (Leurs 2012:34). Ontologically, some things are also constituted *by* discourse. For Hacking (2002), certain 'social' and 'interactive' kinds are sensitive to a 'looping effect', where their nature varies relative to wider socio-historical representations. This is especially significant with regard to the subject (and subjectivity) itself. The existence of a coherent, indivisible 'core' to the subject behind which lie '[…] immutable human characteristics, or an inherent morality or rationality that conditions his whole experience […]' is a primary humanist assumption and is central to any 'politics of emancipation' (Newman 2007:68). Constructionism, however, backs a radical decentring of the sovereign Cartesian subject, and its substitution for one divested of a stable identity, whose subjectivity is materially *constituted* by discourse 'in a continuous process that takes place in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed and alongside the production or reproduction of the social' (Edkins 1999:22; Alvesson 2011:98). This is not arbitrary, and

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[28] While both involve how consciousness and language shape the world (Finnemore & Sikkink 2001), following Burr (2003:20-23) I discern here between constructi*vism* –which assumes a psychological 'core'- and constructi*onism* –that, in identifying the deep constitutive role of discourse and its relation to 'material or social structures, social relations and institutionalised practices', is more sceptical of sovereign agency.

[29] This is a contested and broad typology including theorists with highly variant views –many of whom might resist such categorisation. In general, however, it is interpreted here to refer to those (*e.g.* Althusser, Foucault, Bourdieu, Butler, Laclau and Mouffe, Macherey) who have attempted 'to rescue aspects of Marxist thought from the collapse of Marxism as a global cultural and political force in the later twentieth century, and reorient them to take on new meaning within a rapidly changing cultural climate' (Sim 2000:1). The thrust of such work is usually anti-essentialist –drawing on postmodern and poststructural thinking- and as such sceptical towards explanatory metanarratives. As I argue here, however, while anti-foundational it should not –contrary to popular opinion- be thought of as *idealist*, and generally leans towards a post-Cartesian elision of the material and ideal.

we may '[extend] the "always already" beyond language, to the social structure', in a way that reveals the 'socially bounded' nature of a subject that 'owes its existence entirely to the social order' (Heartfield 2002). Neither is it politically neutral. For Althusser (1971) the subject must in this way be considered an effect of 'ideological mechanisms that form his very identity' (Newman 2007:59) to the extent that 'even the idea of [himself] as a Subject, author of [his own] destiny, is an illusion fostered by ideology' (Heartfield 2002).

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Power in this way shapes the discursive field through which subjects and their subjectivities are represented and constituted. In this case, we can see how identification of young Tibetans as 'traumatised' *national* subjects or 'martyrs', are not neutral accounts of psychological status but 'political expressions of a state of the world' (Fassin 2008:533). Thus, Fassin (2009:533) notes, 'we can use the term *political subjectification* to describe the advent of subjects and subjectivities onto a political scene':

> These subjects are not the rational and autonomous actors represented by a certain kind of sociologist […]. Nor are these subjectivities buried in the consciousness or unconscious explored by psychologists [… or psychoanalysts…]. They are figures that enable individuals to be described (by others) and identified (by themselves) in the public arena. In Palestine, the bold stone thrower and the unfortunate trauma victim -who may be the same person- are two of these possible figures. Thus, to speak of political subjectification is not in any way to predicate a Cartesian "I" or a Freudian "ego" but, rather, the production of subjects and subjectivities that hold political significance within the framework of social interaction. The point is therefore not to determine whether the Palestinian youth is a combatant or a neurotic, but to acknowledge that he is presented, and even presents himself, alternately, as one and the other. We then seek no longer to know what his true experience of violence is, but rather, what the various ordeals of truth to which he is submitted by political authorities or humanitarian organisations, by religious officials or psychiatrists, correspond to.

While attention to this discursive field is vital, political subjectification does not, as noted, reflect only an epistemological concern. In attending to how individuals are 'described (by others) and identified (by themselves)' –that is how they are *made and make themselves subjects*- subjectification concerns how 'any socially relevant (and therefore culturally constructed) designation constitutes both a subject called on to identify him or herself, sometimes against his or her will, with the way in which she or he is designated, and a subjectivity that conforms, at least in part, to this injunction' (Fassin 2009:533). For Foucault, the subject, her subjectivity, and attachments, are an effect of *power* exercised 'at the level of the body, as well

as the individual psyche, controlling its movements, supervising its behaviours, policing its desires' (Butler 1996; Newman 2007; Edkins 1999; Bourdieu 2000). Subjectification –involving how a human is turned, *and turns him or herself*, into a subject - responds directly to the ways in which a subject '[seems] at times to be complicit in the power that dominates him, to willingly submit to excessive forms of authority, to even actively desire his own enslavement'. But why should this be? Foucault fails to define the exact mechanism by which a subject is subjected, offering little detail as to why 'he [attaches] himself to certain forms of power; [or] why [he ties] himself to a discursive identity which power has constructed for him and which thus allows him to be further dominated' (Newman 2007:75). Butler (1997) offers corrective here, hypothesising how the subject's vulnerability to domination later in life is established on the infant's 'passionate attachments' 'to those on whom they depend on for life' (Lloyd 2007:99). While the desire for *recognition* 'is not political in any usual sense […] it conditions the political formation and regulation of subjects' (Butler 1997:7), operating as basis for the subject's reflexive capacity for conscience (or guilt) that compels assent to the 'hail' of authority - thus 'becoming their means of subjection' (Lloyd 2007:99).

For Butler, the psyche 'is formed by the social, and has historically contingent origins' (Pirskanen 2008). For her, '*cultural norms* organise the intelligibility of identities, lives and desires' (*op cit.* 6); subjectivity and reflexivity is located in socio-historical and cultural context. But while historicisation offers a persuasive critique, what of *agency*? 'If, following Foucault, we understand power as forming the subject, power imposes itself on us, and weakened by its force, we come to internalise or accept its terms' (Butler 1997:2), then does this not preclude agency? For Greenblatt (2012:256), 'In all my texts and documents, there were, so far as I could tell, no moments of pure, unfettered subjectivity; indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society'. Without sovereign subjectivity, agency too dissolves –displaced within 'pre-existing, historic, social conditions frame action, which anyway determines consciousness rather than being determined by it' (Edkins 2003:22). For Nietzsche (1887:29): 'there is no "being" behind the doing, acting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction imposed on the doing –the doing itself is everything'; for Foucault (1984), 'the

author does not precede the works' –'the trick of power is to make the doer and the deed look like the deed belongs to the doer as the sole author of the deed' (Jaworski 2015:2). As such, notes Caldwell (2007:770), the negative paradigm of subjectification has been criticised as seeming to preclude any possibility of resistance or making a difference (Giddens 1984; Gergen 1999). For Newman (2007:2-3), '[instead] of the essentially rational human subject who was to be emancipated from power an ideology, we have a subject who is dispersed amongst a multiplicity of desires and intensities, and whose identity is deeply interwoven into discursive and power structures. […] How can the idea of human emancipation any longer apply to a world in which there are not only differing notions of what emancipation means, but also differing notions of what it means to be human?'

The Material Problem of Loss: the Event and Overdetermination

But what of loss? As work on 'double suffering' (Frost & Hoggett 2008) implies, there is an urgent materiality to violence and loss that surely cannot be reduced to representation? While it may be easier –if unjust- to frame Tibetan self-immolations as a case of nationalist fervour, the rise of indigenous youth suicide is not easily reduced to ideological grievances. For all its power, the historicist account struggles no less than constructivism to account for the qualia of loss –and may even risk trivialising it. We must consider how to historicise loss, subjectivity, and agency, without de-ontologising suffering, a vital point when we consider –in accepting the role of power in shaping experiences and memories of loss, and the possibility of its displacement- what status alternative (*e.g.* 'classed', 'gendered') histories of loss may have, and what effect their displacement might have for subaltern social movements referencing them. While space only allows a cursory account, one solution here comes from radical psychoanalysis -which reframes the relationship between (traumatic) loss, subjectivity and agency as an encounter between an event so awful it is beyond representation, and a recovered (*negative*) Cartesian subject. This innovation allows for recovery of a universally traumatic event (and indeed a universal subject) essentially standing outside of history –in an anti-mimetic way similar to clinical theory (Leys 2000). For some (Badiou 2001; Edelman 2004; Newman 2007), moreover, exposure to the traumatic 'real' reveals the contingency of the social order and provides chance for articulation of radical political orders. Corresponding to a more agential 'hermeneutics of self' (Foucault 1984) 'subjectification' is seen here as a process by which 'an individual

transcends his ordinary, everyday existence to take up a position of a full political subject' –involving 'insurrection' through *disidentification* with prevailing identities (Newman 2007). From a Foucauldian view, however, the notion that the event and the subject (his subjectivity and agency) can ever be outside of history forms a return to teleology. While doctrinal, my objections are justified first by the empirical weakness of anti-mimetic theory,[30] and second for a concern –scientific and ethical- for the displacements caused by 'emancipative' identitarian projects. The Foucauldian view suggests that all suffering and responses to it are *within* discourse –even the causal event, following Althusser, is not a 'distinct, separately identifiable entity', but a *relation* with its own causes within the historical material-discursive field (Callinicos 1972). This is true even for suicide, which, as a supposed manifestation of loss, is often defined as an autonomous act by the individual (cf. Jaworski 2015). Yet to see the suicide as a heteronomously determined performance is not to deontologise loss or to reject agency. While I am sceptical –a scepticism predicated on the contrast between the twelve-year-old indigenous suicide 'victim' and the fifteen-year-old Tibetan 'martyr'- the point is not to belittle the *reality* of (national) suffering and agency as a determinant of self-sacrifice. After Jaworski, 'my point is to say that agency has a layered history on which the deliberateness in the taking depends. What constitutes one's authorship is dependent on something other than the individual without the act ceasing to belong to the individual's choice to kill oneself'. A thesis of *overdetermination* (Althusser 1965; Resnick & Wolff 2013)[31] infers that suffering agency cannot be reduced to a single causal account even if others are not apparent or specified. This is not to say that they are not discursive, but that the total discursive social-historical field '[exceeds] the capacities of recording, memory, or reading' (Foucault 2002:30). In practice, this allows for how acts of immolation may be interpellated as –and indeed can *become*- forms of nationalist agency, but also how they are overdetermined

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[30] Alongside a related aversion to traumatic vocabularies of spectrality and haunting that, for Das (2006), are evoked 'too soon […] as if the processes that constitute the way everyday life is engaged in the present have little to say on how violence is produced or lived with'.

[31] According to Silverman (*undated*), for Resnick and Wolff overdetermination includes the following criteria: '(1) *the essence of a thing is not self-constituted; it is constituted only by its relations with other things (hence there are no Kantian "things-in-themselves") (2) "causation" as traditionally understood, requires things/entities with self-constituted essences; in the absence of such entities, we therefore must reject traditional notions of "causality"; (3) In the absence of a world populated by things with self-constituted essences, we have instead, a collection of processes, not "things"; (4) the aforementioned relation of "constitution" holds not merely between objects, but between the "knower" and that which is "known" and, as such, knowledge is constitutive of the world, and not a mere reflection or representation of it; (5) each process stands in a complex causal relation to all other process; (6) it is impossible to isolate processes that are essential to causing event from those which are non-essential; (7) no course of events or set of processes are determined; (8) it is impossible to make generate determinate predictions regarding future outcomes, processes, or courses of events'.*

by a much wider set of socio-historical forces and material histories of loss (*e.g.* pertaining to class, gender, ethnicity, *etc.*).

Reconstituting (Decentred) Marginal Agency

How, finally, may we reconstitute agency? What does it mean to have authorial status, or to make oneself, while the terms of authorship and construction are always already given? Does not the Foucauldian-Butlerian model preclude any real agency? To some extent yes. It is not possible from the perspective of these scholars, to simply step outside of the conditioning relations of power that make us, our subjectivities and desires –and attempts to do so may even 'risk return to the most dangerous of traditions' (Foucault 1978). Accounts that criticise this as precluding any hope of agency, however, misstep. For Butler (1997), the solution to this problem lies in the paradox of a process of subjection that is also a precondition for agency. For Butler, our complicity in subjection is the 'condition of agency rather than its destruction' (Pirskanen 2008:11). What critics fail to note, Butler (1997:2) argues, 'is that the "we" who accept such terms are fundamentally dependent on those terms for "our" existence'. If 'we understand power as *forming* the subject as well as providing the very condition of its existence and the trajectory of its desire, then power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for our existence and what we harbour and preserve in the beings that we are'. Indeed, 'we remain committed to subjection, and thus identification, at the psychic or unconscious level. In fact, this is the very condition for us to be subjects at all. [...There] would be no "subject" [...] and thus no chance of agency, without both an identity and the preservation of a frustrated *relationship* to this identity' (Pluth 2007:147). *Subjectification*, then, 'consists precisely in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency' (Butler 1997:2). While we must *historicise* agency in order to understand it as 'radically conditioned' within discourse, this should not, notes Davies (2006:426), 'be confused with a determinism in which subjects are passively and inevitably shaped according to one set of discursive practices within a monolithic moral order'. Indeed, Alvesson (2011:98) notes, while 'the presence of a powerful discourse may stabilise subjectivity, [the] plurality of discourse in people's lives' [some of which, notes Burr (2004:116) threaten hegemony] typically encourages varied and fluctuating subjectivities'. For Butler (1999:40), mutations in practice –*i.e.* disidentifications- can be

subversive: 'to operate within the matrix of power', she notes, 'is not the same as to replicate uncritically relations of domination. It offers the possibility of a repetition of the law which is not its consolidation, but its displacement'. For Foucault this requires reflexivity -based on recognising one's indebtedness to the past, each other and ourselves' (Dumm 1996:3)- in self-constitution. There remains a possibility, he notes, that 'within discourses of knowledge and new forms of disciplinary power, we can recover and rediscover *our-selves*' (Caldwell 2007:786) —a 'radical alterity to our lives that might be revealed through the process of interrogating our political strategies' (Dumm 1996:14). Calder (2007:786) notes: 'by somehow resisting what we have become we create possibilities for redefining what we are and what we can become […]'; a critical agency that, for Butler (1997), entails efforts to displace the terms of recognition and reveal their historical and cultural contingency. Yet the impossibility of a pre-cultural source for agency or of any teleology of positive freedom means that such efforts are always heteronomously conditioned. The power to 'act otherwise', notes Salih (2002), is necessarily circumscribed: 'subversion must take place from within existing discourse, since that is all there is'. This *decentred* agency —as a historically contingent *practice*- might be progressive (historically defined) but, due to the opacity of the subject to herself —her inability to *account* for herself- can also mean submitting to different forms of subordination. Nevertheless, as a heuristic for decentred critical agency here, I use Foucault's (1983) *parrhesia* -understood as a mode of speech where subjects speak the 'truth' *at significant risk to themselves*, and usually for a greater cause. Of course, as implied, this is not to say that a *parrhesiastes* really does speak *the* truth, or that his efforts are progressive: he should be seen as *producing* alternative and always political forms of truth. Here, I draw on this framework of agency to explore the extent to which young people —through speaking truth about alternative histories and forms of loss- are able to resist the hegemonic archepolitics of exile nationalism through alternative – but non-antagonistic- forms of identification, or conversely how far their efforts are constrained by, and return them to, hegemony.

METHODOLOGY: HISTORICAL ONTOLOGY & GENEALOGY

In responding to and drawing on theories of practice, political subjectification and overdetermination, the central concern of this thesis is for the tensions between, on the one hand, the ideological forces through which young people are made and make themselves subjects and agents of a prevailing historical 'truth',

and on the other for the constitutive effects of the wider material-discursive field displaced by this masternarrative. I am, in other words, in this way concerned like Fassin with revealing the discursive field through which the young are made and make themselves subjects (in this case of the 'lost nation'), as well as the wider historical field of material-discursive forces which also determine wellbeing and attachment (*e.g.* age, gender or class), and which provide possibility for other kinds of loss and identification. With this established, it is important to identify a methodological framework for structuring research and analysis. As set out in the previous section, in imagining social reality I draw here on Hacking's (2002) dialectical realist interpretation of Foucault's (1984) 'historical ontology' to consider how certain phenomena (*e.g.* nations, traumas, national subjects and subjectivities), while constructed, *become* real in a social-historical and cultural context. As such, it follows that a *deconstructive*, or *genealogical* method –involving reflection on 'the political stakes in designating as origin and cause those identity categories that are in fact the effects of institutions, practices, discourses, with multiple and diffuse points of origin' (Butler 1990; in Colwell 1997:26)- is required to reveal the contingency of these formations, the purposes they serve, and what they displace. To this end, my genealogical approach encompasses an eclectic and non-partisan 'historically inflected historical analysis' (Tjiattas 2007) – or 'local historicism' (Velody & Williams 1998 – which, while qualitative,[32] inductive, and (cautiously) relativistic, is -for its *discursive* materialism and critical orientation- neither anti-realist nor subjectivist. (Indeed, part of the methodological approach here involves reflection on how prevailing and constitutive discourses of nation, national trauma (or nationalist subjectivity), and sacrificial (nationalist) agency, have emerged *as real* via historically specific discursive practices of the community and its supporters).

Discourse, of course, is held as constitutive of the entire social-psychological field, and identification and analysis of discursive formations thus forms a central task here. However, while this work aligns with discourse theory and analysis (DT/A), and while analysis will involve identifying narrative devices (*e.g.* tropes, characters), discourse is *not* regarded as reducible to sovereign *verbal* exchanges. Instead, discourses

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[32] Indeed while fundamentally qualitative -and while I resist the positivistic reduction of complex phenomena to quantifiable variables- like Bourdieu I value and use quantitative and statistical data where appropriate –both as a primary source (reflecting truth), and as a discursive event (constructing 'truth'). Following Stewart and Strathern (2002:1) in this way I 'recognize the layered quality of all explanations of, or discussion above, human behavior, from molecular biology to metaphysics'.

are seen as 'socio-historical forms of practice that are constitutive of the subjects and objects that make up the world defined within particular truth regimes' (Hammersley 2005:3). While consideration of 'traditional' modalities of discourse (e.g. texts or the spoken word) remains vital, this in practice means that enquiries in to how, for instance, national traumas, subjects and subjectivities are produced, necessitates extending understanding of what the nature and significance of a 'text' *is*. In shifting focus from inner psychological truths about individuals to historical analysis of the discursive field that actually produces such truths, an eclectic method (combining ethnographic immersion, participation and observation, interviews, informal conversations and critical reading of social texts such as journalism, literature, art, architecture, lived spaces, film, music and photography –each of which is constituted by and *constitutive of* social normativity) is advised. For Gusterson (1997:115), such 'polymorphous engagement', involves:

> [Interacting] with informants across a number of dispersed sites, not just in local communities, and sometimes in virtual form; and it means collecting data eclectically from a disparate array of sources in many different ways.

In particular, this work includes much reflection of the visual in each of the four dimensions identified by Prosser (2008) – *i.e.* 'researcher-found data', 'researcher-created data', 'respondent-generated data', and 'representation' of visual data. Throughout the thesis I include and refer to a number of images found and created during fieldwork, and indeed in my exploration of the 'trauma process' in Chapter Four I focus specifically on how visual practices *reflect* the masternarrative of national loss and help *constitute* the 'traumatised nation', 'traumatised' young subjects, and subjectivities. In this way, the images included both enhance the thesis analytically and aesthetically, and (as is clear in Chapter Five) form a *possible* visual counter-narrative (the problematic nature of this positional and unavoidably biased second function is, of course, recognised).[33] This focus reflects not only the recent resurgence of social-scientific interest – following a long exile (Prosser 2008) – [34] in the visual as a vital element of social life and the production of

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[33] The production of partial counter-narratives is however an ineludible by-product of including images (especially historical photographs) in any text. The archival practices of including or excluding images is never politically neutral – a fundamental argument of this work (see Chapter One).

[34] Indeed, Bryman (2001) notes, there has been a decided neglect – deliberate marginalisation, even – of the visual in social research since the First World War, and even among those who profess interest in photography, Linfield

meaning (Pink 2001; Rose 2013; Prosser 2008; Hirsch 2012; Banks 1995), but also what ethnography revealed to be its significance in the Tibetan diaspora and, more broadly, its seemingly unique 'iconic' power (Alexander 2012) as an affective-discursive practice reproductive of the political community and the traumatised subjectivities that comprise it. With the phenomenon of collective trauma (understood in naturalistic, psychoanalytic, cultural-constructivist or historicist terms) photographic images in particular are acknowledged implicitly or otherwise to play an especially pivotal role in the preservation, elicitation, signification or production of trauma. For Hirsch (2012:36), photography forms a vital 'post-mnemonic' practice. She writes:

> More than oral or written narratives, photographic images that survive massive devastation and outlive their subjects and owners function as ghostly revenants from an irretrievably lost past world. They enable us, in the present, not only to see and to touch that past, but also to try to reanimate it by undoing the finality of the photographic "take".

The affective power of images is clear but conceptually problematic. It reveals a tension between views of photographs – and the emotions they elicit – as linear, literal and extra-discursive (*i.e.* natural), and the understanding that they are socio-historically and culturally mediated. Recent work by Alexander (2012) in this regard grapples with what Barthes (1980) termed 'punctum', the curious and outwardly transcendent quality of an image that 'pricks' or 'bruises' the viewer. His theory of 'iconic consciousness', provides a framework for conceptualising the processes by which actors 'experience material objects, not only understanding them cognitively or evaluating them morally but also feeling their sensual, aesthetic force'. Yet while I find Alexander's effort to reconceive iconic power as stemming from a 'mutually constitutive

(2010) notes, 'it is hard to resist the thought that a very large number […] don't really like photographs, or the act of looking at them, at all'. In contrast with film or literature, 'you will hear precious little talk of love, or terrible nakedness, or passion's pitch. There, critics view emotional responses –if they have any- not as something to be experienced and understood but, rather, as an enemy to be vigilantly guarded against'. Indeed, for Sontag, Barthes, and Berger, Linfield argues, photographs are variously 'treacherous', 'imperial', 'didactic', and 'predatory', 'without culture', and 'un-dialectical'. Two factors underlie such criticisms of photography, especially images of political violence and suffering. The first is a methodological and political tension with the *real*. An aversion to photography as a technology of the real that could be used to buttress certain ideologies and paralyse or eliminate alternative *visions* of the world, has contributed to its long exile (Prosser 2008). The second criticism is an ethical one, involving the reputedly voyeuristic nature of photography in misrepresenting the 'Other' and events in her world. For Berger, Linfield explains, the problem is 'fission' –the profound separation of 'image' from 'context'. Drawing on Sontag, she notes, 'because photographs present us with scenes of catastrophe but can do nothing to explain their histories or causes, she [Sontag] was highly sceptical of the photograph's ability to be either politically or ethically potent'. The risk of a pernicious triangle of depoliticisation caused by the pathologisation of 'victims' of violence, the generation of a society of 'moral dullards' through desensitising effects of shocking images, and the perfidy of such images as 'commodities' *and* political tools, has been emphasised by Kleinman, Das and Lock (1997).

(horizontal), not a hierarchical (vertical) relationship between aesthetic surface and discursive depth' compelling, the implied extra-discursivity of images is not accommodated by the theoretical framework of this thesis. Instead here I historicise the concept of punctum and more emphatically dismiss any idea of an essential, internal significance to a material image. Indeed, as Loseke (2009) notes, 'visual images of any type can become emotionally evocative only after they are given meaning'. In this way, while they may for reasons beyond the remit of this thesis bear a unique affective power, like any 'text' the force of images is seen as emanating from their *meaning* that is, in turn, constituted through relations of power operating as discourse.

As stated the author (and indeed reader) does not precede the works, and, as with other discursive events examined, the reading, making, and arranging of visual images are regarded in terms of *decentred* affective-discursive practice. In my consideration of images here I align this work with a critical visual methodology (Rose 2012) concerned less with the fact of the image than with why and how images are made, arranged, and read in certain ways and within a wider (intertextual) context. With reading, I am not so much interested in the 'truth' of what an image shows, but in how and the prisms through which they are being read as 'true', and importantly, the disciplinary and constitutive effects of the image on readers. With the production and arrangement of images, I do not regard images as recording the 'authentic account', but instead as a constitutive – and indeed self-constitutive (see Chapter Six) – practice structured by prevailing material-discursive forces. In all cases, I remain acutely concerned with *power*, and with what is rendered visible and invisible (intentionally or otherwise) or possible and impossible by visual representation. In the same way that testimony demands attention to silence, so too does the visual demand attention to what is not shown and the role of readers and image-makers in sanctioning the social order through reproducing politically mediated 'ways of seeing'. As such, notes Hirsch (1981:42), 'the prim poses and solemn faces which we associate with Victorian photography conceal the reality of child labour, women factory workers, whose long hours often brought about the neglect of their infants, nannies sedating their charges with rum, and mistresses diverting middle class fathers' – as I discuss in Chapter Five a startlingly similar point could be made about distortive historical images of cheerful and peaceful Tibetan monks, nomads and children.

While my reflection on the visual (both emplaced and through virtual visual ethnographic methods) allows for consideration of how it serves in the production and transmission of loss, this *critical* approach inspires questions not only over the authorship of an image, what it shows, what it says and who it addresses, but also what role they play in the reproduction of the social through inclusion and omission. The selection and arrangement of images to support and supplement this enquiry is, as with any purposive approach, problematic and invariably biased. Although reproduction of images of trauma, loss, and resilience here is to some extent justified by their prevalence in the material and virtual spaces of the exile community, there is no way to absolve the fact that this process of representation is, as with any account, political – a point mitigated by the central thesis of this work. The use of researcher-made photographs to enrich the text is even harder to justify for this reason. When I first conceived this study I had planned to use my own photography 'ethnographically' to reproduce events for the reader and as a prompt for thick description and analysis. The images I include still perform this function, serving alongside found images to recreate (however partially) for the reader something of the visual storyworld of exile and the trauma process. Simultaneously, my turn to Foucauldian analysis compels disruptive questions over the objectivity of this method, or the neutrality of representational practices that inevitably reflect my own classed, gendered and ethnic ways of seeing. While I attempt to mitigate this through standardising presentation and reflexive admission of how my classed, gendered and intellectual biases distort what I see, photograph, and include, there is no escaping this criticism. However, while such practices unavoidably form new modalities of subjectification, where the inclusion of images reveals or allows for the indexing of counter-narrative they may still be of ethical significance (see below).

As this query over the epistemological status of data 'discovered' by the researcher in the field reveals, while I describe this study as *ethnographically informed*, it is vital to note that ethnography and Foucauldian discourse theory are not instantly compatible –epistemologically or methodologically (Hammersley 2005; Lima 2010)- and this link requires some clarification. Ethnography resists easy definition (Hammersley 2005). In general, however, it relies on a 'grounded' theoretical approach typified by a researcher's

immersion (covert or overt) in a field site[35] for the purpose of generating 'thick description' (Geertz 1973).[36] Despite several parallels with DA -especially *vis-à-vis* shared interest in eclectic sources of data and the focus on *context*- differences are also apparent. While Foucauldian DA does use interviews to explore the emotional lifeworlds of individuals, for instance, responses are seen as constituted *through* discourse rather than emerging autonomously (Alvesson 2010). Of course, there are disadvantages to the macro-sociological pretensions of discourse theory here –*e.g.* the risk of ignoring local realities by importing analytical categories into contexts where they might not be relevant. But while this may be true of very remote locales, in today's world few are so isolated from global processes -and the Tibetan diaspora is especially dependent on external discourses for constructing its history and identity. Yet, as Diehl (1998) argues, even global processes are experienced locally, and as such, ethnography remains valuable for this study; first, as a source of data for 'documenting the character and operation of various discourses' (Hammersley 2005:7-8), and second, as a corrective for reading isolated materials with an ethnographic sensibility.

Finally, as was prefigured by my discussion of the visual, the cautious return to the material -and my concern for symbolic and material disparities experienced at generational, classed, or gendered levels- determines the significance of a *critical* analytical practice. For ethnography (although it applies equally well to DA more widely):

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[35] In a way relevant here, there has been much debate over the validity of single *versus* 'multi-sited' ethnography (Marcus 1995; Falzon 2009). On the one hand, ethnography has traditionally advocated and involved the researcher's immersion at a single location –reflecting both a desire for 'thick description' and the subsequent need for rich and trusting relationships with participants, and a theoretical conviction over the constitutive primacy of local forces. On the other, as Marcus (1995) notes, processes of globalisation and the increased flow of capital, ideas, and people between locales –as well as, as is true of the Tibetan case- the transnational/*displaced* nature of life for many of the world's people, strengthens the case for comparative multi-sited work. In the Tibetan case, a multi-sited approach could be useful not only for responding to the mobile nature of Tibetan youth –who frequently live and study at different locations in exile, and are increasingly engaged through Internet technologies with peers from all over the diaspora- but also for interrogating class which, I suspect, has a strong –if hidden- geospatial dimension reflected in the historic distribution of refugees throughout the settlements.

[36] For Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), five key features of ethnographic research may be identified in this way: (1) The situation and study of people's actions and accounts in everyday contexts rather than experimental circumstances; (2), Reliance on a wide range of 'data' sources; (3), Data collection as unstructured, both in research design, and with regards to the reflexive and mutable nature of thematic categories of enquiry; (4), A generally local and small-scale focus; (5), Data analysis involves 'interpretation of meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local, and perhaps also wider, contexts'.

A critically-located ethnographic methodology highlights the interplay between social structure, material relations and agency; addresses the ways that social structure is (or is not) instantiated, accommodated, resisted, and/or transformed in the micropolitics of everyday life; contends with issues of ideology, hegemony, and culture; critically addresses its own historically, materially-, and culturally-specific interpretations; works towards change; and does so with the collaboration of research participants.

Talmy (2010:130)

As discussed in Part One, my concern in this way extends beyond orthodox Foucauldian theory in considering, with Butler (1997), the psychic life of power, and the constitution of the subject's passionate attachments. In trying to theoretically accommodate the emotional realities of exilic suffering and belonging I find Wetherall's (2012) critical discursive psychology -and especially the concept of affective-discursive practice- valuable here as a non-reductive and pragmatic model of political physiology –even if, unlike Wetherall, I put more emphasis on the Bourdieuian concern for the disciplinary utility of emotion. Extending the genealogical method in this way opens space for analysis of how the production of meaning may work –at the level of emotional subjectivity- to reaffirm a hegemonic social order and the displacement of different histories and experiences of loss. Concern for the *overdetermination* of subjectivity and agency with regard to age, class and gender in this project, however, compels acceptance of how the narrative of national trauma may not represent all –compelling a 'history from below'. The task is 'to challenge the hegemony of certain constructions of the past because the failure to interrupt and disrupt the present can easily lead to a mere affirmation of the status quo' (Vosloo 2000:390). Of course, poststructuralism also precludes reifying subaltern narratives: there is no essential gendered, generational, or classed position from which to speak, and as such any effort to recover subaltern subjectivities or agencies must also be seen as an effect of external power. As implied with regards to photography above, the task, as Vosloo (*op cit.* 396) emphasises, is the ethical duty of '[writing] otherwise in the midst of archontic power'.

Methodological Limitations

While this method is helpful for examining the 'interpretive politics' involved in representing historical experience, political subjectivity, and agency, and for illuminating constitutive sociohistorical and cultural forces, problems remain. As with other forms of qualitative work, the usual positivist charges -including

low reliability, generalisability and restricted reproducibility- might be made.[37] Bias also remains an issue,[38] with the risk of importing political and ethnocentric norms into the field significant. Indeed, even allegedly 'apolitical' work on Tibet have in this way been coloured by beliefs over the Sino-Tibetan conflict. From a cultural perspective too, *western* categories of 'class', 'gender', or 'children' might differ greatly in Tibetan culture.[39] While overstated,[40] I accept this. For some, a grounded-theory (Glaser & Strauss 1968) design – typified by a process through which researchers develop research questions inductively through immersive fieldwork- offers an alternative. However, following Thornberg (2012), I am cautious here of any prospect of impartiality, and see designs encouraging researchers to disregard –or *pretend* to disregard- theoretical predispositions as risky. A *constructionist* grounded-theory (Charmaz 2009) instead enables respect of the sociohistorical and cultural variance of social kinds, while retaining critical regard for their material historical ontology. While I accept their non-essential, cultural and historical contingency of categories such as age, class and gender, for instance, I also note their relative historical provenance within Tibetan culture, and highlight the value of (cautiously) adopting such universal discourses to decentre the totalising nationalist narrative and imagine alternate possibilities for identification.

A keener problem here, however, involves attempting a discourse-oriented analysis in a foreign-language context. In some ways this is an irrevocable problem: I do not speak Tibetan, and while most interviews were carried out in English, my access to the broader lifeworlds of the Tibetans in exile was thus limited. There are ways round this -most notably, *via* translation. This, however, introduces new problems (Temple & Young 2004). From a constructionist angle, the assertion that language constitutes as much as describes the social world means that appreciation of local social realities not only depends on nuances within the

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[37] As might, of course, the usual responses to such claims –including those emphasising the greater validity of *in vivo* qualitative studies relative to positivist and artificial experimental designs, alongside the charge that standards of what is 'true' or 'good' research in any case reflects power.

[38] This is, however -given the constructionist claim over the impossibility of *any* objectivity- a confused criticism.

[39] This is a valid point, and one relevant to Tibet, where in both research and politics people have been represented through, and subjected to, inapt categorisation. For some (*e.g.* Khetsun 2008; Fjeld 2005) for instance, the attempt by China to impose Marxian categories of analysis and reform in Tibet in this way conflicted with the reality of the local social order and conception of 'class' and 'status'.

With 'class', for instance, claim that China's imposition of Marxian categories of analysis onto Tibetan society failed

[40] Indeed, without dismissing the validity of this point we might raise an eyebrow over the selectivity of objections. For instance, while much has been made of the (reputedly politically-motivated) imposition of 'ethnocentric' 'class' designations, the same reserve is rarely shown for 'national' categories –with subjectivities and agencies routinely represented in national terms, despite the recent provenance of the concept in Tibetan society.

languages that construct them, but also on how they are socially differentiated. Thus, translation –or auto-translation- risks introducing and normalising the translator's biases, and must as such be seen as 'part of the process of knowledge production' (Temple & Young 2004:164). Language is never homogeneous, but complexly inflected by the interlocutor's social position –something that may, contrary to the anthropological resolve on language acquisition, be revealed through second-language interviews but disguised when a researcher conducts interviews in a language he is intellectually but not corporeally familiar with. Still, the use of translators here clearly introduces risks of misrepresentation. While conducting interviews exclusively in English would avoid this, the potential impact on structurally excluding less-educated respondents confounds this. Thus, in the few cases where I was unable to conduct English-language interviews, I employed transparent and reflexive use of skilled and trustworthy translators.[41]

This issue would perhaps be greater if using more technical forms of narrative or conversational discourse analysis. As it is, however, 'discourse' is understood here to comprise broader forms of materially constitutive social practice. The materiality of discourse compels recognition of the textual, inter-textual, and interpellative role of the physical, enabling analysis not just of linguistic forms but also bodily practices, art, film, architecture, and photography. Of course, meaning is not inherent to materiality, and spoken or written language remains vital for codifying meaning –underlining the value of local insight- but here too the Tibetan case allows for a bit more leeway in terms of language than might usually be the case. In contrast to ethnography, discourse theory as noted also focuses on the constitutive effects of global discourses (Lima, 2010). In the Tibetan case, where exilic experience is closely bound in discourses of national loss, genocide, ethnocide, human rights, and displacement (*i.e.* the language of international humanitarianism), the value of focussing on these wider discourses is clear. While interviews remain valuable for accessing (and reconstituting) instantiations of discourse at the local level –as opposed to, for instance, a way of accessing hidden psychological truths- and while language is thus understood as crucial to how a subject is constituted, the local language is not inevitably the only one (or the only way) *via* which a subject is identified and identifies. This is keener given that, while young exiles state Tibetan as their

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[41] As it happened, I conducted only one interview in Tibetan with the assistance of a translator.

mother tongue, mixed abilities and large regional and temporal variation *within* the language, together with differing competencies in English and Hindi relative to Tibetan, means that seeing Tibetan as the *primary* language through which the social world is organised and experienced may be erroneous. Variance within Tibetan reflects not only quite major dialectal differences at the *regional* level,[42] but also changes caused by the Sinicisation of the Tibetan language in Tibet, and its Anglo-Indianisation in exile, and in several interviews BiT youth told me that they struggled to understand their Tibetan family on the phone.[43] Variance in spoken and written Tibetan language ability in exile, and skill in English and Hindi, form sensitive (and political) subjects for young Tibetans. Many BiE youth especially express discomfiture over their Tibetan language ability, and clearly prefer to read and write in English. In a way that in many respects validates an English-language investigation, this is intensified by the role of English as a political language for the wider Tibetan cause. With Tibetan being a rare language and Mandarin being Beijing's language of propaganda, English has proved useful for international promotion of the Tibetan cause. The prevalence of English as a *lingua franca* in India also meant that it offered local benefits too, and was employed as the official language of instruction in exile schools. Indeed, with the exception of those born in Tibet, and despite what might be seen as a classed and generationally mediated shift in policy that has resulted in promotion of Tibetan over English in certain schools, English holds an almost first-language status, reducing concerns over the validity of this English-language study.

DESIGN, METHODS & ANALYSIS

This part discusses the research design, methods and analytical techniques used. In the first part, I outline the basis and detail of research design. In the second, I specify my methods, discussing the various sources of data that were used for analysis and how these were collected. In the third, I discuss my analytical strategy in terms of the 'reading practices' employed for producing insight.

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[42] Significant dialectical differences exist between and throughout the three main Tibetan regions of *Amdo*, *Kham* and *U-Tsang*. Of these dialects spoken in *Kham* and *U-Tsang* are –while still very distinctive- most similar, while the *Amdo* dialect can sometimes be unintelligible to other Tibetan speakers. During fieldwork these differences were often a source of curiosity, humour, but also tension between friends, and were often co-opted into a loose moral typology of regional identities –*i.e.* with the 'hard' *Khampa* dialect reflecting the rough warrior people of *Kham*, the cultivated *U-Tsang* dialect belonging to the elite Central-Tibetans, and the complex *Amdo* dialect reflecting the erudition of the region's scholarly populace.

[43] Although, I might add, it is unclear whether this is due to processes of Anglicisation/Sinicisation, or more to the (successful) attempt to institutionalise Central Tibetan as the official language of Tibetans in exile.

Research Design

In responding to the wider issue of how young people experience, make sense of, and respond to violence, displacement and intergenerational historical trauma, it was determined that a *case-study research design* –focussing specifically on the Sino-Tibetan case- was most suitable. While of limited generalisability and reliability, the sharp local focus of a case study allows the collation of rich and valid data (Bryman, 2001:53), and contextual analysis in a way experimental designs do not. Of the five kinds of case identified by Yin (2003),[44] this is a fusion of 'critical', 'revelatory', and 'unique' methods –reflecting the concern for historical trauma across different social groups within the relatively unique Tibetan case. While not easily disaggregated, three distinct sources of data informed this case study. These included: (1), ethnographic immersion and observation; (2), semi-structured interviews (SSIs); and, (3), textual sources (broadly defined to embrace material culture).

Methods

Methods, as noted, include three principal sources of data collection. Of course, in practice these were interwoven (*e.g.* with SSIs occurring during fieldwork, and an ethnographic sensibility being applied to close reading). They are shown here as disaggregated for presentational purposes only.

Ethnographic Immersion/Observation

The ethnographic part of this project involved three periods of 'yo-yo' (Wulff 2002)[45] fieldwork with the Tibetan community of northwest India - at sites in Himachal Pradesh (HP) and Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir (JK). In 2013 I spent six and half months (across two excursions) living in McLeod Ganj –with visits to the settlements of Bir (HP) and Tashiling, Nepal. I spent a further five weeks in the settlement of Sonamling in Ladakh in spring 2014, plus two more weeks in McLeod Ganj. In total fieldwork involved roughly eight months in the Tibetan community, comprising just over six months in McLeod Ganj and

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[44] For Yin (2003), five broad kinds of case study might be identified: 1) the *critical case*, 2) the *unique case*, 3) the *representative case*, 4) the *revelatory case*, 5) the *longitudinal case* –of which a combination is possible and likely.
[45] 'In order to keep up with the mobility and speed of contemporary social life', notes Wulff (2002), 'anthropology requires a new set of methods such as the expanding practice of mobile and multi-level fieldwork'. Wulff coins the term 'yo-yo fieldwork' to characterize a method involving several return trips to the return site, and often –especially where the research focus involves a particular phenomenon (*e.g.* dance)- to different locations.

just over a month in Ladakh. Ethnography involved immersion in the exile community and observation of everyday life for young Tibetans in exile. According to Gold's (1958) typology,[46] my position was often, but not exclusively,[47] that of *participant-as-observer*. Time was spent participating in the daily life of the community, building friendships, conducting interviews with and talking to young people. I also spent time engaging the material storyworld of exile, working from the constructionist view of 'world-as-text' and emulating the psycho-geographical method of exploring environments with awareness of how the material and visual world is shaped by, and shapes, historical trauma –collecting photographs and other materials and documentary resources for later analysis. Given my interest in how historical trauma is constructed and transmitted through institutional arenas and ideological state apparatuses, ethnographic work focussed not only on settlement, but also on families and schools.

In the first case families, as I discuss in Chapter Four, are ordinarily vital for the physical and psychological wellbeing of young people, but they can also be violent institutions (Scheper-Hughes 1993). For Bourdieu (1998), also, families play a crucial role in social reproduction,[48] with the affective bonds created through the 'practical and symbolic work' (Reed-Danahay 2005:115) occurring within families not only serving to hold the family unit together, but also as a base for attachment (and submission) to the social-political order. In the Tibetan case, while conflict and displacement have had a huge toll on families, leading -as an effect of the separation of especially children- to shifts in their nature and function, whether in its normative form or as a language of confraternity between Tibetans,[49] the structuring role of families remains significant, and they continue to serve as key sites for transmission of collective loss and a material signifier of community. To explore these issues, I spent three months living with two Tibetan

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[46] *E.g.* Researcher as: (1), *complete participant*; (2), *participant-as-observer*; (3), *complete observer*; or (4), *participant-as-observer*.

[47] While my role –which was made clear to participants- mostly comprised that of participant-as-observer this was not always the case. My immersion and participation in everyday life, and development of strong friendships in the field, meant that my official role was likely forgotten at times. Similarly, in assisting with teaching at schools and local charities my role also varied.

[48] Indeed, notes Bourdieu (1998), families 'perpetuate their social being, with all its power and privileges, which is at the basis of reproduction strategies: fertility strategies, matrimonial strategies, successional strategies, economic strategies, and last but not least, educational strategies'.

[49] In Tibetan culture, as I will discuss, familial terminology is routinely used for addressing non-kin. This is amplified, as I will discuss in Chapter Four, with the 'kinning' practices (Lokyitsang 2016) –intended to cultivate fraternity among Tibetan youth- taking place in the schools. However, as is evident in such cases of communal upbringing – where unaccompanied children are appointed 'house mothers' and 'siblings'- family remains a crucial metaphor for social organisation.

families during my time in McLeod Ganj. I spent this time observing and taking part in family life. While it would have been better to contrast my experience by living with a family elsewhere in exile, my time spent with families in McLeod Ganj was positive, and I found exposure to everyday family life illumining.

In the second case, schools also play a crucial role in the wellbeing of the young, and much has been made of their importance in securing the short and long-term physical, social and economic welfare of young people in conflict and displacement. During crisis and more generally, however, the school also serves as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser 1974), and therefore as a site for social control and reproduction (Bourdieu 1991).[50] In exile, schools have played a crucial role, offering education and serving as proxy families for 'semi-orphans' –providing essential physical, psychological, and emotional care. But education must be seen *vis-à-vis* the social and cultural context of education in Tibetan history, and with respect for how it is implicated in the conflict with the PRC in and out of Tibet itself. Schooling, both in China and in exile, is central to efforts to instil national consciousness, and (in so doing), correcting 'backward' or 'brainwashed' Tibetan youth. In exile, education holds messianic promise as a form of resistance against China, and as a means of personal and social betterment. As such, as institution, process, and theme, education forms an important aspect of my enquiry here, and some of my work involved time spent in, or interviewing young people at and about, schools. While I was regrettably unable to either observe pedagogic practices or to interview young people at the flagship ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ –due to the risk posed to children's families in Tibet-[51] I was allowed access to the ▉▉▉▉ *School* –the flagship school of the ▉▉▉▉▉▉: one of the ▉▉ key education institutes in the exile community. In ▉▉▉, I was also allowed access to the ▉▉ where I assisted with English-Language lessons for several weeks. In both schools I was able to talk with and interview a number of students, and gain a little first-hand insight into the daily realities of schooling in exile.

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[50] Indeed, to understand power, Bourdieu argued, we must consider the educational system (Reed-Danahay 2005). The schoolteacher, for instance, '[…] by virtue of his function […] is already inclining them [young people] quite naturally to see and feel things in the same way; and he works to build the common consciousness of the nation' (Bourdieu 1991).

[51] This is, of course –given the precarious political situation in Tibet- entirely understandable. Simultaneously, while other factors might also play a role here –including the exploitation of schools by researchers and filmmakers I have reason to suspect that this was related more to intra-communal issues -including recent teacher-student disputes at ▉▉ and a wider dispute between the ▉▉ and other education providers in exile- than to fears over the risk posed to parents.

Semi-structured interviews in English[52] were carried out with thirty-eight young Tibetans (twenty-one young women and seventeen young men) mostly between the ages of 15 and 24. Twenty-six of these young people were born in exile, and the remaining twelve were born in Tibet. Young respondents were purposively sampled. With the younger cohort, teachers at the schools with which I worked were responsible for recruiting interviewees. This, of course, inevitably introduced the significant risk of sampling bias, distorting representativeness –especially when considering the role of schools as a disciplinary space for the reproduction of patrifilial power relations. However, unique aspects of the Tibetan case, plus the primacy of ethical concerns and my dependency on teachers as gatekeepers, meant that this could not have been easily avoided. For the older cohort I purposively sampled participants from among students of a local educational charity, attempting to secure interviews with young men and women both born in Tibet and in exile, and from diverse (secular) backgrounds. While representativeness in terms of gender was, of course, relatively easy to ensure in this way, class was less so, being infrequently indexed publicly by young people in exile. Interviews were conducted at a time and place preferred by the interviewee, and often in pairs. In the case of younger participants, interviews were conducted in school; most others were conducted at a quiet local café. The interview procedure was consistent but relaxed – allowing as much as possible for the participant to guide the focus and progress of the conversation. Interviews usually started with a self-introduction, an explanation of the research project, a request for the participant's consent to take part, and a request for some brief biographical details. I then requested participants for a brief life history narrative (starting and ending when and where they felt appropriate) before asking questions arising naturally from their account or from a series of thematically arranged pre-prepared questions. Further bespoke semi-structured interviews were also carried out with a number of senior community figures, ████████████████████████████████████

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████████████████████████ Similarly bespoke interviews were carried out with

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[52] Two interviews with new arrivals were undertaken through a translator.

representatives from the Tibetan Youth Congress, the Tibetan Women's Association, and other non-governmental organisations ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. Official interviews were supplemented by innumerable informal conversations with Tibetan friends and acquaintances in person and online over the four years of my research.[53]

Textual Sources: Material, Visual & Literary Storyworlds

As noted, the theoretical orientation of this work allows for recognising the 'world as text', and for how the *material* world is both constituted by, and constitutes, subjects. A 'polymorphous' method of engagement –sensitive to wider material, visual, literary and virtual storyworlds- is helpful for realising the ways in which trauma is constructed, transmitted, and inherited in exile. As such, I sampled a range of materials from the field, including: **(1)**, official publications and policy documents; **(2)**, newspaper articles, local, and international NGO reports, institutional publications and unofficial materials; **(3)**, visual sources –including found and made photos, images, cartoons and films; **(4)**, oral-history sources –such as the Tibetan Oral History Project (TOHP),[54] autobiography, literature and poetry, and, last **(5)** websites and blogs (See Annex 2).

Analytical ('Reading') Practices

With texts detailed, it is necessary to outline the analytical -or 'reading' (Shapiro, 1988)- practices as specified by the genealogical method. These should not be seen as too rigid. Indeed, much has been made of Foucault's resistance to specifying a precise method for discourse analysis in this regard (Harwood 2000; Tamboukou 1999; Graham 2005). While Foucault's aim was to avoid the positivist tendency of privileging certain truths above others by rooting them in 'better' methods –and thus disrupt the objectifying and subjectifying force of research 'fictions'- problems of course remain, such as a lack of clarity regarding the aims of work identifying with a Foucauldian method, diminished –if not barred-

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[53] In referring to sources I use a system of direct referencing and notation. Published resources, including reports, news articles, blogs, images, films, literature, and poetry will be referenced as per usual conventions. Personal interviews –except where permission was given to be identified- are referenced according to a unique respondent number (*e.g.* 'R1', 'R2', 'R3'). Testimony taken from the *Tibet Oral History Project* is referred to using a native notational system –this refers to respondents (rarely anonymised) *via* a site identifier (*i.e.* Dharamshala, Mundgod, or Bylakuppe) alongside a site-specific numerical identifier (*e.g.* #3M – or the third respondent from Mundgod).
[54] Available at: http://www.tibetoralhistory.org/

reproducibility, and a kind of elitist 'exclusive/exclusionary' tendency of poststructuralism (Graham 2005; O'Farrell 2005). Such critiques, however, miss that Foucault's methodological anarchy is not meant to imply 'anything goes in the relativistic sense, but in the creative sense used by Feyerabend, which is to use systems of thought as catalysts to move beyond the strait-jacketing confines of methodological rules (implicit or explicit) that serve to constrain thought' (Graham 2005:5). The analytical task here in this way responds to a clear analytical *purpose* in trying to identify –following Foucault's interest in the 'constitutive and disciplinary properties of discursive practices within socio-political relations of power' (*op cit*. 7)- the material subjection of subjects (Foucault 1980) by '[interrogating] discursive practices that objectify and subjugate [*constitute*] the individual' (Graham 2005:7) –in this case the discourse of national loss through which young people are affectively constituted, and work to constitute themselves as subjects. Yet, while on one hand my concern is for how this narrative '[(re)secures] dominant relations of power and the correlative formation of domains and objects', and how, through objectification, 'individuals not only come to occupy *spaces* in the social hierarchy but, through their continual subjugation, come to know and accept their *place*' (Graham 2005), analysis also tries to identify traces of the wider material-discursive field from which the national account is parsed in an attempt to recover the overdetermination of loss, subjectivity, and agency.
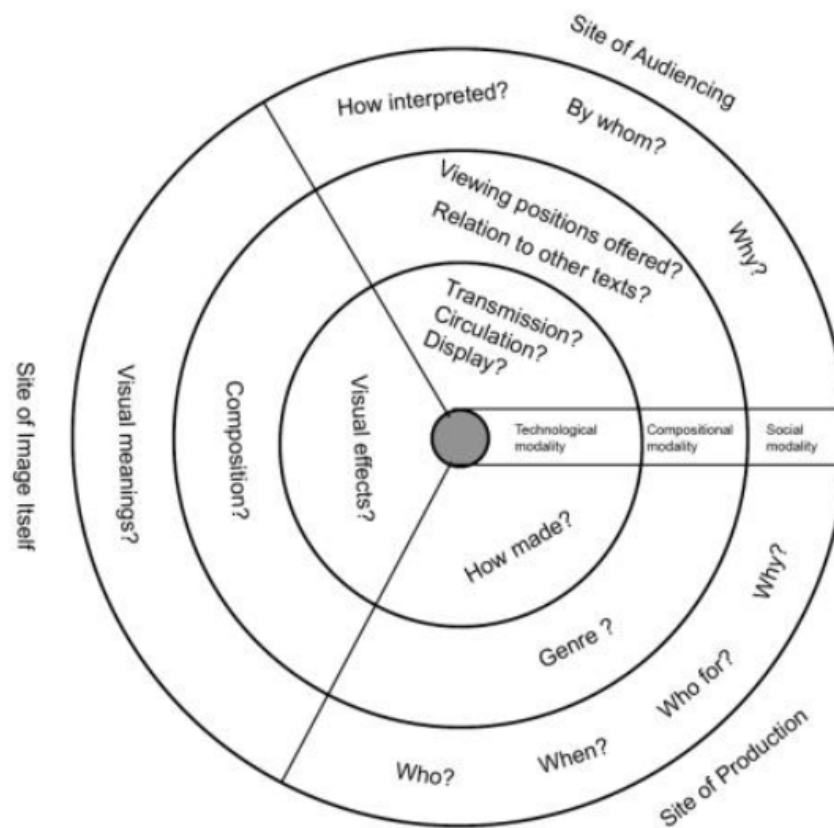
FIGURE 2: TOOL FOR VISUAL ANALYSIS (ROSE, G. 2012)

So how does this translate into analytical practice? What can be done, that is to say, with the texts above to gain insight? Following this pattern, at the broadest, analysis involves isolating how discursive events manifesting in concrete contexts, reflect iterations of broader rationalities and ethics through which young Tibetans are made and make themselves subjects. For this study, I consider, for instance, how the everyday inscription and re-inscription of the masternarrative of national loss (Edkins, 2003) produces national subjects and subjectivities; the potential relation of this master-narrative to historical social structures and power relations; and the exclusions caused by the production of such 'truth'. In practical terms these questions were dispersed according to the analytical method offered by Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2015:91). This process includes:

1) Selection of discursive sources or texts;

2) The problematisation of discursive objects and practices;

3) Analysis of 'technologies' –practical forms of rationality for the government of self and others;

4) The identification of subject positions within which speakers are situated or attempt to situate themselves; and, finally,

5) The process of subjectification –that is 'how do subjects seek to fashion and transform themselves within a moral order and in terms of a more or less conscious ethical goal?

This framework is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive, but reflects well the general progression of my analytical project. The first step of this process was realised by collating, reading, and coding[55] select texts within *Atlas.ti*. The second stage corresponds to the task of Chapters Four and Five which, focussing specifically on decentring the traumatic event and the subjectivities it disperses, destabilises national trauma and traumatised national subjects by revealing first the contingency of the masternarrative of loss and then displaced histories of loss. Drawing on Alexander's (2012) cultural trauma theory, Chapter Four also draws loosely on the analytical method of Grant *et al* –involving: 'examination of the actual content, structure, and meaning of the text under scrutiny'; 'examination of the form of discursive interaction used to communicate meaning and beliefs; and 'consideration of the social context in which the discursive event is taking place' (in: Bryman 2001:509)- together with literary analysis –*e.g.* of trope, metaphor, theme, metonymy, catachresis, rhetoric, plot, and character- of the new historicists (Greenblatt 2000), to examine construction of the masternarrative of loss. Illuminating the relationship between the masternarrative, power, and social structure –and the exclusions created- is more complex. Discourse analysis here might be seen as a kind of 'sceptical reading' (Gill 2000:180) –'searching for the purpose lurking behind the ways that something is said or presented'- as well as for how such practices reproduce –directly or through their exclusions- inequality. So, notes Johnstone (2008:70), 'the worlds that shape and are shaped in discourse involve absences as well as presences. Noticing silences, things that are not present, is more difficult than noticing things that are present, but it is equally important'. In a way slightly in tension with the Foucauldian orientation of this thesis I have, however, given a specific shape to these absences, and look within discursive practices for where issues of gender, class, or age are indexed and excluded –or where the regulating community 'voice' intrudes. The final three stages of Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine's process apply to Chapter Six, where I turn to explore the ethics and rationalities (the discursive terrain) by

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[55] *E.g.* according to themes of 'violence', 'loss', 'emotions', 'youth', 'gender', 'age', 'agency', 'truth' *etc.*

which young Tibetans are made, and make themselves, agents within the Sino-Tibetan conflict. My analytical method here is more idiosyncratic, but through using various texts above I attempt to ascertain various subjectifying tropes and practices ('technologies of power' and 'technologies of self') according to and through which young people are identified and identify themselves, and what room such practices leave for subaltern agency.

ETHICS

This section considers key ethical concerns of this project –notably the inherent power disparity between myself as a white western male researcher researching three nested marginal groups: the Tibetan exile community as a whole; marginalised groups within that community, and finally, 'traumatised' children –as both an example of a marginal group, and as universal clinical category.

In the first case, while research with any marginal group creates ethical dilemmas for researchers given their greater ability to produce truth, this is especially troubling given the critical focus and possible costs for community reputation. This is made keener by a focus on *class* that, of course, risks legitimising historic claims justifying occupation made by China. There is, in some ways, no eluding this: anthropology has historically been beset with a colonial underside that can only be resolved by more subaltern voices in research. Yet, while I remain critically sympathetic to the Tibetan cause, and while criticism in no way reduces or excuses the misery endured by Tibetans through occupation, there is little to be gained from using scholarship to valorise the community and cause, and much to be lost. Focussing on inequality *within* exile demands a (parenthesised) universalism to look beyond the irreproachable culture under siege to see the costs of strategic essentialism. Of course, such efforts will always form *fictions* -mediated by researcher positionality and bias. A *critical reflexivity* may, as such, temper but not remove the risk of misappropriation and misrepresentation.

As noted, justification for such a critical enquiry follows a scientific and ethical concern for issues that some may prefer remain unaddressed. There is no reason, in this respect, why the nationalist political cause should be privileged over –and possibly at the expense of- others, and in this way my obligation lies more explicitly at the generational level with the young, and young Tibetans of different social

backgrounds. Still, several ethical problems apply to researching and representing not only young people, but also those that have experienced adversity –such as violence, conflict or displacement. In general, of course, several issues pertaining to research with adults -including those over potential benefit or harm, the need for informed consent, privacy, confidentiality and fitting reward- also apply to working with children (Morrow & Richardson 1996:103), and must be attended. For some, however, young people in research are especially vulnerable due to their physical weakness, immaturity, and 'total lack of political and economic power' (Lansdown 1994:35). A reputedly limited capacity for understanding and rational judgement might also, some argue, make the young and their testimonies untrustworthy sources. Concerns are amplified in conflict and post-conflict contexts where the risk of physically or emotionally endangering the young is greater. For Hart and Tyrer (2006:18), 'conflict poses particular challenges for safe, ethically responsible research involving children'. Limitations with regard to movement, communications and security, 'make the practicalities of meeting and working with children especially difficult or challenging'. Researcher gender, the authors note, may also be difficult –with males often seen as agents of state or local armed forces. Researchers must 'be aware that their presence may affect the social dynamics within the community by potentially bringing in unfamiliar practices, attitudes and resources. [Also], the visibility of researchers can draw attention to those who engage in research activities, thereby arousing suspicion and potentially creating risk'. Finally, several scholars have also raised alarm for the risks of eliciting –and forcing a respondent to 'relive'- traumatic memories during interviews (Bruzy, Ault & Segal 1997; Wong 1998 –see: Corbin 2003).

In this case study, several specific dilemmas may be identified. First -regarding the potential harm participation might incur for the young- it is possible that, should their disclosure be considered 'subversive' and their identities revealed, young people (or their families) interviewed here now or during a possible future return to Tibet, might be put at risk of reprisals by Chinese state security. Such risk, however, is not limited to censure or limitation of future opportunity by the PRC. While remote, there is also a possible risk of *intracommunal* sanction of young people deemed to have spoken out of turn in a way that threatens the reputation of the community. Second, my focus on the visual and photography compounds matters –particularly in the first instance- for images of young people participating in protests

for example (*see* Plate 1-4), might offer visual proof of their involvement in 'subversive' activity – reportedly a key factor in deciding whether Tibetans are allowed into Tibet by the PRC. Third, given my interest in trauma, there also exists the theorised risk –stated above- of how interviews may cause distress by encouraging a 'reliving' of traumatic experiences.

Mitigating Risk

Several factors and direct measures mitigate these risks –including, as standard, the submission of an enhanced ethical review to the University ethics committee prior to any human involvement. First, concerns for criticism of an already marginal community are troubling, but are to some degree rejected through a duty to science and, more importantly, to an overriding responsibility to difference and the welfare, specifically, of the young. Second, as regards this group, while I accept that respondents capabilities differ relative to age, I dismiss concerns noted above for the reputed unreliability of the young as respondents –noting that, from a poststructural perspective- the reliability of the young is not significantly less than that of adults. Other dilemmas pertaining to work with young people –including the need to identify and negotiate: adult-child power relations and those between children; issues of social difference; the issue of compensation; the need for informed consent and confidentiality; and the immediate consequences of the research encounter (Hart & Tyrer 2006)- are relevant, however, and as such several general measures were taken to address and mitigate risks here. Care was, for instance, taken to ensure no respondent was put at harm during or after interview. Interviews were conducted in a safe, quiet, public or private space (depending on their preference), and usually in pairs. No reward was offered for interviews, but I did offer tea or other refreshments for participants. Respondents were identified through schools, and permission sought with a senior teacher as well as from young participants.[56] Older respondents were identified through a social work organisation, and permission was sought from both this organisation and respondents. Young people were informed as comprehensively as possible of the study's purpose, and told that they could contact me for further details or to retract contributions. All interview data was treated with care and attention. Notes were anonymised and audio files protected on my laptop.

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[56] Official consent forms were, however, not used –partly because these can be viewed with suspicion by groups that have experienced state violence, and also because they introduce a counter-productively alienating formality.

Biographical details were limited to age, gender, BiT or BiE status, region of origin and social background. While the exile community is small and it is possible that individuals might be identified through context, unless they gave express permission or in cases where identity is already established (*e.g.* through published works), no respondent has been named, and care has been taken to ensure accounts can't be linked to any individual. The issue of photography is more difficult. While many images used here are 'found', and as such publicly available, several depict the faces of young people. While these images will be unredacted in examination copies further advice will be sought over whether they should be removed for future publications.[57] Third and finally, while the risk of causing distress through interview was troubling, happily most of my interviewees had not personally experienced violence other than the journey into exile. While some interviews did result in strong emotional responses, my design allowed participants control over the conversation and I remained sensitive to their mood –offering them the opportunity to stop. As a point of ethical departure, I more generally follow Hart and Tyrer (2006) here, in arguing that, while measures must be taken to limit possible harm, research *should* be carried out with young people, even in risky contexts, for in overzealous shielding of the young, there is ironically a risk of worsening their invisibility and exclusion.

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[57] Often, however, these are already available. Not only do tourists routinely take and publish such images online, but so do the community's own news outlets.

THREE

VIOLENCE & NATIONAL TRAUMA

FIGURE 3: TAPEY

Image of self-immolation of Tapey in 2009. [Retrieved from: https://www.flickr.com/photos/24669434@N02/6323263537]

In 2009, following a wave of protests across Tibet the previous year, a young monk named Tapey left his monastery in Ngaba[58] and, dousing himself with petrol, walked into the town centre and set himself alight. As he burned, Tapey waved a Tibetan flag with an image of the Dalai Lama and shouted slogans before

[58] Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan, People's Republic of China.

police shot him dead. While Tapey was not the first Tibetan to have ended his life in this way,[59] this was the first in a wave of self-immolations that to date has seen the death or injury of 145 Tibetans, 24 of which are 18 or under, and 100 of who have been less than 30 years of age. What would cause people to take such action? For those familiar with the Tibetan case, the answer is self-evident: self-immolation, protests, or flight into exile is a result of six decades of occupation by China –an expression of *nationalist* consciousness that, unable to tolerate persecution and culturally barred from violent rebellion, has turned to agonising self-destruction. While this analysis comes from exile, as Woeser[60] argues in her work on the messages of self-immolators, it seems valid in Tibet. The testimony of Tsultrim Gyatso, for instance, reads:

> Alas
> The tears
> The heart aches
>
> Dear brother
> Can you hear me?
> Can you see it?
> Can you hear it?
> Whom should we appeal to [relieve] the
> Suffering of six million Tibetans?
>
> The tyrannical laws of the Chinese
> They are taking away our treasure house[61] of gold and silver
> The public is being subjected to oppression
> Thinking about these, tears flow out of my eyes
>
> I am compelled to burn my precious human body
> For the return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama
> For the release of the imprisoned Panchen Lama
> For the welfare of the six million Tibetans

For Woeser (2016) and many exiles, such –*sacrifice* is *not* pathological. 'I have always tried to emphasise one area of frequent misunderstanding', she states: 'Self-immolation is not suicide, and it is not a gesture of

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[59] Thupten Ngodrup who self-immolated in Delhi on April 27th 1998 was the first such case. Intriguingly Ngodrup's final testimony emphasises his faith and commitment to the Middle Way Approach – a point of relevance to recent divisive debates about the sentiment fuelling immolations today. See: Canada Tibet Committee. (1998) *Biography of the Late Thubten Ngodrup*. Available at:
http://www.tibet.ca/en/library/wtn/archive/old?y=1998&m=4&p=29_4 (Accessed: June 22 2016).
[60] Tsering Woeser is a mixed-ethnicity (Han and Tibetan) writer, journalist, and activist from Sichuan Province and educated at Southwest University for Nationalities. She, alongside her husband -Chinese writer Wang Lixiong- is an outspoken critic of the CCP's Tibet Policy.
[61] The 'Western Treasure House' is a popular historical term for Tibet in Chinese.

despair. Rather, it is sacrifice for a greater cause, and an attempt to press for change'.[62] Moreover, she

argues, the protests are *representative*, united –spatially and temporally- by a common *national* identity,

historical experience, and cause. While some self-immolators are monks, Woeser argues: 'many were

ordinary people: seventy-four were nomads or peasants; among the others were high schools students,

workers, vendors, a carpenter, a woodworker, a writer, a thangka painter, a taxi driver, a retired

government cadre, a laundry owner, a park ranger, and three activists exiled abroad. All are Tibetan' –

united in *loss*. In one article, two young exiles[63] affirm the solidarity between Tibetans in this way. They

note:

> *Like every other nation, we Tibetans are also united because of our own language, our own culture and*
> *history. The traumatic experience of the Chinese occupation has unified Tibetans like never before.* The
> protests of 1959, 1987/88/89 and 2008 have been momentums of national consciousness in
> our recent history. These uprisings and the courage of our own people have inspired not
> only generations of Tibetans in Tibet and in exile but also kept the struggle alive in each and
> every one of us.

The claim to *national trauma* here implies the nation as the principle interpretive frame through which

history *was* and *is* experienced, and, moreover, how *loss* of the nation – through the 'traumatic experience

of the Chinese occupation' – forms a solidary force structuring subjectivity and agency in Tibet and exile,

serving to inspire not only deep loyalties to the cause but also extreme forms of (autonomous) action:

from perilous nocturnal flight over the Himalayas, to agonising forms of self-sacrifice. Here I outline the

history of violence and loss in the Sino-Tibetan conflict, and its reputedly constitutive effect on Tibetan

subjectivities and agencies, especially through the advent of this intergenerational historical trauma. Of

course, this naturalistic approach contradicts my theoretical perspective, which sees efforts to determine

history as contested but also constitutive. Attempts to give account in the 'scientific' arena – where the

claim of trauma 'becomes subject to evidentiary stipulations of an altogether different kind, creating

scholarly controversies, "revelations," and "revisions" (Alexander 2004:18) – will, in the constructivist

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[62] Indeed, she continues, citing a senior Lama '"the motivations of self-immolators in Tibet, whether monks or laypeople, have nothing at all to do with personal interest […] These acts are meant to protect the Dharma and to win the Tibetan people's rights to freedom and democracy". Self-immolators are bodhisattvas sacrificing the self for others, phoenixes reincarnated from the flames of death.'

[63] Keldon, T., and Dolma, M. (2014) *Response to Lodi Gyari's Article on TYC Status*. Available at: http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=35363 (Accessed: 22 June 2016).

view, inexorably shape trauma, generating an interpretative and experiential mode for deciding, organising and internalising the past. While this discussion therefore belongs as a sub-section of Chapter Four, read parenthetically it offers a familiar means for conveying what many see as *the* historical context of violence and loss as experienced by Tibetans over the past sixty years, and provides a historical background for those unfamiliar with the case. As such, it offers space for regarding at 'arms length' (Taussig 1992) the *naturalised* masternarrative of conflict and national trauma, but also a way of decentring this so we can explore, in Chapters Four, Five and Six, the construction, deconstruction, and restoration of youth political subjectivity and agency. In the first and second parts of this chapter I respectively explore the history of violence and loss – with specific regard for the suffering of young people as a result of conflict, displacement, and historical trauma – and the institutional and cultural factors that are believed to mitigate these and promote resilience. In each case, as noted, the task is to define how, for some, youth experience (including youth welfare), subjectivity, and agency is reducible to an account of *national loss*, defined in terms of occupation.

However, while this effort to locate subjectivity and agency in collective historical experience may be intuitive, politically useful, and partly valid, the continuist position entails suppositions over the nature and significance of 'the event', the status of subjectivity and agency, and the purported relationship between them. We should in no way doubt the violence and loss experienced by many Tibetans as a consequence of occupation, certain intentionality by China in causing suffering, or the nationalist inflection of Tibetan agencies (especially today). But we must also identify how the selective seizure and signification of the material traces of the past and past loss is vital for nationalism's 'essentialist conceptual structure and apocalyptic claim to truth' (Vali 1996; in Hodgkin & Radstone 2005:169), and how through reducing experience, subjectivity and agency to its terms – i.e. through securing 'the false unity of the self-same national subject evolving through time' (Duara 1997) – the nation becomes naturalised over, and often at the expense of, other kinds of identification. While rejecting the salvationary or demonising claims of either pro-nationalist or pro-Chinese accounts, I identify how 'explosive methodological controversies' (Alexander 2012) over what *really* happened and who is responsible – *i.e.* third party attempts to 'break the 'hermetic cycle of injuring and suffering' (Beck 2011:350) – can provide inroad for critique here. In this

way, though we must tread carefully and remain wary of 'radical reductionism',[64] I consider how reading *against* the nationalist account, including considering those who emphasise the historic injustices of Tibetan society and China's efforts to develop Tibet, allow us to *decentre* the event, subjectivity, and agency, and restore a complex (overdetermined) reality irreducible to either account.

Indeed, first, the advent of polarised histories here misses that at temporal and spatial levels, *the event* (as a series of heterogeneous, multivalent, and relational processes rather than a traumatic singularity), was felt and perceived differently according to social position: its *meaning*, and much of its force, is contingent. Second, in terms of subjectivity, such critical reading persuades us to ask whether 'the nation' had the status required for people to perceive trauma in national terms. Historically, loyalties have not, for instance, been clear. We have, for instance, heard little of those who sided with China or why (Gattrell 2013). Seeing such groups as 'national traitors' is unsatisfactory, reflecting an exceptionalism that has deterred recognition of 'indigenous' socio-cultural inequalities (Hansen 2003), and ignored how 'the story of modern Tibet is far more complex [than nationalists let on], and there were other types of Tibetans fighting for their people and for a different kind of Tibet' (Goldstein 2004:xiii). This may also be true today, where the post-colonial nationalist project evacuates the complex range of forces determining social suffering and agency. Indeed, agency cannot, here, be reduced to the account of national loss alone, and in cases of flight, protest, and self-immolation, we should be cautious of either assuming alignment between protests in Tibet and the rarefied (exile) nationalist account (Fischer 2014), or of disregarding the broader constitutive material-discursive field. In the fourth part of this chapter, I decentre the naturalised masternarrative of violence, historical trauma and subjectivity by exploiting dissonance between nationalist and pro-Chinese accounts and identifying disjunctures in the historical ontology of the national subject. This allows recognition of both *non*-nationalist sources of past and present social suffering and attending subjectivities, as well as for whether agency (past or present) can be reduced to exile nationalism (*versus* an

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[64] Yeh's critique concerns, in particular, leftist scholars such as Zizek (2008), who have tended to dismiss protest in Tibet as the result of meddling and incitement by the historic elite or foreign powers hostile to China and its political project. See: Zizek, S. (2008) *Tibet: Dream and Reality*. Available at: http://mondediplo.com/2008/05/09tibet (Accessed: June 22 2016).

indigenous species), or whether it can be at all reduced to the call of *Bhod Gyalo*[65] over material factors – including, but not limited to, processes of socio-economic upheaval and dispossession occurring as a result of 'effective occupation' and 'disempowered development' (see: Fischer 2013) in the context of neoliberal reform.

<div align="center">A HISTORY OF LOSS</div>

The annexing of Tibet by China in 1949,[66] and the waves of ethnocidal violence that are claimed to have followed since (forcing many thousands of Tibetans into exile), might be seen as constitutive of modern Tibetan subjectivity. The event is held to have ruptured lifeworlds as if from nowhere, and rippled out to structure Tibetans' lives over the past half century. While both this polarised narrative and its account of subjectivity and agency are contested (see below), here I offer overview of this purportedly structuring context.[67] While both this polarised narrative and its account of subjectivity and agency are contested (see below), in this first section I offer overview of this purportedly structuring historical context.[68] In the first section I consider a more general history of violence and (national) loss and exile from occupation to 2008, and in the second I reflect – drawing on the 'refugee experience' framework – on the specific experiences of young people through conflict and displacement, with a closer focus on the contemporary period of 2008 – 2016.

Violence & Loss In The Sino-Tibetan Conflict

In October 1949 Mao's People's Liberation Army of China (PLA) re-established Chinese control over the Sino-Tibetan hinterlands of Kham/Sichuan and Amdo/Qinghai, compelling the young Dalai Lama,

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[65] (*Lit.* 'Free Tibet')

[66] In fact this date only represents the return of eastern regions of Tibet to Chinese control –regions that, with large population of Han Chinese, and having an ambiguous (even antagonistic) relationship with Lhasa, had never been 'part' of Tibet in the first place. The Seventeen Point Agreement that officially ceded Lhasa's sovereignty to Beijing was not signed until 1950. Indeed, as Sperling (2004) discusses, the Central Tibetan government were not initially concerned for the eastern regions until it became clear that Mao was not prepared to stop there. The shift to 1949 in this way reflects an attempt to historically naturalise the nationalist claim to an expansive Tibetan territory.

[67] Historical analysis formed a substantial part of my analysis during this thesis, and earlier drafts contained a more extensive discussion than there is space for here. Footnotes have thus been used extensively to retain some of this content. However, while they contain useful insight, this extra material is not required to understand the main discussion.

[68] Such historical analysis formed a substantial part of my analysis during this thesis, and earlier drafts contained a more extensive discussion than is possible here. Footnotes are used extensively here to retain this context, but, while containing useful material, are not required to understand the main argument. In the final Annex I include a full copy of an earlier version of this chapter for reference.

fearing China's advance to *U-Tsang*, to sign the 'now-controversial' *Seventeen Point Agreement* (Goldstein

1987:xix) ceding Tibet's *de facto*[69] sovereignty to Beijing. Despite present-day representations as 'traumatic',

and while many do claim widespread anxiety over the event, the well-known account of ethnocidal

violence might not, however, have been predicted in the years that followed, with some accepting or even

for various reasons *supporting* intervention and the reforms it brought.[70, 71, 72] While we should be wary of

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[69] The question of Tibet's sovereignty is complex and confused by contemporary political claims and a disjuncture between modern (and indeed ethnocentric) forms of governance and legal claims –including, of course, considerable heterogeneity of what constituted and who administered 'Tibet'. While it is hard to reduce the relationship between China and Tibet to modern legalistic terms of sovereignty, however, it is safe to argue that neither the nationalist claim for ancient socio-political or cultural contiguity and control over 'Tibet', nor China's claim to absolute political ownership of the same region, are correct –especially given the quite different historical conceptions of sovereignty and collective identity. As such, there have been times when Tibetan kings imposed their rule over parts of China. Similarly there have been times, such as under the Dzungar Khanate (1642) for instance, when Lhasa fell under the control of the Chinese empire. This latter period, in particular, was formative in establishment of what is often referred to as the Patron-Priest relationship between the Qing and Tibet's religious elite. Some, however, temper this –on one side noting the term was really more of a rhetorical device (Sperling 2004) than an accurate 'barometer' of Tibet's status *vis-à-vis* China, and on the other some (*e.g.* Shakya 1999) noting that Tibetans also regarded the Emperor as a spiritual deity. By the early 1900s it is true that dynastic turmoil led to a withering of Qing influence in Tibetan regions (although this is sometimes attributed to an active expulsion of the Chinese by Tibetans), and – among some- the rise of a national spirit –largely encouraged by the 13th Dalai Lama (see Chapter Four). While this period saw Tibet enjoy *de facto* sovereignty, this, as I will discuss, must be considered alongside the presence of strongly divisive inter and intra-regional forces. Some regions displayed considerable autonomy from, and hostility toward, Lhasa – a point evidenced by an (unsuccessful) attempt by the anti-religious, anti-feudal and pro-RoC Tibet Improvement Party of Kham to break away from the Ganden Phodrang in 1934 (Goldstein 1991). While Chinese occupation of Tibet is additionally usually framed as a communist injustice, it should be remembered that the exiled RoC government also consider Tibet a part of China. Nevertheless, while I take issue with the territorial claims of the nationalists, I broadly advocate a position of popular sovereignty here.

[70] Indeed, while the *kashag* did try to secure an alliance with external powers against China, some elites (initially those close to the *Shigatse*-based Panchen Lama) saw a closer relationship with China as surety *against* powers like Britain in the region (and as a means of reducing Lhasa's hegemony); others pragmatically accepted the superiority of the PLA and the high costs –more to their own power than to ordinary Tibetan lives- of resistance (Schaik 2011). Accounts of this period, notes Schaik, often miss this calculated opportunism of the Tibetan government. He continues: 'What the British and Americans failed to appreciate was that the majority of the Tibetan government actually wanted to accept [the Seventeen Point Agreement]. […] They knew that when great powers had risen on Tibet's borders in the past, the Buddhist leaders had usually come to an arrangement with them'. Indeed, this paid off, for despite depictions of China's fundamental animosity toward Tibet, Mao initially, notes Schaik, 'had no intention of simply sweeping away the old system and imposing Chinese rule […] the communists courted the Tibetan aristocrats and did little to change the old hierarchical social system'. The Tibetan elite, for their part, 'supported the Chinese in Tibet and suppressed Tibetans who resisted or campaigned against them' (Schaik 2011:219).

[71] Indeed, contrary to fears over economic ruin, investment in roads and schools meant that for many -especially the elite- material wellbeing *improved*. Even culturally, notes Schaik, there was optimism over a synthesis of 'traditional' Tibetan and 'modern' Chinese values. So, 'enthusiasm for all things Chinese – clothes, music, ways of speech- was sweeping the upper classes. Tibetans who had been taken on tours of the new China returned speaking of the amazing modern industrial society they had seen. There was apparently no contradiction between this enthusiasm for Communist China and more traditional Tibetan values, and portraits of Mao and other leading Communists were placed on family altars' (Schaik 2011:221).

[72] Aufschneiter (in: Grunfeld 1986:115), for instance, reported that 'ordinary Tibetans liked the Han because they were honest and they distributed land. Among the younger generation of the nobility [too] it was seen as an opportunity to make some positive changes'. It is true, that things did improve for the poor, with the institution of reforms aimed at reducing inequality -including increasing access to schools.[72] As Tsering (Goldstein, Sienbenschuh and Tsering 1997) also notes, despite fears over Mao's aims, many Chinese seemed to really believe in helping Tibet.

intentionalism,[73] for many this 'courting' (Shakya 1999) of Tibet was only a prelude to domination and exploitation of Tibet and its people. Indeed, the calm was not to last. In March 1959, Tibetans in Lhasa – prompted in part by news of uprisings by local Tibetans in eastern Tibet against more sweeping economic reforms, and in part by rumours that the Chinese were plotting to kidnap and murder the Dalai Lama[74, 75] – staged protests outside the Norbulingka Palace. The protests turned violent, resulting in declaration of martial law and, on March 17th the flight of the Dalai Lama for India. Six days later, the PLA defeated the protestors and hoisted the red flag above the Potala, ushering in the first of three waves of repression in Tibet. Indeed, while primary sources remain scant,[76] existing accounts, in particular the testimonies compiled by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), imply that any ambivalence felt by Tibetans toward

[73] Indeed, I am way of charges of the deceptive 'courting' of Tibet –which benefit from hindsight. In documentation considered by Grunfeld (1996:112) it seems clear that the CCP did not view the entire elite as harmful, and were committed to real reform. One document reads: 'We must do our best and take proper steps to win over the Dalai [the Dalai Lama] and the majority of his top echelon and to isolate the handful of bad elements in order to achieve a gradual, bloodless transformation of the Tibetan economic and political system over a number of years […]'. In the second instance, the document reads, 'Let them go on [the old government] with their insensate atrocities against the people, while we, on our part concentrate on good deeds – production, trade, road building, medical services, and united front work […] so as to win over the masses and bide our time before taking up the question of the full implementation of the Agreement. If they are not in favour of the setting up of primary schools, that can stop too'.

[74] While Mao proceeded carefully in Central Tibet, the east did not fare so well. Kham was from the start subject to collectivisation, land redistribution, forced re-education, disarmament and coercion (Avedon 1984). Citing ICJ records, Avedon (1994:48) notes how the destruction of homes and villages was followed with extraordinarily brutal forms of public punishment designed to compel the population into obedience. The methods, he notes, 'included crucifixion, dismemberment, vivisection, beheading, burying, burning and scalding alive […] children were forced to shoot their parents, disciples their religious teachers […] Monks were compelled to publicly copulate with nuns and desecrate sacred images before being sent to a growing string of labour camps in Amdo and Gansu'. While the extent of atrocity is tough to determine, oral testimonies in exile offer confirmation: *They killed the people of the nomadic villages. They shot them dead. Then they piled the corpses: the corpses of dogs, people and horses. They [Chinese soldiers] were huge in number, not just a few. They were innumerable like ants emerging out of the ground, killing people and dogs. Then they piled the corpses, poured kerosene oil over it and struck a match. The fire burned and we could hardly look* (#11M). It is probable -although uncertain (Grunfeld 1986:132)- that turbulence in Kham was rooted in grievances over land reform and arms seizures that –in divesting the monasteries and incensing the nomadic warriors- triggered the revolt –and massacre- of monks at Sampheling and Lithang Monasteries in 1955 and 1956. The line between religion and politics was –and remains- indistinct in Tibet, and China's fear that monasteries were fuelling dissent was not unreasonable. The clumsy subdual of rebellion, destruction of monasteries, and intrusion in religious practice, however, allowed for easy rallying of nomads by playing on their historic identity as 'defenders of the faith' (Schaik 2011). Despite efforts by the Dalai Lama to pacify Kham –seen as something of a betrayal (Schaik 2011)- the revolt continued, spreading to Central Tibet and giving rise, in 1957, to the CIA-backed *Chushi Gangdruk* [*lit.* four rivers, six mountains] militia.

[75] Indeed, for Avedon (1994), The Dalai Lama, elite, and Tibetans generally were in this way more single-minded in mistrusting China. He points to ethnic tensions in Lhasa owing to food shortages caused by the encampment of the PLA, the Dalai Lama's dismay at the changes wrought by China in Kham during his travels to Beijing, and the hostility of ordinary Tibetans to Chinese (and socialist) cultural values –with their focus on 'mere physical wellbeing' (42)- that were regarded as incongruous with 'individualistic' and spiritual Tibetan ideals. Although his romantic views –*e.g.* his valorisation of culture over 'mere physical wellbeing'- are elitist, it should be noted that while reform in *U-tsang* seemed sincere, sympathetic, and measured, this was not, as noted, the case elsewhere.

[76] Again, we have few accounts from ordinary people, but the oral testimonies of refugees alongside accounts from elsewhere in China offer insight, and have been instrumental in reconstructing histories of the period and of wide scale suffering.

China before 1959 gave way to more widespread fear afterwards.[77] The revolt served as pretext for

initiating a range of policies and punitive sanctions aimed at transforming Tibetan society and eliminating

feudalist reactionaries, policies which, due to inconsistencies between Marxian theory and the Tibetan

social order (Fjeld 2005), as well as to the ignorance, careerism or hostility of local officials, adversely

affected many ordinary Tibetans. In 1959, a letter sent to the NPC by the Panchen Lama expressed alarm

for arbitrary property seizures, arrests and *thamzing*[78, 79] (practices supposedly intended only for the 'most

reactionary feudal lords, their associates, reactionary elements, and counterrevolutionaries') as well as the

debilitating famines generated by the agricultural reforms introduced as part of the Great Leap Forward.[80]

While mortality rates and China's deliberate targetting of Tibet over the period are likely exaggerated

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[77] While this is, of course, difficult to validate, and it is possible that many benefitted from reforms, the very fact of large-scale exodus to India testifies, if not to concrete acts of violence, then to a climate of fear and panic among Tibetans.

[78] *Thamzing* [Mandarin: *dòuzhēng*] or 'struggle session' -the practice of public shaming- forms a silent yet ever-present feature of historical recollection of this period and the Cultural Revolution era that followed. According to Avedon (229) *thamzing* comprised a kind of 'collective Passion play', in its proper form involving a 'bad person' (usually from the elite) being hauled in front of a crowd of local 'serfs' (many of whom included children and youths) and a tribunal of Chinese officials. The prisoner would be ritually garbed -usually with a 'dunce' cap inscribed with his or her crimes- and made to stare at the floor. The officials would read the charges and ask the people to decide on punishment -encouraging them to insult and admonish their masters, and force from them a confession. Khetsun's (2007) memoir contains several accounts of *thamzing* –although mostly from the time of the Cultural Revolution- including how individuals were paraded up and down the *Bharkor* [Lhasa's market district] in costumes for an entire day, or made to ride each other like donkeys as 'the crowd of onlookers who did not understand the significance of what was happening showered them with dirt and spat or flicked mucus at them, jeered, and subjected them to absolute misery'. Khetsun (2007 -see also: Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering 1997) recalls shaking in terror at the anticipation of *thamzing*, and his humiliation at being forced to identify as a 'class enemy'. While Khetsun escaped relatively lightly, others fared worse, suffering lasting mutilation, 're-education' at hard labour camps, or even brutal execution –potentially by their own terrified children. Avedon (1984:230) records: 'After recounting the supposed suffering he had been subjected to, the witness would beat the victim, rebels often being thrashed by their guards with the butt end of a rifle. In these cases, it would frequently be the task of those at the meeting to execute the victim, not, however, before suggestions were elicted as to the best means. Burying alive, wrapping the accused in a blanket and setting it on fire, suspending him from a tree and lighting a bonfire beneath, hanging, beheading, disembowling, scalding, crucifixion, quartering, stoning to death by the whole group, small children being forced to shoot their parents'. It is difficult to know just how commonplace such violence was –the ICJ reports are not entirely reliable, and it seems the aim of *thamzing* at least initially was intended less to kill than to ritualistically humiliate. Nevertheless, some sources do attest to different kinds of brutality, with sixty-six of the *TOHP* interviews bearing testimony here.

[79] Curiously, during fieldwork I heard few public discussions about *thamzing* despite the weight of the Tibetan trauma narrative. The subject likely raises unwelcome questions about class and violence.

[80] Tibet, of course, was not alone in experiencing famine as a result of Mao's reforms. China also suffered severe food shortages during the three 'lean years' of 1959-1963 -a famine that some see as the worst in history, with an estimated 30 million people dying of starvation (Yang 2008; Bannister 1987; Becker 1998). Tibetans, however, may have been harder hit –due partly to their reliance on barley, but also, some claim, for being deliberately deprived of resources as a punishment for rebellion. While some –such as elites banned from participating in communes (Avedon 1984), and Tibetans living in the rural periphery- were disproportionately affected, the effects of famine were more wide reaching –something attested in a number of primary sources (#21D; Dolma 2013), with the TGiE claiming half a million famine-related deaths during the period.

(French 2002; Hao 2000),[81] the period was likely one of hardship for many Tibetans. Still, while some (*e.g.* Dolma 2013) suggest that the famine years were the hardest for many Tibetans, such suffering is often eclipsed by that experienced throughout the Cultural Revolution[82] which gripped China in a paroxysm of violence from 1966 to at least 1971. In contrast to the early 1960s where violence was at least 'regulated', notes Avedon (1993:289), the Cultural Revolution saw hyper-violent mob-rule – often by the young 'Red Guards' – backed by the PLA. The new class system was used for persecution of the elite but applied to anyone suspected of subversion. Children were cajoled into humiliating adults, and adults to abuse children of 'bad' families (Meisner 1999). *Thamzing* became more severe, with survivors jailed or sentenced to hard labour. Monasteries, temples, monuments, works of art, and books were destroyed; *thangkas* and icons on family altars were replaced with images of Mao. Festivals, dances, song and music were prohibited; even the Tibetan language was targeted for abolition, and traditional Tibetan names replaced with Chinese ones. The revolution attempted to destroy people's deepest held values[83] with a campaign aimed at revealing the 'evil' of the old society and, perhaps most upsetting for Tibetans, by re-branding

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[81] Indeed, as I will discuss, while we should not doubt the sincerity of such claims, there are reasons to be wary of the scale, intensity, and intentionality of violence here. In-access of researchers to China, of course, bars work that might verify, or even reveal more acute suffering during the period, but it is also worth noting that much of what we know comes from (limited) sources or inference. With the first, Grunfeld (1986) reminds us, much data comes from refugee testimonies collected by the ICJ –established specifically to collect incriminating evidence on communist states. While this does not inevitably nullify the veracity of testimonies, he argues –citing a clinician that worked with the refugees- that these 'tend to be influenced and exaggerated by emotional trauma and a psychological need on the part of refugees to justify their actions to others –even to themselves'. Tsering (1997) –a Tibetan involved in collecting testimonies for the ICJ- likewise writes in his autobiography that few of those he spoke to had experienced such events -basing much on hearsay. While right to stress the ideological role of testimony, Grunfeld's dismissals here are, of course, naïve, and many of course suffered horribly from reform. It is the case, however, that inferences over the scale and purposefulness of violence may be over-exaggerated. Claims by the TGiE and others that half-a-million Tibetans upwards died of starvation during the period are, for instance, implausible when we consider the population *increase* (from approximately three to five million) in Tibet over the last sixty years, and that 500,000 more 'unnatural' deaths are also claimed by sources (Hao 2000; French 2002). The charge that famine was also deliberate act of ethnic violence against Tibetans -given that more *Han* than Tibetans died of starvation in Tibetan regions- is also unrealistic (Sautman 2006).

[82] The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution marked a decisive shift in the quarrel between radical and conservative factions of the CCP, and an effort to expedite socialism through inciting direct class warfare against the conservative 'rotten core' (the 'capitalist-roaders', and the 'ghosts and monsters' of the old order). In part, the Cultural Revolution comprised a dramatic re-constellation of power within the CCP, but it was also more than this. Purges formed but part of a wider *cultural* project intended to destroy the 'Four Olds' (ideas, cultures, customs and habits) and introduce the 'Four News' ('Maoist' ideology, proletarian culture, communist habits and customs) –something that was to profoundly alter the social, political and cultural landscape of China in a carnival of violence. Memoirs suggest that the Cultural Revolution had cataclysmic effects across China, resulting in the deaths of some 400,000 people and the mutilation of many more. For Avedon (1984:280), 'the bulk of suffering was endured by the Tibetan people.

[83] Avedon reports, for instance, that Tibetans were forced to take part in the extermination of household pets and insects in order to desensitise their aversion to harming living things. So psychologically harmful were such reforms, notes Khetsun, that many Tibetans resorted to suicide.

the Dalai Lama as a 'red-handed butcher' (Avedon 1984:290).[84] While the GPCR officially ended in 1971, the campaign of 'Socialist Transformation' that followed, while appearing 'gentler than the other political campaigns, was no less violent (Khetsun 2007; Avedon 1984), '[causing] dissension within households and destroyed trust even between parents and children, resulting in a state of mutual suspicion' (Khetsun 2007). Khetsun reports the *increasingly* oppressive political climate faced by Tibetans during this time, including the imposition of travel restrictions, surveillance, and introduction of harsh punishments for the possession or distribution of 'subversive' texts (such as those of the new TGiE), insulting Mao or the government, or continuing practices of the old society. The suffering of ordinary folk is also related in Oral Histories, with claims of forced marriage (Avedon 1984)[85] and sterilisation at this time.[86] He also details the increase in public executions, specifically for so-called 'counter-revolutionaries', describing in one case a 'festival of executions' involving the torture and mass murder of a large number of alleged revolutionaries, many of whom were children and youth of the Red Guard. The fury of the revolution came to an abrupt end with Mao's death in 1976, something that resulted in a 'spectacular reduction' of repression in Tibet (Meisner 1999:538). Mao's successor Hu Yaobang was critical of the Tibet Policy and began reforms aimed at repairing Tibetan culture and religious institutions, improving infrastructural development and access to education, and encouraging participation of Tibetans in governance –reducing the dominance of Han cadre leaders.[87] Yet despite much reason for optimism over the prospect of a

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[84] The *Wrath of the Serfs* –a propagandist exhibition installed at the Tibet Museum in Lhasa- forms one of the most remarkable (and grotesque) examples of this campaign. The exhibit –which has since disappeared- comprised a number of clay sculpture scenes of the violence of the old society, and was centered on the narrative of Hor Lhamo, an alleged case of serf uprising in the late nineteenth century (see Chapter Six).

[85] Similarly, Woeser has recently written on the CCP's recent encouragement of 'Inter-ethnic Marriages' between Tibetans and Han as a means for continuing the assimilation of Tibetans. See: Woeser, T. (2014) *Using 'Inter-Ethnic Marriages' to 'Fight Splittism' is Essentially a Continuation of Colonialism*. Available at:
 http://highpeakspureearth.com/2015/using-inter-ethnic-marriages-to-fight-splittism-is-essentially-a-continuation-of-colonialism-by-woeser/ (Accessed: June 22 2016).

[86] The *TOHP* (#13M; #52D) also appears to corroborate such practices. Sonam Tso, a woman from an Amdoese farming community claims she was one of many youths from her village sterilised by the Chinese: '*We did not have children because the Chinese checked and rendered everybody of my age unable to bear children. We cannot have [children]. All the women were injected and then we were stretched out with our hands and legs tied. They touched our stomachs. At that time we did know what they were doing. There was a basin in which were scissors and other things. Chinese women with gloves on their hands put their hands into the opening at the end of women. All such things were done. [We were] rendered unable to conceive'.*

[87] Indeed, while he offered no change regarding China's *right* to govern Tibet, and while the change of approach might also have reflected fear over the collapse of the USSR (something also attributed to nationalist minorities), Hu ushered in an era of economic –and limited political- liberalisation. Recently released US diplomatic cables from the time note 'modest improvements of conditions in Tibet', praising market reforms, and finding 'significant gains' in the rural areas 'where 95% of the Tibetans live' and where Tibetans have replaced Han in local governance. The cables report that while change was slower in urban areas, investment and political reform more widely led to

better relationship between Tibet and China, there were also signs of future troubles, including a sharp rise of youth unemployment exacerbated by the repurposing of Tibet's economy from a rural agricultural to an urban industrial base, and the massive influx of a skilled class of Han migrants from elsewhere in China. In any case, while the period offered prospect for a very different modern trajectory for the conflict, a range of factors – including diplomatic failures by both Chinese and exile officials – led to political deadlock and, ultimately, sharper polarisation of the conflict. The rise of a democracy movement and protests within China more broadly also seemed to gather momentum in Tibet too, leading to crackdown by Beijing on alleged dissidents. In 1989 protests turned to riots and the imposition of martial law. Hu's death, and the events at Tiananmen Square, saw return of repression to Tibet (driven by the wider return of a reactionary authoritarianism through China), leading to the present day. While Deng's capitalist restructuring saw dazzling economic growth, this was attended by a return of state violence-including purges of those sympathetic to the Democracy Movement and detention of intellectuals and journalists of the newly freed press, which was quickly returned to state control (Meisner 1999). The revival of Han nationalism[88] alongside the divesting effects of market liberalisation shaped the return of violence to minority (*minzu*)[89] areas over the period. While reforms for many *minzu* have led to dispossession, the loss of traditional values, and immiseration, voices are stifled as groups have been subject to censorship, surveillance and coercive policing. While conditions seem to have improved somewhat, reports of surveillance, coercive policing, curtailing of speech and assembly, arrest, torture and execution persist (TCHRD 2013).[90] Clinical researchers (Mills *et al* 2005; Crescenzi *et al*, 2002) confirm claims of torture and trauma among refugees in India and, while I found accounts to be rare among recent exiles, I *did* speak with victims of arrest and torture (often by *Tibetan* guards) as a result of political activity

infrastructural development, better economic prospects and material wellbeing of Tibetans, a reduction in oppressive securitisation, and restoration of cultural traditions –such as religious practice. Remarkably, such, liberalisation did not prompt rises in nationalist sentiment. http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB414/docs/19810721.pdf (Accessed: June 22 2016).

[88] As Meisner (1999) explains, nationalism had always been important for the communist party, but it now became central, making socialism irrelevant as it 'triumphed over revolutionary aspirations and values'.

[89] The change in nomenclature from 'nationalities' to 'minorities' is instructive of the changed attitude towards such groups.

[90] In their 2013 *Annual Report*, TCHRD trace seven areas of concern, including civil and political rights, religious repression, crackdown on self-immolation protests, economic, social and cultural rights, socio-economic inequality, internal migration, and education reforms. The report documents the continued violation of rights in terms of torture, arbitrary arrest and 'political reeducation', and increased surveillance and restrictions on freedom of speech.

or attempted flight. Accounts of violation are not limited to political offences, however, but extend to the coercive policing of daily life, including accounts of forced abortion and sterilisation against Tibetan women,[91] and forms of institutionalised deprivation. Physical violence has been joined in recent years by accounts of structural discrimination, especially in education and healthcare. Despite claims of free education and health care, reports (TJC 2005; TCHRD 2013) document the exclusion of Tibetans from schools and hospitals as a result of limited rural availability, high costs, or illiteracy (in Chinese). The TJC (2005) report infant mortality as being three times the national average, and 'more than fifty-six per cent of children between the ages of two and seven [exhibiting] severe growth stunting due to malnutrition'. Education, where available, is criticised as being politicised, with class-texts portraying Tibetan history and culture as 'backward' relative to China, creating a situation 'where both Tibetan and Chinese children are taught to denigrate the traditional Tibetan culture' (TCHRD 2014). According to some, education – and policies that prioritise Mandarin over the Tibetan language – strive to '[assimilate] minorities into the Han Chinese majority instead of taking into account their actual educational needs'. Overall, claim TCHRD, this has resulted in decreases in student enrolment relative to population increase, a mismatch between *real* enrolment and literacy rates with official reports, considerable gender disparity in school attendance, and

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[91] Such claims must be located *vis-à-vis* the rise of China's notorious –although now discontinued- 'family-planning' policies -introduced in 1979 as a means of slowing China's growing population. As a 'minority' group of only six million people, Tibetans were excluded from this, however several reports (Ingram 1992; UN 1998; Avedon 1987; Asia Rights Watch 1987; TWA 2009) suggest the practice of enforced birth control in Tibet. According to the UN: 'acts of violence against women include forced sterilization and forced abortion, coercive/forced use of contraceptives and female infanticide. Numerous reports document that Tibetan women are encouraged to go to clinics for check-ups or for medical purposes unrelated their pregnancies, and then are given injections to induce abortion, without being told the purpose of the injection. Abortions are often followed by sterilization operations, performed without consent. Further, there are reports of hospitals where, at the time of birth, lethal ethanol is injected into the babies' heads, causing them to be born dead. Many Tibetan women now refuse to go to the doctor when they are pregnant for fear of these procedures, and therefore go through pregnancy without any medical attention. Recently, reports have indicated that women are being coerced into "consenting" to abortions and sterilizations under duress, facing the threat of violence against their husbands and the confiscation of all of their possessions'. Ingram's *Genocide in Tibet: Children of Despair* (1992) is disturbing in this regard, offering accounts of sexual assault, invasive medical procedures, infanticide, the discarding of foetuses in drains, and young women being 'pursued through the countryside' and 'taken away in trucks […] like animals' for 'experimentation'. However, while it does not lessen the fact that exile and indigenous Tibetans *believe* such practices occur (and what this says about views of China), and while it does not preclude the chance that reports may 'reflect sporadic abuses carried out by overly zealous officials', Goldstein and Beall (1991) found no evidence of forced abortions, sterilisations, or infanticides in areas sampled for their research –instead noting the significant *increase* in fertility in these areas. Goldstein and Beall attribute the disparity in findings to a number of possible causes, including, first, fabrication, exaggeration or conflation of temporally distinct events by Tibetan refugees and residents in Lhasa; second, misinformed opinions by Tibetans attributing child-loss to 'modern' Chinese medical practices; third, that the 'accounts are true but reflect sporadic abuses carried out by overly zealous officials'; and fourth, to methodological flaws of the earlier research.

finally the failure of education to improve opportunities later in life. Such violence, of course, is directly implicated as the precipitating cause of not only recent waves of protest, but also the flight of between 2500 and 3500 refugees to India each year from 1980 to 2009.[92] While in some ways true, as I will discuss, the reduction of experience, subjectivity, and agency in the present-day conflict to the nationalist account – and its representation as a *continuation* of this account – displaces the more complex context of violence and loss, and a wider range of subjectivities and agencies.

<div align="center">❖</div>

By the end of 1959 over 20,000 Tibetans had followed the Dalai Lama and *kashag* into exile in India, and by 1965 this had increased to 50,000 (Grunfeld 1986). Over the course of conflict new births and extra waves of Tibetans making the journey have continued to grow the community. In 1998, a democratic survey estimated the total exile population – spread across Nepal, Bhutan, the US, Switzerland, the UK, Australia, and principally India – to be roughly 111,000, and in 2009 127,935 (TDS 2009).[93, 94] Responding to the needs of this population was, from the outset, a vital task for exile authorities and host governments, and it quickly became clear that the arrangement of employing refugees on risky road-construction projects[95] or billeting them in cramped, squalid, and diseased transit camps in Assam and West Bengal (Roemer 2008), wouldn't do. As such, the *Kashag* –with vast material support[96] from the

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[92] This figure, however, does not account for those that were forcibly returned, failed to register, or perished on route.

[93] This number, when accounting for the population of undocumented migrants, is more likely to stand at around 150,000.

[94] While difficult to determine precisely, it is likely that around 52 per cent of this increase may be attributed to new arrivals.

[95] Indeed, so dangerous was roadwork that the Dalai Lama, concerned for the threat posed to Tibet's religious elites, directed many monks to return to Buxa Duar where they built a small religious community (Avedon, 1987; Schaik, 2011).

[96] The CTA was not, of course, without its own sources of wealth. Most significant in this regard, was the recovery of a treasure-horde (*labrang*) of gold and silver valued at between US $3-11 million, which the Dalai Lama had sent to Sikkim prior to exile for 'future use', and that had been invested with the Indian government (Grunfeld 1991; Avedon 1987). According to Avedon, this wealth, alongside the work of sweater-selling and handicrafts tradesmen, has formed the bedrock of the Dalai Lama's Charitable Trust –'the resource from which virtually every exile project found seed money'. This aside, we can also assume a certain role for individual wealth too. Not all refugees arrived completely destitute, and indeed we can safely assume that wealth in exile was owed not solely to hard work, but also to the foresight of elite families choosing, like the Dalai Lama, to shift some of their riches ahead of them to Sikkim. As time has elapsed, as exile businesses have matured, and as individuals have moved abroad (sending remittances back to their families in exile), the sources of wealth, and the transnational and transgenerational chains of funds from *within* the diaspora have become increasingly complex and obscure.

Government of India (GOI),[97] other states, and international organisations- set about creating self-reliant Tibetan settlements and institutions tasked with provision of immediate material care for refugees, as well as the vital one of cultural preservation (Roemer 2008). The TGiE, aided by India, eventually resettled refugees over thirty-eight sites in Orissa, Jammu, West Bengal, and Madhya, Arunachal, Uttar, and Himachal Pradesh. Though challenging, this policy was astute. While settlements offered material security they also allowed continuance of cultural and political traditions threatened by revolutionary violence in China. The spacious southern settlements allowed for rebuilding of Tibet's monasteries, while Dharamshala became the site for numerous cultural bodies and, of course, a government tasked with aiding refugees, instituting a political tradition, and organising the *cause* (Avedon 1987). For Frechette (2004:36; see also: Roemer 2008), foundation of the CTA was in this way vital for '[promoting] and [maintaining] the idea of a unified and distinct Tibetan community in exile, loyal to the Dalai Lama and his administration, and poised to return to Tibet'. As such, while the offices of the CTA set about devising policies and institutions that could respond to people's material needs -in particular the delivery of education and health care for growing numbers of children- for HHDL the task of regaining Tibet depended also on *transformation*, of Tibetan society through creating a democratic tradition, government, and institutions.[98] While problems, of course, remain –and feature as a foremost focus of this thesis- this policy –alongside the assistance offered them- has enabled the exile community to emerge as arguably the 'most successful refugee communities in the world' (Gyatso 1986). Indeed, the sincerity, creativity, and energy invested by Tibetans in this way, are most evident with the remarkable exile education system and its schools.[99] In conflict research, schools have an uncertain reputation, held as a social good on which conflict recovery depends *and* as sites for polarisation and recruitment. In the Tibetan case, however,

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[97] While this has not been without benefit for India, and while valorising India's assistance can lead to elision of intercommunal tensions and inequalities faced by Tibetans, Tibetans have, at least relative to other refugee groups in the country or elsewhere, enjoyed considerable security and political freedom in India. While the government in exile was not without its own sources of wealth smuggled out of Tibet with the young Dalai Lama, the GOI provided 'staggering' financial support (Schaick 2011:238; Grunfeld 1996) alongside resettlement space.

[98] A commitment that some might argue has been verified by the Dalai Lama's resignation of political authority to the democratically elected prime minister (*Sikyong*) in 2010.

[99] The CTA -assisted by Nehru and several INGOs and foreign governments- set up twenty-eight schools across Nepal, India and Bhutan catering to refugee and local children from pre-primary to senior-secondary levels. Three *Tibetan Homes Foundation* nurseries, eighteen *Tibetan Children's Villages* –run by *SOS Kinderdorf International* and catering largely to new arrivals- and twelve *Sambhota* schools –at more remote locations- have since joined them. Until 2013 - when the GOI transferred administration of the CST schools to the DoE- these have been jointly administered by the GOI and the government in exile.

schools have generally been seen as a *positive* force on individual and collective wellbeing, and since the early 1960s have provided not only the care and education of thousands of Tibetan children, but have been instrumental in social change, cultural survival, and the construction of a mostly progressive political community and cause. While limited resources mean that more rural youth must often move to larger settlements for secondary school, access to education is assured to all young people, regardless of means. Fees are often heavily subsidised by the CTA or foreign sponsors, and written-off for those least able to afford it –such as new arrivals.[100] This results in enrolment rates of 80-90% among school-aged children in the diaspora, and literacy rates higher than that of the local population (Roemer 2008) – including for girls. The material success of schooling is accompanied by its role as a form of *resistance*, especially given views of how education in China has become an instrument of discrimination (through excluding Tibetans) or indoctrination. Exile education aids survival of the Tibetan nationalist counter-narrative while encouraging endurance of Tibetan language, traditions, and values. Combined with their care of the young, and role as sites for the forging and upkeep of affective bonds between young people, the wider community and Tibetan culture, schools enable the processes of intergenerational transmission that drive identification in exile.

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[100] Such privilege afforded to new arrivals can be a source of considerable intra-generational resentment. One friend, for instance, repeatedly grumbled about how while he and his family had to scrape together the funds to afford their education. Some new arrivals, in contrast, were able to spend their sponsorship money on brand new trainers or other luxuries.

Exile, Youth & the Refugee Experience

In this Life I Saw…
a child
struggled across the snow-mountains
left his parents back home
over the snowy pass
he lost his toes
in this life I saw

Kathup Tsering

FIGURE 4: FROSTBITE AFTER PASSAGE

Image from *Journey in Exile* showing a child being treated for frostbite. Tales of extraordinary hardship on the journey into exile are commonplace, although it is also evident that not all young people face the same difficulties coming into exile, with some taking more conventional routes to India. The socio-economic and political dimensions of this require research.

While the young have been, and continue to be, affected by conflict and displacement, there have been few efforts to offer generational accounts of the Sino-Tibetan conflict, or to identify – in the past or today – differing experiences of it. Drawing on the 'refugee experience' framework, here I briefly discuss young Tibetans experiences of political violence and displacement both historically and in the contemporary period.

Pre-flight: Children, Youth and Conflict

While rarely a category of historical analysis, the young do often feature as objects of concern in accounts of the Sino-Tibetan conflict. This is truer today than during the early history of conflict, for which we depend on refugee testimony. Accounts in the TOHP, for instance, document the reactions of children to rumours of invasion – with one recalling fears of cannibals among young nomad children – and the PLA's efforts to gain children's trust by giving them presents. Others offer alarming accounts of the forcible relocation of children for education in China (#05; #77; #9M; #11; #26M; #37D)[101] or of their ensnaring in the violence of the Cultural Revolution. Sangpo (#9M), for instance, recalls how the children of one couple were forced to watch their parents executed and then 'made to dance over [their grave] and sing'. *They were beaten and told to obey them [the Chinese]*, she notes, *'They did things that would never happen in the world'*. Deckyi verifies the use of violence against children, recalling how, following confiscation of her family's estates, she was (*'as child of ngadak*[102] *who oppressed the people'*) banished and forced to work as a farm labourer where, with other *ngadak* children, she faced severe mistreatment and abuse.[103] Importantly, such accounts also offer evidence for how *status* and *gender* intervened in mediating experience and vulnerability. While conflict did lead to more indiscriminate loss, the elite were especially vulnerable as targets for reform. Khetsun, for instance, recalls the toll of such reform on his sister's children,[104] noting how exclusion of elites from schooling had meant they had become 'completely illiterate […], they had no shoes to wear and their hands and feet looked alarmingly like birds' claws caked in grime'. With gender, while women

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[101] Other interviews suggest that the reality here was more complex. While some were indeed forced to attend school in China, others report being more willing to go. Passang Tsewang (#21D), for instance, reports being encouraged to attend school in China by a Tibetan teacher, and repeatedly lobbying his parents to let him go –which, for financial reasons, they refused to do.

[102] A popular term for a member of the aristocracy.

[103] So, she writes, '*I cultivated the land but did not have anything to eat after the harvest. […] The grain was inspected for stones and finding one stone meant gyurkhoe, finding two stones was gyurkhoe and finding three or four [stones] meant a thrashing […] worse than being in prison, I could not live on par with the people nor could I be in prison like a ngadak to suffer the punishment. I suffered immeasurably. The public beat me […]. The children of the ngadak should not be beaten […] but nevertheless [they] did so like [we were] animals. One was beaten until he lost consciousness*'.

[104] So, he notes, 'all I could think of was the conditions my sister was living in. The dwelling was like a leftover pastoralists' corral with a roof stuck on top, in derelict condition, with no windows to let light in and no whitewash on the walls. Inside there was no furniture except a couple of cracked earthenware cooking pots, a couple of worn-out tin pans, and some ragged mattresses.'

have been excluded from histories of conflict and resistance,[105] women *did* participate, with some '[organising] uprisings, [fighting] against the Chinese troops, and [aiding] the resistance army in invaluable ways' (McGranahan 2010:771), and others, as Epstein confirms, enrolling in the PLA. Furthermore, the exclusion of women and girls from combat didn't avert them from being *targets*, and the *TOHP* implies violence against women –including sexual violence- not only by the PLA, but also by the *Tibetan* resistance (*TOHP* #61M; Grunfeld 1996). While some (*e.g.* Lixiong 1998) reject claims of sexual violence in the Sino-Tibetan conflict[106] – a refutation that, while unusual, seems to be supported by an absence of such claims in primary sources – secondary analysis (Powers 1995; Avedon 1994) and recent testimonies written by Chinese women (*e.g.* Xinran 2010) detailing the extensive forms of abuse enabled by the re-constellation of social power relations that took place during the Cultural Revolution, offer more unflinching account of the lethal intersection of age, class and gender, including of systematic rape campaigns by the Red Guard.[107]

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[105] *Bu mo gcig kyang yod ma red*, notes McGranahan (2010:771), recalling the words of one respondent in his discussion of the role of women in the resistance: "*There was not one woman*". It is something that is repeated independently in the discussions of the resistance cited in *TOHP* (*e.g.*#28M). According to McGranahan, women's exclusion may be tied to religious-political beliefs over their polluting effects –their perceived 'dangerous and sensuous' nature that serves 'to highlight men's weaknesses and vulnerabilities on and off the battlefield'. But, she notes, while not widespread there *are* accounts of women participants, such as Dorje Yudon, and (in the earlier conflict with the Guomintang) Chime Dolma. Indeed, the *TOHP* contains the transcript of an interview with Ama Adhe [*lit.* 'Mother Adhe'] who, while emphasising that *"Women did not kill people"* (#61D), describes the participation and subsequent imprisonment of a group of women in supplying the resistance with supplies.

[106] Lixiong –a staunch Tibet sympathiser, and husband of the poet-activist Woeser- for example, claims that sexuality during the Cultural Revolution was stifled, and that ideas that 'the PLA soldiers forced the lamas and nuns to have sex publicly while Red Guards raped women everywhere […], is far from the truth' –likely reflecting western embroidery. I am uncertain. While the lack of first-hand reports may validate this, it may also reflect the attendant shame of such experiences –something attested by Dolma (2013)- and the risk of negative repercussions for victims (*e.g.* defrocking of nuns).

[107] During the Cultural Revolution, notes Powers (2007:208), the 'Red Guards struck fear into the populace with marauding bands of young soldiers who staged mass gang rapes randomly throughout the countryside. International human rights organisations estimate that thousands of women of all ages were raped, often in public, with their parents, children, and neighbours being forced to watch'. Avedon (1994) also attests this. Drawing on ICJ reports, he writes: Then, as early as August 1966, gang rapes began. The female children of four hundred Tibetan families engaged in lumbering at Po Tramo were marched naked in public by Red Guards, submitted to *thamzing*, and then raped […] In the winter of 1966-67, Revolutionary Rebels travelled to Nagchuka, north of Lhasa. Here they subjected vast numbers of nomads, gathered at the town during the cold months, to similar atrocities. Women were stripped, bound and made to stand on frozen lakes under guard. A man and his daughter, Karma Sherab and Tsering Tsomo were compelled to copulate in public. Throughout Lhoko similar wanton acts took place, as classed Tibetans were left tied in gunnysacks for days at a time […] women and children of classed men, were made to stand in freezing water for five hours, wearing dunce caps, heavy stones strapped to their legs. More rapes and beatings occurred in Shigatse'.

Such concerns for the young, and young women especially, are also evident in accounts of the contemporary conflict. The *Tibetan Justice Centre* (2005) reports troubling accounts of violence against the young, claiming that China has 'fallen far short of its obligations under international law [as defined by the *Convention of the Rights of the Child*]', citing 'systematic' and 'arbitrary' harassment, physical abuse, and detention of children 'often for lengthy periods in 'appalling conditions' without legal council. Torture of children, notes the TJC (2005), 'remains a common practice in Chinese detention centers: To obtain information and confessions, to intimidate and to punish, we found that authorities subject very young children to beatings, whipping, burns with irons and heated metal bands, electric shocks with cattle prods, forced staring at the sun, assault by police dogs, suspension in painful positions and various forms of psychological torture, such as solitary confinement, threatening children's parents or forcing children to witness others being tortured. Virtually every child detained, whether for political activity, attempted flight to India or otherwise, suffered torture. Several young children were tortured merely for suspected association with others' political activities'. Attention has also been afforded violence against women, and especially young nuns charged of political crimes. *Amnesty International* (1995; 1996) reported that Tibetan women form the largest group of female political prisoners in China, and are subject to cruel, gender-specific forms of torture.[108] Indeed, reports TJC (2005), 'one of the most disturbing aspects of the torture of Tibetan women and girls is its sexualisation', and while 'there has been some welcome evidence that the incidence of rape among young children has been declining, it continues to occur'. The reports of recent writers such as Kunsang Dolma (2013) offer some corroboration of such forms of violence – especially during passage – but it should be noted that fortunately none of the young people I spoke with reported direct experiences of this kind. Indeed, while it must be noted that most of my respondents were born in exile, those from Tibet itself generally spoke of political threat in more second-hand – albeit still concrete – terms. In one interview (R30), for instance, a young woman told me of how her family self-censored any discussions about the Tibetan issue – to the extent she did not realise there was such an issue until she arrived in India – for fear that if they were overheard the Chinese would have 'killed her family'. Indeed, while such instances as those reported by TJC above undoubtedly have taken place, these seem to be

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[108] According to the UN, 'Tibetan women exercising their right to peaceful protest have had their breasts cut off, have been sexually abused by electric cattle prods, attacked by dogs, and beaten while suspended in the air'.

restricted to (often monastic youth), that have become embroiled in so-called 'subversive' activities, with everyday structural violence, the violence of passage, and familial separation being more common sources of loss for the majority.

As mentioned, it is claimed that young Tibetans also suffer more diffuse – but *commissioned* – structural discrimination, especially in the education and health sectors and the labour market, leading to high infant mortality, malnutrition, illiteracy, and unemployment (TJC 2005). With education, China is argued to systematically exclude young Tibetans from schools (*via* high fees *etc.*), and at the same time use them for validating occupation, quelling nationalist sympathies, and eradicating Tibetan culture (TCHRD 2014).[109] The effects include decreases in enrolment relative to population increases; incongruities between *actual* and official enrolment and literacy rates; sizeable gender disparities in educational attendance; and finally, a diminishing return of schooling relative to mobility. With this last issue, the rise of especially urban and peri-urban youth unemployment in Tibet has been sharp, due partly to preferences for employing Han migrants over Tibetans (Fischer 2014) and resulting in increases in urban poverty, hazardous livelihoods, crime, and related health concerns. Here we might also consider the classed or gendered dimensions of violence and loss, with rises in marginal occupations like sex-work, for instance, raising concern for the differential effects of violence on men and women (see below). These concerns, unlike state-sponsored violence and persecution *were* more evident in interviews with young people from Tibet. High levels of illiteracy and the unavailability of quality Tibetan-language education in particular, resurfaced numerous times as a rationale for flight (or more accurately migration), with one respondent during my pilot study in 2010 emphasising this as a major problem facing Tibetans in his region. While this may be a coded reference to political struggle, the lack of quality Tibetan language education in the TAR is more a product of policy failure than malign intent – of *omission* rather than commission – and as such material concerns over livelihoods may also be at play here. The general socio-economic inequalities faced by Tibetans were however referenced by other young respondents, even if these were not articulated in polarised political terms. A monk friend chuckled frequently (and with a clear degree of embarrassment) about how 'dirty'

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[109] TCHRD (2014) maintain that China's education policy diverges greatly from international standards in prioritising 'moral education' over individual development -a euphemism for a 'patriotic education' aimed at '[promoting] students' faith and confidence in the Party's leadership and the socialist system'.

people were back in Tibet, noting their ignorance of simple hygiene. In my pilot study the testimonies of a number of young people suggested difficult childhoods typified by high levels of early parental mortality and economic pressures worsened by a lack of education and skills and competition with Han migrants. As I will discuss, broader economic upheaval and changing cultural aspirations have had dramatic effects in Tibet, especially among rural youth who are pressured to move to urban areas for work, sometimes in risky or exploitative industries. While empirical work is needed, this group seem to be strongly represented among more recent exiles, and tend also to face greater levels of economic hardship. These new arrivals are often subject to derision by exile youth; mocked for their 'rougher' complexions, manners, and (out-dated) clothing – a possible sign of lingering class prejudices.

Passage

Passage forms a vital but under-researched stage of the refugee experience (Ager 1999). In *Tibetan* narratives accounts of passage are, however, quite prominent – possibly due to the extraordinary nature, physical, and psychological pressures of the weeks-long journey across frozen Himalayan passes. A young nomad woman 'Dolma' told me of her journey into exile – on foot and at night for fear of border patrols – with a friend five years ago. Dolma spoke of the crevices lying beneath the snow that could open and swallow people. This was especially difficult, she noted, given the youngest was only three. Her journey, like so many others, was tough. One night, her friend fell into one of these crevices. *I never saw her again,* she said, *but I hope she got away.* She paused before shaking her head and adding: *I don't think so.* A similar account by a fourteen-year-old girl is cited by the TJC. '*We mostly walked in the night time [because] we were afraid of spies in the villages […] There was a big wind, moving the snow all over. Our hair and eyebrows froze. [A] young Khampa carried my younger sister [five years old] on his back. My younger brother [seven years old] could walk on his own. . . . We slept in the snow, with the children and nuns in the middle. In the middle of the night, one of the nuns started screaming […] [S]he had fallen into an ice stream […]. I saw her dead body: her arms were all frozen, her teeth, lips, the inside of her mouth, were all frozen'.* Indeed, the Himalayas are an intolerant terrain. The physical risk of fissures, avalanche, and blizzard can overwhelm the toughest and best prepared. Guides (or 'snake heads') notes Green (2010), are not averse to deserting the weakest en-route. The prospects of capture means moving at night, increasing the chance of falls. For the inexperienced, poorly resourced, or least physically

able, this is worsened by risk of snow-blindness, Acute Mountain Sickness, hypothermia, frostbite, fatigue, starvation, or even animal attack. Children, in particular, suffer severe physical injuries as a result of flight. [110] Then, of course, are the *human* threats, including Chinese, Nepalese and Indian border authorities, but also opportunistic Tibetans such as guides or border peoples. Indeed in the first instance finding a guide, for instance, is a fraught process, made more perilous for those trying it on their own. In his *Murder in the High Himalayas,* which documents the brutal shooting of the seventeen year old nun Kelsang Namtso as she and a party of Tibetans attempted to cross the border to Nepal, Green (2010) notes: 'the only way to find them [is] through the Tibetan underground. […] So-called snakeheads are highly sought after and command top fees for their work. Theirs is an incredibly dangerous line of business. When caught, mountain guides are met with increasingly harsh prison sentences, sometimes as long as twenty years'. Green (2010) is somewhat ambivalent over the integrity of guides (or 'snake-heads'). While some are motivated by the chance to help, others are more mercenary. Fees for the service are high, costing as much as $350 -a year's income for rural Tibetans (ICT, 2010)- and while victims of persecution are, it is claimed, escorted for free (ICT 2010), the risk of exploitation is high. In the second instance, in a conversation with one young man I was told how a roving shepherd had come across their group while it was setting up camp. While the shepherd had warned the group of a patrol unit in the vicinity, the guide, distrusting the man, decided to strike camp and move on. Whether the shepherd had indeed been offering sound counsel to the group, or whether, as the guide had feared, he was set on betraying them, is uncertain. Either way my respondent claimed that the group later learned that a patrol *did* discover their camp shortly after they had departed. However, it is the threat of discovery, arrest, and or mistreatment by Chinese (and Nepalese) border security that is for most, the most pressing danger. Reports of extortion, physical, sexual abuse, and *refoulement* have been reported since 1960. Capture by China can result in detention or worse.[111] While the young – comprising the largest group of refugees – are especially

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[110] Such mutilations are visually recorded in a series of graphic photographs on display in the foyer of the Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre, Dharamshala. Indeed, as discussed in the next chapter, these threats are poignantly memorialized in exile, often forming the centerpiece of exile narratives of flight.

[111] Indeed, this was made clearly apparent when, in 2006, a group of foreign climbers watched the seventeen-year old nun Kelsang Namtso shot dead as she fled for the border when riflemen opened fire on her party. The incident – now known as the *Nangpa La Shooting,* brought to global attention the perils of the Tibetan flight into exile. The

vulnerable to the hardships of passage here, however, age is not the only cause of vulnerability. Socio-economic factors, for instance, are also vital, with those unable to afford the right clothing or better guides less likely to survive. Gender is also crucial, and while monks historically formed the largest group, over recent decades many women and girls have made the journey. Regrettably, girls' suffering can be missed by the largely androcentric nationalist account of violence and loss. Girls not only 'get cold faster than the boys' and 'die first' (Blumencron 2008), [112] but also face unique kinds of violence. On capture, notes Dolma (2013), 'it is even worse for women. Women who are caught are raped first, then sent to do the same forced labour as the men'. The disregard for the differentiated risks of flight in this way also detracts from the risk posed to women and girls from *other Tibetans*, including other refugees and guides. Still, it is vital to identify how not all stories of passage are the same, and the severity of reports simplifies a process that is in truth more complex. As I discuss, some respondents reported arriving *by taxi*, through official border-crossings. An official working for the TGiE noted that this is possible with the right connections and resources.[113]

Resettlement

Resettlement – while varying by host state – poses further physical, psychological, and socioeconomic challenges for young (especially *unaccompanied*) refugees. Regrettably, due to a failure to document early histories of exile, nuanced understanding of the challenges faced during the early years of resettlement is limited. We have almost no record of those living in the unsanitary transit camps of West Bengal and Assam,[114] of those posted to road-gangs or sent to clear the malarial jungles of Karnataka and Orissa. Today, while systematic work detailing the challenges and opportunities faced by young, mostly *unaccompanied*, new arrivals is still required, we have better appreciation of the physical, psychological and socio-economic issues facing young refugees. Yet while problems of course remain, and while these are

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event has subsequently been the subject of a book *Murder in the High Himalayas* (Green 2010), and a documentary film *Tibet: Murder in the Snow* (360 Degree Films 2008).

[112] Kehrein, M. (2008) *Exodus of Tibetan Children – Maria Blumencron: 'Goodbye Tibet'.* Available at: http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=23546 (Accessed: June 22 2016).

[113] Given growing fear for Chinese-Tibetan spies in the community the subtext of his statement, I believe, assumed the assistance of the CCP in such cases. Equally, however, the role of socio-economic position might also be seen in this way to *reduce* vulnerability during passage.

[114] Lempert's (2012) excellent documentation, among other things, of suicide epidemics among young monks at Buxa during the early years of exile is an exception in this regard.

intensified by the absence of a primary caregiver, the stress of this stage is usually accounted for in terms of past-experiences of violence, familial separation, or a rarefied notion of national loss – rather than, for instance, intracommunal issues *in* exile. In this regard, *schools* have been crucial in mitigating resettlement challenges. Indeed, most new-arrivals are dispersed among exile schools, with younger children placed with surrogate families at the TCVs, and older (often less educated) youth with the *Sherab Gatsel Lobling Transit School* (TTS), which offers three years of shelter, education, and vocational training to new arrivals over eighteen. Such services offer not only education but also material, psychological and emotional care, insulating the young from the exploitation and destitution seen with refugee youth elsewhere. With some exceptions, the vulnerability of young people to trafficking, forced-labour, or sexual exploitation *appears* marginal, at least in India.[115] Indeed, the community seems affluent even compared to local people – especially *gadi* and Bihari groups – and visibly obvious poverty within the community is rare.[116, 117] Yet such ideas can obscure inequalities differentiated by generational, socio-economic, gender, regional, and arrival status (Diehl 1998). Indeed, despite the representativeness of refugees,[118] welfare was and continues to be structured by various forms of class and status,[119] with choice of resettlement location or access to foreign visas contingent on one's status.[120] While the structural forces at work are more complex, fortunes

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[115] This is, of course, extremely difficult to determine given the clandestine nature of such practices and the taboo in Tibetan culture. Indeed, while refugees *in* India and Nepal are possible sheltered from such issues, the shadow economy of flight between Tibet, Nepal and India offers an ideal opportunity for extortion and trafficking. In 2004, Radio Free Asia reported the prevalence of sex trafficking of Tibetan girls (attracted by the prospect of passage to the community in exile) in the Tibet-Nepal borderlands. See: Radio Free Asia. (2004) *Traffickers Prey on Tibetan Girls, Women*. Available at: http://www.rfa.org/english/news/social/135875-20040513.html (Accessed: June 22 2016).

[116] In consequence the 'problem of rich refugees' (Prost 2006) has emerged as a contradiction of the Tibetan refugee experience, resulting for some wishing to pursue goals judged 'un-refugee-like' by sponsors (*e.g.* taking up computer science), in withdrawal of funds and, at the collective level, threatening to undermine the cause.

[117] Curiously, my conversations with young unaccompanied refugees suggest that, contrary to patterns within other migrant groups, Tibetans often *receive* remittances to supplement their livelihoods (and sometimes *lifestyles*) in exile from families in China or elsewhere in Asia. This is especially true where young people have relatives who are members of a newly enriched clerical class making small fortunes teaching Tibetan Buddhism in China, Korea, and the Philippines.

[118] For the CTA, as many as 60 per cent of exiles being 'either farmers or pastoral peasants' (Roemer 2008:59) – an important point when considering that alongside the scale of exile, the representativeness of the diaspora is vital for legitimating the nationalist narrative of widespread, cross-class opposition to China's occupation and subsequent reforms.

[119] Indeed, the much-vaunted equality of early exiles –*vis-à-vis* class and region- is thus likely to be a retrospectively imposed fiction. Indeed, as Dawa Norbu notes, for instance, the Tibetan aristocrats that had settled in India some years prior to occupation did little to help those languishing in the refugee camps.

[120] Indeed, while select members of the elite were granted discretionary visas to resettle in the United States, the poor -according to research cited by Grunfeld (1986)- were resettled in the 'hotter, more economically depressed [and] crowded agricultural settlements where education and employment opportunities are far below those in the northern refugee centres such as Darjeeling, Kalimpong, New Delhi, Dehra Dun, Dharamshala, *etc.*'.

are also varied today. *Economic* problems faced by young Tibetans are in this way troubling, with barriers to local employment leading to rivalry for community jobs and high rates of un/underemployment and poverty – an issue for older BiT youth in particular who, lacking the skills and language ability of their BiE peers, are disadvantaged in the labour market. The risk of exclusion among this group (pejoratively known as *sanjor/sarjor*) is especially high, amplified by other issues such as family separation, physical and psychological hardships of passage, and troubles with adjusting to a new environment and socio-cultural context, and discrimination by other Tibetans. While it may not have been clear in formal interviews (with questions about BiT and BiE differences often downplayed) on several occasions I noted a rift between the groups (especially between those 18-25 year-old new arrivals and BiT youth), defined either by a general lack of interaction-or unwillingness to interact, masked inter-group hostility, or direct claims of grievance. As a consequence of their unaccompanied status, those young people that have come from Tibet are also more likely to face the economic and emotional effects of familial rupture. The profound impact of this can easily get lost beneath the more political mutilations of displacement. On one occasion early in my fieldwork I went for a walk around the Lingkor with Pema, the seventeen-year-old nephew of the family I lived with. Pema, an intelligent but modest and serious young man, had left Tibet several years previously, making the treacherous two-week journey over the Himalayas to live with his uncle and pursue an education in exile. He missed Tibet and his family there keenly. When we reached the prayer-flag strewn knoll at the back of His Holiness' Temple, Pema confided that he often came here because, if he closed his eyes, he could pretend he was back home. *You know*, he said, *it is my mother I miss most. She is very old, and in my heart I do not think I will see her again*. This is not to say that both BiT and BiE youth do not suffer the effects of what some term a *protracted* refugee crisis in terms of the material privations of exile and the 'refugee syndrome'. With the first, exclusion from the 'national order of things' inevitably introduces difficulties for Tibetans, whose welfare depends on foreign governments and their authorities, institutions, and publics. While largely accepted in India, and able to acquire property, possessions, and establish businesses, statelessness and legal ambiguities over legal status[121] do cause problems for young

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[121] Legally, Tibetans are *not* formally recognised as refugees in India, but as 'foreigners' *without legal status*. As the *Tibet Justice Centre* (TJC 2011) notes: 'Without legal status, undocumented Tibetans […] generally cannot become citizens; travel freely, either within India or internationally; own property in their own name; hold government or other public

Tibetans, ranging from petty police extortion for minor legal infractions, impositions on travel rights, and

perhaps most significantly, restrictions on property ownership. Tibetans' second-class status translates into

an acute sense of *ontological insecurity*, manifest in the prospect that at any point authorities could evict

Tibetans from properties, or even from India itself.[122, 123] While wider relations with India and Indians are

in reality cordial,[124] local level tensions *are* extant, and have recently led to outbursts of violence between

young Indian and Tibetan men,[125] and a palpable fear of India among some. While fear of India is largely

unjustified and possibly emerges from a sense of insecurity mixed with a certain culturally-sanctioned

xenophobia, some anxieties felt by young people themselves –such as over the risk of assault faced by

Tibetan girls and the lack of legal redress- are more tangible. Still, we must recall that not only do such

threats also emerge from *inside* Tibetan society, but also that Tibetans are neither alone nor the most

vulnerable here. Poverty, violence and exclusion are rooted in the historic institutionalisation of class and

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jobs; attend most government-funded schools; or vote'. To legally reside in India Tibetans must obtain an annually renewable Registration Certificate (RC), but this itself only 'amounts to a privilege to reside in designated regions of India, some ability to travel domestically, and, subject to further conditions, potentially also to travel abroad' (TJC, 2011). Prohibitions on property ownership, employment -especially in government offices- and political participation remain. The government of India officially ceased issuing RCs for new arrivals in 1979, although in practice individuals have variously settled within the community since this period, and authorities have generally turned a blind eye (TJC). Nevertheless, without an RC Tibetans remain vulnerable to harassment by the authorities. While citizenship remains more ambiguous in practice, anyone born in India between January 1950 and 1986 qualifies as a *de jure* citizen (TJC 2009).

[122] As one of Hess' (2009) respondents notes, 'if one day the Indian government says: "you Tibetans please leave," at that time even if we don't want to go, we are powerless. We know this very clearly. Today in India we have homes and land: however, we feel in the true sense that these do not belong to us'.

[123] A risk evident with ongoing attempts by the Forestry Department to evict Tibetan families from properties argued to be in violation of environmental encroachment legislation on the TIPA and Bhagsu roads. This petition has also achieved successful embargo of 'harmful' practices of *Mani* stone carving and the stringing of *lungta* (prayer-flags) between trees -practices, of course, which serve to reproduce a sense of 'home' in exile, and which are also spiritually significant. The risk of eviction threatens not only homes, but also businesses and the livelihoods they sustain. Between my visits to Dharamshala in 2013 the local government ordered restrictions on market stalls run by Tibetans in McLeod Ganj, resulting in evictions and removing a source of income for many poorer refugees.

[124] Indeed, many Indians I met expressed significant pride in the aid their nation has given Tibet, and considerable affection for the Tibetan people.

[125] There are likely several reasons for this, not least envy among Tibetans –who lament their social, political and economic exclusion given the impact of the community on local economies. Indeed, In Dharamshala, Ladakh, and other settlements, it is true that Tibetan influence has kindled local economies, bringing investment, tourism and services. The formation of settlements constituted a process of regional development by the GOI, and the impact of the refugee community in effecting local socio-economic, cultural, and political change deserves research. Local people, it would seem from my experience, however, do not consider this as entirely positive. In perceiving local hostilities to their presence, Tibetans in Dharamshala note that without them the town would not be what it is. It is not just the presence of the Dalai Lama that has attracted investment in this regard. Tibetans argue that it is their efforts that have gone into building the town: *without us* one young man put it, *this would all still be jungle*. However, it is also understandable that many locals also feel resentment at the privilege enjoyed by relatively affluent Tibetans over often desperately poor local communities.

caste, and are keener for young people of outcaste backgrounds than Tibetan refugees –despite their 'marginal' status.

THE *TOMORROWS OF VIOLENCE*: HISTORICAL TRAUMA & RESISTANCE

Once you have lost your homeland you develop a
completely different mindset, a strange mentality of
loss and longing. It really is a mental condition and
we all have it. Under this surface we are
all distressed.
                                        Kunchok Tenzin[126]

While the previous part considered the immediate toll conflict and displacement have on the young, it is important to recognise how violence and loss also have a *tomorrow* (Nordstrom 2004) – a *structuring* effect on bodies, minds and societies beyond the original injury. As noted, humanist theory assumes a materially determinative relationship between objectively violent or traumatic events and adverse psychological, moral, and social development. Here I consider this structuring effect of loss in the Tibetan case. In the first section I reflect on the prevalence of a 'refugee-syndrome' among young Tibetans, considering the physiological, psychological and finally the behavioural costs of displacement, before introducing the notion of 'historical trauma' as both a 'social fact' in the exile community, and a means of theorising the suffering of individuals from a past they have not personally experienced. In the second, I temper the fatalism of such accounts to note how, through cultivation of historical consciousness and the support of exile institutions, Tibetans have managed to thrive in exile, and unlock the transformative potential of displacement.

Protracted Refugee Syndrome & Historical Trauma

Displacement for young Tibetans has led to what Moynihan (2012) – following UNHCR – terms *protracted refugee syndrome*, defined by a state of '[perpetual] poverty; lack of income and assets; voicelessness and powerlessness in the institutions of state and society; and vulnerability to adverse shocks [...] leading finally to 'hopelessness, despair and a descent into drug abuse and criminality'. Indeed, as noted earlier, some clinical and sociological (*e.g.* Stein 1981) researchers emphasise the inevitable physical and

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[126] Interview with Nick Harvey. Harvey, N (2009). *Tibet: 50 Years from Home*. The New Internationalist. Article available online at: https://newint.org/features/special/2009/03/01/tibet-50-years-from-home/

psychological costs of forced migration. Displacement may indeed, in the first case, cause physiological shock. Aside from the direct somatic effects of persecution, clinicians stress susceptibility to disease owing to difficult journeys, unsanitary living conditions, poor food and water, and climatic variations. This is compounded by differences between the conditions of home and refuge. Tibetans are no exception here, and interviewees attest, as noted, to many somatic stresses of displacement. While as note above most recent young new arrivals have not experienced torture, the hardship of passage leaves many injured – the Dharamshala Reception Centre offering stark record of the debilitating frostbite afflicting some children as a consequence of the freezing journey.[127] While resettlement may pose fewer physical risks, new arrivals often lament the climate, food, water and lack of 'cleanliness' in India, and the numerous health problems these produce. In the early years, many refugees succumbed to various diseases to which they had no experience or immunity, including TB – the impact of which is well remembered.[128] Today, many refugees suffer from 'gastric illnesses, diarrhea, skin diseases, and respiratory diseases as a result of poor sanitation and hygiene' (TJC 2011).

According to many clinical theorists, as note, displacement also however has ongoing psychological costs, due in part to these pressures and also its putative delaminating effects. On one hand, the violence and loss experienced and the injuries sustained during conflict and displacement effect psychological welfare.[129] In this way, while some note the resilience of Tibetans to psychological distress, and while others – noting the historical absence of cultural nosologies (Lewis 2013)[130] – question the salience of

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[127] The walls of the Refugee Reception Centre in Dharamshala are lined with a photographs documenting severe cases of frostbite that have often required amputation to prevent further infection and tissue damage. Lewis (2013), like myself, notes the politically galvanizing role of such images.

[128] Due to a unique genetic vulnerability the Tibetan refugees has been especially susceptible to Tuberculosis –which has had a significant toll on the community (TJC 2011). While largely under control, the TB wing of the Delek Hospital remains active.

[129] The long-term physical repercussions of experiences of torture during pre-flight, for instance, are not difficult to imagine, and numerous studies document how internal and external forms of bodily damage physically, socially and economically constrain future lives in terms of limiting mobility, undermining capabilities for self-sufficiency (especially in difficult environments), reducing opportunities for employment or practicing one's livelihood, limiting the ability to lead a full and dignified social life, as well as, of course, often remaining as a source of physical pain to the survivor (Bradley & Tawfiq 2006; Peterson 1985). Such effects are also not confined to the individual, effecting – especially where a primary provider's employment opportunities are restricted- the welfare of wider family networks.

[130] Some argue that *rlung* (*lit.* 'wind') disorders correspond to trauma and traumatic stress –as Lewis recognises. However, she notes, 'this gloss is problematic, in that many core features of PTSD (e.g., hypervigilance, flashbacks) are not a part of *rlung*'. While Lewis is correct, it is worth noting that other culturally specific conditions –including

western psychiatric categories, recent years have seen several studies confirming high levels of anxiety and post-traumatic stress in the community (Terheggen *et al* 2001; Ruwanpura *et al* 2006; Sachs *et al* 2008). For some, the traces of such traumatic suffering are evident in, and recoverable through, young peoples' testimonies and creative work. For younger victims some clinicians have expressed interest in the value of *art* as a means of eliciting such catharsis. The promising field of 'art therapy' is aimed at exactly this kind of 'working through' – and has seen considerable interest among those working with child victims of violence. Provision of such therapy is the task of *Art Refuge*, a small NGO that '[works] with people who have been displaced, whether the cause is armed conflict, trafficking, natural disaster, famine, or political or religious persecution', and that set up a small project working with young new arrivals in Mussoorie, and then later in Dharamshala. The images reproduced below depicting scenes of persecution, torture and flight were produced by children during therapeutic workshops run by *Artrefuge* and assisted by adults 'who encouraged the children to '[paint] their memories of Tibet, the journey into exile, and life in their new schools in India' (see below).[131] The 'trauma' of conflict and on-going displacement is arguably also evident in similar practices by older youth too. The self-immolations have been a particularly affecting issue in this regard, and have clearly led, as my vignette in the Introduction reveals, to significant anxiety among exile youth. A poem by Tenzing Rigdol seems to clearly reflect clinical concerns for the haunting and limiting effects of trauma:

> My eyes are red
> Wet and swollen,
> With your ashes
> Blown to my face.
>
> […]
>
> My frightened fingers
> Braided in fear
> Reach out into the abyss.
> My knees are nailed to the ground and
> Palms chiselled into a spear.
> And in the moment of despair
> I tremble,
> 'Who would be next?'

'grief disorders'- do correspond with the western concept of trauma. This has also not, as I discuss later, prevented Tibetans from appropriating trauma discourses as a means of articulating loss.

[131] See: http://www.artrefugeuk.org/#!history/c3u3 (Accessed: June 22 2016).

[…]

I couldn't smoke a cigarette
I couldn't burn incense
Butter-lamps intimidate me
Matchsticks frighten me

[…]

Walls and ceiling
Walls and ceiling
I haggled for a quiet sleep.

[…]

My pillow opened its windows
And I coughed
Charcoal and smoke.

On the other hand, family separation and processes of cultural or environmental separation can engender more everyday forms of dislocation and sorrow that are similarly evident in the artistic enterprises of young Tibetans in exile. Perhaps most pervasive here is a sense of alienation. The Indian environment is, of course, very different to that of Tibet, and can be a constant reminder of Tibetans' foreignness. For Tsundue:

Our tiled roof dripped
and the four walls threatened to fall apart
but we were to go home soon.

[…]

Grass on the roof,
beans sprouted and
climbed the vines,
money plants crept in through the window,
our house seems to have grown roots.

The fences have grown into a jungle,
now how can I tell my children
where we came from?

Tsundue's poem expresses the psychological toll of displacement, detailing the bitter-sweetness[132] of survival (through a growth that, while sustaining, is also consuming) alongside wider issues of the unexpected protraction of exile and apprehensions for the intergenerational preservation of identity. The instability of a house about to 'fall apart', also offers a metaphor for not only this poet's sense of inner turmoil, but the forms of individual – and consequently social – delamination caused by displacement. Despite its successes, immersion in the community here reveals issues that may be seen as the inevitable effects of 'protracted refugee syndrome'. For Moynihan (2012), symptoms include indolence, a rise in substance abuse, family desertion (often by men trying to secure visas *via* relations with western women) aid dependency and a related 'victim mentality'.[133] The community is aware of such issues even if it avoids publicising them. Indeed, the existence of *Kunphen*, a small NGO dealing with issues of substance abuse[134] among youth, attests to this, even if the physical site of its tiny office located down a side street, reflects the import afforded it. Others verify accounts of indolence. Swank (2014), for instance, attests to the incidence of *kyamkyam* ('roaming').[135] While she sees this as a way for new arrivals especially to generate social capital, friends revealed similar concerns – and often resentment – for certain youth ('*trebz*')[136] that could afford to cavort about town, partying, and doing no work. This is not limited to secular society, and some monks revealed concern for monastic indolence too, with 'bad monks' using sponsorship to buy luxury goods.[137]

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[132] Mirrored by the bittersweet fruits they grow in their garden: 'We grew papayas/ in front of our house/ chillies in our garden'.

[133] On this last issue, she notes, 'the dependence on a narrative of victimisation is another symptom of protracted refugee syndrome; it becomes a means to generate sympathy and exoneration, and to sustain a model that appeals to donor agencies'. The availability of aid, in this way, has resulted a rise of fraudulent claims of asylum on the grounds of persecution –which, she notes, may lead to delegitimising 'real' victims and the broader political cause.

[134] I came across several instances of a mild-to-moderate drug abuse among young Tibetans –in each case involving youth on troubled terms with their parents. Alcoholism is a prevalent but concealed issue, with striking comorbidity with domestic and gender violence (see Chapter Five).

[135] So, notes Swank (2014), 'in McLeod Ganj, two activities kyamkyam 'roaming' and shapshu 'service' are ubiquitous in the community's social discourses. Across young and old, kyamkyam has come to be associated with Tibetan youth participating in social activities that take place outside the home and generally apart form family. Many older Tibetans devalue some forms of kyamkyam and talk about it in opposition to being *nang la* 'at home'.

[136] This term tends to apply only to a specific elite group of young people with an apparently sizeable disposable income. When I heard this used by friends, it tended to be a resentful reproach of those who could afford the best bikes and clothes, and seemingly had little to no responsibilities.

[137] Appearances here, however, were sometimes deceptive. Indeed, while I was at first struck by the number of monks with iPads, smartphones and laptops, many seemed to use such devices for downloading language-learning apps, reading sacred texts and watching video-clips of religious teachings. A more valid concern, I feel, is for inequality within the monastic community, and between monks and nuns. As Swank argues in relation to *kyamkyam*, there are deeper socio-economic processes at work here. Where they are not distorted by perception and prejudice,

FIGURE 5: 'TRAUMA DRAWING' (I)

FIGURE 6: 'TRAUMA DRAWING' (II)

observations of indolence as a sign and symptom of the refugee-syndrome greatly obscures the emergence of complex new class dynamics in exile, the performative value of such behaviour, and the fact that many young BiT and BiE Tibetans work extremely hard for often little material reward.

FIGURE 7: 'TRAUMA DRAWING' (III)

A crucial point, however, is that many young people involved here have not directly experienced violence or (physical) displacement. To retain a material account of this relationship between violence and damaged subjectivity a different material model for transmission is needed. *Historical trauma*, here, offers a modality for theorising how an *essentially* traumatic past event may determine future suffering of individuals or groups through its material effect on social relations and institutions, or – either by way of genetic encoding or psychoanalytic 'double-suffering' (Frost & Hoggett 2008) – individual minds. While theoretically imprecise, the concept of historical trauma is intuitive. As Choesang (2015) writes, anyone 'understands that the past, even the remote past, can exert a grief impact on the present and future', and while Tibetans rarely articulate loss in terms of trauma, its existence as a fact of collective experience in present-day exile is clear. In one article a foreign visitor describes, after speaking to a Tibetan friend, what she sees as a trauma lurking beneath 'the surface veneer of dharma tourism and 'Tashi Delek' smiles' of everyday life':

> [It] had struck me that everyone in McLeod Ganj seemed to be struggling with a personal sense of trauma – from the protest march of schoolchildren in the green and yellow uniform of TCV, to the young political activists educated abroad but returned to India, to the bent figures of the original exiles who had accompanied the 14th Dalai Lama in his escape across the Himalayas in 1959 and who were now eking out an existence on hand-outs from the Tibetan Government in Exile and foreign sponsors.

This sense of trauma has become keener with the self-immolations.[138] However, such trauma, while seen through my historicist theoretical framework as *constructed*, is *not* however treated as metaphorical here, but as a real structure of loss constitutive of subjectivities and agencies. In the Tibetan case, this *structural* quality of historical trauma is defined best by Vahali's (2009) psychoanalytic work on exile as a 'dark and forsaken fragment of the self'. While much in her work is hopeful, Vahali's work considers the delaminating effects of a -singularly determinative- event to explain how, for Tibetans in Tibet and exile, individual and collective experiences of physical and psychological displacement have caused psychological damage –a 'dark cellar' from which the essentially destabilising effects of exile derive. Vahali in this way traces the dissociative effect of violence and exile on 'the self'. But this also has an *intergenerational* and *social* dimension. The liminality of young exiles today, estranged from their homeland and its sustaining traditions, also yield dissociative effects in terms of a crisis of belonging that, individually and generationally, instils the feelings of 'worthlessness' (Levamo 2009) and waywardness predicted by the 'refugee condition'.

Meaning & Coping – Consciousness & Resistance

While credible, however, is this overly negative? For some, adversity can enable unique kinds of vision, and be a catalyst for individual and collective (post-traumatic) growth. In the first instance while the mutilations of displacement are very real and damaging, they are not *inherently* destructive, enabling recognition of injustice and new kinds of collective agency in response to it. Indeed, rather than being

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[138] Indeed, at the ethnographic level this trauma, and the fearful expectancy of another suicide was, during my fieldwork, palpable. There was a point -sometime around the mid-point of my fieldwork- that news of another immolation became an almost ordinary weekly occurrence. The news usually came *via* a loudspeaker mounted on top of a car that would wind its way around the muddied streets during the dark monsoonal afternoons informing people of the event. The silent tension at the moment the car passed by was intense –broken but a few seconds later as business, wherever you might be (an office, a restaurant, a shop), resumed. In the evening, hundreds of Tibetans and sympathisers would meet at the main *Chowk* and, clutching candles and reciting prayers, would circumambulate the town shrine before weaving their way toward the Tsuglakhang Temple in an act of shared mourning.

regarded as an essentially pathological process, displacement here may be reconceived as a particular response to a specific set of socio-historical conditions: a *continuation* of conflict rather than a symptom of it -and even, as McConnell (2012) confirms in her discussion of the archival role of diaspora as a means of preserving the ethnie, a *mode of resistance*. Identifying the valences of violence and loss – valences that, of course, give them force – allows their *repoliticisation*. This is true also for trauma, which, as the writer cited above says:

> [Is] far from being a source of shame, but […] the source of courage and determination for change. […It] is the symptom of everything that is wrong in Tibet: the suffering of life under foreign rule; of devout Buddhists who watch as their high lamas are compelled to flee abroad one by one; of nomads forced to abandon the open spaces of their tradition and move into cramped concrete blocks; of students made to study in another language and disavow their own intellectual heritage; of women forced into sterilization and abortion; of a country losing its very identity through on-going cultural genocide and a sustained policy of Han Chinese 'population transfer' into Tibetan land; of a people helplessly witnessing the relentless degradation and plunder of their environment through mining and deforestation for the benefit of people who have no idea what is being done 'in their name'.

For Wexler (2009) *meaning* – in terms of 'historical consciousness' – serves as remedy to historical trauma, offering individuals the cognitive resources needed to isolate the source of their suffering and its resolution in wider terms, *e.g. vis-à-vis* a narrative detailing the loss, and recovery, of *the nation*. In spite of the privations they face, by offering the symbolic and institutional resources required for coping this structure of meaning enables the community to thrive. The observations above notwithstanding, young Tibetans also don't seem to suffer the socio-psychological afflictions of other groups, but are in fact recognised for their apparent well adjustment. In a symbolic capacity, as noted, historical consciousness involves recognition of one's place in the specific process of occupation and exile. Recognition that they are the inheritors of this history is acute among young people, reinforced from infancy by adults who stress their role as 'seeds' for the future of the nation. Despite claims to the contrary (*e.g.* Vahali 2009; Moynihan 2012) I did not perceive a weakening of this sentiment. Indeed, while there are those who, for personal or practical reasons, do not participate, and those who are more committed to the cause than others, this cannot be reduced to the pathologies predicted by protracted refugee syndrome. Moreover, in my experience – and perhaps due to the self-immolations – young people I met exhibited deep affective

loyalties to Tibet, its culture, and the cause, stating a desire to serve (*shapshu*) it in any way they could.[139] In several interviews I asked young people whether they found the duty placed on them by adults in this way onerous, but I was more-often told of the pride they felt in the task.[140] This commitment to the cause is prevalent among youth manifesting, at least in Dharamshala,[141] in frequent performances of 'traditional' Tibetan culture (see Plates 5-8) alongside a lively political scene. Protests (see Plates 1 – 4), hunger strikes, benefit concerts, film nights, festivals and other events run continually in an effort not only to raise support for the cause but also to galvanise political subjectivity. Contrary to charges of youth acculturation, there has been an enlivening of the cause in recent years: clear in support for the *Lhakar* protest.[142]

Institutions have also played a crucial role in assuring young people's resilience to loss, both by providing material support and in nurturing meaning. Schools have, from the start, provided a crucial source of material, psychological and emotional succour, playing a key role in inculcating this sense of love and duty. As I discuss in Chapter Four, the pedagogic practices of exile schools enable not only a pedagogy of the event (*i.e.* the transmission of a 'correct' history of occupation and exile, and of appropriate suffering), but also one of suitable (moral) agency, encompassed, for example, by the TCV motto *Come to Learn, Go to Serve*. In considering this internalised sense of duty we also must recognise the religious institutions and traditions that permeate Tibetan society. Clinicians in this way have frequently linked Tibetan Buddhism with resilience to mental disorder after trauma.[143] While I am sceptical (see also: Sachs *et al*, 2008), work by

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[139] As discussed in Chapter Five, however, ideas of *shapshu* vary between groups. More elite BiT youth tend to see service in more abstract terms –through gaining prestigious jobs and contributing to raising the profile of the cause- whereas BiT youth spoke more of returning to Tibet to help their people –if, of course, they did not intend to leave India entirely for the West.

[140] See Chapter Six.

[141] As I discuss in Chapter Four, this is less evident in other settlements I visited (*e.g.* Sonamling), where the master-narrative of loss –in terms of its material impact on the lived environment- is less clear, and where (as some young respondents informed me), people are disinterested in politics, preferring 'gossip'.

[142] *Lhakar* (*lit.* White Wednesday), styles itself as a 'homegrown people's movement' that has apparently emerged out of the 2008 protests. 'In spite of China's intensified crackdown, Tibetans have embraced the power of strategic nonviolent resistance. Every Wednesday, a growing number of Tibetans are making special effort to wear traditional clothes, speak Tibetan, eat in Tibetan restaurants and but from Tibetan-owned businesses'. See: http://lhakar.org/ (Accessed: June 22 2016).

[143] Indeed, several studies here claim that 'Buddhist spirituality plays an active role in the development of protective coping mechanisms among Tibetan refugees' (Holtz 1998). A study by Terheggen, Stroebe and Kleber (2001), may incidentally demonstrate how our very perceptions of loss are contingent on religious belief. In the research, several Tibetan nuns claim their experience of watching religious articles desecrated caused greater stress than experiences of

Lewis (2013:41) offers persuasive insight into the mediating role of cultural structures (*e.g.* '*lojong*' -a reflexively entrained capacity to 'reframe the mental distress associated with loss, violence, and other distress') in insulating against trauma. [144] 'Derived from the methods brought from India by Atisha',[145] notes Schaik (2011:62), this process of 'mind training' often *via* spiritual practices (*e.g. kora, puja,* or pilgrimage) also has wider significance, oriented towards 'replacing ordinary egotistical impulses with selfless compassion'. *Lojong,* in this reading, may be seen not only as a cultural resource for personal coping, but as one shaping individual and collective agency,[146] aligning with the prospect of reflexive self-betterment – a 'hermeneutics of self' (Foucault 1980) – central to the conception of agency here, and extendable from individuals to exile society more widely. Indeed, as noted earlier, for some the diasporic 'third space' can in this way be a site for reawakening: of recovery and reinvention. While 'the burden of exile is heavy', a 'severe test of communal fortitude', resembling, for some, an un-diagnosable 'disease' (*natsa*), it also offers an occasion for transformation (Sonam 2004). 'Inspite of upheavals and separations, deaths and destruction in our homeland', notes Sonam (2004:xxi), 'we have withstood this testing period and emerged enriched'. As I discuss in Chapter Five, while there is a lack of work on (or reluctance to engage with) social structure in exile, enthusiasm for 'diasporic' flux has inspired work on the community's democratising successes in exile. For exiles, if inequalities did exist prior to occupation, they have been largely eliminated in exile. The recognition of common cause, it is argued, has led to cross-gender/class/sect/regional solidarities. Although this is a sanitised truth, successes here are evident. Aside from obvious forms of democratisation –such as the institution of elections, a representative parliament, and the rise of a critical arts scene- are decreases in mortality, and increases in household income, material

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physical abuse, torture, or assault. While consistent with the theoretical orientation of this thesis, it is however worth questioning how far this reflects an ideal the nuns thought was expected of them –a 'response bias' and effective performance of martyrdom- or wondering, if sincere, whether such norms t are an inequitable artefact of patriarchal signification.

[144] While I agree with Lewis in seeing things as more complicated here –with culture acting as a mediating influence- I nevertheless also recognize –from a post structural concern for difference- Sachs' concern over 'response bias'. I find the culturalist argument in this way also risks further exoticisation of Tibetans, and a dangerous valorization of traditions and institutions that may be inequitable.

[145] Atisha was an eleventh-century Buddhist teacher instrumental in the spread of the Mahayana tradition.

[146] While other sources –notably Gandhi's concept of *satyagraha*- also inform the exilic logic of resistance, we might remember Atisha's (in Schaik, 2011:62) words: 'Whenever I am with others, I will see myself as the lowest of all, and from the depths of my heart respect them as the highest. […] When others out of jealousy mistreat me with abuse and slander, I will accept the defeat for myself and offer them the victory. […] In short, I will offer my own happiness to my mothers both directly and indirectly, and secretly take all their sufferings upon myself'.

prosperity and literacy rates,[147] signalling an equalising trend in exile society (Roemer 2008).[148] While nationalism, for many, has an ambiguous reputation, those sympathetic to the Tibetan cause try to rehabilitate it by identifying a 'reimagined', 'progressive' or even 'post' nationalist project –especially among exile youth. For Vahali (2009:274), 'despite the struggle and discord that accompany the life of younger Tibetan exiles, their political strivings have taken a distinctly democratic turn'. Referring to a new cultural elite,[149] she notes how democratic views have enabled 'articulation of a more open relationship with figures and symbols of authority' such as the Dalai Lama, who has been re-imagined 'from a god to be worshipped to a "spiritual politician" who can be engaged with'. For Vahali (*op cit*), the rise of reflexive engagement (often *via* art and poetry) with Tibet's past, and an effort to move beyond anti-Chinese critique in an effort to identify internal problems leading to Tibet's ruin, is essential for this project.[150] While, as I will note, there is need for caution,[151] such observations -if accurate- seem to corroborate ideas of the transformative potential of the traumatic event.

DISRUPTIONS: HISTORY, SUBJECTIVITY AND AGENCY

In this part I move to consider and disrupt how histories of violence are seen to be constitutive of subjectivity and agency. As noted in the introduction, the history of violence and loss in the Sino-Tibetan conflict is routinely signified as naturally constitutive of Tibetan subjectivity and agency, and in reducing

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[147] Indeed, according to the TDS (2008) literacy among the under-45s stood at 80% (and at an average of 93.7% effective literacy for the under 25s). This represents a significant increase from 74.5 to 82.4% in effective literacy of the population since the first survey in 1998, and contrasts markedly with those aged 50 or over at the time of survey. Literacy for those aged between 50 and 75 years of age stood at an average of 51.4% (with a marked dip to an average of 40.3% for those between 65 and 75), and an average of 34.5% for those aged between 75 and 99 years of age. While not expressly stipulated –and while not offering literacy rates of new arrivals under 50- this data seems to suggest that exile education interventions have dramatically reversed the low literacy rates of Tibet itself, as most of those over 50 would have been at least born in Tibet. While the data also shows differences along lines of gender and between settlements, hinting at some structural deficits, the 2008 survey shows some improvements in this regard (see next chapter).

[148] According to Roemer (2008), for instance, 'employment in government today is no longer restricted by social status –something even Grunfeld (1996) agrees on -at least in theory. 'According to the CTA', she writes, 'there are no records that register the social heritage of the present officials', and youngsters may not even be aware of their family's social status. Some point to the education system in effecting this profound change, arguing that the TCV system in particular has worked to equalise Tibetan society.

[149] Including exile writers such as Tenzin Tsundue, Buchung D. Sonam *etc.*

[150] This newfound reflexivity also has progressive implications today -she points to how one of her respondents, for example, lobbied cultural institutions in exile to include 'common' as well as 'aristocratic' songs in their efforts to preserve Tibetan folk music.

[151] Indeed, rather than *post-national*, it seemed that this effort is –or has become- *hypernationalist*. Moreover, as I found during fieldwork, outside of the relatively elite *rangzenpa* most young Tibetans are far from agreed on what shape nationalism should take.

subjectivity and agency to the account of *national* loss, works to establish the unity (and continuity) of 'the self-same national subject' across time and space (Duara 1997:4). In the first section I discuss how the material traces of violence and loss in the conflict have in this way been signified through terms of colonial ethnocide, and used to *explain* subjectivity and agency. Yet, while ideas that Tibetans would despite years of 're-education' resent subjection and 'rise' against it is normatively sound, how far ought we accept the totality of the *continuist* nationalist account – either historically, or as a description of subjectivity in present-day Tibet and exile? I do not, in fact, refute this as *a* truth; nor do I reject the role of nationalism as a formative[152] rationality of agency (in exile or Tibet); nor even do I doubt that Tibetan nationalism offers better prospects for Tibet than administration by a PRC insensitive towards the unique needs of the region and its people. My concern, however, is theoretical and ethical, involving problematic assumptions over naturalistic theorisation of the event, subjectivity and agency, and for how descriptions of history, subjectivity and agency collude in the reproduction of power relations and inequalities. In this way, both humanist *and* culturalist accounts noted above are inadequate: the first, concealing the host of sources generating youth suffering by reducing subjectivity and 'behaviour' to the mutilations of exile[153] (and moral universe of the cause); the second sustaining strategic essentialism (and the *displacement* of alternate histories of loss) by overstating resilience in reifying historical (national) consciousness.[154] To better recognise youth subjectivity and agency after loss, I turn to a thesis of *overdetermination* that treats reductive – but constitutive – descriptions of experience, subjectivity and agency (*e.g.* self-immolation or flight), as part of a wider historical field of material-discursive processes. With this in mind, in the second and third sections I attempt to disrupt the nationalist account by reflecting on the more complex nature of violence and subjectivity in the early years of conflict, and then in recent times of protest and political self-sacrifice.

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[152] In this way nationalism reflects a *subtractive* (Whitehead 1929) construction (in that the nationalist narrative forms *one* possible truth about a multivalent social process).

[153] For instance in Moynihan's (2012) isolation of 'protracted refugee syndrome' as a structuring socio-psychological pathology in exile.

[154] Lewis, for instance, risks valorising cultural mechanisms (*e.g.* 'Lojong') that, as vehicles for normative standards, may be disciplinary and exclusory at the same time as they are palliative. Vahali, despite identifying this potential, still forwards an essentialist notion of a singular and singularly significant event lying 'beneath' and fundamentally structuring subjectivities and agencies in exile.

PLATE 6: PERFORMING IDENTITY (2)

Young musicians prepare to perform for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to celebrate his birthday at Tsuglakhang Temple in Dharamshala.

PLATE 7: PERFORMING IDENTITY (3)

A young man in a traditional *Lhamo* (Tibetan Opera) mask performs a typically energetic 'male' dance during an anniversary celebration at the Upper TCV in Dharamshala. While the preservation of Lhamo has become a site of struggle between Tibetans in exile and the occupying Chinese notes Ahmeda (2006), cultural politics cannot be reduced to this polarity alone, but must be seen as a site of active – and *multipolar* – struggle.

PLATE 8: PERFORMING IDENTITY (4)
A young girl in the traditional dress of southeast Tibet performs in a dance of young men and young women to commemorate the birthday of Samdhong Rinpoche.

Violence, Subjectivity & Agency

For the exile community, the material traces of violence and loss documented, alongside responses to them, are framed in *nationalist* terms. Social suffering over the past fifty years is seen *vis-à-vis* the invasion and occupation of a sovereign *nation* by a foreign power, and successive efforts to persecute, brutalise, and even eliminate a peaceful people and culture. In the effort to make sense of and represent this history of loss, the community and its supporters appeal to several humanitarian discourses, most notably of which include *colonialism*, *human rights*, and *ethnocide*. Appeals to *colonialism* are of course apt, signalling not only the idea of invasion, occupation, and exploitation of one sovereign state by another (the nationalist account), but also offering an established language of grievance and restitution. *Human Rights* – despite a dubious status in Asian contexts and uncertain value for nationalist projects –[155] also offer a way for Tibetans to describe various forms of historical injustice.[156] While charges of *genocide* have failed to gain traction, those of *ethnocide*[157] have done – although, despite their relevant valence in modernity as a way of framing the costs of neoliberal 'development imperialism' (Biccum 2005) on indigenous groups, these have been

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[155] Much has been written on the putative incompatibility between collectivist 'Asian-Values' and individualist human rights frameworks. More intriguing are questions over the compatibility of nationalism with human rights –both of which, of course, form important discourses of representation in the Tibetan case. While, following Kiss (2000), I believe the 'relationship between universal norms and particular allegiances [to be] far more complex than any simple opposition between nationalism and human rights', I would suggest that in the context of the Sino-Tibetan conflict, human rights discourse –specifying the responsibilities of a state towards its citizens- while valuable for critique of China, has uncertain value for the nationalist effort –which reflects a claim to restitution on a much more abstract plane.

[156] The popularity of human rights might also reflect their popularity with the UN as a means of expressing injustices in Tibet. The UN, for instance, passed resolutions in 1959, 1961, and 1965 noting '[grave concerns] at the continued violation of the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people of Tibet […]', working largely from reports by the ICJ that documented the testimonies of those fleeing the occupation of Tibet by the PLA and the first several thousand refugees who followed the Dalai Lama in 1959, 1960, and 1961. The reports document violations in terms of acts of: murder, rape, and arbitrary imprisonment; torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment; arbitrary arrests and detention; violation of the right to privacy, home and family life –including forced transfer of family members and indoctrination; violations of freedom of movement within, to and from Tibet; the violation of the right of voluntary marriage by forcing monks and lamas to marry; the arbitrary deprivation of private property; the infringement of freedom of though, conscience and religion; the violation of the freedom of expression and opinion by destruction of scriptures and imprisonment of regime critics; the violation of the right to free assembly; the violation of the right to democratic governance; the violation of economic, social and cultural rights; the violation of the right to reasonable working conditions; and the violation of the right to participate in the cultural life of the community.

[157] Defined as when: 'an ethnic group is denied the right to enjoy, develop and transmit its own culture and its own language, whether collectively or individually' (UNESCO 1982).

interpreted and represented in specifically *ethnonationalist* terms as a way of rearticulating the nationalist grievance.[158]

The history of national loss is seen as constitutive of Tibetan subjectivities and agencies over the past half century, inspiring everything from passive modes of agency such as flight into exile, to direct and extreme forms of protest. With the first, from a realist viewpoint flight into exile has been historically framed in terms of *forced* migration; or, as one western journalist (Hadekell 2014) explains: 'why they [young Tibetans] leave Tibet is clear [...] under Chinese rule, 6 million Tibetans are victims of linguistic, cultural and religious repression along with social and economic marginalization'. With the second, any incidence of popular protest occurring in Tibet over the past half-century tends to be interpreted – by Tibetan exiles or those sympathetic to their cause – as a *resurgence* of national consciousness. The protests that swept across Tibet in 2008 are no exception, with an ICT (2008) report stating: 'Since March 10, a tidal wave of mainly peaceful protests against the Chinese government has swept across Tibet. Tibetans have risked their lives to demonstrate that their exiled leader the Dalai Lama represents their interests, and not the Chinese state'.[159] In the third case, the self-immolations that have since 2009 claimed the lives of 145 mostly young Tibetans in Tibet and in exile are similarly seen as either acts of desperation in response to, or efforts at resistance against, occupation. The exile writer Jamyang Norbu insists that self-immolations in this way must be seen as courageous acts of self-sacrifice for the nation, something apparently verified by certain testimonies left by self-immolators. Woeser's (2013) analysis of testimonies, for instance, records the following:

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[158] The Dalai Lama first used the term to describe the situation in Tibet during an interview in 1993. Sautman (2003) reports his view as more consistent since flight: 'In the first years after the emigration of 1959, the Dalai Lama charged that China had "a view to the total extermination of the Tibetan race," had brought "the danger of total destruction" to Tibetans, and had instituted a form of oppression "a thousand times worse than the system of apartheid". In general, it seems that the claim surfaced most prominently following the failure of the CTA to meet an agreement with the CCP following the death of Hu Yaobang, and the political polarisation that ensued. The TGiE publication *A Tale of Cultural Genocide*, and the 2012 ICT report *60 Years of Chinese Misrule: Arguing Cultural Genocide in Tibet*, have since appealed to ethnocide, as have several newspaper journalists. See, for instance: Norbu, J. (2009) *Waiting for Mangtso II*. Available at: http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=25692 (Accessed: June 22, 2016).

[159] Photographs included in the report showing Tibetans raising the Tibetan flag in Amchok Bora (eastern Tibet), apparently validate the idea that protests, like those of the 1980s, were a *resurfacing* of Tibetan nationalist sentiment.

Last Words	Percentage of Sample (*n* = 44)
To take action	36.8%
To offer beneficial wishes to the Dalai Lama	31.8%
To express courage and demonstrate a will to endure	29.5%
To express and call for ethnic unity	25%
To call for Tibetan independence	22.7%
To protest or make particular demands	18.2%
To make it clear that life is presently unbearable	18.2%
To speak in defence of the Tibetan language	11.4%
To attract the international community's attention	6.8%

FIGURE 8: LAST WORDS OF THE SELF-IMMOLATORS

Reproduced from Woeser (in Whelan-Bridge, 2014). N.B. In many ways this table might be regarded in itself as an act of memoro-politics.

While this claim is credible, there are ontological, epistemological and ethical reasons to be wary of seeing it as an *authentic* (*i.e.* absolute, inevitable or representative) account of violence, subjectivity, or agency. Reduction of loss, subjectivity, and agency to the *exile* nationalist account here neglects several issues, including the intersubjective salience of the nation as a cultural modality of experience both historically and between Tibet and exile today, and the wider range of social forces constitutive of subjectivity and agency potentially displaced by the prevailing narrative of national identity. In identifying the *overdetermination* of subjectivities and agencies, we are able to restore these alternative dimensions. With flight, for instance, while many refugees do attest to persecution and traumatic passage, the kinetic realist model is undermined by the fact that some arrive, not by hazardous flight across the Himalaya but by taxi with passports. As I discuss below, most refugees in this regard are not the victims of state violence, but young unaccompanied minors seeking education – something that *may* be seen in terms of cultural resistance, but might also serve instrumental material or symbolic functions.[160] Other, slightly older youths

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[160] Indeed, while the context is, of course, more extraordinary, and without refusing the very real damages of familial estrangement and homesickness felt –and professed- by young unaccompanied refugees, it has actually been a quite

similarly seek education but with a view to *return* to Tibet and help its people, and for others still exile offers prospects for social mobility, or even escape from abusive households (see Chapter Five). With protest, the nationalist narrative tends to pathologise or over-politicise the young, precluding their own accounts. On the one hand, the *umaylam* tendency to pathologise self-immolation as acts of desperation (Whelan-Bridge 2015) – and in-so-doing to side-line or distort calls for independence among self-immolators – may be tempered with a *rangzen* emphasis on what Woeser claims to be the remonstrative, perlocutionary nature of immolation. Yet, even if protests *do* reflect a sovereign response to nationalist grievance they may still reflect local – and by no means secessionist (Fischer, 2013) – species of nationalism. More troubling, is that such assumptions of sovereignty miss how nationalism is only one recent and uncertain interpellative force. In *politicising* protest in the narrow terms of the *exile* nationalist narrative, does the *rangzen* take involve similar reductionism? We can see in Woeser's (limited) analysis above, for example, that while some claim (*e.g.* Jamyang Norbu) the protests to be *nationalist*, a religious dimension remains indisputable (Whelan-Bridge 2015).[161] Religion is but one differentiating force here, and consideration of the myriad internal and external social processes constitutive of subjectivity and agency may be productive. Indeed, the drama of the self-immolations in this way tends to obscure their ambiguous representativeness, and we should be aware of how relative to the wider population, or public suicide in China generally, it remains a rare mode of public protest within Tibet and Tibetan history (Mills 2012). Moreover, the regional concentration of protest, and its epidemiology among the young, young males, and young male monks in particular, raises further questions over the exclusive representativeness of the national account. While material factors are not enough by themselves sufficiently account for protests, neither is social suffering in Tibet or exile, subjectivity, and agency wholly reducible to nationalist rationality.

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common cultural practice in the Himalaya and throughout Tibetan history to send children away for school or for a monastic upbringing.

[161] This is perhaps not surprising when we consider the profound role of religion in the lives of ordinary people throughout Tibetan history.

Historical Violence & Underdetermining Subjectivity

The continuism of the nationalist account may be moderated by a 'disruptive' historiography that accepts neither the account of an essentially malicious China nor a unified, benevolent, sovereign Tibetan nation as entirely correct. With the first, while often making matters worse, the efforts of some Chinese (Goldstein, Siebenschuch & Tsering 1997) at helping Tibet, however paternalistic, misguided, or colonial they might be, make it hard to accept claims of ethnocide, for which the *intention* to destroy is constitutive. Indeed, despite evidence of severe repression, the account of a China set on eradication of the Tibetan people and culture does not tally with the entirety of Sino-Tibetan relations, even while this portrayal may be popular with activists. [162] For China, a quite different historical account here regards 'intervention' as the 'peaceful liberation' of Tibet from an exploitative feudal order. Despite their dubious reliability, 'political pilgrims' (Smith 2009) like Epstein (1983) in this way dismiss violence endured by Tibetans as incidental,[163] and offer a contrastive view of Tibet's feudal past and its present-day prosperity as a result of its 'liberation'. Such accounts, of course, are propagandistic, but while we should beware China's sanitised account, the claim of 'development' in contrast to that of 'ethnocide' *is* useful for revealing the elitist tendency of the nationalist account and the range of interests it displaces. It also, of course, destabilises ideas of historic national *unity* that, although important for the national cause, are nevertheless the product of a politically expedient revisionism. Certainly, while the idea of nationhood was on the rise during the early twentieth century as a result of the 13th Dalai Lama's far-sighted reforms and British intervention, it was far from established, with intraregional and sectarian conflicts impeding the political ambitions of the Lhasa-*Gelugpa* led *Ganden Phödrang* (McKay 2003 – see above). *Intra*-regional socio-economic and political tensions were also evident. Conflicts between the socio-political elites of Tibet's regions were common, as were those between secular and religious elites, with monasteries forming powerful conservative blocks. While many characterise Tibet's social order as benevolent, with many arguing a total lack of class-caste inequalities prior to or after occupation, others for a 'friendly feudal' order, and some (Miller 1982)

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[162] Indeed, many representations of violence in the Sino-Tibetan conflict, I suspect, have been highly influenced by the atrocities of the Cultural Revolution that have, through the trope of ethnocide, been overextended to create the impression of uniformity in the type and intensity of violence levelled against, and experienced by, Tibetans.

[163] Caused more by overzealous local governance- than by design

accepting a *de jure* serfdom but stressing that the *miser*,[164] far from being serfs, were protected by law and enabled by the institution of 'human lease' (*mibo*), others are less optimistic. As I discuss later, while we *should* reject the distortion of Tibet's social order in Epstein's *Tibet Transformed*,[165] I follow Goldstein's (1986; 1988; 1989) caution for 'revisionist' accounts that dismiss its exploitativeness. It is not that the social system wholly precluded social mobility,[166] or that it was inherently abusive, but that it was, for most, precarious, with welfare depending on the good graces of a lord,[167, 168] and many facing penury and servitude.

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[164] Much contention exists over the term *miser* (*lit.* 'Yellow Person'). Goldstein (1986; 1988; 1989) defends translation as 'serf', and his description of the Tibetan socio-economic order as a 'serfdom' (although critically not a *political* 'feudal' serfdom), against claims that such terms constitute inappropriate use of European cultural concepts to (*sic.* 'unfairly') describe a non-western society. For others (see: Miller 1982; Michael 1982; Dargyay 1982; Fjeld 2005), the *miser* -constituting the vast majority of the Tibetan non-elite populace, are better understood as 'commoners' or 'subjects' who 'had hereditary rights to land and thus were not subject to the will of the lord. [Moreover] most of the subjects in Tibet were not tied to land at all and thus were free to go where they chose unfettered by the will of their lord' (Goldstein 1986:107). But for Goldstein the use of the term commoner (as in the English social system), and claims that social mobility was institutionalised in such a way that guaranteed freedom *in the last instance*, are erroneous, mistaking the actual *de jure* hereditary status of the *miser* and the nature of the social order, and allowing only for a system of cultural distinction (see below) rather than concrete material relations. For Goldstein, *miser* is closely associated with *mikhung* (belonging) and signals the absolute subordination of the individual to his or her lord (or to the government) from birth.

[165] Accounts of peasant children being rounded up by officials, forced into crates, and buried alive under buildings as part of arcane rituals, for instance are gross distortions. The prevalence of forced labour, mutilation, and torture as illustrated in these publications, while probably more frequent than the nationalists argue (see below), should also not be exaggerated. In truth it was not in the interests of landowners to grossly mistreat peasants when their flight – and transfer to the government (Goldstein 1987)- would risk undermining an already deficient rural labour-force. The perpetuation of elite affluence *depended* on a healthy and well-fed peasantry to maintain the upward flow of resources. Moreover, while violence and brutality were in no way alien throughout the public and private spheres of Tibetan society, the possibility that harming another might have karmic implications likely ensured it remained rare, and evidence seems to suggest a general aversion to unduly harsh punitive measures (French 2002). Indeed, the most exploitative elements of the Tibetan social order were *structural* rather than a result of outright cruelty. Still, we should not mistake the deeper cultural dimension of distinction and social inequality, or discount the class/caste, gendered and generational violences and inequalities that are rarely associated with 'harmonious' Tibetan culture and society.

[166] Indeed, *miser* could improve their lot, and several scholars highlight the possibility of social mobility in Tibet. Affluence, it has been noted, varied as much *within* as between class groups (with some of the *miser* wealthier than the elite by the mid-twentieth century). However, while *miser* could rise in affluence, most were faced with balancing subsistence with tax-obligations in a harsh environment. Many experienced a fall in fortune. Families facing hard times could amass crippling debts in meeting tax duties, compelling parents to send their children to monasteries or place them into servitude as *nangtsen* with noble –or indeed other serf- families for payment, or as tax.

[167] Indeed, 'whether *miser* were wealthy or impoverished, satisfied with their position or bitter about it, they were involuntarily linked to an estate and lord from the time of conception, and subject to the will of that lord with regard to their labor and to a large extent, their lives' (Goldstein 1986:108). Of course, numerous regional differences mean we should be wary of generalising here, and Goldstein himself recognises the need for more research. But while some (Cox 1991) have, for instance, suggested that Tibet's large nomadic population was an exception to this order, further research by Goldstein (1988) seems to suggest that even among Tibet's pastoral groups –often romanticised as ungoverned- hereditary serfage remained in place.

[168] Furthermore, while human lease allowed movement, it could also be refused. Besides even if it were granted, serfs remained legally bound to their lord. Moreover, notes Goldstein, far from a chance for betterment, the condition of landlessness –achieved either through grant of lease or by running away- was precarious. For runaways especially, fleeing duties meant severing contact with kin for fear of capture and castigation -a choice of desperation, not resistance.

Although we should be wary of overstating (or retroactively superimposing) any class-consciousness, the masternarrative here neglects how far reformist ideas may have been stirring in Tibet,[169] and whether this may have differentiated how the events of the 1950s were experienced. Some accounts hint that seeds of social reform *were* gestating before 1949, especially among younger elites (there was even an attempt to establish a Tibetan Communist Party).[170] This is not to imply that any Tibetan *approved* occupation. But as Tsering (Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering 1997) notes, some may have (naively) seen intervention as chance for realising a different future. While the lack of primary accounts from marginal groups, alongside the deep religiosity and high levels of illiteracy among Tibet's peasantry (Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering 1997), make claims to any subaltern consciousness problematic, conversely we should not presume absolute hostility to China. The naturalised nationalist account, while tempting with hindsight, neglects how responses may have differed according to socio-economic, generational, or even gendered positionalities. The signification of loss through the nation in this way, not only assumes prevalence of a type of identity that likely had limited salience for many Tibetans, but also risks privileging the terms of *cultural recognition* over material factors. In sum, the tendency to reduce violence and loss to a totalised national account displaces other kinds of past and present suffering and the multitude of social conflicts to which they relate.

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[169] Tibet was, as noted, not so isolated as portrayed. Knowledge of events unfolding elsewhere in the world reached Lhasa through foreign dignitaries, journalists, writers and explorers, and through a number of Tibetans educated at foreign universities. Portrayal of an essentially 'static' social order, untouched by modernity, is also misleading (Goldstein 1991). Rising trade –especially with India- had enriched a new merchant class, while the power and wealth of the aristocracy -as the weaker force in an escalating competition for land and taxes with the government and religious establishment- were on the decline, with some now poorer than 'wealthy' peasants. In the core political region of *U-Tsang*, political tensions between various factions were palpable, and while there is little evidence to show that coherent awareness of inequality and social injustice reached the 'lower' echelons of Tibetan society, the sudden interest of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in social reform, while sincere, might suggest a prescient concern for the future potential of social upheaval. This, of course, must be considered in context of events unfolding elsewhere in the world –most notably in the newly formed USSR, and alongside the ideological upheavals brought about by the birth of socialism.

[170] Indeed, his alleged attempts to institute 'Bolshevik-styled' reforms led, in 1934, to Tsepon Lungshar being ritually blinded. In the 1940s Phuntsok Wangyal ('Pünwang') -depicted by Jamyang Norbu as a 'self-important, self-deluded and simpleminded wretch'- laid foundations for the Tibetan Communist Party. In addition, the Tibet Improvement Party –an anti-religious, anti-feudal, and pro-RoC Khampa movement led by the Pangdatsang family- might also be seen as an attempt to reform the old order.

The Complex Present in the Sino-Tibetan Conflict

The reputed uniformity of loss, political subjectivity, or agency may be as tentative today as it was historically. As I will discuss later, recent research (Yeh 2007; Wright & Houston 2003) often cites heightened intragenerational tensions between young people born in exile and 'new arrivals' from Tibet – tensions ascribed by Yeh (2007) to perceptions of dispositional difference between the groups related, notably but not exclusively, to acculturative processes. As I found in my interviews, for many new arrivals exile is described as a political 'awakening' to the 'truth' about Tibet, one they were unaware of before. Yet to what extent does this 'awakening' reflect less revelation than *learned* identification with the exile masternarrative? For both exile and especially Tibet, we might ask how far the exile-nationalist account of occupation and ethnocide is accepted, and how far it is fully constitutive of agencies. While Tibetans have been, and continue to be, subject to unjust treatment by China, we must beware how the 'connective tissue' (Shambaugh 2008) of the exile narrative elides complex processes related, but not reducible, to the nationalist account. While it is hard not to accept this account, it is vital to recognise that the exile community comprise only three per cent of the total Tibetan population, and their claims should be contrasted with accounts (e.g. Sautman 2003; Lai 2009) and evidence that dispute charges of ethnocide, and highlight the disproportionate investment by Beijing in the Tibetan Autonomous Region.[171] It is true, notes Fischer (2009:38-39), that GDP in the TAR increased 300% between 1997 and 2007, and the region has seen large infrastructural investment.[172] Indeed, he explains, development outlay – often, Lai notes, at the cost of coastal cities – has led to a 'fall in poverty rates, a rise in average household income, and moderate improvements in educational attainment'.[173] Gains are not only *economic*. Lai notes how Tibetans are privileged in being able to use their language at schools, and receive sizeable support for *cultural* preservation, a point made by Fischer who notes that contrary to popular belief it is *Tibet* – rather than the

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[171] For Lai (2009:8), 'Other than regional autonomy, the RAEM [Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities Law] also entails affirmative action for ethnic minorities, as well as fiscal benefits and economic and cultural support from the state for ethnic areas […]. They are under lax restrictions in birth control and are subject to relaxed requirements in admission to schools, colleges, universities and employment in state or public institutions. […] Ethnic minorities even enjoy the state's favourable treatment in judicial and civil disputes involving the Han'.

[172] *E.g.* the Qinghai-Tibet railway

[173] Refugees also cite material enrichment in Tibet (*e.g.* Dolma –personal correspondence) –although they seem hesitant about its benefits. Other 'pro-Tibetan' sympathisers acknowledge this, but suggest 'development' is culturally and *environmentally*, destructive. This last point is indeed defensible, and a new emphasis on environmental degradation and indigeneity responds to similar shifts in international development discourse.

exile community – where the finest preserve of Tibetan culture and language is found.[174] While problems remain, Kolas (2004) thus sees neither Beijing nor exile authorities as qualified to articulate the problems facing Tibetans today.

It is not that the narrative is false, but that it may be wrongly tuned, reflecting more an effort to secure – through defining the nature of violence – the validity of certain political claims, rather than concerns for ordinary wellbeing. In viewing the conflict today, Fischer's (2014 – see: Yeh, 2013; Bass, 1998) thesis of 'effective occupation' and 'disempowered development' – which understands Tibetan social suffering as a result of 'structural and institutional disjunctures [emerging] from the heavily subsidized, externalized, and polarizing development strategies implemented within a context of open migration, rather than on specific agentive practices of exclusion, bias, prejudice, or outright discrimination practiced by Chinese toward Tibetans' – is compelling. While Fischer does not refute ethnic discrimination, he notes how suffering and agency are enmeshed in more complex material processes of long-term socio-economic change, related processes of exclusion and polarisation, and legacies of discrimination. For him, efforts to develop Tibet have joined with historic power imbalances and neoliberal reform to result in the exclusion of (most)[175] Tibetans by interventions largely serving the CCP, Chinese corporations, and large numbers of non-Tibetan migrants. For Fischer, it is *precisely* the investment in Tibet relative to other areas of China in this way that results in Tibetan immiseration through 'progressive appropriation of ownership in the local economy by outsiders' – a process inured by patterns of 'cultural, linguistic, and political [biases] that derive from axes of advantage stemming from characteristics of the dominant cultural and political group, such as Chinese fluency, Chinese work cultures, and connections to government or business networks in China proper'. The relative exclusion of Tibetans here has been aggravated by economic liberalisation that, despite stimulating growth, has dispossessed poorer workers left exposed to market forces (Meisner 1999), producing a new underclass: a 'floating population' of over 200 million dispossessed and

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[174] A recent blossoming of the Tibetan arts –*e.g.* the films of Pema Tseden- from Tibetan artists in Tibet itself, attests to this –even where they obliquely reference the various dispossessions and hardships of occupation.
[175] Some Tibetans, Fischer notes, have benefitted from attempts to include more minorities in local governance. Many of these, however, are ironically from the old aristocratic families of Tibet who have now seen something of a return to influence (see also: Fjeld 2005).

proletarianised rural poor.[176] This has had implications for Tibet where high subsidies have encouraged

inward migration of Han Chinese, but where relative deficiencies in education, skills, and social capital

among locals, create a 'unique structural asymmetry whereby the most educated category of local residents

(urban Tibetan men) is much less educated on average than even the least educated category of

interprovincial migrants competing in local urban labor markets (*i.e.,* rural women from Sichuan)' (Fischer

2014). According to Fischer, this has in turn led to exclusions (and resentment) among Tibetans at upper

and especially lower ends of the labour market – with the latter being further afflicted by industrial

restructuring in the TAR and the subsequent rise in rural-urban migration and urban poverty (influenced

also by changing aspirations of rural youth).[177] Alongside other concerns, this could help explain rises in

prostitution, gender violence, or even trafficking in the TAR.[178] However, while such issues are of

increasing infamy for nationalists, in considering agency and especially the 2008 protests Fischer tempers

national consciousness, basing collective grievance and protest in a more complex context. He contends

(*op cit.* 250):

> While the social basis of these recent and ongoing protests has been definitely wider than in
> the protests of the 1980s –and hence more rural in a sense- they have not been more rural in
> comparison to widespread resistance in the 1950s, the memory of which is still quite vivid
> among the older generation of Tibetans today. *In this respect, despite important lineages and*

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[176] The outcome of 'social dislocations', he notes, 'has been an upsurge in common crime […] the proliferation of criminal gangs in both city and countryside, and the execution of 3,000 criminals (or alleged criminals) in 1997, more than the rest of the world combined. And the cities have suffered a resurgence of the social evils that were chronic in pre-1949 China –prostitution, drug addiction, gambling, and a criminal underworld […]'.

[177] Documentation -and elliptical criticism- of this transformation may be found in the work of a new generation of native Tibetan artists, writers and filmmakers –including, for example, Pema Tseden's elegiac and darkly humorous *The Silent Holy Stones* and *Old Dog.*

[178] Verifying such claims is difficult due to the difficulty of researching shadow economies, and the unwillingness of respondents to talk frankly about such issues given the stigma and taboos associated with it, and for its supposed illegality. Exile sources argue that prior to Chinese occupation there was no, or at least very little, prostitution in Tibet. The 'modernisation' of Lhasa has, some claim, resulted in startling increases of the practice, however, with different sources claiming the emergence of anywhere between 300 (Lenoir, 2008) to over 1,600 brothels (TWA 2006; Coephel 1998) 'employing' up to 9% of the female population –or over 8,000 women (Tibet Times 1998). These figures vary wildly, but given China's wider problem with prostitution, the specific socio-economic conditions that make Lhasa a fertile place for the industry, and corroboration of it by researchers, journalists, filmmakers and activists, concern seems valid. While most cases seem to involve Han sex-workers, it seems young Tibetans – especially girls from pastoral families (RFA 2004)- are increasingly becoming involved –with a recent TCHRD (2007) report claiming that as many as 7,000 Tibetan women now work in the industry. According to TWA, 'Tibetan women are forced into prostitution as their only means of survival. It is believed that the rise of prostitution is due to the rapid urbanization and pattern of economic development in Tibet […]'. Certainly, as noted, migration and the relative skill deficit of Tibetan women relative to migrants have meant tight competition for employment and education. This is particularly marked with young rural women. Tibet Information Network (*TIN* 2004) suggest that 'an increasing number of Tibetan women from rural areas, particularly in the TAR, are working as prostitutes', with some 'as young as 13 or 14, and often paid less than a dollar for sex'.

continuities from the past, there is something very new about the protests occurring now, although this is not necessarily their rurality.

The 'emphasis on exclusion and dislocation at the middle and upper end of the labor hierarchy', notes Fischer, 'is important from the perspective of conflict given that such exclusion is usually the most politically sensitive, even if it is not necessarily the most impoverishing or disequalizing' (283). Exclusions and the associated insecurities caused by loss of position and status for elites and their offspring are important for 'their importance in determining the trajectories of various socio-political processes such as resistance and conflict […]'. The consequence, he notes, has been a rise in nationalist, but '*not necessarily secessionist*' (284), feeling. Yet this has not been limited to the upper strata. While less well articulated, prospects for a wider (*local*) nationalism is perhaps more valid today given the anxieties caused by the material effects of restructuring and continued subservience to Han cultural hegemony, problems that lead to cross-class 'educational, linguistic or cultural modes of disadvantage' and unities (Fischer 2013:250). While Fischer in this way sees unique *material* causes as underlying grievance (especially in urbanising areas) and forms of agency like protest, immolation and flight, evidence for the demographic distribution of this grievance (and its frequently spiritualised character) does raise concern for socio-economic and generational dynamics and alternate (gendered or classed) modes of social suffering. Still, none of this denies, however the nationalist *inflection* of protest, or the symbolic dimension to the violence of reform. So called 'progressive' development projects in Tibet – including those aimed at beautification, increasing tourist capacity or promoting Tibetan culture – in this way might be seen as an effort to palimpsestically erase identity.[179] For Woeser, a plan to 'cleanse, disperse, transform and elevate' (to 'open the guts' of Lhasa), have had material, psychological and social repercussions for the city and its people. While inequalities and injustices here might be cast in generational, gendered or classed terms, for nationalists the main concern is for the *cultural* cost as the ancient city is turned into a simulacrum of its former self.[180] How far ethnonationalist perceptions of cultural erasure might be drivers of protest is difficult to

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[179] As with, for instance, the destruction of the historic town of *Zhöl* –which used to be located below the Potala Palace, to make way for the Panopticon-like Chinese 'liberation' monument.

[180] For Woeser, there is concern here for *authenticity*. She notes: 'Even if there manage to be pilgrims making prostrations there, they will simply serve to liven things up as background for the tourists, as one disaster follows another, winding down to a pathetic and miserable end for Lhasa'.

determine, especially as protest seems to occur far from Lhasa in areas ironically less exposed to high levels of surveillance or restrictions. Yet it is not inconceivable that such discourses, propagated through the Internet, do play a role. Simultaneously, we should be wary of overstating Tibetan victimhood, or valorising culture. Tibetan culture is still very much alive, and in Tibet and in exile Tibetans are contributing to its survival. Moreover, while (bourgeois) anxieties for cultural survival are valid, valorisation can miss how securing welfare means going beyond this to identify how change can be best secured.

CONCLUSION

This chapter offered historical and historiographical context for this thesis. It tried to illumine how, at least for the exile community, a specific history of loss *naturally* structures subjectivities and agencies in Tibet and exile. In the final section I offered insight from later in this manuscript that disrupts the naturalness of this account, revealing the wider and more complex historical conditions through which subjectivities and agencies are constituted. Yet this is to take nothing away from the emergent historical ontology of the nationalist account of historical trauma, or its real effects, especially for exiled Tibetans but maybe also as a *subjectifying* discourse for Tibetans in Tibet today. In the following chapters I reflect on the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of subjectivities and agencies in exile starting, in Chapter Four, with exploring the production, transmission and inheritance of loss; in Chapter Five by deliberating alternate histories and present-day histories of loss displaced by the masternarrative; and in Chapter Six, by introducing political subjectification to consider how, against this material-ideal context, young people are made, and make themselves, national subjects, alongside the prospects for decentred *marginal* agency.

FOUR

THE PRODUCTION, TRANSMISSION & INHERITANCE OF LOSS

Where we can we must give things a meaningful
shape.

Yann Martel

National history secures for the contested and
contingent nation the false unity of a self-
same, national subject evolving through time.

Duara (1997)

FIGURE 9: BRINGING TIBET HOME

An emotional young girl describes her feelings after being given the opportunity to interact with Tibetan earth smuggled from
China as part of Tenzin Rigdol's art installation *Our Land, Our People*. Screenshot taken from *Bringing Tibet Home* – a
documentary recounting Rigdol's exhibit.

In October 2011, the Tibetan artist Tenzin Rigdol opened his exhibit (a twenty-tonne square of soil

smuggled from Tibet) *Our Land, Our People* at Upper TCV in McLeod Ganj. Footage from the opening

ceremony covers the first hours of the event. Following a speech by the *Sikyong*, a blessing by monks, and

performances by infant-school children, people were invited to walk over the rectangle of earth. As one

journalist recalled: 'they lined up hundreds strong to touch the dirt. Some fell to their knees, clutching the

gritty stuff as though it were a long-lost child. Others lifted it to their lips to savour a taste of the home they left behind decades ago' (Basu 2011). As people walked over, sat on and clutched handfuls of the soil, some hoisted the Tibetan flag -lifting a large portrait of the Dalai Lama before it. Several elders, artists, and students –some clearly overcome with emotion- then rose to deliver speeches to the crowd. While the event might, in this way, be seen as a solidary act of collective mourning, it is crucial to identify how, for many taking part (especially those born-in exile), Tibet and the trauma of occupation and exile is known only through photographs, films, and the stories of their parents, elders and textbooks. Even for those born in Tibet, it is likely that they would have been only infants at the time of flight – not too long ago to prevent recalling a little, but long enough to warrant curiosity over the endurance of such affective bonds.

The formation of intense, transgenerational attachments to places and histories of violence and loss that are not necessarily one's own is vital in the constitution of youth political subjectivities and agencies. In the last chapter I discussed how the effects of occupation and exile may be seen in terms of a intergenerational historical (national) trauma that singularly structures suffering and responses to it, but may also foster resilience where historical consciousness and identification are rallied in its wake (Wexler 2009). This naturalistic approach, however, offers an underdetermined account of experience, subjectivity and agency that may *politically* displace the wider determinative context. I turn here from natural to *constructivist* (Alexander 2012:201) trauma theory, to explore the affective-discursive (Wetherall 2012) production, transmission and inheritance of loss. For Alexander (2012) there 'is an interpretative grid through which all "facts" about trauma are mediated, emotionally, cognitively, and morally. This grid has supraindividual, cultural status; it is symbolically structured and sociologically determined'. Vitally, he notes, no trauma interprets itself: events are *made* traumatic. This is not to deny the 'reality' of trauma: it is *real* in so far as it has real effects – a social fact with an emergent *historical* ontology (Hacking 2002). Simultaneously, transmission does not occur through the material injury of an individual (or collective) by an objective traumatic event, but through processes of representation; through *performances* of loss that are subsequently *constitutive* (rather than derivative) of identities (Butler 1990). In the first part of this chapter, I

turn to analyse this process. The intention is to reframe 'historical' as 'cultural' trauma (*i.e.* a trauma in terms of *meaning*), and understand how *the nation* has emerged as the main mode through which history and loss are experienced by isolating the 'complex and multivalent' 'spiral of signification' vital to production of the masternarrative of social suffering in exile. This process is mutually constitutive: just as groups produce loss so too do narratives of loss work to structure the subjectivities and identities that sustain them. This has vital implications. In the second part, I consider the 'revision' of identity, and ask whether, in the Tibetan case, the 'lost' Tibetan nation (and nationalist subjectivity) have been *produced* rather than preserved in exile. As implied, this is not an entirely ideal process: for historical loss to be *felt* as real – and its solidary potential realised – transmission must involve the material. In the third part I discuss the *affective-discursive* practices (Wetherall 2012) through which the emotional experience of suffering is cultivated, and trauma internalised.[181] Finally, it is vital to consider those institutions that play a central role in youth socialisation: notably families, schools, and community. In the last part, therefore, I discuss how such sites are crucial not only for construction, transmission, and inheritance of loss and the realisation of political identity, but also for making such loss tangible in terms of the deep psychological (or *passionate*) attachments (Butler 1997) felt by the young for caregivers. While such attachments work as the basis for later attachments to the abstract nation, they also – for the fear of their loss and the *recognition* that they bring – determine the subject's vulnerability to (patrifilial) power relations, and form a key disciplinary mechanism.

THE TRAUMA PROCESS: THE SPIRAL OF SIGNIFICATION

The advent of social trauma as an experiential reality depends on a process of *social attribution*: an effort by actors to inure – *via* 'a complex and multivalent symbolic [storytelling] process that is contingent, highly contested, and sometimes highly polarising' – a new masternarrative of social suffering that is internalised and leads to revision of collective memory and identity. Here, I turn to the first stages of this 'spiral of signification' (Alexander 2004; 2012), considering the formation of a claim, the institutional arenas across which it unfolds, and reflecting on just *who* makes the claim and attending stratificational issues. With

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[181] The practice of 'self-constitution' also forms a major part of my discussion of agency in Chapter Six. To avoid too much overlap, here I discuss more 'directed' practices (*i.e.* where adults guide young people in practices that lead to internalization of the masternarrative), leaving more 'autonomous' attempts at constitution for Chapter Six.

Tibetans in exile, this claim, of course, refers to China's continued occupation of Tibet, the ethnocidal persecution of Tibetans and their culture, and the forced exile of thousands of Tibetans over the past sixty-five years. The prevailing cultural trope through which historical loss and present-day social suffering is signified, narrated, and even experienced is, as the Tibet Museum's *Journey in Exile* makes clear, that of the *fallen nation*.

Imagining Rupture

For Alexander (2012), the construction of trauma starts with 'a claim to some fundamental injury, an exclamation of the terrifying profanation of some sacred value, a narrative about a horribly destructive social process, and a demand for emotional, institutional, and symbolic reparation and reconstitution'; it must also, of course, ascertain *what* happened, to *whom* and *when*. While the first two will be discussed presently, the issue of *when* merits reflection. While clinical theory presumes coterminosity of event and traumatisation, the linearity of the relationship between time and loss notes is more uncertain, and trauma may reference events in the past, present or future (Alexander 2012; Butler 2003). For Tibetans, loss and the temporalities of suffering are uniquely conceived, relative to space and the position of sentient beings in *samsara*. Still Buddhism, notes Kalupahana (1974), accepts linear causality, and while trauma itself may have emerged, later and might even be attributed to different events (see below), it is routinely fixed in the point at which the nation was lost. This event is imagined to have erupted onto the tranquil *Shangri-La* of the Tibetan social, political, and cultural landscape as if from nowhere – a rupturing of lifeworlds that has indelibly marked lives and galvanised a coherent, and always already extant nationalist Tibetan nationalist subjectivity.

In imagining rupture the trope of *spoilage* is prevalent. This is not uncommon. As Dashke (2014) notes regarding 'apocalyptic nostalgia': 'apocalypses may hearken to a beautiful, lost past (a sacred *time*), many may also express a yearning for a homeland where people once lived a blessed existence before being tossed into the wicked world in which they live today'. In the Tibetan case, such narratives are reinforced by the exoticisation of pre-occupation Tibet as an isolated, pure, and politically naïve realm on the 'roof of the world'. The name for Tibet in the old days, notes the first page of the Tibet Museum's *Journey in Exile*,

was '*Gangchen*' (*lit.* land of snows) – the allusion to *purity* clear. The publication notes how 'Tibetan culture has flourished on the "roof of the world" for thousands of years'; the first chapter *The Land of Snows* opens with discussion of a Tibet 'mysterious and legendary' to outsiders; a land of 'lofty uplands of snow-clad mountains' with a spiritual populace of 'farmers, nomads and semi-nomads'. The remaining pages include photos of cobalt lakes, yak-dotted pastures, and images of Tibetans engaged in daily life. While in no way to suggest insincerity in remembrance as I discuss in Chapter Five, such representation is distortive, and prompts depoliticising mythicisation. The opening lines of Adhe Tapontsang's (1997:5) autobiography, for example, invoke an enchanting –but far from representative- vision of pre-occupation Tibetan childhoods:

> Even now as I close my eyes, I can recall my first memory –laughing, spinning, and falling in fields of flowers beneath an endless open sky. Playing among the flowers was our favourite summer pastime. My childhood friends and I would take off our boots and chase each other. Then we looked to see if a specific type of summer flower had gotten caught between our toes. […] We loved to roll about on the hills, breathing deeply the fragrance of fresh earth and blossoms. […] In fact, our land was known as *Metog Yul*, or Land of Flowers.

The association between occupation and contamination forms a profound affective core to social suffering –describing a point where the 'foreign' outside punctured the putative whole. Curiously, however, despite recognising temporal linearity, Tibetan belief in prophesy not only amplifies the cultural significance of collective experience –linking occupation to ideas of moral decay- but also puts the masternarrative beyond worldly rebuke –rooting the meaning of the event in the cosmic order. In *A Home in Tibet*, Dhompa (2013:5) recalls her mother's story of China's arrival. 'It did not alarm her at first when she heard the Chinese Army had encircled all strategic Tibetan towns and cities', she starts, but 'nomads in her village professed to witnessing two suns, or two moons, or a barren sky. Trees collapsed. Rivers grew tumid'. The Oracle, it is claimed, received menacing visions, and earthquakes[182] were reported. One TOHP respondent (#77DD) recalls an ill-omened play performed by the PLA where a dog was made to pull a plough-cart driven by a monkey, and another recalls how as children her friends used to make tents from chupas (*a portent of exile?*). In 1931 the 13th Dalai Lama warned in an oft-cited prophecy on show at the Tibet Museum:

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[182] The distant but massive Assam-Tibet earthquake of 1950 might have been a source for this.

This present era is rampant with the five forms of degeneration, in particular the red ideology. […]. In future, this system will certainly be forced either from within or without on this land that cherished the joint spiritual and temporal system. If, in such an event, we fail to defend our land, the holy lamas, including the "triumphant father and son" [the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama] will be eliminated without a trace of their names remaining; the properties of the incarnate lamas and of the monasteries along with the endowments for religious services will all be seized. Moreover, our political system, originated by the three ancient kings, will be reduced to an empty name; my officials, deprived of their patrimony and property, will be subjugated like slaves by the enemy; and my people, subject to fear and miseries, will be unable to endure day or night. Such an era will certainly come.

Irrespective of the spiritual significance of such words we may identify how the prophecy might be seen as an incisive piece of political analysis. Indeed, in this and a later testament,[183] the wider text shows the Lama's concern for the effects of communism on Mongolia, and his 'predictions' therefore more truly reflect awareness of how communist reforms altered the balance of power in similar societies. Certainly, while fear for the future of traditional institutions is clear, his concern seems to be less of impending ethnocide than for the loss and seizure of property and status. Indeed, the testament is replete with anxiety for the potential destruction and reversal of the current socio-economic order: 'my officials, deprived of their patrimony and property, will be subjugated like slaves', the Lama notes. But, interestingly, as Goldstein (2009:315) argues, the 13th Dalai Lama's testament warns 'not only about external threats but also about the dangerous consequences of self-serving behaviour on the part of the elite'. As I will note, despite portrayals of a naïve and harmonious Tibetan society, China in truth arrived in a Tibet already experiencing significant upheaval. Nevertheless, it is easy to see how oracular visions like this serve as effective and culturally significant ways of establishing the 'truth' about trauma, before it even occurred.

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[183] Another version contained within his 1933 political testament states: '*So, if you are not able to defend yourselves now, the institutions of the Dalai Lama, venerable incarnates and those who protect the Teachings shall be wiped out completely. Monasteries shall be looted, property confiscated and all living beings shall be destroyed. The memorable rule of the Three Guardian kings of Tibet, the very institutions of the state and religion shall be banned and forgotten. The property of the officials shall be confiscated; they shall be slaves of the conquerors and shall roam the land in bondage. All souls shall be immersed in suffering and the night shall be long and dark*'.
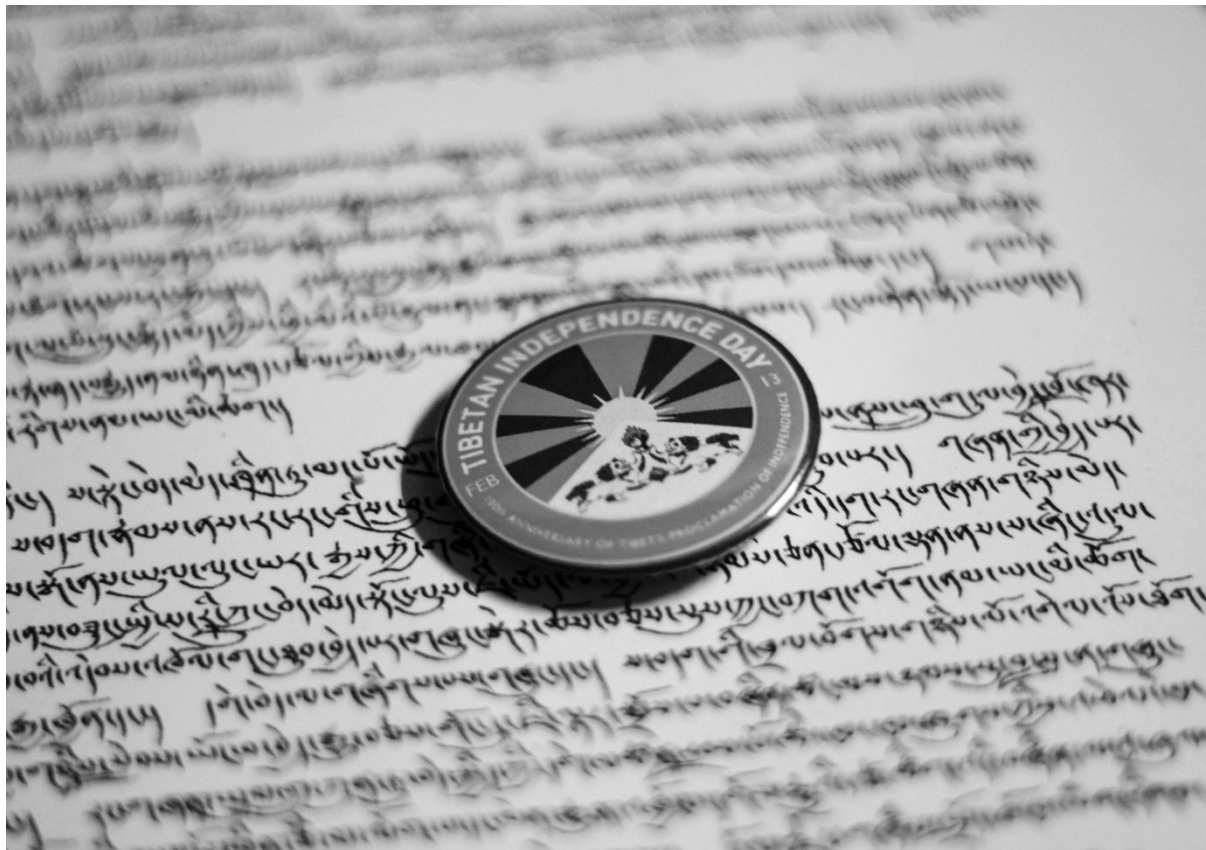
PLATE 9: PRODUCING & REPRODUCING THE NATION

An image of the 'Declaration of Tibetan Independence' – a copy of the 13th Dalai Lama's proclamation of Tibet's independence (against the Qing) following his return to Tibet from exile in 1913. This copy was reproduced and distributed freely by Students for a Free Tibet to an audience of Tibetan and foreign visitors to their 'Tibetan Independence Day' event held in Dharamshala on February 13th (also pictured is badge produced for the event). While the declaration was more truly an aspirational document and reflected the 13th Dalai Lama's new nationalist ambitions (inspired in no small part through contact with the British), the reproduction and distribution of the declaration forms an imaginative attempt to legitimise and naturalise the nation through rooting it in material culture and artefacts. At the same event copies of Tibetan banknotes, coins and other evidence of the nation were displayed, along with photographs from Tibet's past.
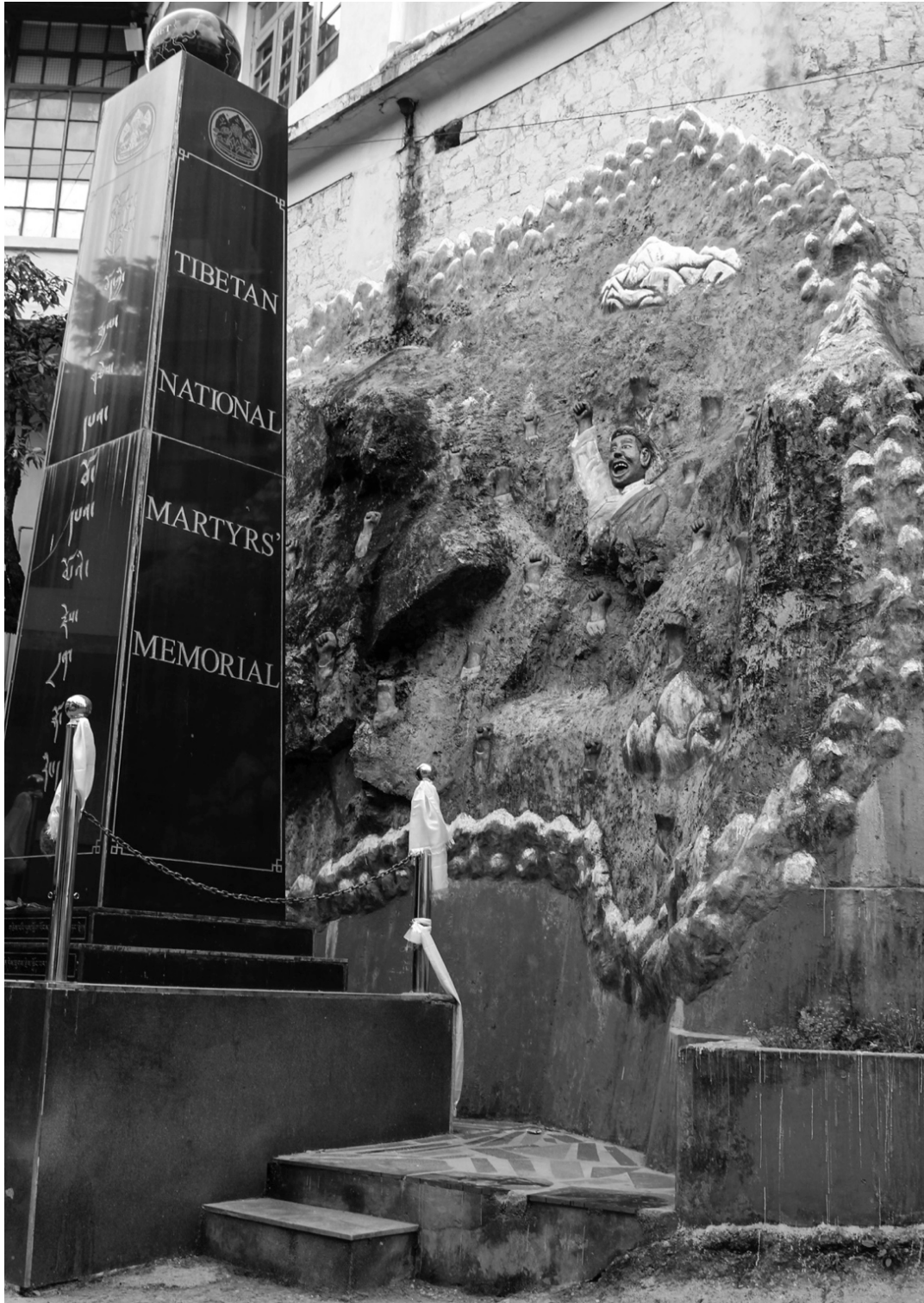
PLATE 10: PRODUCING AND REPRODUCING THE NATION

The Tibetan National Martyrs Memorial stands before the Tibetan Museum and a wall-sculpture of Tibet in the entrance to the Tsuglakhang. In attempting to convey religious-political unity, the location of the memorial next to the Dalai Lama's residence also indexes tension between the two sources of authority. While nationalists are keen to stress (and manufacture) the equivalence of these traditions, questions remain over whether the nation has the same socio-psychological significance as Tibetan Buddhism and its institutions.

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A Tibetan monk takes a photograph of framed bank notes and currency from pre-occupation Tibet during an exhibit for 'Tibetan Independence Day' in Dharamshala on February 13th 2013. The image is interesting for two reasons. First, we can identify how Tibetans attempt to legitimise the nation through seizing upon items of material culture (*i.e.* materialising it). Second, the interaction of Tibetans with these items is interesting. In this image the young monk can be seen photographing the exhibit on his phone, producing a second instantiation of this 'proof' of the nation as an always-available keepsake.
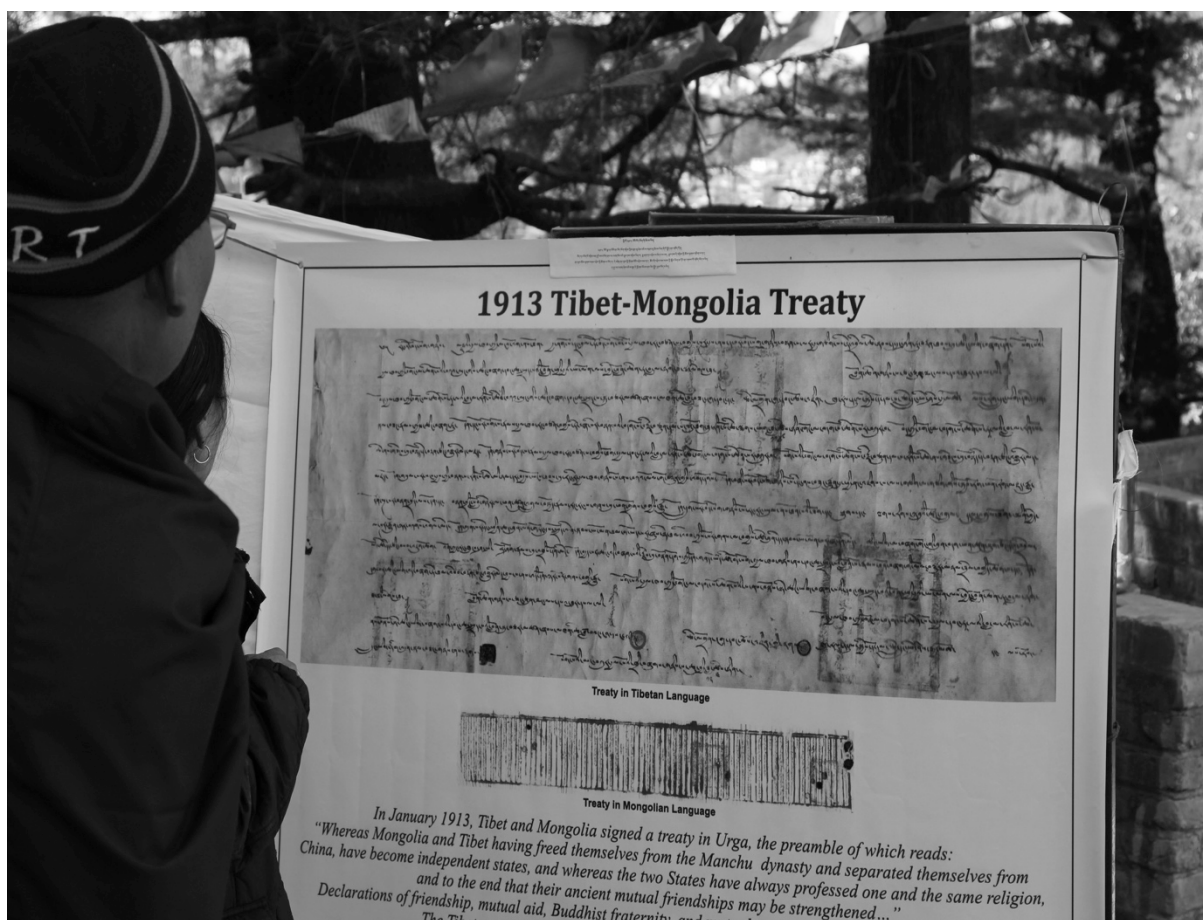
PLATE 12: PRODUCING & REPRODUCING THE NATION (4)

Tibetans read a reproduction of the 1913 Tibet-Mongolia Treaty, which is appealed to as further material historical evidence of Tibet's status as an (internationally recognised) independent nation.

Establishing the Narrative

In exile, histories of loss are brought under the powerful signifier of the fallen nation. The emergence of the nationalist narrative as a cultural script in exile (as an ideal *structuring structure*) is crucial. The attribution of trauma, notes Alexander, is vital to this process, involving a 'spiral of signification' (the telling of a compelling new story). This involves delimiting: (**a**), the nature of the pain; (**b**), the nature of the victim; (**c**), the relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience; and lastly (**d**), the designation of responsibility.

The Nature of the Pain

For Alexander, the narrative must first establish the nature of the pain: 'what actually happened –to the particular group and to the wider collectivity of which it is a part?'[184] In the Tibetan case trauma is assigned to the loss of homeland reframed as *nation*, and the systematic persecution of its people since by a hostile foreign power. Even here, however, there is variance in the nature of loss; which, for some, seems to be rooted more in the shame of submission than occupation, and for others – for whom occupation is too remote to be painful – it is rooted in the real and symbolic hardships of statelessness, and/or highly emotive but vicarious stories of suffering in Tibet. In the first case, *exile* is the most tangible source of loss for young Tibetans, and representations of exilic hardship (such as those contained in the poems below) offer a way of grasping, articulating and mobilising feelings of alterity, relative material deprivations, and collective injustice. While exile and its privations *are*, of course, a structural part of the Sino-Tibetan conflict, symbolic work is still needed to harmonise ever-more varied experiences of displacement with the masternarrative. In this way, by representing as *forced* what is often a *voluntary* hegira from conditions seen as unbearable, exile (as an imagined common experience) works to symbolically suture exiles into the masternarrative of common loss. In the second case, trauma has come to be associated with ethnocide, human and, more recently, indigenous rights. In this regard, the masternarrative claims to speak for the two million (*sic*) Tibetans that perished over sixty years of starvation, persecution or massacre, alongside

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[184] So, Alexander (2012) asks, 'did the American military lose the Vietnam War, or did the Vietnam trauma consist of the pain of having the nation's hands "tied behind its back"? Did hundreds of ethnic Albanians die in Kosovo, or was it tens and possible even hundreds of thousands? Did they die because of starvation or displacement in the course of a civil war, or were they deliberately murdered?'

the six million in Tibet today.[185] *Ethnocide*, as noted, offers a cogent way of signifying violence – resonating with other cases of cultural elimination in modernity. This claim has been effective – helped by evidence of historic brutality against China's other minorities – and includes framing occupation as an effort to control Tibet through destroying Tibetan culture, rather than as China affirms, to liberate and develop the region.

The Nature of the Victim

Defining the nature of the victim involves isolating those affected by trauma, are 'they particular individuals or groups, or "the people" in general? Did a singular and delimited group receive the brunt of the pain, or were several groups involved' (Alexander 2012:13)? In the Tibetan case the claim to injury is at once inclusive (in subsuming myriad regional and social groups under the ethno-linguistic and religious label of 'Tibetan') and exclusory (in largely ignoring ordinary Chinese suffering, or that of other minority groups). Such discrimination is understandable. On one hand, attempts to engage with other groups might be seen as an effort at 'splittism'. On the other, attribution and transmission of historical trauma – and its role in remaking political community and political subjectivity – requires narrative parsimony. For the nationalist account to prevail, the Tibetan case must be differentiated as exceptional to other kinds of minority politics, and for sustaining the narrative of violated sovereignty also obliges identifying historic ethnic polarisation between 'Tibetans' and 'Chinese'. Recognising the blearier reality of human loyalties can draw interpretation away from 'national' and towards 'social' terms. In this way, these strong inclusionary and exclusory processes can, of course, be damaging. The emphasis on Tibetan Buddhism, for instance, can marginalise the experiences of other religious groups in Tibet,[186] and invisibilises their

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[185] Aside from the logistical problems of calculating a diffuse, rural population, the precise population of Tibet has, and unsurprisingly continues to be, the subject of intense political controversy. Estimates vary in time and space (*i.e.* according to what a give demographer counts as 'Tibet'), and also in methodological standard. Relative increases or decreases in population, of course, are quickly seized upon to substantiate claims of Chinese maltreatment of Tibet or success in developing –depending on one's position. The exile establishment, defining 'Tibet' as encompassing all areas with sizeable Tibetan populations, claims the 'population of Tibet' –as opposed to the 'Tibetan population'- to be over six million. Official (Chinese) statistics, in contrast, estimate the population of the TAR to stand at around three million. It seems reasonable to assume the population of the TAR –excluding the large population of Han migrants- stands at approximately three million, while the wider population of ethnic Tibetans likely falls somewhere –according to recent research (VoA 2014)- between six and seven million. Such figures, however, generally temper the nationalist charge of genocide or massacre, even supporting claims for a general *increase* in material welfare.

[186] Dissatisfaction with religious hegemony might be indexed here. While few and far between, other groups, such as the small communities of Tibetan Muslims (the *Barkhor Kha-ché* and *Woba-ling Kha-ché*) and Tibetan *Bön*, also suffered

experience in exile. The deliberate de-emphasis of class-based accounts of the conflict, additionally, not only obscures the role of socio-structural factors in patterning the course of conflict, but also invisibilises the appalling persecutions experienced by many of the elite during conflict.

The Relation of the Victim to Wider Audience

For trauma to emerge as a social fact, an audience must be able to identify with the immediately victimised group (Alexander 2012). This process of *symbolic extension* has relevance for the Tibetan case in two ways. The first involves how those who have not directly experienced violence – or those whose experiences of conflict need harmonising with the nationalist narrative – come to know the traumas of their forebears as their own. The poverties of exile, while sometimes performed more than self-evident, can in this way be extended in ways discussed below with the aestheticized narrative of national loss so that 'trauma' encompasses those BiE youth; or indeed BiT youth that migrated for reasons other than persecution. Also important is the *global* emergence of Tibetan trauma. While Tibetans express fear for the obscurity of their cause, and while the rise of China has led to some pragmatic neglect, Tibet's visibility relative to other global issues is significant, and is perhaps one of *the* best-known self-determination movements in recent times. The community receives material and symbolic support not only from the GOI and other governments and institutions, but also high-profile 'friends' (including actors, musicians, and politicians) as well as scores of people who support them either *via* donations or volunteering. Together these actors work alongside Tibetan activists – and the Dalai Lama – in elevating the Tibetan cultural trauma to the global level.

The Attribution of Responsibility

Finally, notes Alexander, 'in creating a compelling trauma narrative, it is critical to establish the identity of the perpetrator, the "antagonist". Who actually injured the victim? Who caused the trauma? This issue is

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from occupation –sometimes from Buddhist aggression. The *Bonpo* suffered similarly to Tibetan Buddhists, fleeing to India in 1959 and establishing a community at Menri in Himachal Pradesh. While now incorporated (some may say adversely) with the Tibetan Buddhist community under HHDL, *Bön* have historically been on the margins of Tibetan society both in Tibet (where they often faced persecution) and in exile. Following an interview with two young SFT activists I had an interesting conversation with their friend, a young *bonpo* woman, who expressed frustration at knowing little of her culture following its subsuming within the overwhelmingly Buddhist nationalist project. While I do not make any claims in this regard, further research might consider whether the clearly more secular *rangzen* project offers greater political options for marginal groups.

always a matter of symbolic and social construction'. In the Tibetan case, is it Mao, the CCP, Communism, or the Han that are to blame for the suffering of Tibetans? How about related groups: the secular/religious elites, Tibetan China sympathisers (*the enemy within*), the international community, or multinationals? The extension of culpability – a truth determined by shifting *political*, rather than objective *historical*, practices – is vital here. Most commonly, while nuanced accounts do fault communism, the CCP or Mao, many point to 'China'. This is discouraged however. In one case, while watching a report of self-immolation with my host family, one of the girls pointed at the screen and (scowling) told me in a tone she reserved for cartoon villains that the Chinese were '*bad'*. Her mother laughed (nervously), reproved the girl, and then told me she had corrected her daughter that it is the Chinese *government*, not the *people*, which are guilty. The ethnonationalist charge of the masternarrative however makes it tough to avoid accusing Chinese people – especially the Han, who are seen to benefit from occupation. While the issue of *Tibetan* involvement in revolutionary violence – an issue quiescent not only for its divisive potential, but also for its implicit admission of societal rifts – is controversial, some sources imply Tibetans *did* participate, and involvement in the state-apparatus remains true today. Of course, complicity might reflect a way for many Tibetans to simply get by. For nationalists, however, collusion is attributed to ignorance or treacherous avarice. The attribution of responsibility also extends to external parties that have helped or hindered the cause. Despite the strains noted earlier, India is well regarded in the masternarrative, justly recognised for its role in providing aid to the refugee community. Western states occupy a vague place. The US, due to its role in assisting the resistance, has historically been admired. European states are similarly framed: falling in and out of favour depending on their relationship with China. The UK, for instance, bears a curious position, recalled as a colonial power that had designs on Tibet, but also one that for some would have been the lesser of two evils. The UK is also seen negatively for deserting Tibet,[187] although as Schaik (2011) notes, declassified sources suggest far more covert assistance to Tibet than was thought. In any case, changing perceptions of these powers was palpable during fieldwork, especially among the cultural elite. Some, including Tsundue, gave speeches accusing not only western *states* of neglect, but also blaming

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[187] I am reminded of an interview with a former member of the *Chushi Gangdruk*, who a young friend had insisted I meet. After commenting to him that I thought there was much support for Tibetans in the UK he noted that he was not so sure, and that while the United States had supported the Tibetan resistance effort, Britain, he felt, had deserted them.

companies and ordinary people of supporting occupation by buying and selling goods dependent on

Tibet's pillage.
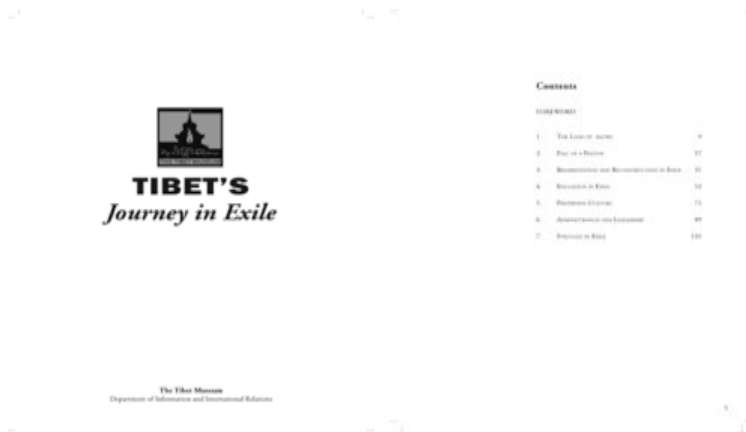
FIGURE 10: IMAGING TIBET

Images from the opening pages of DIIR's *Journey in Exile.* The use of stark panoramic shots of Tibetan landscapes and the majestic Potala Palace alongside the title Land of Snows, helps conjure a sense of otherworldly timelessness and remoteness. While in no way a false impression, this discursive framing reinforces misrepresentative accounts of Tibet's sequestered and unspoilt past, and distracts from the more complex socio-economic and political realities of the Himalayan region.

TIBET'S
Journey in Exile

The Tibet Museum
Department of Information and International Relations

Contents

The Land of Snows

Lake Manasarovar or Tso-Mapham *(Tib.)* is situated 62 Km south of Mount Kailash at 4,558m above sea level. Pilgrims from India and Tibet circum-ambulate this holy lake in Western Tibet to express their devotion and earn merit

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Institutional Arenas

The emergence of trauma cannot occur *via* 'transparent speech acts' alone, but unfolds across various religious, aesthetic, legal, scientific, media (*incl.* virtual), and bureaucratic arenas forming the social field (Alexander 2012). This element of signification links social and psychological spheres and is central to the advent of cultural trauma as a structuring structure. Here, I offer brief summary of the religious, bureaucratic and media arenas, returning in the third part to consider the emotive aesthetic arena (*e.g.* visual, literary, and material embodied practices), which has been particularly crucial for the internalisation of loss.

The Religious Arena

Where trauma unfolds in the religious arena, 'its concern will be to link trauma to theodicy' (Alexander, 2012). It must be harmonised with norms defining what violence and suffering, good and evil are, and why they occur. During fieldwork the profound role of religion in everyday life was clear.[188] Religion and religious practice helps make misfortune meaningful, offering a source of understanding and solace. As a profound psycho-physiological force in Tibetan history, religion is framed as existentially threatened by China, and thus occupies a privileged place in the practice and politics of cultural preservation. Not only does Buddhism offer cosmic explanation for conflict and displacement, but also temporal purpose – linking exile with historical accounts of refugee-monks protecting the *dhāmma* from irreligious warlords (Schaik 2013). The preservation of religious practice in exile (including veneration of the monastic elite), re-construction of the great monasteries, and safeguard of the Dalai Lama offers a sense of purpose and a source of agency in difficult times. The binding of faith and space – albeit bittersweet in accentuating Tibetans' liminality – is clear. Religious artefacts – from *thangkas* to *stupas* – symbolically, and – as with the

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[188] From daybreak –when incense is lit and offerings made- religion is central to practice, and as with *kora* devotion is measured by how you move across the surface of the world. To flail one's arms about, I heard, risks disturbing the ghosts sharing our space. (Of course, one monk told me, Buddhists aren't *meant* to believe in ghosts, but he did because he saw one in his home village -a 'bad' place full of stories of communal disintegration and intra-familial murder). While we must be wary of exoticisation, or of assuming homogeneity in religious practice, religion is ever-present in the community –and a vital source of ethnic identity construction (Maslak 2008). 'The Dalai Lama's picture', notes Maslak (2008:97), 'is prominently displayed in all public and private spaces I visited. Elders who pass the hours sitting in shops and on benches throughout the community use prayer beads. Children write in Tibetan language books at home, and parents read to their children in Tibetan. At school, Tibetan culture and language, in the form of classes at the primary level, and in songs at morning assemblies at all levels are taught in the school, and religious instruction is part and parcel of that instruction'.

cobwebs of prayer flags strung between houses – *physically*, bind individuals, families and the wider community in common belief and loss. Prayer and meditation enable, through inculcating 'right mind', a sense of continuity as well as personal and collective wellbeing in exile, emphasising exile's impermanence and offering insulation against the corrosive effects of historical loss (Lewis 2013). Of course, where it intersects with cultural and political governance religion can also be destabilising. The institution of *kāmma*, for instance, has been criticised for normalising suffering and invisibilising its temporal causes, legitimating – in the conceptual terms used here – a *hierarchy of grief*. While I did not find it understood like this, given the proximity between religion, religious institutions and nation, we should remain sensitive to how institutions may enable a naturalised (politically opportune) privileging of certain kinds of suffering (such as that of monks) over others (*e.g.* women or children). As discussed in Chapter Five, this introduces concerns for the possibly harmful effects of cultural preservation on social welfare and democratisation. Monasteries, for instance, while fêted as hubs of traditional culture, remain unaccountable as providers of care to children.[189] The continued influence of unelected religious figures in exile politics may also be seen as troubling, and some[190] query what they see as the preclusion of democracy by the *de facto* total authority of religious leaders. It would be unfair, however, not to admit the flexibility of these institutions. The Dalai Lama has revealed significant commitment to democratisation, ceding his political authority to the elected *Kashag*. More broadly, while serious issues remain, some senior figures, including the Dalai and Karmapa Lamas, have recently tried to raise the issue of social inequalities such as the marginalisation of women.

The Bureaucratic Arena

In the bureaucratic arena[191] actors 'channel the representational process [and] through creating carefully choreographed public dramaturgy [tilt] interpretative process in powerful ways, expanding and narrowing solidarity, creating or denying the factual and moral basis for reparations and civic repair' (Alexander

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[189] Indeed, the risk of abuse here is verified by Yangsi Kalu Rinpoche's 2011 revelations of the sexual abuse by elder monks he experienced as a child growing up in monasteries. This is not to imply such violence is common, but that the culturally sanctioned lack of scrutiny –alongside the generalized valorization of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism-generates unique invisibilities.

[190] A number of friends in the community queried democratisation when the TGiE forbids rival political parties, and unaccountable religious authorities remain profoundly influential forces in the community. See also: Ardley (2003).

[191] Which includes those instruments, institutions, and organs of state: *i.e.*. the police and judiciary, legislative and executive wings of government, and civil service organisations and allied groups.

2012). Of course, this is complex where groups lack the resources of statehood, and are spread over large distances. The Tibetan community, due to astute leadership, the amenability of the GOI, and support from donors, however, benefits from an effective quasi-governmental apparatus in exile that produces, and is in turn legitimated by, the narrative of historical loss. While having only limited juridical authority, the TGiE (or CTA), governs in exile *via* a number of political, fiscal, and social mechanisms operating within families, schools, and settlements. In practice, the TGiE is also aided, constrained, and shaped by engagement with monastic and civil society institutions and organisations (*e.g.* the TYC, TWA, NDPT), as well as the GOI, INGOs and other external actors -most of which are aligned closely with government and, of course, the Dalai Lama, who remains influential despite resigning from political office in 2011. The TGiE, through its website, settlement offices, media-outlets, and several semi-autonomous NGOs (*e.g.* TCHRD, TWA, TYC) has and continues to play a role in creating and circulating the masternarrative. This takes place through public meetings, the exile media, and vital pedagogic practices instituted in exile schools that, as the provider of education for 79% of children in exile (TDS, 2009), play a fundamental role in signifying and transmitting loss.

The Mass Media & Virtual Tibet

'When the trauma process enters the mass media' writes Alexander (2005:100), it 'gains opportunities and at the same time becomes subject to distinctive kinds of restriction'. On one hand, he notes, 'mediated mass communication allows traumas to be expressively dramatized and permits some of the competing interpretations to gain enormous persuasive power over others'. On the other, 'these representational processes become subject to the restrictions of news reporting, with their demands for concision, ethical neutrality, and perspectival balance'. Entwined intimately with the aesthetic arena, the media plays a powerful role in the transmission of loss in exile and, since the advent of the Internet, even in Tibet itself. In few places, can images of torture, the charred remains of a self-immolation victim (or the blistered bodies of those that failed in their attempt) be justifiably broadcast, and their affective power (their facility to incite shock, terror, and anger) so well exploited.[192] Despite resource constraints, several publications,

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[192] Of course, Alexander notes, the media is constrained by social convention –it must at least *appear* to be impartial by convincing audiences that its interpretation of an event adheres to certain rules.

television channels and websites aimed at disseminating news on, and raising consciousness of, Tibet and the exile community, have emerged. These include two journals[193] as well as several I/NGO newsletters and publications,[194] and a number of print and online newspapers.[195] For broadcast journalism, the DIIR's *Tibet TV* offers live sessions of the exile Parliament and speeches and teachings by the Dalai Lama, and the US-funded *Voice of America* (VOA) provides two hours of Tibetan language programming to Tibetans in exile *and Tibet* each week in addition to 42 hours of radio. *Radio Free Asia*[196] also offers daily Tibetan language programs. The Internet has also allowed proliferation of official[197] and organisational,[198] news,[199] and public interest sites, and has enabled greater voice in a relatively unregulated space –especially for the young. Significantly, the Internet offers space for showcasing Tibetan writing, music, and other arts,[200] alongside blogs.[201] Sites like *YouTube*, *Facebook* and *Twitter*, also provide space for discussion and debate. In both dimensions the media, of course, plays a key political role, and in promoting a counter-narrative of history, serves as a means of resistance. The US operated VOA, for instance, while emphasising a commitment to 'objectivity', does not hide its efforts to broadcast analysis to the TAR. The message is clear if unstated: news in China is unreliable; it takes an independent source[202] to supply Tibetans with accurate content. While justifiable, the service reflects continued efforts to interfere in the Sino-Tibetan conflict –and should prompt questions over the role of such services in the seeming rise of nationalist sentiment in Tibet. This political dimension is internally applicable too. The rise of the Internet especially allows space for intra-communal critique, with websites and blogs offering gendered, generational, classed, or sectarian comment. The rise of social media, including *Facebook*, *YouTube*, or virtual message boards, offers space for critique. This shouldn't be overstated, however. Aside from forms self-censure preventing

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[193] Including the CTA's *Tibet Bulletin* ('[promoting] awareness and [providing] facts of the situation in Tibet and Tibetans in exile)- and the *Tibetan Review* -an independent publication charged with offering a 'source of news about the Tibetan issue and the situation in occupied Tibet').

[194] *E.g.* the TWA's *Dolma* and the TYC's *Rangzen*

[195] *E.g. Tibet Sun, Tibet Express, Tibet Times, Tibet Today, Tibet Telegraph* and *Phayul*

[196] Established in the US but with a stringer office in Dharamshala-

[197] *E.g.* for the CTA, the Office of the Dalai Lama, TCHRD, LTWA, various exile schools, and institutes like the Tibetan Traditional Medical Institute the Men-Tsee-Khang, TIPA and the Tibet Museum.

[198] *E.g. Rukor, Gu Chu Sum, NDPT, TWA, TYC, SFT, Rangzen Alliance, Rokpa, Rogpa, Free Tibet, ICT, Friends of Tibet, Lha Charitable Trust, Learning and Ideas for Tibet, Tibet Charity, Kunphen,* and *Tong-Len*).

[199] *E.g. Phayul, Tibetan Review, Tibet Telegraph, Tibet Sun, Tibetan Review, Tibet Times.*

[200] *E.g. Tibet Writes, Ragged Banner Press.*

[201] *E.g. Shadow Tibet, Invisible Tibet, High Peaks Pure Earth, Burning Tibet, Drugma Lives, Lhakar Diaries, Tibetan Women's Reality, Yarlung Raging, Yuthok Lane,* and *Tibetan Feminist Collective.*

[202] The voice of America no less!

dissensus, are forms of social opprobrium alongside material privations that simply prevent some from accessing such technology. Still, these media offer huge opportunity for and challenge to exile politics, vastly increasing the reach of the masternarrative, but also providing relatively ungoverned spaces for dissension.

Carrier Groups & Stratificational Hierarchies

Signification of trauma is neither autonomous nor neutral. *Carrier groups*, notes Alexander, 'are the collective agents of the trauma process […] they may be elites, but they may also be denigrated and marginalised classes'. More often, however, *elites* – with greater access to material and symbolic resources – have greater opportunity to dominate meaning making (Kleinman 1997). While even those sympathetic to China tend to the exile community's representativeness, and while it would be rash to assume subaltern groups have not preserved histories of conflict and exile, high illiteracy and poverty among early refugees (Goldstein 1978; Palakshappa 1978; Subba 1990), and the remoteness of their tented existence during the early years, suggest this is probably true of the Tibetan case. Few at first had a role in the community or cause (Butler 2007) – tasks that fell to the refugee elite.[203] As Tsering (Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering 1997:60) recalls:

> They [those involved in setting up the government] were aristocrats and monk officials of the old school, and they had little use for me inside their circle. I could run errands and take down narratives, but I wasn't one of "them". From their point of view I could never be. I remember that after we first heard the news about the Lhasa Uprising, a special meeting was called at a private house in Kalimpong. […] I was told to remain outside. It was the way it was always done. Whether literally or not, there was always a door –the door of class and caste- and I feared I was always going to be on the outside of it […]

[203] The Dalai Lama, his family, and members of the exiled Kashag, alongside other members of the aristocracy and religious establishment that had fled Tibet during the occupation or following the 1959 uprising were, of course, fundamental to this project of institution building and meaning making. The Dalai Lama has been instrumental in appropriating discourses of ethnocide and human rights as a vehicle for the political cause. But others too, such as close members of the Dalai Lama's family including his sisters Tsering Dolma and Jetsun Pema –both involved in establishing educational establishments and designing curricula in exile- and his brothers Gyalo Thondup, Lobsang Samden and Thubten Jigme Norbu, the last of whom remained an influential advocate of the Tibetan cause in the US- have played a role. The Dalai Lama's wider family, it should be noted, have also been prominent, and as Roemer (2008) notes, have enjoyed consistent appointment to influential positions. Also significant were members of the religious and secular elite, including the young Samdhong Rinpoche. These individuals were central not only to the resurrection of Tibetan political establishments in exile, but also in re-establishment of the monasteries and creation of numerous civil society organisations. As Butler (2007:87) reports, for instance, 'the women who made up the first Central Executive of the Tibetan Women's Association were clearly not representative of the overall refugee population in terms of their family background and social status' –among their number were four members of the Dalai Lama's family, and at least a further two women from aristocratic backgrounds.

Indeed, notes Goldstein (2004:viii), the literature on modern Tibet has, in this way, 'been monopolized by the voices of monks, lamas, and aristocrats, *i.e.*, people who dominated the traditional semifeudal society and generally opposed modernization and change. They present the conflict in stark black-and white images – *i.e.* good Tibetans against malevolent Chinese communists – and have come to represent the face of Tibetan nationalism in Western literature'. The account offered here is not false, but the exclusory potential of such elite hegemony over signification shouldn't be ignored. While rejecting portrayals of the exile community as elite (cf. Parenti 2007), I query the elitist roots and effects of the nationalist ideal (at least in exile), and consider how a tightly regulated masternarrative of loss ensures preservation of the social order. Simultaneously, we should not overstate the fixity and homogeneity of the social order or carrier group here: some elites have been instrumental in realising socio-political change in exile, and acute differences certainly variegate the carrier group. Still, historically, regional and sectarian dissensus often reflected peripheral elite concerns for maintaining power *vis-à-vis* the Lhasa and *Gelugpa*-centric orientation of the exile administration more than wider social inequalities. In exile today dissensus is similarly, with some exceptions, inhibited. Although the cultural elite, especially those working to promote *Rangzen* and democratisation, *appear* to challenge the religious-political hegemony their aspirations arguably only differ in terms of their militancy. While some touch on issues like gender inequality in their work, for example, few tackle such issues robustly –and may even join in marginalising counter-narratives deemed 'damaging'.

REVISING IDENTITY: NATION AND NATIONAL SUBJECTIVITY IN EXILE

The spiral of signification encompasses not only the creation of the event and the 'distribution of its ideal and material consequences' (Alexander 2012), but also the production of a new identity through which loss may be experienced. For Alexander, by reconstellating history *via* historical trauma (as a new account of meaning), identities are socially and cognitively repatterned. In the Tibetan case, the nation, national subjectivity, and agency are – through the symbolic extension and internalisation of retroactively imposed narratives of imagined unity – *produced in* exile as concrete inter-subjective effects of the trauma process. While it is a project with uncertain basis, and one that risks displacement of non-nationalist histories, the

effort to signify trauma as *national* and secure the nation as the primary mode by which history is experienced, has been very successful. Such emotional identification, moreover, has enabled a cause based on the perception of common suffering and, in turn, politicisation and mobilisation of collective identity (Alexander 2012; Fassin & Rechtman 2009). Here, I discuss the rise and essential contingency of nation, and nationalist cause.

The Tibetan Nation: An Uncertain Provenance

The claim that the Tibetan nation, national subjectivity and agency are produced in exile is contentious, undermining those relying on a reified Tibetan nation and national consciousness to account for Tibetan suffering, subjectivity, and agency. For Norbu (2008), the Tibetan trauma and cause is ineludibly national, and the 'common dream' of restoring the (fully independent)[204] nation unites all (in Tibet or exile, past, or present) in what he sees as unremitting processes of oppositional nationalist consciousness and resistance. He writes:

> In this year's historic uprising, scores, even hundreds, of national flags were defiantly flown throughout Tibet to visually amplify, as it were, the clarion call of the protestors for independence. There can be no doubt that the people of Tibet are calling for rangzen. In a real sense even their other demand for the Dalai Lama's return is a declaration of independence since he is, above all else, the enduring symbol of a free Tibetan nation.

While not all share Norbu's belief in *rangzen*, the 'loss of nation' is vital to the masternarrative irrespective of whether one backs complete independence or 'meaningful autonomy'. Historically, however, the provenance of national unity for a populace governed by local socio-economic, religious, and political forces, was shaky. Even the nationalistic Tsundue (2004), while noting Tibetans' deep sense of mutual self, notes:

> [Before] the [Chinese] invasion, Tibet was that peaceful country where spiritual pursuits were the dominant activities in peoples' lives. They were nomads and farmers who lived far from the politics of the capital Lhasa. Occasionally, they would see a government *babu* collecting taxes. Otherwise, there was no relationship between the centre and the periphery.

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[204] This glosses a bitterly divisive contention over the *Middle Way* –or *Umaylam-* policy of the Dalai Lama (which calls for a truly autonomous Tibet *within* China), and the *Rangzen* project –which calls for complete independence.

Indeed, while the Potala Palace now forms a symbol of an identity and a land under siege – a spectre of an alternative political order – a quite different disruption emerges when considering that, for some, the building was once seen as a symbol of Central Tibetan (*U-Tsang's*) and *Gelugpa* dominance over outlying regions of Tibet, and associated by some with the profligacy of the elite. This is not to say that there were no nationalist sentiments in Tibet, or that there weren't attempts to construct them. In the early twentieth century the 13th Dalai Lama attempted political and economic reforms aimed at modernising the region. In addition to founding a standing army and implementing economic reforms, the Lama attempted to instil wider nationalist allegiances among the Tibetan public, stressing 'the duty of *all* Tibetans to think and work on behalf of the nation' (Goldstein 2007). This project, however, was not wholly indigenous. A 'united Tibet' (see: Bell 1992) was useful to others, such as the British. So write Dodin and Räther (2001:78):

> The cadre tried to encourage Tibetan national unity at different social levels. For example, it created a Tibetan football team in designated "Tibetan colours" and played international football matches […] the children were encouraged to wear Tibetan clothing and gave them photos of the Dalai Lama as prizes, rather than money. These were all deliberate actions with the stated aim of "developing the national consciousness of Tibet".

For Shakya (1999), 'the period between 1913 and 1947 was a watershed in Tibetan history: during this period there would have been real scope for Tibet to have emerged as a 'nation state', provided the ruling elite had had the foresight and willingness to adapt to the changes in the larger world. But that elite chose to remain oblivious to what was going on around them'. Still, the existence of this consciousness-raising project indicates that national feeling was not widespread. While Shakya is mostly right in his analysis, he glosses the extent of Lhasa's 'unchallenged legal authority and monopoly of force' over Tibet (McKay 2003:3),[205] and how far nation building involved an effort to extend Lhasa's influence over outlying regions. Inter-regionally some, however, had loyalties if not to the Qing Emperor, then to local dynasties, and had no interest in ceding sovereignty to Lhasa. Intra-regionally the monasteries – now a bastion of nationalist thought – were during the early twentieth century *least* interested in a national project, and fiercely resisted centralism (Goldstein 2007). Indeed, in the years prior to occupation, conservative

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[205] Indeed, in this way he also presumes the ethics of this project to start with –which would have meant subjugation of other minority identity groups and peoples on the plateau.

resistance led to the greater isolation and fragmentation of Tibet, rendering the prospect of a 'nation' awaiting a traumatic event, unlikely.

Exile and the Birth of the Nation

Despite this, the claim to Tibetan unity is accentuated by the masternarrative, which emphasises a Tibetan populace united within a classless social order and by transcending linguistic, religious, cultural and regional identity articulated through the trope of *Cholka Sum* (*lit.* 'Three Regions'). This unity – emphasised by HHDL as vital – is symbolically reaffirmed in everyday practices in exile, from teaching and learning 'pure' (*i.e.* Central) Tibetan (Lhasa) dialect of the Tibetan language, to acts like the composition of a national anthem and flag as powerful symbols of nation.[206] As implied by Sharling's (2013) article *Exile: Nursery of Nationalism,* the nation has through signification of the masternarrative of social suffering emerged as a mode of identification, experience and agency. Exiles, in this way, lay claim to a historical geographic unity that in many respects did not exist. Still, this should of course not be seen as only politically contrived, but as grounded in *real* feelings of loss. Still, recognising the emergent reality of national loss does not lessen its political contingency: *i.e.* the role of power. In producing historical trauma, representational practices enable the advent and governing of a populace *via* the interpellation of traumatised national subjectivities. McConnell (2011) – drawing on Foucault's governmentality – in this way considers how the government in exile attempts to achieve 'statehood without a state'. While focusing mainly on the institutions of the TGiE, McConnell also notes, however, that the biopolitical practices of

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[206] In exile, the flag in particular has become a symbol of resistance displayed around the community (on government buildings, car windows, and doors), on official and unofficial publications, and emblazoned on mass-produced souvenirs like tee-shirts, mugs, children's toys *etc.* (some ironically, the BBC reported in 2008, manufactured in China). For nationalists: 'The Tibetan national flag is intimately connected with the authentic history and royal lineages of Tibet, which are thousands of years old. History attests to the fact that Tibet is one of the most ancient nations of the world. Therefore, in all the three regions of Tibet, irrespective of caste and creed, this national flag inherited from our ancestors is universally accepted as a common, peerless treasure and even today still continues to be highly respected and esteemed as in the past'. While some dispute this, arguing that rather than an eternal symbol of nation the flag was only ever a regimental banner of the 13th Dalai Lama (French 2009; Goldstein 2009). While nationalists reject this 'revisionist distortion' –pointing, for instance, to the flag's presence in matchbook 'postcards of the world' and a 1934 issue of *National Geographic*, a lack of references does justify questions over how widely it was recognised by Tibetans prior to occupation. On one hand, it is possible that the flag was purposely used by the 13th to instil nationalist consciousness. On the other, nationalists may miss how its wider distribution in *National Geographic* and elsewhere may have formed part of a strategy to establish the Tibetan nation and delegitimise China globally. Either way, the idea that the flag was an accepted symbol of Tibetan nationhood seems doubtful, and serves more to naturalise a specific historical political subjectivity central to legitimising a modern political project.

the TGiE are 'matched if not superseded by the role of *cultural* politics', one structured around the claim of historical loss. So, she continues (*op cit.* 86):

> What is striking is that whilst TGiE seeks to 'know' its exile population using the techniques conventionally employed by states, its discursive construction of the population is specifically attuned to the exile situation. In light of the threatened loss of Tibetan language and identity […] this is a population perceived as having a series of interlinked and distinct purposes: as a 'resource' which needs to be preserved; as a population-in-waiting ready to return to govern a future Tibet; and as a cultural repository, preserving a unified and essentialised Tibetan national identity outside the home territory.

Fear of loss validates an archive politics that is at once reactive (in defining a population and culture that needs 'archiving') and proactive (in preserving 'authentic' Tibetan culture and a population that will some day restore the nation). In this way, notes McConnell, 'the TGiE needed to foster a very particular kind of population in exile: a cohesive, united, and homogeneous community that shares a single national identity. In so doing, the exile government has sought to subsume fractious regional and sectarian identities under a homogeneous Tibetan identity which had previously not existed beyond the Lhasa elite'. McConnell emphasises the cultural context of biopolitics, revealing the deeper forms of meaning underlying governmentality. These enable intense loyalties -as one of her interviewees notes, 'the power and authority of our government, it comes from sentiments […] patriotic and heartfelt sentiments of the people'- but it also ensures vulnerability to control - especially over the identities and movement of subjects. While rarely severe, these are still restrictive, working through bureaucratic exclusion (*e.g.* the denial of citizenship or travel documentation) or social censure to govern freedoms (*e.g.* marriage preferences or movement) and discipline subjects in the 'national' interest. This, McConnell notes, is not always effective, Tibetans rarely marry members of host societies, for instance, but censure of extra-communal relations doesn't prohibit marriage with westerners. Still, she notes, 'the continued discursive promotion of these policies remains central to TGiE's attempts to foster a homogenous Tibetan community in exile sheltered from external influences'.

McConnell's analysis could go further. While the context of national loss and cultural survival is vital, overemphasis of this neglects how, rather than an *absolute* context, this may have its own genealogy *within* a matrix of ideal and material socio-historical forces. Reconnecting culture to *power* allows sight of how

outwardly neutral processes of nation-making and cultural preservation entail social reproduction. While potentially positive, this can also generate exclusions. While this has been noted regarding the papering over of regional or linguistic differences (McConnell 2011),[207] less often considered are classed, gendered, or generational accounts of historical or present-day loss, and their intersection with the national project. While McConnell, for instance, notes the relatively liberal attitude toward Tibetans marrying westerners, she doesn't mention how this is overwhelmingly restricted to *men*. In ensuing chapters I explore more fully the links between nationalism and historic (*patrifilial*) power relations, and their relation to subjectification, alterity, and agency.

PERFORMING AND INHERITING LOSS

Following my discussions of the construction of social trauma, and how this allows for production of a political community in exile, here I move to consider the affective-discursive practices (Wetherall 2012) by which the construction, transmission and inheritance of loss are practically achieved, and as such how the masternarrative – and attending subjectivities – emerge as *psycho-physiological truth* and a mode of experience. As with *Our Land, Our People* exile poetry reveals an affective attachment that is sociologically puzzling. Tsundue's *Exile House*, for instance, relates the poet's feelings of alienation in India. But while he may have been 'born refugee' (in a *tent on the roadside/[that] smoked in the snow*) India, as his birthplace, should not be alien to him. Indeed, while his alienation might be 'real' in a political or legal sense, Tsundue has had to *learn* to experience India as foreign: alienation inculcated by his writing practices – a *practiced dispossession*. Here, I exchange views of such acts as expressing inner, traumatised identities, for a performative theory that sees identity as a *product* of embodied performances; reflecting on how subjects are affectively formed *via* an enmeshing – and indeed bodily participation (as with *Bringing Tibet Home*) – in material-discursive practices. The affective dimension is vital, and for framing the mutual constitution of emotion and discourse I draw on Wetherall's 'affective-discursive practice' –looping 'processes of developmental sedimentation, routines of emotional regulation, relational patterns and 'settling". I also focus on the unfolding of trauma in the *aesthetic* arena – including the material environment (*e.g.* museums and memorials), the arts (*e.g.* literature), and the visual (*e.g.* performance and photography). In the first

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[207] The identification of *U-Tsang* Tibetan as the 'pure', 'proper' dialect has apparently been accepted by Tibetans, and was reiterated by many young people I spoke with in exile.

section, I consider the materiality of loss in terms of the McLeod Ganj 'traumascape'. In the second and third parts I turn to the aesthetic construction of 'the victim' and of 'the enemy' respectively. In the last part I explore the various technologies through which young people are physically socialised into historical trauma.

PLATE 13: PERFORMING LOSS (1)

Young people in Dharamshala re-enact the arrest and mistreatment of a Tibetan political prisoner. Such 'passion plays', like the re-enactment of self-immolations by young people (see below), constitute a powerful form of affective-discursive practice, serving not only to more widely restate and reaffirm the nationalist master-narrative, but possibly also working at the psychological level as an important technology of self.

PLATE 14: PERFORMING LOSS (2)

The bloodied shirt of a former Tibetan political prisoner on display at the Tibet Museum in exile. The affective impact of this object – located next to a display case of various restraint and torture instruments – profoundly reinforce the materiality of loss.

PLATE 15: PERFORMING LOSS (3)

Children attend a candlelit vigil to commemorate the wave of self-immolations in Tibet.
The sensory confluence of candlelight, communal prayer and movement increase the
affective force of such acts of collective mourning, which in turn reinforce bonds within the
community and with the self-immolators themselves.

PLATE 16: PERFORMING LOSS (4)

Young people join in a collective prayer before a vigil to mark a wave of self-immolations in 2013.

The Traumascape: The Materiality & Visuality of Loss

The built environment is not only a canvas for expressing identities but plays a vital role in the production of subjects and subjectivities (Hirst 1993). This is especially applicable to post-conflict contexts where 'traumascapes' (Tumarkin 2005) shaped by conflict continue to retell historic loss, reaffirming a collective identity and cause. As I found during a visit to Sarajevo in 2004,[208] they form attempts to make narrative *material*; to interweave blood and concrete in a way that binds history and memory to space. The environment forms a daily theatre for a traumatic past and present, but one that does not just *reflect* history but makes it, *creating* traumatised subjects. With refugees, however, things are more complex. In contrast to other sites of conflict, in exile the mutilations of political violence have to be purposely *inscribed* onto a new locale. Yet the ability of refugees to assert agency here must be treated with caution. Camps, note Peteet (2005:94), 'are products of violent discursive and spatial practices that accompany displacement and attempts at denationalisation […] symbols of colossal loss and defeat'. In this way, sites of exile could be seen to ratify the historic trauma of conflict and displacement. Early images of Dharamshala attest to the poverty endured by refugees. Today also, beyond the shop and hotel fronts of McLeod Ganj lies a poorer town –one where, one young NGO worker told me, some sleep 'ten to a room' in 'asbestos-filled' shacks. In places like Sonamling where many live in adobe shanties vulnerable to floods, such privation is more apparent, the half-submerged shells of homes left standing as monuments to those killed or dispossessed by the 2010 cloudburst. This precarity is a regular theme in Tsundue's poetry: one that follows him from his birth and infancy in a roadside tent (*Refugee*), through the dilapidated 'exile house' of his childhood that 'threatened to fall apart' (*Exile House*), to the leaky, tin-roofed abode of his later adult years (*When it Rains in Dharamshala*).

Yet camps might also 'become a potent political field in which to organize and express national identity and sentiment […] attesting to the remarkable human capacity to create new cultural and social forms of daily life in the face of monumental loss' (Peteet, 2005:94), and it would be naïve not to recognise Tibetan

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[208] In 2004 I visited a museum in Sarajevo devoted to the siege of the city during the war. On one stand was a textbook with bloodied pages. A card stated that this had been left after a shell came through a classroom wall killing all the children and their teacher. The exhibit, and others -like the 'Sarajevo Roses'- was moving, captivating for how loss is remembered and transmitted, especially to the young. I couldn't help think of this when visiting the Tibet museum in Dharamshala, with its similar images of atrocity and suffering (see below).

agency; one that extends to the representation of the sense of liminality vital for signifying national loss. Refugees were not passively housed but worked to build settlements. The claim of marginality, while not false, is also not accurate, and while some settlements are often deprived, others are affluent.[209] Moreover, while fears over rights are valid, we ought not overstate this. 'It is clear', Hess (2009:91) notes, 'that Tibetans are accorded privileges that have not been available to other groups (such as the ability to work, the grant of land leases to the settlements, and Indian funding of Tibetan education)', terms that have been further ratified by the Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy of October 2014.[210] Moreover, without trivialising hardship, we should identify its symbolic value for preserving social suffering and securing support. In this way, for some refugeeness entails a performance of marginality.[211] The imagined alienation enlivening Tsundue's poetry signal its performative role in producing and entangling the masternarrative of loss with feelings of sadness, frustration, desperation and anger such marginalisation enables.[212] While the materiality of exile may thus be seized upon in the affective-discursive construction of suffering, so too can it serve as a canvas. In McLeod Ganj the *inscription* of trauma on the environment (see Plates: 14, 17, 18, 19, 21), or its enactment *via* performances within it (*i.e.* protests, vigils), is striking (see Plates: 13, 15, 16). From domestic interiors (with manipulated photos showing families separated by conflict as reunited), to graffitied public walls and billboards, the material forms a profound visual storyworld.

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[209] Indeed, in contrast to the cramped apartments of McLeod Ganj, some new homes I visited in Bir, for instance, are relatively luxurious –funded, I was told, through remittances from rich relatives either living in China, the US, or elsewhere.

[210] As I discuss in Chapter Six, the varying material fortunes of Tibetans should be seen not only in the context of the 'universal' violence and trauma of occupation and displacement, but also as mediated by *internal* processes of historic distinction within the diaspora.

[211] With many of the cultural elite, for instance, a foreign NGO worker once commented that many (being from relatively elite backgrounds) could quite easily secure citizenship abroad (albeit at the likely cost of lowered socio-economic status), but chose not to because exile, however difficult, remained *meaningful* precisely because of its privations.

[212] A rise in the publication of, and youth engagement with, old images of Dhasa (complete with shoeless children in a more obvious 'refugee' community) on social media -while linked to concerns for the commodification of McLeod Ganj- may also in this way reflect efforts by young people to establish emotional connection to the history of displacement, as well as serving to retain the symbolic capital attached to *refugee*, more than 'diasporic', communities.

PLATE 17: THE TRAUMASCAPE (1)

A provocative mural painted on an exterior wall overlooking the valley on *Jogiwara Road* in Dharamshala. The painting is profoundly emotive, fusing religious imagery (and quotes by His Holiness the Dalai Lama) and the secular nationalist imagery of the Tibetan flag with flames (indexing the self-immolations). A variety of figures – representing the young and the old, the religious and the secular, the traditional and the modern, and Tibetans in Tibet and in exile – are set before this backdrop, presumably emphasising *national* unity in loss. A small emblem in the bottom right corner identifies the mural with the Tibetan Youth Congress.
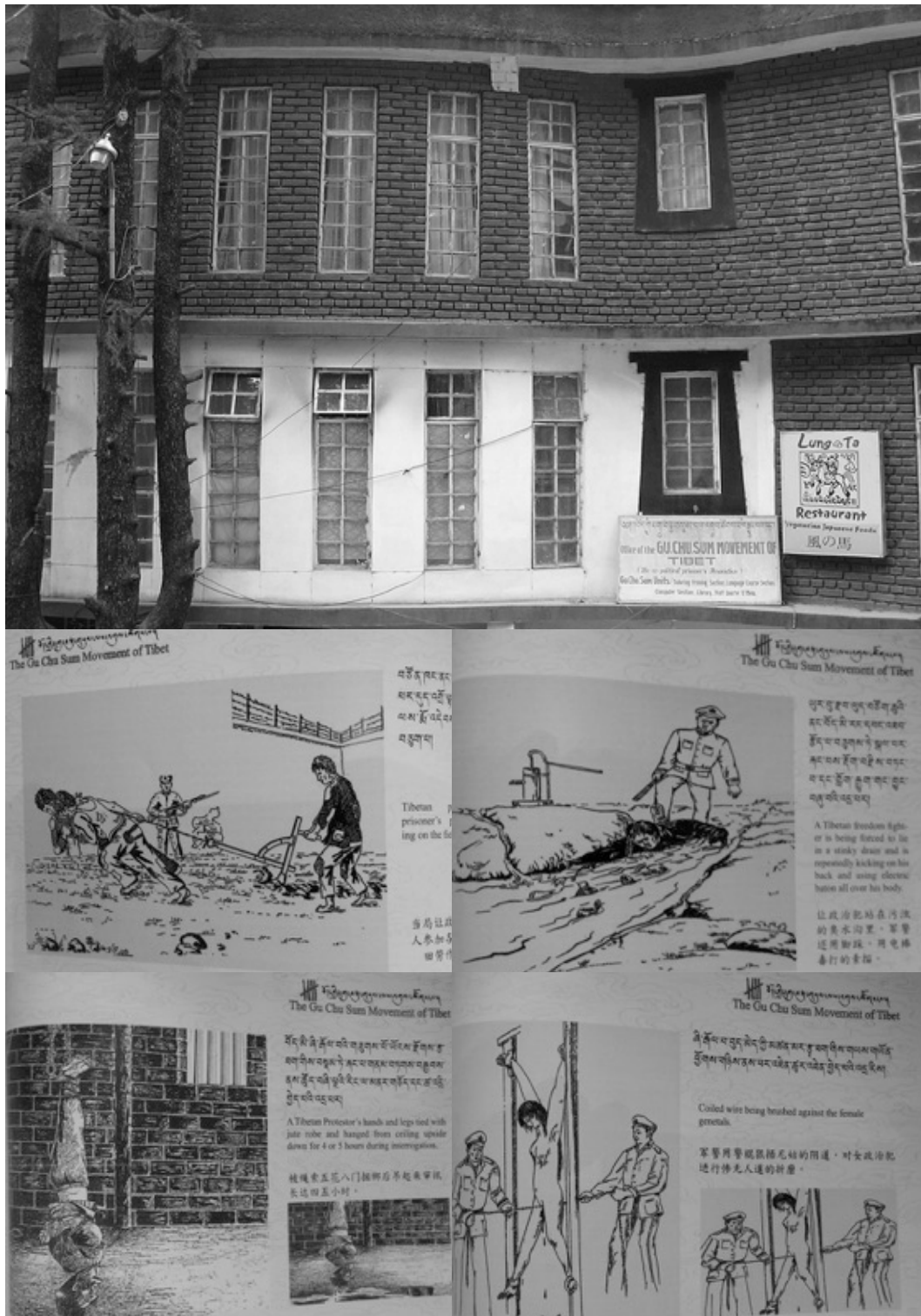
PLATE 19: THE TRAUMASCAPE (3)

Despite their plain exteriors, the foyers of Gu Chu Sum and the Refugee Reception Centre offer distressing photographic record of the forms of physical violence experienced by Tibetans held as prisoners in the PRC and during their flight across the Himalayas. The images in Gu Chu Sum are particularly noteworthy, given that they comprise *illustrations* of various tortures used by the PRC – some showing especially abhorrent kinds of gender specific torture. Photographing the exhibit – which decorates the walls of the building, is not permitted – the images here are reproduced from a Gu Chu Sum publication.

PLATE 20: THE TRAUMASCAPE (4)

Images taken of displays in the Tibet Museum in exile. The top two photographs show torture instruments allegedly used on Tibetan political prisoners by the Chinese authorities. The bottom two images show: (*on left*) display boards of press cuttings documenting the suffering of Tibetans under Chinese occupation; (*on right*), a narrativised account of Chinese aggression against Tibetans – in this case through the policy of sinicisation.
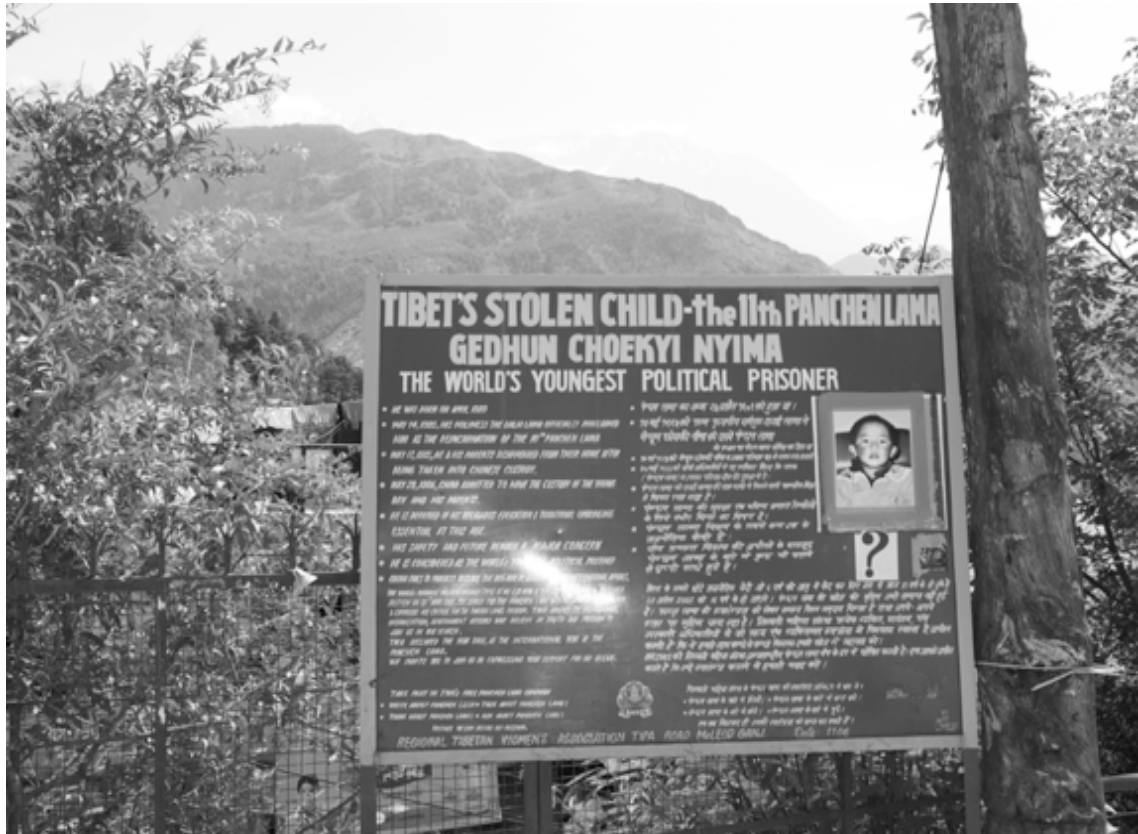
PLATE 21: THE TRAUMASCAPE (5)

A board outside the Tsuglakhang Temple informs new visitors and reminds Tibetans about the unresolved abduction of the young 11th Panchen Lama Gedhun Choekyi Nyima by China in 1995. The instrumentalisation of children within the narrative is clear, with the title *Tibet's Stolen Child*, and the subtitle reading *The World's Youngest Political Prisoner*.

PLATE 22: THE TRAUMASCAPE (6)

A display set up in the courtyard of the Tsuglakhang Temple by an Indian protestor. The simplicity and sparse decoration of the Temple not only sends a clear message about the austerity and non-materialistic values of the Dalai Lama's exilic leadership, but also provides a (politically significant) space for such protests and presentations.

PLATE 24: TRAUMASCAPE (8)

A neon-lit memorial to the self-immolators set up along the *Lingkor* that encircles the Tsuglakhang Temple. Again, the memorial is constructed to 'leave space' for the images of future self-immolators to be included.

The Tibet Museum, here, is in this way an important site for weaving together the material traces of violence in a pedagogy of the event. Museums of course play a vital role in producing collective identity, forming sites for constructing official history, and historical consciousness (Gosselin & Livingstone 2016). In exile society, apprehensions over China's muzeumisation of Tibet has, notes Harris (2012), left museums with an ambiguous reputation, but the opening of the Tibet Museum in Dharamshala may, in this way, be seen as a reaction against the depictions of the 'evil old order' and Chinese munificence propagated by the Lhasa museum. On both sides, Harris notes (*op cit.* 7), the selection and arrangement of objects, 'have been enlisted to support the narratives of opposing sides in the highly politicised debate about Tibet's past and present. […] These forms of representation [art and photographs […] are designed to shape public opinion […] and have the capacity to capture the imagination of those who encounter them. They can also be readily adapted for the purpose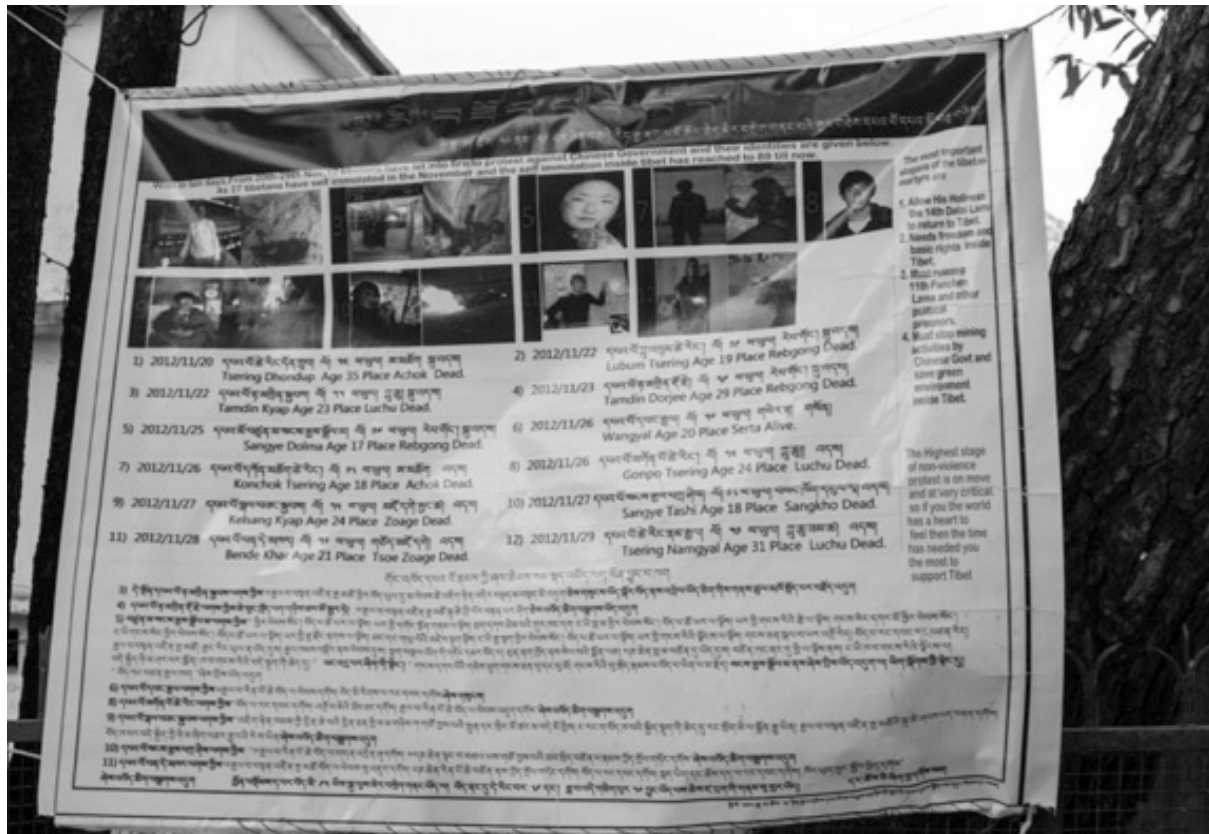s of pedagogy or its reverse: propaganda'. The role of the museum is clear –with the inclusion, exclusion, and arrangement of objects serving to reaffirm the masternarrative. As a trauma museum it is devoted to a history of national loss, with little on other aspects of Tibetan history, society, or culture. It also performs a sanctifying function. News-clippings, photographs, torture instruments, and the blood-stained clothing of political prisoners, allow the museum to serve not only as a passive reliquary of a traumatic past and 'the rightness and righteousness of a cause', but through what Alexander (2008) terms 'iconic consciousness', to affectively suture individuals to the collective through the material.

Simultaneously, while significant, it seems that more foreigners than Tibetans actually visit the museum in exile (Harris 2012).[213] Alongside the relative absence of traumascape at other refugee settlements, we might question the primacy of the material environment as a vector for loss. Indeed, while it is possible that variance reflects a *classed* (*i.e.* elite) aversion to the voluble and sometimes irreverant[214] politics of

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[213] A museum steward also confirmed this. My host family, too, told me that, despite its proximity, they rarely visited the museum or took their daughters there.

[214] Concerns for a culture of irreverence in Dharamshala were revealed by a respondent –a 'youth' in his late thirties-from Sonamling, Ladakh. My respondent, who was at one time influential in the regional TYC chapter, spoke of respect for his 'classmates' such as Tenzin Tsundue, but also noted that many in peripheral settlements such as his felt that the political scene in Dharamshala, and the attitudes of some Tibetans, could at times push the boundaries of acceptable conduct. His concern, of course, implicitly referenced the *Rangzen* dispute and the perceived immorality of speaking against the Dalai Lama. Such disclosure, then, suggests that we should not see the political quiescence of

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Dharamshala, it would be unfair, as noted later, to presume that the lack of traumascape at other sites reflects a reduced sense of political commitment or traumatisation here, and indeed interviews with young people in Sonamling, often revealed strong nationalist sentiments, even among *Changpa* groups arguably less affected by occupation.[215] It is more likely, instead, that greater diffusion of refugees, scarcer resources, and tighter restrictions on rights mean that transmission of the masternarrative at these sites depends –beyond everyday practices such as the naming of businesses (*e.g. 'Snow Lion Hotel'*) and reaffirmations of solidarity and loss enacted by stringing *lungta*, scattering *mani* stones, or constructing stupas- on the media (*e.g.* television and radio), and oral narrative practices taking place in homes and schools.

Before moving on, it is worth identifying the recent and important rise of *virtual* spaces for documentation and propagation of news about the conflict and cause. As noted, the limited space of exile – and Tibetans' limited rights to it – alongside the broad dispersion of the community, means that the Internet offers a vital means both for maintaining social bonds across the diaspora, and for narrative transmission. Like physical publications, the Internet offers space for the aesthetic affective-discursive performance of loss, and for amplification of the community's voice, and has been particularly valuable for the *virtual* memorialisation of self-immolators. For Veale (2004; see also Wertheim 1999), 'while cyberspace lacks physicality', virtual memorials, here, form a 'collective mental arena' for remembrance and resisting amnesia -a 'space they might share [and grieve] with other minds', and which 'anyone can visit at any time, without imposition to others, and without interruption to themselves'. This value is increased given that the physical remains of protestors (vital for mourning) are often unavailable – being remanded by Chinese

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Tibetans in remote settlements as indicative of political disinterest. Simultaneously, some in Dhasa –including those originally from other settlements- *did* note how Tibetans at remoter settlements were more apathetic; one young man noting: '[the] *whole day they just spend by gossiping and just talking about the story and talking about the serials and TV serials, they watch movie, and they just talk about it*'. Of course, several reasons for this difference may be put forward, including the unique demands of life in rural and agricultural settlements and related socio-economic factors. It is still possible, however, that the classed distribution of refugees plays a role –with 'high politics' being a less urgent concern for the less educated, lower status Tibetans in peripheral settlements.

[215] The *Changpa* –a semi-nomadic Tibetan populace from the extraordinarily isolated *Changthang* desert of Western Tibet- have traditionally existed at the border of Tibet and the historic Kingdom of Ladakh (now in Jammu and Kashmir). Following occupation many *Changpa* restricted their movements to within their Ladakhi pastures. While the national identity of the *Changpa* varies and cannot be easily categorised as Tibetan, Ladakhi, Chinese or Indian, the CTA's Sonamling Office has informally assumed responsibility for the community. The TCVs, additionally, have established a network of schools throughout the region, offering basic primary education to the most remotely located nomadic children.

authorities. Yet while websites are crucial as sources of official comment, they are increasingly being replaced by more dynamic social media platforms, which offer swifter production, dissemination, and commentary of cause-related content to a wide audience. The affective potential of such sites given their facility for integrating numerous multisensory (*e.g.* video, text, sound) media, and for aiding rapid exchange between individuals is substantial. This enables formation of affective-discursive loops, where content enflames emotion that in turn incites users to engage in ways that reaffirm the psycho-physiological pathways that enable internalisation of the masternarrative. The intensity of loops, however, is not tied to the truth of an event, and the speed with which affect fluoresces across platforms means that an affective event may 'ensue' from an incident that never actually happened. The availability of video-editing software makes it easy to produce misleading (although politically useful), content. In one case, the *Centre for Research on Globalization* revealed a 2008 CNN report that, in reporting alleged abuse of Tibetan monks by Chinese police actually used footage of *Indian* police quelling a protest in New Delhi (Chossudovsky 2008). While this did not go entirely unnoticed, this did not stop some violently racist remarks from pro-Tibetan and pro-Chinese commentators.[216]

Imagining Victimhood: The Aesthetic Representation of Tibet & Tibetans

In ascertaining the nature of victims and enemies, the trauma claim becomes acutely politicised. With the first, the nationalist narrative sees trauma as arising from the invasion of a benign society by a foreign power. While not false, images of either a malicious China or an essentially passive Tibet reflect strategic reconstruction of the past by carrier groups and supporters in exile. Aesthetic practices work to produce *doxic* impressions of Tibetans as blameless victims of ethnocidal violence –and in so doing, prime the affective space for anger, sorrow, and fear. As noted, Tapontsang's opening to *The Voice that Remembers* illustrates the idealisation of Tibetan culture and society. Tropes of purity, innocence and harmony – sharply contrastive with those used to portray China – form powerful background representations for exiled elders who fled Tibet in the 1960s, and many young people born in exile and raised on their tales. Many in the *TOHP*, for instance, reminisce of carefree childhoods spent in the pastures. 'I did not have

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[216] See, for instance:
http://www.globalresearch.ca/western-media-fabrications-regarding-the-tibet-riots/8697 (Accessed: June 22 2016).

any work except herding the lambs', recalls 'Lhamo' (#11M). 'I spent my time playing, as there was no work. At that time my parents were there and so were my siblings. I was the youngest. I grazed the lambs while I played'. The natural world in this way features heavily, and is infused with a preternatural significance tied to Tibet's political fortune. Films,[217] photography, and poetry are reverently located within a mythicised landscape. So, writes Cherin' Norbu: *Behold thy eyes/see the colossal Himalayas/Standing before me so silently/For a moment the frozen peaks/Overwhelm me*. Images of snow-capped mountains and a simple rural populace evoke purity, seclusion and serenity: a prelapsarian paradise. So Tsoltim Shakabpa[218] laments in *My Tibet*:

> my Tibet
> sparkling in the snow
> like diamonds in the sky
> your mountain ranges endless
> your air so pure
>
> my Tibet
> monks chanting prayers
> nomads herding sheep
> all so happy
> all so fulfilled
>
> my Tibet
> the Potala
> reaching to the heavens
> the Norbulingka
> a garden of Eden
>
> […]

Of course, as I will discuss later, not everyone enjoy this Tibet, but the sentiment affects a community of feeling. The sense of nostalgia here is acute, and Shakabpa's reference to Eden simultaneously elicits love and foreboding for a paradise lost. Images of snowy mountains are literally and figuratively apt –signifying Tibet's dramatic geographical terrain, but also a remoteness and purity violated. Sonam – in a piece that signals a shift to a politically mobilising aesthetics – conveys this violation well, like Tapontsang using floral imagery to portray a (delicate, beautiful) people violently depetalled:

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[217] Including modern Tibetan films such as Pema Tseden's *The Silent Holy Stones* or *Old Dog*, with their wide-angle shots of the pastures.
[218] Youngest son of the aristocrat, historian, and government official Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa.

They were in full foliage
The dandelions of Tibet,
When the hail stormed
Maiming all that there was,
Each yellow petal estranged
From the mother bud,
Roam aimless in strange meadows
Where they rot unknown and unclaimed.

The *visual,* for its accessibility and intense ability to incite, plays a profound role in affective transmission, and several cases of exile discourse (*e.g. Journey in Exile*) in this way enliven their accounts by locating them within the mythicized Tibetan landscape. Of course, landscape may be seen as a mute facticity –alterable only by glacial natural processes or intensive reshaping. In truth, things are more complex. While seeming natural, notes Wells (2011:14), images are 'not disassociated from the socio-political […] Photography works very directly in terms of geography, autobiography and metaphor, but mapped over this are questions of theme, form, and the political that anchor image making in relation to contemporary issues, and in terms of aesthetics'. Thus, 'representational and interpretative processes are cultural in that they are anchored in aesthetic conventions. [Landscape images are] seated within and influence cultural identity, which can be defined as a complex and fluid articulation of the subjective and the collective that draws into play a range of factors such as class, gender, ethnicity, nationality, but is by no means limited to these social formations'. Context is all. While the visual is a source of pre-*linguistic* affective engagement, it is not *extra-discursive*. From early encounters, images are placed in narrative processes that are tangled with, and always work to co-cultivate, affective responses. In the Tibetan case, this has profound solidary effects, serving on one hand to engage outsiders through romantic visions of Tibet's uniqueness (and the tragedy of its loss), and on the other to remind Tibetans of the physicality of loss – and their unity in it – and beyond that (given the spiritual significance of the natural world in Tibet) its cosmogenic implications.

Coracles made of Yak hides, waiting for passengers to ferry across the Tsangpo river.

A. T. Steele, 1944

A.T. Steele, 1944

FIGURE 11: 'TRADITIONAL' LIFE

Images clipped from DIIR's *Journey in Exile* depicting 'traditional' Tibetan life and livelihoods. Such beautiful and nostalgic images are an important source of counter-memory for Tibetans, but their production, interpretation and deployment is similarly strategic and political. These images tend to romanticise traditional livelihoods and show little of the hardships of certain forms of labour in pre-occupation Tibet (e.g. various forms of domestic servitude, or the harsh realities of pastoral life).

Simultaneously, the illusory extra-discursivity of such portrayals, and the responses they arouse, can form a depoliticising nimbus, serving – through construction of a lost Eden – to remove the realities of life in such places. This is especially acute in depictions of pastoral livelihoods, which are often shown in ways consistent with the romanticising of indigenous life in post-industrial cultures. Images of 'traditional' life in *Journey in Exile* visually restate ideas of an *innocent* and *content* people found in other iterations of the narrative. The romanticisation of pastoral life, including images of wild but characterful nomad children dressed in woollen chupas and attending their livestock, is troubling given what can be an extremely challenging existence. These images, however, serve a crucial political function, visually establishing the innocence and passivity of Tibet and the Tibetan people *vis-à-vis* China. Indeed, the visual storyworld in this way plays a key role in the struggle for legitimacy, with depictions of Tibet's social history, for instance, contradicting those showing the excesses of historic Tibet made by Epstein, while those of Tibet and exile today highlight the success of the community in exile contrasted with the catastrophic effects of China's occupation of Tibet (see below). A qualitative transition in the visual narrative is, in this way, apparent, reinforcing the idea of essentially progressive and resilient Tibetans, and essentially destructive Chinese. Exile images of a Tibet now spoiled, or of frostbitten, wide-eyed children newly arrived after their harrowing flight across the Himalaya, contrast sharply with those of a once happy land, or of smiling and healthy children in exile, dressed in dazzling *chupas* or the bottle-green uniforms of the TCV – an image that reinforces the salvationary role of the exile education system (or exile more widely). Yet, as with the problem 'rich refugees' (Prost 2006), in emphasising success it is crucial not to lose the symbolic capital that comes with recognition as a deprived refugee diaspora. As such, representations capitalise on a reputation for progressive resilience: attributing success to hard work. Images, as such, depict the squalor and hardship of the early years of exile, showing underfed people in worn clothes sleeping in roadside tents. By contrast, later images show clean, well-fed, and content individuals living in modern but modest settlements. Often, images will also show western patrons visiting or inspecting Tibetan institutions (especially schools), acknowledging the vital importance of, and the continued need for, foreign assistance.

Imagining the Enemy

In determining the nature of the perpetrator and the injuries they inflict, sympathy turns to anger. As Alexander (2012) notes, the traces of construction here blur away as actors seek to represent atrocity in absolute terms: an essentially inviolable victim and essentially irredeemable perpetrator: an ontological good and evil. In the Tibetan case, China's iniquity – at least for many supporters of the cause – is fundamental to the historical narrative, with accounts of violence and loss claimed by the community often serving as an *a priori* traumatogenic context for further (*esp*. clinical) work. While the masternarrative idealises Tibet, Tibetan culture and Tibetan people (underlining, for instance, the transformation achieved in exile), representation of China is less generous, stressing *continuity* with regards to the country's illegal occupation, abuses and exploitation of a sovereign nation and people. The museum, for example, focuses on each, with exhibits showing occupation, flight into exile, and violence against Tibetans by China. With the first, while much analysis now offers nuanced analysis of the historical and legal legitimacy of Tibet's status, I am less interested in historical truth here, than by how this 'truth' emerges and is internalised. In this way, in the museum's exhibits and its publications like *Journey in Exile*, the nation is reified through the aesthetic: including through the making material of abstract things (the display of the Shimla Agreement, or reproduction and dissemination of the declaration of independence), or by exhibiting items that 'prove' national historical status – *e.g.* seals, stamps, flags, or banknotes (see Plates: 9, 10, 11, 12). In recording occupation, images of innocent Tibetans contrast with those of unsmiling Chinese soldiers marching under Mao's banners. Controversial aspects of history, like the Seventeen Point Agreement, or the Dalai Lama's early accord with Mao, are re-framed in acceptable terms. An image of the signing of the agreement in *Journey in Exile*, for instance, recreates the impression of duress (with Tibetan dignitaries shown sat beneath watchful Chinese officials), and a smiling portrait of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas with Mao explained as showing *attempts* to 'negotiate a peaceful settlement' with China. As if to avert any suggestion of Tibetan complicity, the following pages offset images of acquiescence with those of the *Chushi Gangdruk* resistance and 'National' Uprising, reaffirming Tibetans' firm rejection of China. Exception to depictions of Tibet's peacefulness is evident in Gu Chu Sum's *Living Under Extreme Fear and Repression*, which includes photos of the army, and Tibetan delegates attending international forums. Although the extent of national consciousness was, as discussed, ambiguous, such images are enmeshed in

affective-discursive loops evident in TOHP -accounts recording China's duplicity and Tibetans' universal distrust of them. [219] Representation has been keenest, however, with claims of violence. In the museum, considerable space is given to images of abuse. Sculptures showing Tibetan faces contorted with pain join the bloodstained shirt of a former political prisoner, and items of torture apparatus. A wall of news clippings chart various human rights abuses committed against Tibetans over recent decades. Graphic reports of maltreatment are also found in official reports, the testimonies of political prisoners, and NGO publications (see: *Living Under Extreme Fear and Repression*) making up an extensive trauma literature. These are joined by websites allied to the cause that, showing scenes of militarisation, surveillance, police brutality, and misery related to failed development, environmental damage, or forced sedentarisation, reinforce the PRC's villainous characterisation. These later concerns for environmental issues – and more recently of children's, women's and indigenous rights – do, however, reflect a shift in the content and choreography of visual representations of violence, one that reflects an effort to appropriate new humanitarian discourses, and to align these – alongside socio-economic, demographic and cultural changes in Tibet itself – with the historical masternarrative. In the first case, for instance, the international rise of environmental and indigeneity discourses has been met with a similar attempt by carrier groups in exile to represent the 'wrongs' of occupation in such terms. The *Tibet Human Development and Environment Report* (DIIR 1992; 2000; 2007) offers detail into China's 'futile developmentalist ideology' and its record of causing not only environmental destruction, but also of worsening social exclusion, inequality, education and healthcare in Tibet. The report, however fair its contents, may be regarded as an ultimately

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[219] Thupthen Conphel (#26), for instance, recalls the arrival of the Chinese to his rural village. '*When the Chinese first came*', he starts, '*they spoke very sweetly. They said, "we have come to help you. We have come to help bring development. We are the same. We are the same race, same colour. We are brothers. We have come to help you. After we have done that, we will go back"*'. He then continues, '*we did not trust the Chinese. They were talking in that way, but we did not trust them. We did not like them. They just spoke that way*'. Another, Thupthen (#36), similarly writes: '*I never trusted the Chinese. I was always in fear of them. I would wonder when they would start suppressing us. The elders said that the Chinese were no good.*'. While it is, of course, entirely feasible that these individuals did feel this way, it is impossible to know how far memory has been re-patterned after the fact –reflecting hindsight. Indeed, Passang Tsering (#67M) is more circumspect here, and reminds us that many of those providing testimony were just children at the time. *There were no feelings then as I was a child*, he notes. *I did not fear them nor did it ever come to my mind that they even had a country of their own. I though they'd just wandered around and came to live in our village. I was a child then and it never occurred to me that they had a country of their own and that in the future they would do this to us*. In any case, we may certainly see the *act* of remembrance –and the performance of testimony- here in performative terms -as affective-discursive practice. In this way, the reassertion of the narrative incites an emotional response that physiologically confirms its truth.

nationalist document, an effort to secure new vocabularies for articulating old historical grievance.[220] More broadly, such issues –alongside those over indigenous or women's rights- are related to a deep and troubling question over *development* itself, a discourse that goes to the heart of debates over the legitimacy of China's invasion and ongoing occupation and reform of Tibetan society and economy. In this way, representation might be seen as an effort to realign present-day forms of violence and loss (or even *improvement*) with the masternarrative of ethnocide, and to refute claims of Chinese officials that China's 'developmentalist ideology' is in any way having a positive impact on the wellbeing of individuals, historically marginalised groups, or Tibetan society and culture as a whole. Where available, images suggestive of failed development policies are used to convince audiences of the insincerity of Chinese efforts to help Tibetans. Indeed, as is clear from photographs used by the *Human Development Report* (DIIR 2000), scenes that may be used to convey positive change are described in ways that ensure negative interpretation (see above). I do not seek to arbitrate on either side here – I have already noted my alignment with a thesis of 'disempowered development' that, while identifying efforts by China to redress problems, stresses inequalities created by engrained exclusions operating in the context of neoliberal reform (Fischer, 2013) – but on how a claim *becomes* true. Fischer's work is useful here for illustrating how the complexities of violence and loss are flattened. In one *VoA* interview we see how the narrative is concurrently reproduced and affectively charged through the editors' strategic selection and emphasis (through subtitling) of 'salient' points. These extracts, however, which almost exclusively work to vilify China's efforts, simplify what is a more sophisticated position on the 'effective occupation' of Tibet by the PRC (see Chapter Three).

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[220] A similar process –albeit more cautious given its risk for undermining the nationalist case- might be seen with regard to the rise of discourses of indigeneity and the increasing emphasis on the fate of Tibet's nomadic populations. Furthermore, a growing number of senior figures –including the Dalai and Karmapa lamas- are voicing strong views on women's rights, suggesting an alternative vehicle for articulating loss.

The situation of Tibetan under suppression.

FIGURE 12: THE SITUATION OF TIBET UNDER SUPPRESSION

Image of an elderly Tibetan woman moving past a line of Chinese soldiers (possibly in the Jokhang region of Lhasa), taken from Gu Chu Sum's *Living Under Extreme Fear and Repression*. The photograph effectively captures the apparent militarisation of the Tibetan plateau and the holy area of the Jokhang in Lhasa, and emotively juxtaposes the imaginable frailty of the elderly woman with the soldiers. While her posture gives an impression that she is being paraded before the men, in reality the image more likely captures the woman mid-way through prostrations (prayers) on her way to the Temple.
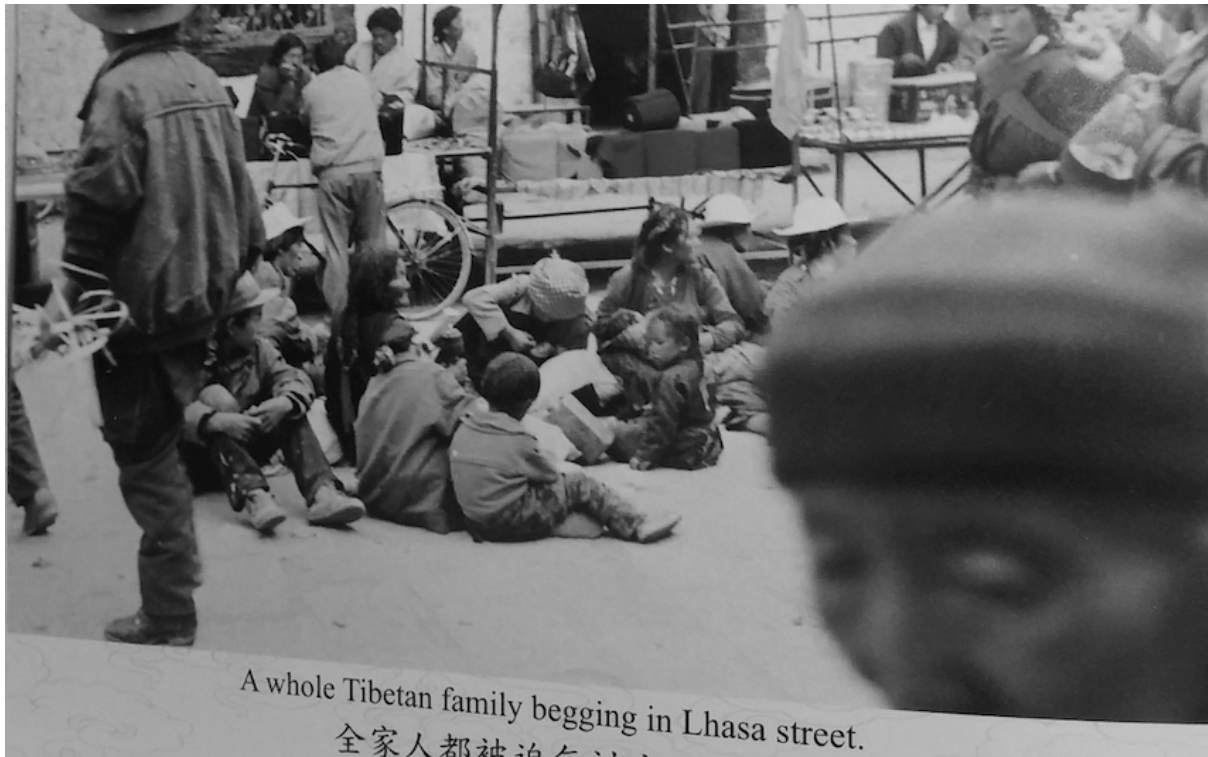
FIGURE 13: A WHOLE TIBETAN FAMILY BEGGING IN LHASA STREET

An image purportedly showing a Tibetan family begging in a Lhasa street, reproduced from Gu Chu Sum's *Living Under Extreme Fear and Repression.* This image of course forms an important counter-narrative to Chinese claims that intervention in Tibet has improved living standards in the TAR. As I will discuss later, such claims are of course misleading, and indeed the upheavals generated by the shift to economic (neo) liberalisation have led to the rise of a new Tibetan precariat class of young rural-urban migrants. Simultaneously, the nationalist account might also be considered misrepresentative and disingenuous. Tibet and many Tibetans have – largely through subsidies and massive infrastructural investment – benefited economically from Chinese intervention. Moreover, the pivot here to a discourse of socio-economic equality contrasts markedly with Bell's images of penury in pre-occupation Tibet in Chapter Five – images that are rarely reproduced in the master-narrative.

Tibetan primary school students kneel on the bare floor of a classroom

Tibetan primary school children take a break in the sunshine to warm up after a morning spent in a cold classroom.
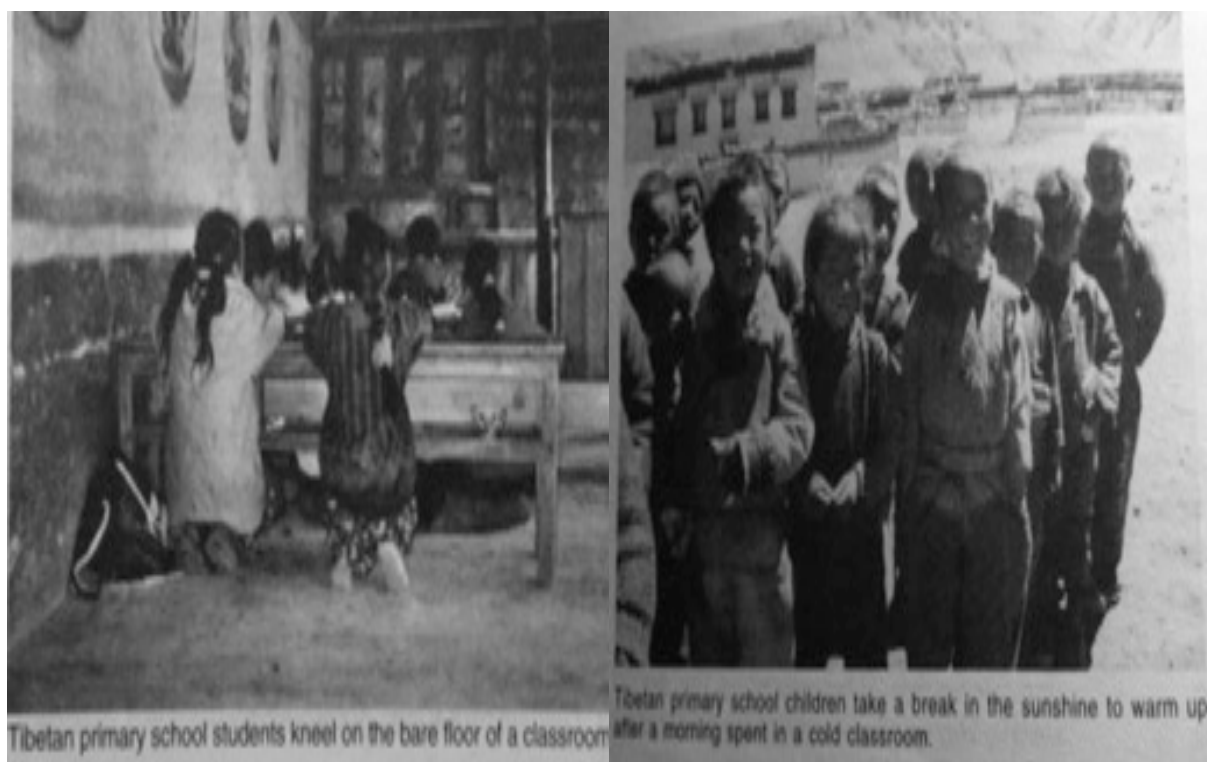
FIGURE 14: TIBET ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT REPORTS

Images of Tibetan primary school students '[kneeling] on the bare floor of a classroom' and '[taking] a break in the sunshine to warm up after a morning spent in a cold classroom' – clipped from the Tibet Environment and Development Reports (DIIR 1992; 2000; 2007). While positioning themselves as 'scientific', the reports subtly reinterpret facts and images about development in Tibet through the terms of the nationalist account. Images showing children at school here for instance – an otherwise progressive development – re-signify education in negative terms, contrasting sharply with images of exile schools.

Becoming Refugee: Inheriting Loss & Performing the Cause

The inheritance of loss and its constitutive effects on the subject, her subjectivity and her agency, however, is a *material* as much as an ideal process. Internalisation of social normativity, as post-Marxian argue, is *corporeal* as well as intellectual, and the emergence of historical trauma as a social fact – its advent, that is, as a felt reality for individuals that have not directly experienced violence – and solidary force, requires *embodied* performances of loss. Tsundue might be 'born refugee' in a legal sense, and he may be constrained by the force of the label, but his refugeeness is not a *suis generis* psychological state (Malkki 1995). The significance and psycho-physiological quality of this status is historically specific and, must be inculcated through embodied performances from an early age. However, the internalisation of loss is in this way not only a passive process but, as argued in Chapter Six, involves how individuals self-constitute themselves through various material practices. While the distinction is by no means clear and one may

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easily lead to another, for argument's sake I discern here between 'technologies of power' (discussed here in Chapter Four) and 'technologies of self' (a subject for Chapter Six): that is, between the ways young people are encouraged to participate in practices that effect identification, and their involvement in *self-directed* practices to that end (*e.g.* in art, joining political associations, or protest). Overlap between each is, of course, probable.

In considering the inheritance of loss *via* performance, we may isolate the broader intertextual context within which such performances occur. The distinction between material and discursive dissolves here as practice unfolds across a physical traumascape that is, ultimately, discursive. As noted, while transmission in locations like Sonamling relies more on storytelling in private spaces, in Dharamshala this is amplified within the traumascape. Here, performance is made meaningful by and works to make meaningful a *theatre* in which individual minds, bodies and memories are enmeshed with and produced through collective processes of representation and differing (lived, material, spiritual, actual, and imagined) histories and geographies of the town. The performance of 'Trauma Talks' (by former political prisoners), film screenings and festivals, charity concerts, traditional music and dance displays (see Plates 7, 8, 29, 31), processions, protests, hunger strikes, and vigils, occur in or move around a site of overlapping historical and spiritual valences, in ways that are meaningful *and* reaffirming of the prevailing national trauma. The tangling of the material with bodies, minds and agencies in the context of historical trauma is shown by the *Bringing Tibet Home* installation, by which the soil brought from Tibet is seen to hold a unifying, legitimating power. As the young president of *Students for a Free Tibet* Lhadon Thetong said: 'I think for all of us, especially some of us who've been raised far away, even from Dharamshala […]. We were born in exile. We were raised in foreign lands. To touch the soil from Tibet is a very moving experience. To me it's a reminder that this land is there. It's tangible. It exists. We have to fight for it. We can never forget it'.

That *Bringing Tibet Home* was staged at the TCV and involved participation of young children is, of course, notable, not least for its role in signifying intergenerational consistency of the cause. While other public spaces (and especially the Tsuglakhang where children are taken by parents or caregivers for worship or to participate in vigils and protests) are vital sites for socialisation into loss, for the very young schools and

families are perhaps most significant in this regard. Given the number of young unaccompanied minors in exile dependent on them for care and education, and given their theorised role in shaping political subjectivity, schools perhaps play the *most* vital part here. As discussed in Chapter Three, while undoubtedly beneficial for young new arrivals, therapeutic interventions – like 'art-therapy' – run at reception centres, might also play a *political* role in reconstituting young peoples' experiences to align with the masternarrative. While we should not doubt hardships endured by many young Tibetans, and while many do document real abuse, we should be cautious when viewing 'trauma paintings' produced by young new arrivals –and reproduced in books or cause-related material (*e.g.* Yasouman & Taylor 2012; Harris, Lukas & Leaken 1998)- as part of art therapy workshops. It is unclear with some of these images, however, whether a child *personally* experienced the event shown or has instead replicated accounts retold by adult staff.

We ran away across the snow-covered Himalayas and escaped from Tibet into India. The Himalayan Mountains are so tall they reach above the clouds. It was hard to breathe sometimes, and we were surrounded by endless snow.

Chinese police often come into our homes and destroy our stuff. They say they need to check through our things.

Many Buddhist monks, our local religious leaders, have been arrested and taken to prison.

We knew that if we were spotted by the Chinese Security Force, we would be shot— even us children. You may wonder why we wanted to flee from Tibet, even risking our lives. It is because, in our home country of Tibet...

FIGURE 15: TRAUMA DRAWINGS - JOURNEY TO INDIA

Children's 'trauma drawings' produced during art therapy workshops and reproduced in Yasouman and Taylor's (2012) leaflet *Journey to India*. Although harrowing, a critical reading compels us to query the basis for such images. While the top two images –and especially that depicting flight- are likely based on personal experience, it is difficult to imaging children witnessed the bottom two first-hand. The bottom right image, in particular, bears close parallel to the *Nangpa La* shooting of 2006, and possibly reflects the reimagining of this –or a similar incident- following hearing of the account in exile.

FIGURE 16: IMITATING IMMOLATION

Image from *Phayul* of children at TCV Gopalpur re-enacting self-immolation [retrieved from: http://www.phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=32969&t=3]. As I discuss later, such performances may form powerful technologies of self in the constitution of youth political subjectivity, but might also form a 'risky blueprint' for agency.

Regardless of whether drawings depict personal experience or not, the physical involvement of young people in such practices enables them to be identified and identify themselves in certain terms, *i.e.* as traumatised subjects of a specific historical experience. The *illusio* or 'practical sense' (Bourdieu 1972) of a *sovereign* and 'natural' national subjectivity among young people intensifies as they engage in more complex affective-discursive practice -especially *via* learning and other forms of activities taking place within school. *Learning*, for instance, is itself a material process, and schools, curricula, and pedagogic practices form technologies for constituting subjects and subjectivities. Indeed, by deciding curricula and defining history through textbooks, for instance, schools shape what young people know of the past, and determine the ways in which it should be interpreted. In this way China's use of textbooks to put forward and mobilise the affective potential of, its own – often idiosyncratic – version of history has been well recognised. As noted above, some (*e.g.* Woeser), claim that curricula in Chinese schools works to assimilate Tibetans through naturalising Chinese control over the region and demeaning Tibetan culture as backwards and uncivilised. Bass (2008) also offers analysis of the Tibetan primary curricula in nation building. Alongside

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textbooks which impart more general guidance on 'personal hygiene, discipline, honest and the value of science', she notes, are those 'adapted from Tibetan and Chinese society, history and folklore'. These, she argues, 'play a more specific nation-building role. The are designed to teach Tibetan children: (1) the fundamental role of the CCP (and Han Chinese) in bringing social and economic advancement to Tibet; (2) an interpretation of Tibet's Buddhist heritage as a non-religious cultural/architectural heritage that is part of a common Chinese cultural heritage; (3) a spirit of unity with other nationalities in appreciation of modern socialist Tibet and an understanding of the pre-1950 Tibetan society as an oppressive society at the stage of feudal serfdom; (5) the value of economic development'. Of particular interest is the representation of *children* in textbooks, she notes. 'Considerable space is given to Tibetan children in the old society [something, as I have already noted, is not the case with nationalist versions of history]. In almost all the stories, children are represented as being the valiant catalyst for change. Pupils are taught that life was hard for children in the old society. In a poem entitled: "No Right to Leave" children are compared with prayer flags destroyed by wind of hard work, getting up before dawn and working for the rich until late at night. The poem ends: *I planted a tree/I watered a tree/But the shade was taken/By the feudal landowners'*. China is not alone here, however, and official history in exile -drawing on Shakabpa's *Advanced Political History of Tibet* (1967; 1976)- may also be seen to reflect efforts to establish as true what is a somewhat partial history and political sensibility. Shakabpa's text, in particular, may be argued to reflect an emotive and politicised (Powers 2004), but also regionally biased, elitist, and sanitised account of Tibetan history.

Schools, however, are also sites for broader forms of preservative practice and performance in exile – including, for instance, as sites for the learning and display of 'traditional' music and dance. On public holidays thousands of people (including local Tibetans, tourists, and 'VIP' foreign donors) visit schools to watch displays of 'traditional' dance and music performed by students (see Plates 7, 8, 29, 31). While such efforts at cultural preservation may be seen as a form of resistance against perceived ethnocide, displays can be more politicised where they include, for instance, re-enactments of occupation, arrest and torture - or of self-immolation. While I discuss these is Chapter Six, the participation of children in re-enactment of self-immolations merits special mention, raising questions over the potential social-psychological effects

of such valorisation. Indeed, schools constitute vital sites for socialisation into historical trauma. While their disciplinary potential should not be neglected, it is crucial to note that involvement in various cultural practices is not usually coercive, and is regarded positively by young people who, as noted (see Chapter Six), view their role as the future guardians of Tibetan culture and tradition with pride. This translates into practices that are in part directed and in part autonomous. When working with students from one school in exile, I was for instance impressed with the poignant work of a film club made to commemorate the self-immolations. The work was striking for how it served as a way for BiE youth to make sense of and connect to the tragic events occurring on the plateau, but also for how it revealed the power of affective-discursive practice as a technology of self. In the film, '*The Burning Truth*', the faces of several young people lit by candlelight appear against a dark background. Stirring music is interrupted by the whispered voices of the children as each recited a prayer or a few words before showing an image of a self-immolator's corpse.
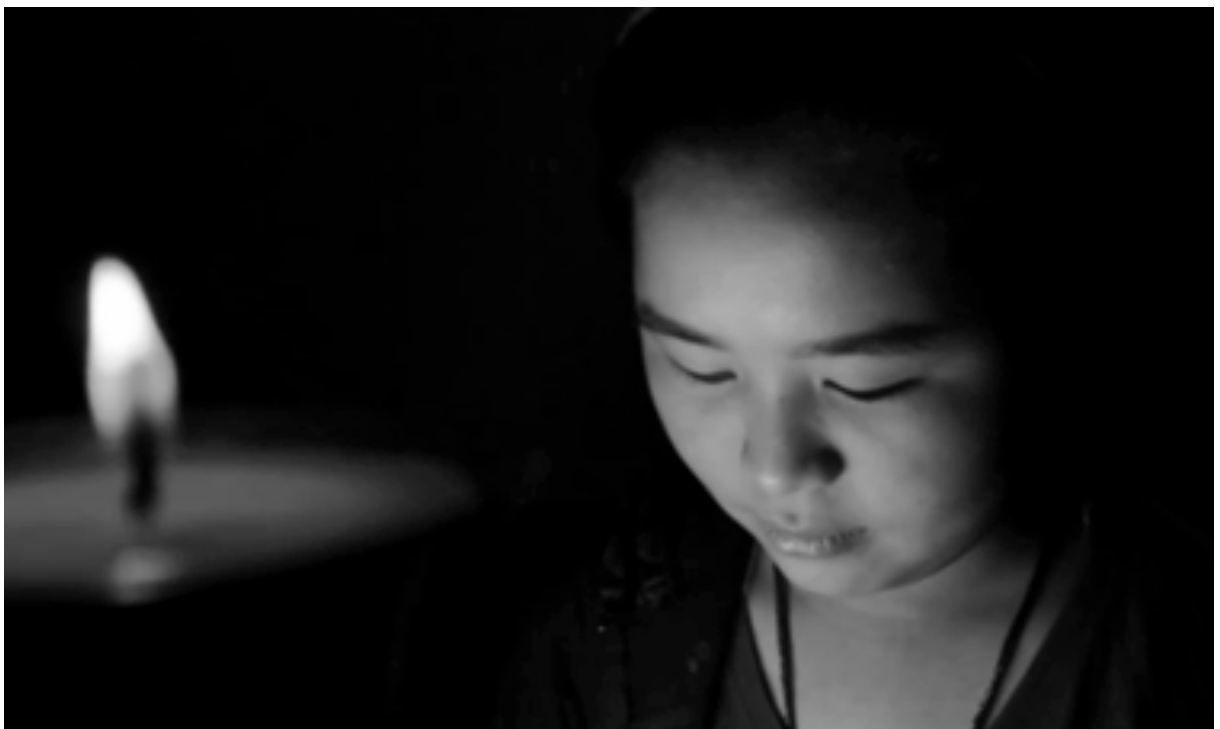
FIGURE 17: THE BURNING TRUTH

Sequence of stills taken from the student-made film *The Burning Truth* made by the ▓▓▓▓ School film club. The film poignantly juxtaposes images of children reciting a prayer before images of the charred-corpses of self-immolators in Tibet. As a form of affective-discursive practice and technology of self and others the film serves as a mechanism for transmitting and inheriting loss in two ways, enabling first affective internalisation of loss through the physical performance by the children, and second through the act of watching and re-watching.

Despite the pre-eminence of schools, *families* also play a crucial role in the socialisation of Tibetan youth – at least for those who have not been separated. The material space of the home, and the interactions that take place within families serve as a vital means by which historical trauma may be reproduced, transmitted, and internalised. In part, the home –frequently decorated with family photographs that have been manipulated to visually reunite members divided by conflict- serves as a kind of passive means of transmission. Furthermore, while some Tibetans enjoy conditions better than local Indians, for many cramped tenements with variable shared amenities over which Tibetans have few rights, also underlines a sense of privation that can be later woven into significance as ontological insecurity owing to displacement. Perhaps more potent here, however, are familial narrative practices. In an interview with one young woman – a leading TYC member – I was told of how everyday practices in families have in exile been politicised in ways that introduce young people into the cause –she recollected, for instance, how her parents fused the traditional Losar ritual of scattering rice for good fortune, with a wish for Tibet's independence. Indeed, as noted earlier, during fieldwork I beheld or heard of a number of similar practices –from accounts by young people of their grandparents' memories of Tibet, to family visits to the Tsuglakhang for prayers or participation in vigils and protest, to the mundane but still significant, practice of watching television to learn of the unspeakable stories of cruelty and self-sacrifice coming from China.

LOVE AND LOSS: FAMILIES, SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY

In previous parts of this chapter I explored the wider representational process central to the construction of a new masternarrative of social suffering, the attendant emergence of political community as an artefact of this process of signification, and the affective-discursive practices by which this narrative is internalised and by which (traumatised) national subjects and subjectivities are produced; a process I explore further in Chapter Six. In Chapter Five and Six I move to discuss the displacement of other histories and present-day histories of loss by the nationalist masternarrative of social suffering (and its role in reproducing social inequalities), and the paradox by which the young devote themselves to an ideology that is simultaneously a basis for agency and subjection. In this part, however, I extend the discussion to tentatively theorise how the affective masternarrative of loss and communal attachments internalised *via* affective-discursive practice may come to form the psycho-physiological basis for this attachment and assent to terms that

may not always be in the 'best interests' of young people. First, it is vital to recognise that power here is not seen as only coercive; we must identify in the Tibetan case that 'passionate attachments' (Butler 1997) to the nation are real, sincere, and deeply felt –as an identitarian social movement it may also be both justifiable and pragmatic. At the same time, following Foucault we may imagine how fear of losing the institutions that sustain them (institutions already threatened by occupation) offers opportunity for governance –we may imagine, that is, the affective force of loss as *governmentality*. In understanding how such fears over the loss of abstract institutions emerge – and thus render the subject vulnerable to power – we may identify how vulnerability is already assured by a subject's prior desire for recognition cultivated in concrete institutional contexts –a task I attempt here through reflection on the three loves for family, school, and community among young exiles. For Butler (1997), vulnerability here is based on preluding *concrete* attachments –in particular the constructed, but not exactly political, primary dependency (*passionate attachment*) of an infant to those on whom it depends for life (Lloyd 2008:99). The subject's 'desire for its continued subjection by power', then, 'is the result of a *prior* desire for social existence' (*op cit*. 99) – the fear of loss, is fear of losing what makes one recognisable.

Families

FIGURE 18: TIBETAN FAMILY - '*MY TENT BY THE ROADSIDE/SMOKED IN THE SNOW*'

Image of a Tibetan family after arriving in exile taken from DIIR's *Journey in Exile*. The image, showing the family – with cheerful children – at their tent home, is a touching reminder of the hardship and relative poverty experienced by the first waves of refugees, but also emphasises the continued importance of family and the care provided for children by elders. The image is reminiscent of Tsundue's poem Refugee.

In exile, families, schools and the wider community serve simultaneously as sites for transmission of the masternarrative and of care, enabling later passionate attachment to the more abstract idea of nation. The family forms the first and, except for disruptions caused by family separation in exile, perhaps the most crucial site of socialisation. The family is a vital source of attachment–enabling, *via* 'countless ordinary and continuous exchanges of daily existence [gifts, service, assistance, visits, attention, kindnesses] and the extraordinary and solemn exchanges of family occasions (often sanctioned and memorialised by photographs consecrating the integration of the assembled family),' a sense of *family feeling*: 'a cognitive principle of vision and division that is at the same time an affective principle of cohesion' (Bourdieu, 1996:22). For Bourdieu, the intense affective bonds within families – depending on 'practical and symbolic work that transforms the obligation to love into a loving disposition' – offer basis for solidarity in more intangible bodies or groups (*e.g.* clubs, social movements or nations). The family, notes Bourdieu, 'is the

product of a labour of *institutionalisation* both ritual and technical, aimed at durably instituting in each member of the instituted unit feelings that will tend to ensure the *integration* that is the condition of the existence and persistence of the unit'. This is true of Tibet, where filial terms – *e.g.* '*cho*' ('brother'), '*acha*' ('sister'), '*ama*' ('mother'), and '*pa*' ('father') – are extended to unrelated community members, and where 'family' serves as rhetorical trope for the community and cause. While many Tibetan families have of course been disrupted by conflict and displacement, and while for some raised in institutions the meaning and role of 'family' may have shifted, family remains vital, with several interviewees noting family losses as fundamental to their experience of violence. Indeed, as my discussion in Chapter Three about the emotional turmoil of the young man who missed his mother testifies, the rupturing or loss of family bonds caused by differential migration of family members in many ways forms a prevalent and tangible experience of loss for young people born in Tibet. A monk friend expressed similar sentiments; on one occasion telling me he was a 'bad monk', because while his faith demands ceding attachment, he was unable to let go of the love he felt for his family in Tibet. Of course, things aren't always straightforward. As noted in Chapter Six, while disintegration may be explained in nationalist terms, some may flee to *escape* violent family relationships. Still, observations of family life in exile highlighted the intimacy, care, and concern practiced within families, and the tangible sense of insecurity felt at this level of social life as an affect of historical trauma. In this way, real and imagined suffering of families is linked with the masternarrative of loss, allowing reciprocal reinforcement. The social offers the narrative for explaining familial loss, and in turn the family 'body' becomes symbolic of the social body: tortured monks or nuns, or the self-immolators, although biologically unrelated, are often represented as 'our brothers and sisters'.

Schools

Schools are a second site for cultivating attachment, something intensified by their role in providing care not only for unaccompanied minors from Tibet, but also for those from remoter settlements. Given that schools serve for many Tibetans as home and place of education, 'family' in this way applies not only as a metaphor of organisation, but also as a felt reality. With the former, in the TCVs especially children (often unaccompanied new arrivals) are allotted a 'family', 'house', and 'house mother' (responsible for ensuring each child receives the everyday support he or she requires). With the latter 'family' also describes a more

profound effect of exile schooling on subjectivity. In one interview, for instance, I was moved by the sororal intimacy shown by two (unrelated) young women about to complete studies at TCV, something that emphasised the profound affective bonds cultivated by the institution.[221] While intra-generational tensions remain – especially between BiE and BiT youth[222] – this bond (sororal and fraternal) recurred often in my discussions with young people raised and educated at the schools (see Plates 27, 28). Indeed, in conversations with young Tibetans, discussions of the TCV commonly elicited a powerful emotional response. One friend, a young writer, struggled to articulate the depth of significance TCV had had on his life, and the lives of all young Tibetans. *It has given me… us, everything*, he said.[223] Of course, as with families, problems remain. As I discuss in Chapter Six, the successes of the TCVs, and the need for the institution to maintain its image to ensure its foreign funds, has arguably led to a obfuscation of problems ranging from the mild (pedagogic difficulties and varying standards), to the significant (harsh disciplinary practices and inequitable gender policies), to the pernicious (recently-discovered cases of sexual abuse of children – some only infants). With that said, the transformative reputation of the TCVs is not undeserved, and they have not only successfully cared for the immediate physical and psychological needs of young Tibetans and the community, but have also been a profound equalising force on exile society, exponentially increasing literacy and mitigating class and gender disparities. This, of course, is influenced heavily by the

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[221] N.B. As I was finalising this thesis a Tibetan Ph.D. student at Columbia University published an excellent blog-post on precisely this issue (Lokyitsang 2016). Very similar to my own concern here, Lokyitsang discusses the ways in which in the 1960s 'relatedness' between Tibetans in exile shifted from a concept of biological kinship to a 'mutality of being' (Sahlins 2011) based in common *loss*. 'From its beginnings', she notes, 'the Tibetan exile administration promoted an open policy towards kinship (family)- that relied on a shared experience of loss rather than biogenetics (blood)'. Exile *schools* were crucial to this project and, notes Lokyitsang similarly to Shakya (personal communication), encouraged –through various 'kinning practices' a sense of commonality. Yet in discussing how, for some poorer Tibetans, this concept of relatedness often 'narrows' given the exigencies of survival, Lokyitsang perhaps misses how this solidary in loss was, from the outset, illusory. Indeed, while *appearing* the same, refugee welfare is always-already differentiated and overdetermined by material-discursive forces other than that of national loss. Indeed, decentering loss here also allows, as I discuss in this section, for its politicisation –and for how the desire for recognition and the affective inter-personal bonds produced through this 'mutality of feeling', also ensure the subject's vulnerability to power.

[222] In one interview a young recent arrival from Tibet told me of significant name-calling, bullying, and fighting – some quite aggressive- between BiT and BiE groups at schools. Others also confirmed the use of spiteful nicknames –especially for BiT youth. While such phenomena might be dismissed as 'normal', or even a side effect of the so-called refugee-condition, deeper issues might also be at play –as I discuss in Chapter Five. Many instances of name-calling, for instance, seem to reference class differences –referencing new arrivals rustic dress sense, dirtiness, crude manners (*sic*), ruddy-complexion, or aggression. As I discuss in Chapter Five, I was on several occasions taken back by a significant degree of hostility between the groups.

[223] Indeed, this sense of indebtedness to the TCVs recurred through several interviews. So, noted one young woman (R35) who had left Tibet for exile at 13, *my TCV family is like my real family. TCV is like a second home. A second home.*

education policies of the TGiE and Dalai Lama -who insists on the criticality of education for salvaging the nation.

The Community/The Dalai Lama

FIGURE 19: DALAI LAMA WITH REFUGEE CHILDREN

Image of His Holiness the Dalai Lama with refugee children and their schoolteacher at an early refugee school – reproduced from DIIR's Journey in Exile. Again, the image reinforces the poverty and simplicity of early refugee existences, but also strongly emphasises the paternal care of the community and others symbolised through the father figure of His Holiness. Such images may be seen as important technologies of power – interpellative devices working to reinforce passionate attachment.

Attachment to the *community* forms – for attachments to the nation – the most important, yet also least tangible, binding. In its attempts to represent itself as a traumatised nation and function as a transnational social movement, the exile community may be seen as an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983), one that, 'regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail […] is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship'. Accomplishing such 'horizontal comradeship' is a complex task, especially in historically heterogeneous groups. While linguistic, religious, and cultural affinities validate unity, it is the feeling of common *loss*, established through affective-discursive practice, that is I believe the *condition for community*: a loss that, to paraphrase Butler (2002:468), *cannot* be overcome without losing the sense of community itself. Indeed, while painful, loss as voiced by the exile community is crucial for existence. Fear

of loss in exile ironically depends on *attachment* to the imagined loss of a nation that has only ever truly existed in the minds of exiles, but that is central to political identity. Psychologically, the community offers both care and *meaning*, supplying the means to make sense of suffering through provision of identity. While I would not reduce community to any individual or institution, and some would fiercely oppose it, it may be possible to reframe passionate attachment here through the paternal figure of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. For most Tibetans,[224] the Dalai Lama here forms a transcendent point of cultural and political significance (McGranahan 2010). Held as incarnation of the Bodhisattva of Compassion Chenrezig (*hin.* Avalokitesvara), he is seen as messianic both in his role as the pre-eminent deity in Tibetan faith, and – continuing the familial trope – as father of the nation, community, and cause. Indeed, in exile and in Tibet it is, as the editor of a (admittedly pro-Middle Way) newspaper informed me, difficult to know how far even today the concept of nation is separable from the Dalai Lama. The irreverence shown to him, for instance, by Sikyong candidate Lukar Jam,[225] is exceptional. In an interview with one young TYC activist, for instance, I heard that most *rangzen* advocates, while disapproving of the Dalai Lama's Middle Way policy, do so because they feel return to anything other than a fully independent Tibet would endanger his life. Such attachment, rooted in the Dalai Lama's redemptive role, is not easily forsaken. Examples of this are plain in the profound emotional reactions of those who get the opportunity to meet – or even just to see in passing – the Dalai Lama. The first appointment for new arrivals is, in this way, a reception service with HHDL where they are blessed and told to 'study hard'. *Have you ever seen, Tibetans from Tibet having an audience with His Holiness*, one young respondent (R26) asked me. *Have you seen the look on their face? They cry! They cry!* Emphasising His Holiness' role both in providing for Tibetans and for ensuring the perpetuity of the cause, she noted earlier, with tears rolling down her face:

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[224] Of course, both historically and today there have been those that have opposed the Dalai Lama and the *Gelugpa* more generally. The present incarnation, with his global renown as a 'simple monk', is of course very much a product of his times. While some earlier incarnations –such as the reformist 13th Dalai Lama- were also respected, others were regarded as gamblers, philanderers, and despots. Contemporary representations, however, are not exclusively positive. For some of those adhering to the prohibited *shugden* sect, the Lama is charged with propagating religious intolerance and even sanctioning persecution.

[225] According to some sources Lukar Jam Atsok apparently referred to the Dalai Lama as *Lhargen* or 'Old Monk' in a broader critique of the exile political establishment. This has, however, been contested, with some arguing that this reflects a term of endearment. Please see:
http://www.jamyangnorbu.com/blog/2015/09/09/growing-support-for-lukar-jam-atsok-in-europe/(Accessed: June 22 2016).

His Holiness is not only our political leader and religious leader. He is like a father to us. I am here, wearing these clothes, I am well off, I can now go to a restaurant and afford to eat … And looking back when I was small we can't even do this. And every Tibetan living here … are living on His Holiness. You westerners come here. Why? Because of His Holiness. His Holiness is like a father providing for us.

Such attachment, my young respondent emphasised, was common among all Tibetans wherever they were born. Simultaneously, throughout fieldwork I became acutely aware of the spectral fear in the community of the Lama's future passing: a prospective loss that comprises what Alexander (2012) terms a trauma by adumbration – a trauma to come. In conversations about the Dalai Lama's death many express fear for the safety of the community, predicting India's turn against Tibetans or the sudden surge of nationalist violence in Tibet itself. Highlighting how such fear becomes entangled in an affective sense of duty to the cause, my young respondent above noted:

As he grows older, we have this feeling like 'what's going to happen' … Like … there is no stability, you know? At times you see the future with His Holiness, even if you know you can't foresee the future, you still know that he's there. It's just like family. He's a father and we are kids. We see the father family provides for us, and we can always get back to him. But if the father's not there we feel often like… so… yeah. I think every Tibetan feels like that. And it is a very sensitive issue, and … but… yeah it is natural for people to get old, so we can't complain about that right? But I feel that what my mom says is that, they have to feel … gratitude, and we have to study more vigorously than … because we have to… I don't know… Like after he is not there what are we going to do? India has given so much support to Tibetans. But without His Holiness no one is going to know what happens. Now the global audience is helping us right? But after he's gone will they help us? Even a political leader like Lobsang Sangay, he is still a layperson right? I don't know … I don't trust them enough to substitute for my father, for His Holiness… there will never be a substitute for a father right? So, I feel more vulnerable each day thinking about this. But, we have to accept, we have to work more than we have ever done because … Now we have the best facility and opportunity to do whatever we can while His Holiness is still there… After His Holiness is not there then we are not sure what's going to happen. Tomorrow the westerners might not come here, let alone help us. So His Holiness is like everything to us …

While understandable, such apocalyptic eventualities are likely overstated, with a more likely prospect being the gradual diffusion of the exile community if no appropriate successor is identified, and the amplification of localised processes of resistance and reform that are now already taking place in Tibetan parts of China. While this impending loss is distressing, we must note that in Buddhist culture, attachment bears wider significance Ordinarily understood, Buddhists seek to abandon attachment as the root of temporal suffering, and as such this loss – or indeed preserving the loss of nation more generally – is a

violation of this view. This misses how it is attachments and the identities they disperse that, however painful or even exploitative, give life meaning. Given their deep constitutive effects on subjects, terms of recognition shouldn't and likely *cannot* be simply cast off. Indeed, in a positive capacity, as Fassin (2008) notes regarding psychiatric designations of the traumatised *subject*, the identification of *the traumatised nation*, while eliminative of alternative histories of loss, enables the emergence of a collective political subjectivity. It is through precisely such a mechanism that cultural trauma may, in Alexander's words, come to constitute a 'forge for agency'.

PLATE 25: PASSIONATE ATTACHMENT

A young girl listens ardently to a speech by Samdhong Rinpoche at a celebration in his honour at a school in Dharamshala. At the event children dressed in traditional dress performed dance, music and poetry before the Rinpoche and assembled guests. I theorise that the instilled desire to be *recognised* by such respected elders forms a vital psychological prerequisite for the perpetuation of the patrifilial social order.

PLATE 26: PASSIONATE ATTACHMENT

Children read poems they have written for Samdhong Rinpoche to commemorate his birthday. The image helps evidence how the concept of filial piety – and the patrifilial order – is subliminally reproduced through specifically spatialised performances of deference. Here children, seated beneath and looking up at the elevated Rinpoche, defer – and indeed watch adults defer – to the symbol of elder (traditional) authority.

PLATE 28: KINSHIP IN EXILE

Young students eat together during celebrations for Samdhong Rinpoche at a school in Dharamshala. The everyday care provided to young people by schools and families conditions the passionate attachments that form a basis for attachment to the nation (and its emotive power) later in life.

Loss, Love & Governmentality

Such attachments may still, however, be exploitative. This risk becomes more acute as we move from families, schools and groups, to the communal or national level where the most pressure is required to create order from the mosaic of social difference and sustain the hegemonic version of community. Families, for instance, form sites of social reproduction in disciplining people into accepting prevailing social-cultural norms and the power relations they sustain (Bourdieu 1996). In one sense, notes Bourdieu, by passing on the family 'name' or bequeathing wealth and forms of social and cultural capital *via* cultivating 'taste', families play a crucial in preserving the social order. Beyond class, families also work to reproduce other inequitable social-cultural norms. As noted Chapter Five, this is evident with respect to gender, with norms governing girls' place (and related rights, inequalities and even violence that they face) reproduced in the domestic sphere.[226] More widely, disciplinary practices in families may also reinforce generational inequalities and the voicelessness of young people through normalising values of filial obedience –something that, while prevalent elsewhere, is significant for its particular acuity in Asian cultural contexts. There is nothing essentially wrong with this; but naïve reverence of elders can lead to intergenerational inequalities or tensions where it naturalises political or social exclusion of the young. This is amplified when we consider that 'youth' in Tibetan culture can extend to those up to forty-years of age. Indeed, rebellion against these terms of (patri)filiality – especially against religious elders – is a common if quiet tension for *rangzen* youth, who may appeal to democratisation and nationalism as a way of mitigating the cultural violation of criticising the (elder) political elite. The disciplinary potential of an internalised sense of love, duty and fear of loss is similarly evident within schools and their interpellation of young people as 'good little students' (see Chapter Six). The 'duty' to schools – rooted in the need to repay one's parents, and (especially in the case of unaccompanied minors) the profound attachment felt to schools for their role in providing care at a time of acute vulnerability – links a duty to family with that to community and political cause. Returning to Rigdol's installation discussed at the start of this chapter, a

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[226] I am keen to emphasise here that this was *not* my experience of domestic life in exile. In my limited experiences of living with Tibetan families I generally observed a great care and respect for daughters. Of course, selection bias obviously plays a huge role here, with my host families pre-selected by an organization keen to ensure an enjoyable stay and good impression.

later musical performance by children reveal how the eventual recovery of the homeland is joined with

normative expectations of children's obedience. In the piece, the children sing:

I, a little student; study hard I must.
I, a humble student; study hard I must.
Study hard I must
[They gesture towards the soil]
And return to Tibet.

FIGURE 20: I A LITTLE STUDENT

Screenshot from *Bringing Tibet Home.* N.B. the enfolding of hands over the heart and its symbolisation of internality, duty and personal responsibility.

FIGURE 21: STUDY HARD I MUST

In this frame, children sing 'study hard I must' [outside of shot children mimic holding a pencil to a book], reinforcing – through physical movement and the lyrics of the song – the disciplinary imperative.

FIGURE 22: AND RETURN TO TIBET

In the final shot the children gesture to the imported soil and repeat the words 'and return to Tibet', thus completing the narrative that if students obey and work hard they can regain their homeland – the desire of all Tibetans in exile.

There is of course nothing wrong about instilling such values in the young; and the TCV's *'Come to Learn, Go to Serve'* mantra is estimable. Yet who defines such values? *Obedience*, while not innately exploitative, can allow symbolic violence where 'humility', 'diligence' or 'proper' service are defined in ways that aid hegemonic interests over those of individuals or subaltern groups. In interviews a deep sense of reverence among Tibetan youth for schools reflects the role of these institutions for their wellbeing. But such reverence can also deter criticism of these institutions and the possibly exploitative, even abusive, norms they reproduce. While my experiences of these institutions has, like with family, been positive, the role of schools in symbolic reproduction of social-cultural norms may also be complemented by their role as sites for their material reproduction. As discussed in Chapter Five, evidence for abuse in educational institutions, and the *neglect* of such issues, signals wider concern for how patrifilial hegemony and narrow focus for the nationalist project generate zones of invisibility. The same is true also of the *community* more widely, where perceptions of loss and its affective grounding in passionate attachments, although crucial for ensuring loyalty to the community and its redemptive project of restoring a 'sublimely blank utopia', can also perpetuate possibly chauvinistic myths of 'original unity' (LaCapra 2001:57). While youth passionate attachments enable mobilisation crucial for survival of the national cause, we must beware how these have been produced and sustained *via* relations of power, and what is displaced in the process. In this way, the suffering and agencies of young Tibetans are almost exclusively reduced to a narrative of national loss and sacrifice. Unlike similar cases of suicide among First Nation youth, for instance, there is no talk of immolation being related to individual experience of abuse or psychopathology. In this or other forms of agency, the masternarrative of national loss neglects the structuring effect of age, gender, class or other structural positions. This burden of national loss is, of course, very real, especially for exile youth today who overwhelmingly expressed pride at their inherited duty to the cause. But, as Hirsch (2012) notes in relation to the weight of postmemory, at what point does this burden of imagined past loss displace current suffering?

CONCLUSION

In Chapter Three, I offered critique of the naturalistic view of violence and historical trauma in the Sino-Tibetan conflict, raising concern for reductionist descriptions of political subjectivities and agencies. In this chapter, I turned to consider the emergent historical ontology of nationalist historical trauma in exile, drawing on Alexander's trauma process to explore the production, transmission, and internalisation of loss especially through aesthetic affective-discursive practices. Towards the end of the chapter I explored the psychological aspects of this process, considering the importance of bodily performances of loss for internalisation of loss and identification with the cause, before discussing the significance of attachment in terms of young people's affected dependency on the concrete institutional contexts of family, school, and community. Where this chapter *constructs*, the next turns to *deconstruction* of the masternarrative of loss, proposing possible alternative forms and interpretations of historic and contemporary social suffering displaced by the masternarrative, and as afterthought how far this narrative has enabled social transformation or reproduction in exile.

FIVE
DISPLACING HISTORIES

The previous chapter explored the advent of the political community and cause *via* the affective-discursive production, transmission, and internalisation of a masternarrative of national trauma. While this has been crucial for emergence of the Tibetan nationalist cause, we should remain wary of how such identitarian projects, while valorised, are not immune to exclusory tendencies[227] – a symptom of identification itself (Butler, Laclau & Zizek 2000). While cultural trauma theory is illuminating, the decoupling of meaning from power is problematic.[228] We must ask who makes and who defines cultural meaning (Keesing 1987), and what (or *who*) is excluded, and at what cost? The 'transcendental national narrative of culture and tradition', notes Inoue (2006:76), 'hides histories by articulating history (teleological history) – with a capital H'. We must consider how articulation of loss through the *nation* displaces alternative *histories* and ways of understanding the past, and imagining the collective future. For Fassin (2008:552), articulating history through trauma effaces '[both] the singularity of individual trajectories and situations and the specificity of collective processes and issues'. The claim to trauma de-politicises so that "what is lost in the testimony of the humanitarian witness – the one who was seen as *histor*', notes Fassin (552), 'is, ironically, history'. This displacing of *histories* aptly reflects concern for 'historical arrest', 'narrative dispossession' or 'narrative closure' (McGranahan, 2005; 2010), and their effects. This is relevant in the Tibet case, where a master-narrative of national trauma risks displacing other histories of social suffering. Moynihan (2012) writes:

> The strong cultural heritage of the Tibetan community – their identities, memories and narratives – have come to be informed by an increasingly strong meta-narrative focused on religiosity and suffering. This meta-narrative is built both intentionally and organically by the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGIE) and numerous organizations openly funded and supported by foreign associations and agencies. Ironically, as the target of the meta- narrative is to support Tibetans and to conserve their cultural affluence and tradition, it also restrains the independence of personal experience, generating homogenized narratives.

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[227] This was recognised by Gramsci. 'Very importantly', notes Crehan (2002:5-6), 'Gramsci always recognized that subaltern groups are not homogeneous, that they have their own hierarchies and inequalities, and that it cannot be assumed that all the members of a particular subaltern group see the world in the same way'.

[228] In his *Meanings of Social Life*, Alexander sets out his agenda for a *cultural* sociology –one that stresses the possibility of an analytical separation of culture from power.

While irreducible to sovereign intent,[229] this process *is* structured. Narrative hegemony is predetermined by a social order that is, in turn, maintained by the narrative. At heart here is anxiety for the 'ferocious recoding power of nationalism', and the seizure, reworking, or exclusion of subaltern loss in reconstituting the *nation*. So, note Hodgkin and Radstone (2005:169), 'to construct a narrative of the nation implies a large task of suppression and denial of incongruous or undesirable elements – a task Renan described as forgetting its history, placing the failings of memory at the heart of the new nation state'. Forgetting 'becomes the epitome of all common interest, the shared *communal* space that locks antagonism out of the orbit of history and makes of national history a continuum' (Gourgaris 1996:238). In the Tibetan case it is the *nation* through which history and the history of loss are, at least in exile, affectively produced. While some see this as emancipative, I am unsure. Following Edkins (2003), I query how relations of power are reproduced in producing memory, what shape power assumes, who benefits, and who doesn't. Here, I consider the displacement not only of alternative histories and contemporary accounts of loss, but also of the meanings that offer basis for alternate kinds of political organisation. Of course, we cannot, *pace* Guha (1982), speak of an autonomous subaltern sphere here: of essential 'youth', 'gender' or 'class' groups. Efforts to 'uncover' counter-memories may promote a politics of difference by enabling 'history from below' (Vosloo 2005:396), but 'the question of how people remember their own stories is intimately entwined with how they remember the national story' (Hodgkin & Radstone 2005:170), and we can't just parse subaltern from hegemonic accounts (McGranahan 2010). Nevertheless, in hypothesising a wider material-discursive field, in the first part I turn to *historic* displacements, identifying possibilities for classed, gendered and generational counter-memories of loss in Tibet. In the second I examine present-day issues experienced at intersections of class, gender and age, considering how these too may be displaced, sometimes in very damaging ways, by the national narrative. In the third, I consider the displacement of historic and contemporary forms of social suffering in terms of *meaning*, asking how far the significances attached to loss reflects politically destabilising dissonance with the national narrative. In the last part I reflect on how far the social order has been reproduced or transformed in exile, and – with regards to

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[229] Following Foucault, inequalities are not seen simplistically as a result of deliberate malign intentions here –the entire category of intention is incommensurable with the model of decentred subjectivity and agency proposed.

social reproduction – ask how constitutive relations of power might be described, tentatively connecting nationalism to patrifiliality.

<div style="text-align: center;">HISTORICAL DISPLACEMENTS</div>

While signification allows for solidary forms of political organisation, reconstructing the past also entails denial (Shakya 1996) and displacement of alternate histories of loss irreducible to – or even conflictive with – the nationalist account. In Chapter Three I noted two accounts of the Sino-Tibetan conflict, the gulf between which, notes Shakya (1996), is 'as wide as heaven and earth'. In the first, Tibet was a peaceful, politically-naïve 'land of snows', with an innocent populace devoted to Buddhism, until it was occupied by China. In the second, Tibet is represented as a violent serfdom ruled by an exploitative elite and emancipated by the PRC. While my sympathies and analysis lead me to prefer the former, and while I am in any case more interested in the uses over the truth of history, the second account may temper the ideal and idealised nationalist account, allowing restoration of the more complex social field (*incl.* material and symbolic inequalities) it displaces. While underlining forms of social being and suffering other than 'the nation' also involves a contemporary interpellative practice, highlighting elliptical subaltern accounts – from secondary analyses, primary sources, and recent autobiographies – illumines the *overdetermination* of subjectivity by *historicising* loss. Here, I consider the possible classed, gendered, and generational aspects of this context.

A '*Blessing in Disguise*' ~ The Traditional Social Order

Images of Tibet as an isolated and harmonious *Shangri-La* reflect reimagining of a region that was often embroiled in sectarian, factional, and intra-regional conflict, and that by the early twentieth century was already experiencing transformation. While inter/intra-regional disputes have been noted, however, *social* discord is harder to gauge, with many stressing the harmony of pre-occupation society. Indeed, while Tibet's traditional order should be described as an economic serfdom (Goldstein 1987), for some this was not intolerable, and many serfs, it is argued, enjoyed social mobility (Fjeld 2004; Miller 1987). The work of early visitors[230] rarely confirm claims of extreme cruelty or extensive slavery made by China's apologists,

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[230] We should, however, remember that these visitors –and their works- were not neutral –many of them intimately involved in the imperial rivalries of the early to mid twentieth century.

and even where cases of 'very mild' (Bell, 1924) slavery are noted, commentary is hardly critical. For Bell, slaves were often treated better than paid servants, and *miser* usually accepted their lot, '[appearing] to take genuine pride in the past traditions and present standing of the House' (64). The evidence for systematic, institutionalised, or socio-culturally normalised abuse, at least in the judicial sphere, does not appear to be strong, with a normative aversion to violence within Buddhism perceived as limiting castigatory practices (French 2002). Some nationalists (*e.g.* Norbu 2008) criticise (often leftist)[231] scholars of what they see as politically inspired and essentially racist[232] misuse of second-hand reports of isolated and poorly recorded historical brutalities (*e.g.* child sacrifice, execution, and slavery) to distort views of what was, in truth, a reformed society. Indeed, for such commentators, not only was Tibetan society relatively harmonious, but it was also an example of *progressive* reform. Alongside economic reform, the 13th Dalai Lama, they claim, tackled elite excess, noting alarm at their cruel profligacy.[233] His *Declaration of Independence* (1913), railed against 'coercion' of 'subject-citizens', condemned property seizures 'on the pretext of minor breaches of the law', and banned penal mutilation, taking 'unprecedented and far-reaching steps to protect the rights of the most humble Tibetan peasant and nomad against exploitation and official corruption' (Norbu 2008). Further reform included opening schools in Lhasa, electrification, and the standardisation of land-rights.

Yet it is vital to recognise that the declaration was an *aspirational* text, a *symbolic* attempt to assert Tibet's autonomy, and extend Lhasa's hegemony. Through his reign, the 13th Dalai Lama faced backlash from elites, some of whom were sympathetic to, and even assisted, the RoC.[234] The result of dissent, notes Goldstein, was a return to traditionalism by the end of the 1920s, and factional strife in the years following the Lama's death. It is thus wise not to overstate reform, or see it as revealing the *essential* magnanimity of

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[231] This, of course, is an easy target. Unfortunately efforts to tarnish the reputation of Goldstein with this brush were torpedoed in a response by the (equally sharp-witted) scholar, who asserted his *conservative* rather than leftist political persuasions.

[232] Norbu here, with little recognition of the irony, goes on to note how unfair this is given the Chinese predilection toward systematic cannibalism –for which he basis his claims on (unreliable) research by Yi Zheng. See: Norbu (2008). Available at: http://www.phayul.com/news/tools/print.aspx?id=22520&t=1 (Accessed: June 23 2016).

[233] So, he writes, 'It is evident that if you do not devote yourselves to the service of the state but consistently indulge in seeking to benefit yourselves and act with prejudice and nepotism, the long-term common objectives will not be realised, and then nothing will help and regrets will be useless'.

[234] These included a rebellion by supporters of the Panchen, and a monastic uprising against his efforts to form a modern army. Parts of eastern Tibet rejected the rule of Lhasa *and* the Qing, causing constant frontier conflicts and, after his death, a separatist struggle led by the Pangdatsangs and the Tibet Improvement Party (Goldstein 1991).

Tibetan culture.[235] Indeed, while Tibet was no feudal hell, the social order, though not necessarily abusive, could be exploitative, and pro-nationalist sentiment may in this way have encouraged a 'revisionist approach', that 'downplays the existence of massive servitude [places] the traditional system in a deceptively positive light and [trivialises] the oppressive and exploitive aspects of that system' (Goldstein 1989:56). As stated, tax obligations were onerous, and families could accumulate huge debts in meeting them, at times forcing parents to place their children in domestic servitude (as *nangtsen*).[236] While my efforts to elicit counter-memories of the traditional order in this regard were at first unsuccessful – with some participants claiming the contemporary irrelevance of class – after some time in the field a more complex picture emerged. During one conversation with a young woman I was informed that while social inequality past or present was not, she felt, extensive, it suited some in society to dismiss them. Another friend recalled his grandfather's stories of how landlords would routinely abuse their serfs. In a phrase I heard often, he stated that some saw China's arrival as a '*blessing in disguise*' – albeit one that had turned sour.

Indeed, it is wise to distrust images of the 'friendly-feudal' traditional society, and to assume that life at the bottom was – within what was an exploitative socio-economic and cultural order generative of hereditary class *and* heritable caste positions[237] – hard. Regrettably, accounts of such groups are scant (Fjeld 2002), making it difficult to establish the scale, dynamics, or lived reality of inequality. While for the most part positive about Tibet's social order, the work of early explorers, diplomats, and missionaries[238] to the region offer some insight. Kawaguchi (1900) reflects on the dynamics and scale of inequality, asking

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[235] Though we should not underrate interest in modernisation, we might also regard concern for social injustice as shrewd given the historical context. The Lama's statement of 1932 expressed fear for the 'degenerative' influence of the 'red ideology', warning that 'the low will be made high, so that everywhere serfs will steal the ancestral estates, wealth and property, and we will be forced to wander the land as the servants of our enemies' –hardly the words of a radical. We can be more wary still over the *efficacy* of reform. That the 13th considered it necessary to introduce reforms might imply that abuses were prevalent. Given the resistance he faced with other reforms, neither should we assume that elites any more willingly accepted these attempts to curb their autonomy.

[236] Epstein (1983:181) suggests that this could occur *within* the *miser* class too, with children being sent as household servants to wealthy serfs.

[237] Alongside class groups, this also included an 'untouchable' (*ragyapa*) caste of 'fishermen, butchers, executioners, corpse carriers, some painters, blacksmiths, some metalworkers, and all their offspring' (plus prostitutes, beggars, and hermaphrodites), who faced segregation, prohibition from marrying outside their caste, or joining a monastery (French 2002).

[238] *E.g.* Kawaguchi 1900; Harrer 1953; Waddell 1905; MacDonald 1932; Bell 1924, 1928, 1931; Pereira 1925; Carrusco 1972; Younghusband & Lamb 1985.

whether high levels of mass-monasticism were due less to a 'flourishing national religion' than to the severity of tax duties; 'the only means of escape' from which, he notes, 'consists in becoming a monk, and there must be in the Tibetan priesthood a large number of men who have turned priests solely with the object of avoiding the payment of taxes'. For those unable to join monasteries, for escaped serfs or for *ragyapa*, the precarity of life is indicated by reports of penury and of 'beggar' villages on city outskirts -to the extent, notes Bell (132), that many claim Lhasa to be 'tenanted by women, [239] beggars and dogs'.[240] The institutionalised inequalities of the social order also enabled direct abuses. 'As befits a country still in the feudal stage', notes Bell (1928:64): 'the nobles of Tibet exercise great power and influence. With the priests they share the higher posts in the administration; like the monasteries, they own large landed estates […]. The nobility are a class apart. There is in many respects a great gulf fixed between them and ordinary folk who bow down low before them and use a different vocabulary in addressing them'. Indeed, 'the lord of the manor', Kawaguchi notes, 'is an absolute master of his people both in regard to their rights and even their lives'. Aside from economic inequality, the elite exercised 'magisterial' powers over their tenantry, '[including] the power of putting in the stocks, of fine, flogging, and short periods of imprisonment; it may even comprise all forms of punishment short of death itself' (Bell 1928:64).[241] The

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[239] This may indicate a high female population rather than prostitution. As Waddell writes, 'women vastly outnumber the men. This preponderance is due to the enormous numbers of men who join the church as celibates, as well as to the prevalence of polyandry, which tends to drive the surplus women from their homes into the town, where the contract promiscuous marriages as both marriage and divorce are easy in Tibet'.

[240] Waddell (1905:334) notes: 'while on the sandhills outside the holy road, so that their abode would not defile the city, was a loathsome encampment of beggars and outcasts, huddled in dirty huts built of the horns of yaks and sheep and other offal, and roofed over with ragged blankets'.

[241] Indeed, despite a ban on violent punishment this likely persisted in an extrajudicial capacity (McKay 2003). Kawaguchi (1900), in this way is critical of what he sees as the pervasive violence of Tibetan society. While writing prior to the Dalai Lama's reforms, his travelogue contains concern for the prevalence of harsh punishment in Tibet: '[I] saw as many as twenty criminals undergoing punishment, some of them tied to posts, while others were left fettered at one end of the street crossings. They were all well dressed, and had their necks fixed in a frame of thick wooden boards about [1] inch thick and three feet square. […] From this frame was suspended a piece of paper informing the public of the nature of the crime committed […] sentencing him to the pillory for a certain number of days and to exile or flogging afterwards. The flogging generally ranges from three to seven hundred lashes.' Kawaguchi offers evidence for the prevalence of such practices. Amputation and blinding, he notes, are 'generally inflicted on thieves and robbers after their fifth or sixth offence. Lhasa abounds in handless beggars and beggars minus their eyeballs; and perhaps the proportion of eyeless beggars is larger than that of the handless ones'. Later visitors support this -'all over Tibet I had seen men who had been deprived of an arm or leg for theft', noted Ford (1957), and even Bell notes how, despite efforts to outlaw capital punishment, 'the punishment for deliberate murder is usually so severe that the convict can hardly survive for long' –an account supported by Goldstein, who in detailing the mutilation of a soldier accused of murdering a policeman, describes his later death, and the display of his head outside the Barkhor. See French (2002), for an excellent discussion of law and order in traditional Tibetan society.

potential for abuse was real, with reports of some landowners relying on 'force and fraud […] to terrorise the peasantry' (Forrest, 1905).[242]

FIGURE 23: BEGGARS IN RAGYAPA QUARTER OF LHASA

Image by Evan Yorke-Nepean (1936). Reproduced with Permission, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (2001.35.181.1)

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[242] A reference from a Scottish botanist George Forrest, who had been collecting specimens during the 1905 Tibetan Rebellion against Christian missionaries in the region. The full account reads: 'Here and there in the folds of the mountains the Lamas of the yellow sect have established huge gombas, or lamaseries, and, by a combination of force and fraud, have become the real masters of the country… they terrorise the poverty-stricken superstitious peasantry and pay little or no regard to the nominal sovereignty of the Celestial mandarins'.

FIGURE 24: RAGYAPA FAMILY OUTSIDE TENT SHELTER

Image by Frederick Spencer Chapman (1937). Reproduced with Permission, Pitt Rivers, University of Oxford (1998.131.234)

FIGURE 25: 'HATRED GLEAMED IN THE EYES OF THE CHILD'.

Reproduced from *Wrath of the Serfs: A Group of Life-Size Clay Sculptures.* The *Wrath of the Serfs* was a clay sculpture series commissioned by the CCP for display in at the Tibet Museum in Lhasa. The exhibit formed a key piece of propaganda for 'revealing' the horrors of traditional Tibetan society. As Makley (2007) discusses, the piece also had an interpellative role – comprising an attempt to produce new subaltern consciousness. This image –reimagining the toll of the traditional order on children- in many ways corresponds with Bass's (2008) discussion of contemporary school textbooks (see *fn.* 230).

The scarcity of subaltern testimony compels reliance on 'political pilgrims' whose purpose was to collect accounts of historic abuses by the old order for Mao's 'speaking bitterness' campaign. While we must be careful of such sources, this does not mean testimonies are wholly false (Smith 2009).[243] The grotesque clay scenes depicting abuse of the *miser* shown in *Wrath of the Serfs*, or Epstein's (1983 – see Strong 1959; Gelder & Gelder 1964) photos of amputees and other victims of traditional justice, might form exaggerations and cynical attempts to incite revolution among Tibetans, but may also be seen as rooted in real, complex socio-economic inequalities. Indeed, accounts of violence against the *miser* are not entirely absent from autobiographies,[244] oral histories, and documentary sources produced in exile. Most of these (largely from elites) do, of course, largely reaffirm the masternarrative (Shakya, 1999), and as such play down pre-occupation tensions, but some are more candid. Born to an affluent family in Kham and educated in China under the Guomindang, the autobiography of Phuntsok Wangyal (Pünwang)[245] is an example of an account by one Tibetan who, despite his vision of a unified Tibetan nation and acute hostility to China's misrule, was opposed to theocratic serfdom and devoted to socialist revolution. His autobiography is critical of what he saw as elite abuses in traditional Tibet. In one instance, Pünwang recollects:

> [One] day […] I came upon the monastery head sitting at the side of the road watching a monk whipping a young girl. When I asked him why they were beating her, he said it was because she had made beer for the monks. […When] they caught the girl selling beer, they decided to make an example of her. By the time I got there, they had ripped her dress from neck to waist and had begun to beat her. She was screaming and crying, and a crowd was forming. It made me angry because it was a perfect example of the hypocrisy and oppression the elite practiced against the ordinary people.
>
> Goldstein, Sherap & Siebenschuh (2004:52)

Similar testimony may be found in the autobiography of Tashi Tsering, a commoner who rose to prominence as a *gadrugpa* (a member of the Dalai Lama's dance-troupe) and *drombo* (child sex-partner for influential elder monks). His account offers insight into class and childhood in traditional Tibet, resisting

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[243] Indeed, even the staunchly pro-nationalist Smith (2009:154) notes, 'their accounts undoubtedly reflect some of the reality of traditional Tibet, but not the totality or even the primary characteristics of old Tibet'.
[244] E.*g.* Tapontsang 2012; Dolma & Denno 2013; Gyatso 1991; Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering 1997; Taring 1986; Goldstein, Sherap & Siebenschuh 2004; Nulo, Lhamo & Cargill 2014; Khetsun & Akester 2008; Yuthok 1990; Takhla 2001; Sakya 1990; Thurston & Thondhup 2015; Pema 1997; Norbu 1986; Tsering 2001; Pachen & Donnelley 2002; Gyatso 2010; Soepa 2008; Tsarong 2000.
[245] The founder of the Tibetan Communist Party.

either the Chinese or exilic master-narrative. While stating deep loyalty to Tibet, Tsering is critical of the inequalities of the traditional society. In one passage, he recalls:

> The revelations started when I began to read about medieval history, because as I began thinking about Europe in the Middle Ages […] I saw parallels to the old, theocratic, and essentially feudal Tibetan society of my youth. It was a shock to realise that the huge social and economic gap between the Tibetan aristocrats and the peasants, the ownership of the land by a small minority […] were by no means unique to Tibet […].

> Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering (1997:73)

Oral histories also offer insight. Several elderly (mostly elite) Tibetans interviewed for the *TOHP*, emphasise how while there *was* poverty in Tibet, it was tolerable. 'The relationship was good then', recalls Kanying Lobsang Deckyi, 'the poor people were looked after with compassion and kindness according to the Buddhist beliefs and Tibetan traditions. Similarly, those subjects who could not work and went begging would be given a lot of alms as well as the homeless provided with homes. In such cases, there was a lot of compassion'. Dakpa Samdup continues to note: '[the] Chinese say that was oppression and that poor people were being made to suffer […]. If looked at carefully, that was not the case. […] If one was capable, there were opportunities everywhere like in India now. It was similar to that'. This comparison is instructive, and in one account Namdol (#18D) describes her life as a *nangtsen*, providing a less romanticised view of the Tibetan order:

> The family [the *Mapcha Shikha*] caused misery to its subjects. […] There were over 30 servants in the estate from various [villages]. Some did the cooking but most of them were field hands. There were more than 30 servants. Except for food, there were no wages. […They] worked [us] day and night, which is why [my] body has suffered much damage. […] There were no hours as such. The work continued for 24 hours. All the servants slept for around 2-3 hours a night. One must start work half asleep before daylight; else you would be hit. There was not much time to sleep. Slaves were like that. […] One was made to sleep near the door. One used sacks as a mattress. […] If one was not up by 4 o'clock, you would get slapped on the cheek. There was a thing called *khocha* that was used. All the servants would get struck. […] We did not have any power. [We] did not have the authority to talk to them. […] The orders came from the appointed people. One could not talk [back]. It was similar to the Chinese. There were no interactions; one was not allowed to.

Gender & Tradition

Voices of women in traditional Tibet are also rare. Schaeffer (2005:83) notes, 'autobiographies of women were uncommon in Tibet […]. Out of the over 150 Tibetan autobiographies currently known only three

or four are by women'. References do exist, however. Reports by explorers (Kawaguchi 1900; Bell 1928) often emphasise women's freedom. So, Bell reports (1928:156), 'few things impress [more] than the position of Tibetan women [...]. Those who have studied domestic life in Tibet can hardly fail to agree that the position of women in Tibetan society is remarkably good'. For Kawaguchi (1900), women enjoy 'almost equal treatment with men', receiving equal reward for their labour. 'The condition of Tibetan women with regard to men', he maintains, 'especially in the provinces, may be considered as surpassing the ideal of Western women, so far as the theory of equality of rights between the sexes is concerned'. Yet careful reading reveals the more 'patriarchal' (Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering 1997) nature of the traditional order. For Makley (2007), contrary to popular belief, 'Tibetans adopted specifically tantric forms of Buddhism [that] amounted to highly masculinist [...] forms of governance'. Despite regard for the status of women, for instance, Bell (1928:162) notes in the religious sphere 'signs of [women's] inferior status'. Citing a priestly informant, he notes, 'Laymen generally are considered common and unclean (*kyu-ma tang tsok-pa*), and so are all women, even nuns. Women are lower than men. The very word "kyemen", i.e. "the lower birth", shows that we Tibetans think so'.[246] Indeed, according to one of Epstein's (1984:101) interviewees, 'women weren't considered truly human, so naturally they had no part in councils; what they said or thought didn't count. [...] In the past, even if women wanted to do something, we had no right'. Similar sentiments are evident in the reports of other 'political pilgrims' (Strong 1959; Gelder & Gelder 1964), which record the subjugation of women in the traditional order, and even document forms of socially sanctioned gender violence, such as the routinised rape of serfs by landlords (Strong 1964).[247] While the *TOHP* offers no record of this, several do hint at exclusions of women and girls (*e.g.* from religious ceremonies, schools, and from the presence of HHDL), and the unequal division of labour. So, notes Dolma Choezom (#15D), '[I] did not attend school'. [I have] never been to school. There were no schools in our region. Except for boys, it was beyond the reach of girls. Girls took care of the fields and animals and never went to school'. The effect of this was the acute exclusion of women

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[246] Indeed, the naturalisation of women's subordination in ordinary language remains prevalent today (Sharling 2014 –see below).

[247] While this seems fanciful, similar accounts do emerge in more reliable sources. As I will discuss, Kunsang Dolma confirmed for me that during her parents and grandparent's upbringing, there existed a fear among low-class families for the abduction, sexual assault and desertion of young girls by landowners.

from social-political life. So, Lhamo (#11M) records: 'Women were never selected as leaders. That will never happen. I never heard of a woman being a leader in my region. Women were considered gentle. In this country [India] women are very domineering. They speak more than the men and that is not proper. What is the use of a man then?' As I discuss later, cultural norms regulating the 'rightful' place and conduct of women are clear here. In recording the exclusion and intense social-psychological pressure[248] facing women who became pregnant outside of marriage, Tsering (Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering 1997) offers insight into the costs of transgressing these norms. Indeed, while sources in this way do offer evidence for a more progressive attitude toward women in Tibetan than elsewhere, there is reason to be cautious of overstating this.

Children, Gender & Class in Pre-Occupation Tibet

While *seen*, young people are seldom *heard* in the sources. In Tibet as in the West, this is likely due to prevalent Dionysian and Apollonian norms (Ansell 2005),[249] but also because young people are less likely to leave written testimonies. Bell (1928:198), offers one of the few accounts of children and childhood in Tibet, and is positive in his account: 'The Tibetan children are jolly little people', he asserts, 'merry and mischievous […] hardy and happy [they spend] most of the day out of doors, [and have] abundant pleasure. The spirit is in them, and so they easily evolve games'. The *TOHP* largely agrees, with interviewees recalling joyful childhoods of playing outdoors or caring for livestock. Yet again, careful reading exposes hardships facing the young. So, Bell reports (1928:197): 'the death rate among young children is heavy. Venereal disease is prevalent and is regarded but lightly. […] And the little children themselves are sometimes put to hardships, which are destructive even to those born of Tibetan parents. […] Let it not be thought that Tibetan parents are wanting in affection towards their children. They are not, but the people generally are inured to hardships, and babies are sometimes tried too high'. If this was

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[248] Indeed, he notes how suicide was a common response to such predicaments.

[249] As discussed in Chapter One, childhood experience often varies by the way 'children', and 'childhood' are locally constructed. Sasson (2012) here notes the neglect or sometimes-cruel treatment of children in Buddhist culture and scripture. In the *Vessantara Jataka*, for instance, the hero hands over his distraught charges to the violent Jūjaka for spiritual gain, and Buddha himself deserts his infant son to pursue enlightenment. But to regard Buddhism as 'anti-family' in this way, notes Sasson, is wrong. 'Children are often abandoned in Buddhist narratives', she contends: '[But] the very fact of their abandonment reveals a deeper sentiment vibrating beneath the surface. Otherwise the stories would have no impact. […] There is no question that Buddhism can be read as an anti-family religion. But it can also be read as a religious tradition that understands parental love and makes room for the care of children in a number of (often unexpected) ways'.

true for the elite, then we must surmise, especially given the harsh climatic conditions of the plateau, that things were tougher still for the children of beggars, prostitutes, outcastes, or indentured servants. We know such children existed. Bell, for instance, mentions children assisting adults with begging: 'One such party that I met […] consisted of the fiddler with two small boys and one small girl. These three danced; the man played his fiddle behind them, lifting his foot only to kick any of his small dependents who showed a slackening in effort'.[250]

FIGURE 26: BEGGAR CHILDREN DANCING WHILE MAN PLAYS 4-STRING INSTRUMENT

Image by Sir Charles Bell (1904-1922). Reproduced with Permission, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.285.648)

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[250] Bell's photography is especially valuable in this regard, offering rare glimpses of groups that, while making curious subjects for photography, were otherwise historically invisible.

FIGURE 27: COLLECTING YAK DUNG FOR FUEL

Image by Evan Yorke Nepean (1937?). Reproduced with Permission, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (2001.35.291.1).

FIGURE 28: GROUP OF CHILDREN IN PHARI WITH CHOMOLHARI

Image by Harry Staunton (1940-41). Reproduced with Permission, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1999.23.1.6.4)

FIGURE 29: TIBETAN SILVERSMITH IN LHASA

Image by Sir Charles Bell (1920-1921). Reproduced with Permission, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1998.286.297)

FIGURE 30: SEATED ARISTOCRATIC WOMEN WITH CHILDREN AT THEIR FEET

Image by Harry Staunton (1940-1941). Reproduced with Permission, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford (1999.23.2.63)

Indeed, as a source of corvée labour – and vulnerable to being placed or sold into servitude to satisfy tax obligations – children could also suffer the exploitations of the Tibetan socio-economic and cultural order:

> Very often he [a poor layman] is hardly able to drive the wolf of hunger from his door […] and gets that loan under a strange contract, that is to say, by binding himself to offer his son or daughter as a servant to the creditor when he or she attains a certain age […]. The lives of the children of poor people may therefore be considered as foreclosed by their parents. Those pitiable children grow up to be practically slaves of the Peers.
>
> <div align="right">Kawaguchi (1900)</div>

Whether sold into servitude or sent to monasteries, the young often had little say in their lives.[251] Certain oral histories – like Namdol's account above – in this way offer a less romantic image of subaltern childhoods. Tsering (1997) is also helpful, revealing the cultural sanctioned and institutionalised ill-treatment of the young – *e.g.* with the abusive forms of corporal punishment[252] practiced in schools.[253] Tsering's accounts of abuse become more acute where he details the use of young boys by elder monks as passive sex partners (*drombo*). While Tsering is keen to stress the value of this for improving one's social mobility, he criticises how the exploitative norms and inequitable power relations on which such practices are sanctioned, also enable more pernicious violences. In discussing the threat of rape made by *dobdo* monks against any child daring to attend the schools set up in Lhasa during the 1940s, Tsering reveals not only the vulnerability of the young, but also the politicisation of this vulnerability. As noted, efforts to introduce secular education in Lhasa met with stiff resistance from monasteries. The *dobdo* threat reflects

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[251] While monkhood was, for instance, supposedly freely chosen, the choice in truth lay with parents. Indeed, notes Goldstein (2010) fugitive children were forcibly returned to monasteries and disciplined.

[252] Corporal punishment, of course, has until recently been accepted worldwide. But the virulence of punishment described here is peculiarly acute, and indicates a deeper significance that continues today. Tsering offers insight to the severity of these practices: '[The] teachers' idea of providing incentives was to punish us swiftly and severely for each mistake. They constantly hit us on the faces, arms, and legs. The encouraged competition among us to spur us on. When we ran to line up at the beginning of morning, for example, the first boy in line got to punish the latecomers with a slap across the face. Each boy got to punish the one below or behind him. […] I still have some of the scars from the almost daily beatings.' This is corroborated by Bell (1928) and Kawaguchi (1900), who writes disapprovingly: ' The birch-rod is considered to be the most useful implement in teaching', he notes, '[masters] are invariably of opinion that they must make free use of the rod in order to quicken their pupils' progress'.

[253] Those that existed, of course. 'Education', notes Kawaguchi, 'is not widely diffused in Tibet. [No] provision exists for teaching children, except at monasteries, so that the boys and girls of ordinary people are generally left uneducated, especially the latter'. Of course, Kawaguchi arrived in Lhasa prior to the Dalai Lama's educational reforms. But even when a limited number of schools were opened in Tibet, these were for the sons of aristocrats, and admitted neither girls, nor commoners (Tsering 1997). Several respondents in the *TOHP* discuss schooling, but most emphasise that their parents could either not afford, or forbade, their children attending school. Women report that girls were widely excluded.

not only the historic cultural sanctioning of violence against the young, but also the instrumentalisation of their vulnerability in a wider, *and enduring*, struggle between tradition and reform. While a thing of the past, such events compel reassessment of Tibet's essential benevolence, and reveal the historical precarity of the young.

PUBLIC SECRETS: DISPLACEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY EXILE

Where the previous part considered classed, gendered, and generational kinds of social suffering displaced by the masternarrative of national loss, here I turn to how this may also extend to the appropriation, reworking, and exclusion of present-day suffering. In this way, while postmemory may make life meaningful, it also risks displacing contemporary lives (Hirsch 2012) –a process that is structured by, and works to reaffirm, the social order and its inequalities. This entails exploring tensions between marginal experience and wider processes of collective representation, and the role of these wider processes of representation and exclusion in social ordering. As before, I consider how this relates to the experiences of young people, and to varying degrees young people of different class and gender backgrounds. In exploring these matters I draw on interviews, observation, films, newspaper articles, literature, blogs and autobiography.

Young People, Violence & Exile

The suffering of young people has – through accounts of their 'refugee experience' – been hyper-visibilised and, through subsuming their loss within the nation, invisibilised. Of course, reports and images of frostbitten infants with tales of persecution and chilling nocturnal flights across the Himalayas, although not insincere, also have symbolic and instrumental value in mobilising support (political and financial) for the cause. Concerns for the welfare of young people in exile are, in this way, especially scarce. There is, of course, some justification for this, and during field-work it became clear that, despite having faced very real challenges, and despite having still to contend with the insecurities of statelessness, young exiles often enjoy better conditions than many refugee communities, and equal, if not *greater* safety,

material welfare and opportunity than even some of their Indian peers.[254] Still there are blind spots here, and it is worth noting that in all cases – even with young new arrivals, to whom access for researchers is limited – the actual voices of young people are rarely heard, forcing dependency on adult accounts of their experience. Despite the risk and reality of 'reworking', it is true that some young people from Tibet confirm much of the nationalist masternarrative in detailing their reasons for flight, including various forms of persecution, and restrictions on education and prospects, and the dangers of flight.[255] However, as I will discuss, many accounts of violence were vicarious and only understood in nationalist terms – as young people themselves aver – *after* arrival in exile. Indeed, few of my conversations with BiT youth attest to direct experiences of violence, with reasons for flight repeatedly attributed to wanting a better education.[256] This does not refute the nationalist account (and may support elements of it), but allows us to ask whether reduction of such agencies to ideal rather than material factors distorts the present-day realities of life for Tibetans.[257] With clinical work especially (which assumes *a priori* the accuracy of the narrative), disjunctures between the presumed context of conflict and displacement, and that that *actually* precipitated flight, are nettlesome. The identification of traumatised subjects elides the possibility that the 'traumas' faced by young people may not be analogous to those that they are clinically 'diagnosed' with.[258]

Indeed, the assumption of and effort to identify causes of youth suffering within the terms of the masternarrative can miss other kinds of violence and loss, including those arising *within* the 'salvationary'

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[254] Indeed, the vulnerability of India's precariat classes was made clear during my fieldwork in Ladakh, when one afternoon news came from Spituk that a nine-year-old girl -the daughter of a migrant worker from Bihar- had been killed by a pack of dogs. Her partly eaten body was discovered some time after her death, causing considerable anguish in Leh. See: http://www.reachladakh.com/archive_details.php?pID=2300 (Accessed: June 23 2016).

[255] While some young people I spoke with, as noted, surprisingly claim to have arrived by taxi, or with little trouble through official borders, most did –as Dolma's account earlier testifies- do cite extremely precarious journeys in to exile. They also reference certain inequalities pre-empting flight that align with the masternarrative, but, as I note later, these frequently seem to be *reinterpretations* of experience –many, of course, struggling to remember their early childhoods in Tibet.

[256] Indeed, this is recognised by several exilic sources (*e.g.* TDS 2009), as well as the TJC. In these cases, however, this desire for education is itself reduced to the terms of the narrative –*i.e.* as a desire for more *authentic* education. While the legacies of conflict cannot, of course, be excluded as structuring factors, it is also possible that material concerns over improved employment prospects play a role (see below).

[257] They also, it should be noted, simplify what is a more complex decision to flee. Indeed, some of my interviewees (*e.g.* R35), noted their parents resistance to the prospect of coming into India, suggesting more complex influential forces at work – perhaps peer-processes?

[258] Indeed, Fassin (2008) discusses a similar issue with regards to Palestinian refugees, whose 'traumas' are often attributed by psychiatric-health professionals to conflict-related violence but can often, in fact, derive from other, non-conflict-related, events.

community. Indeed, issues like un/ underemployment, the rising incidence of STIs (*incl.* HIV/AIDS), and domestic or gender violence, are examples of problems that, while related to national loss, cannot be reduced to it, or to its material effects.[259] With unemployment, for instance, the community's success in producing graduates has – with the scarcity of jobs available in exile institutions and restrictions on work for people of uncertain status – led to an employment crisis. While this is *related* to statelessness and vague legal status, pressures to put community or parental interests first – often meaning refusing citizenship and staying within settlements rather than seeking employment in Indian cities – compound matters. This may to some extent be class-based, especially in cases where – as with a friend who was forced to quit his job at an NGO to help his family's seasonal sweater-selling business – young people are expected to forgo personal opportunities to help their families. Other complaints – such as health concerns or rates of domestic violence (see below) – although framed as a kind of 'double suffering', may also be traced to wider present-day socio-economic and cultural processes or, as I shall discuss later, to institutional failure.

FIGURE 31: BAFFLEMENT

Student drawing reproduced from ▆▆▆ School Newsletter (2013). The image neatly illustrates a prevalent tension among young Tibetans between personal interests and the (patrifilial) duty to one's parents and elders.

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[259] That is, for instance, as 'symptoms' of a singular socio-psychological pathology (*e.g.* 'refugee-syndrome').

As the case of my friend implies, *filial* norms in Tibetan society form a unique pressure that is intensified by, and works to intensify, perceptions of siege and the duty felt to the cause. Ideals of duty and sacrifice, while accepted proudly by young people, and likely varied relative to class, gender or diaspora location,[260] may, when combined with institutionalised obedience to elders, form a governmentality that exploits the young and masks intergenerational inequality through appeals to the 'national good'. *Sacrifice* can be mild (*e.g.* serving the community rather than pursuing a life outside of it), or grave (as with the young man who contemplated, or those that have committed, self-immolation), but in either case its normalisation in national terms can disguise its value in intergenerational power struggles and the inequality of the young in exile society. At the everyday level, the institutionalised subordination of young people can lead to disregard or normalisation of practices and issues that, while are in many cases minor, can be serious. Filiality, for instance, is acute in schools, where the young are expected to respect and obey teachers, but where traditional discipline increasingly conflicts with modern child rights. As discussed later, in 2013 several cases of physical abuse against 'disrespectful' students by teachers were reported[261] – events reported to me by friends shocked not at the teacher's actions, but at the students' impudence. Of course, such values are common in other cultural contexts too, but the unique features of exile society force reflection on how the subordination of young people sustained by filial norms combine with cultural preservation to create zones of invisibility. Indeed, while *serious* abuse in schools is likely limited, they - alongside religious institutions- have in this way escaped scrutiny as sites of care for hundreds of children given their vaunted role in cultural preservation. More widely however, such norms also underpin the wider disengagement – *e.g.* with low rates of voter participation among youth – of the young in exile politics and, in everyday terms, the difficulty faced by youth in challenging elders. In one interview, two

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[260] Some, as I will discuss, have more freedom than others. During fieldwork, for instance, I was startled by the freedom enjoyed by young female friends from Bir relative to others in Dharamshala. This wasn't always the case, however, and I later learned of both considerable self-policing and private social censure curtailing such freedoms.

[261] In November, 2013, Lobsang Wangyal reports 'a tussle' ensuing between students and teachers at TCV Dharamshala, following an incident whereby a teacher allegedly 'slapped and kicked' a student that had shown 'disrespect' after he had been instructed to cover a tattoo on his arm. Students reportedly then protested demanding the dismissal of the teacher. The comments left beneath the piece, many of them from students and community members, are instructive, noting that the students had not protested, and that the article more generally is unreliable in its details. Source:

http://www.tibetsun.com/news/2013/11/20/student-teachers-tussle-disrupts-classes-at-tcv-school (Accessed June 22 2016).

SFT activists cited wider issues of tradition and modernity, and the resistance of some elders to cede space to young people. While I am reluctant to reduce such marginality, once again, to nationalist terms, for these young people at least such marginalisation is enmeshed in what is seen as the 'intergenerational' *rangzen/umaylam* conflict.

Youth & Class in Contemporary Exile

Relatively low rates of destitution in the diaspora, a scholarly turn away from 'traditional material' concerns toward more positive notions of resilience and diasporic flux, and of course an aversion to issues that might damage the cause, have resulted in disregard for socioeconomic concerns for those of violence and cultural survival. *Class*, is a thorny issue here, tied to historic excuses for occupation and broadly dismissed – by both Tibetans and researchers (cf. Yeh 2007; McGranahan 2010) – as a relevant dimension of contemporary life in a 'classless' exile polity. '*We used to have such problems* [of class prejudice] *in the early days'*, noted the director of one school, '*but not anymore'*. My queries about outcastes were also fruitless, suggesting that while subaltern histories may be omitted from accounts of Tibet's past, and while the legacies of class and caste might still be felt, they are likely not prevailing determinants in welfare today. Indeed, as I discuss, the 'traditional' order has experienced some transformation, with class and caste, though not fully dissipated, of blurred influence in determining symbolic or material inequality. With the first, while one friend noted that her parents would be reluctant for her to marry a blacksmith, she felt that for most young Tibetans there is still little recognition of class, with cultural markers (*e.g.* family names) now unfamiliar. With the latter, material indications of improved socio-economic equality in exile include: a higher rate of effective literacy;[262] education level;[263] school attendance,[264] and a good life expectancy (TDS 2009).[265] The TDS also shows division of basic amenities, noting high rates of access to tapped water, electricity, and sanitation.[266] Indicators of material affluence record that in India seventy-eight per

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[262] 82.4% *vs.* 74.5% in 1998.

[263] 38% of the literate populace have completed middle and secondary school). Although, as the authors of the TDS note, over 76% of the literate population do not have a university education.

[264] 44% of the populace are estimated to be in education.

[265] Life expectancy stands at 67.45 years. This actually reflects a fall from the TDS 1998 figure of 72.54.

[266] At 93%, 98% and 90% respectively.

cent of households own a television and telephone, fifty-three per cent a refrigerator, and nine per cent a computer.

Yet social structure, like culture, does not just evaporate when people cross borders (Donnan 1998).[267] Should we, then, accept so readily the classlessness of exile society? Certainly, such change was not immediate, and while democratisation became a vital rhetoric, early efforts to practically realise it – or the wider equalisation of exile society – faced resistance, with politics remaining classist and patrimonial (Roemer 2008; Jongh 1995). It is for this reason that we must note how, despite the representativeness of early refugee cohorts, the experience of conflict and displacement –alongside individual vulnerability- varied according to status and other factors.[268] Some, for instance, able to make use of extended social networks to smuggle assets out of Tibet, were from the start wealthier and more influential than others. Indeed, status also likely played a vital role in the creation and composition of settlements, and in determining migration between them and overseas. It is likely that this is still significant in determining present family status and opportunities. On the one hand, elites had far greater opportunity for refuge in the West, with 1,000 discretionary visas made available, for instance, for resettlement in the US. Such privilege has not been limited to these individuals, however, and large remittance flows[269] suggest that India-based relatives of such groups continue to benefit from this privilege. On the other, as noted earlier, ordinary Tibetans faced harsh conditions in grim camps, on road-gangs, or during forest clearance and settlement construction programmes during the 1960s and 1970s. Simultaneously, while it is tempting to assume a classed geography of exile here, with legacies of adversity for such groups, things are not so simple, and favourable lease terms on land offered to Tibetans by the GOI in the 1960s has meant that many Tibetans here have become affluent. Still, not all settlements are equal, and while some reveal consistency in refugee lives, the large bungalows in Bir and the adobe huts of Sonamling –alongside statistics detailing inter-settlement variance in employment, underemployment, and unemployment- show

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[267] The neglect of classed experiences of displacement is in this way common across 'refugee studies' (Boyden and de Berry, 2004; Barber, 2009).

[268] Indeed, in the Tibetan case, of course, the elite were specifically targeted during the early years of conflict.

[269] Remittances, as noted, play a significant role. During conversations with friends it became apparent that many had relatives overseas that sent money for their subsistence. While this once originated largely in the West it seems that today much comes from China itself, where Tibetan families enjoying new prosperity from the caterpillar fungus trade or from offering religious patronage, are supporting dependents in exile.

that some are better-off. [270] *Inter*-settlement inequality is verified by the TDS, which reports that while thirty per cent of Tibetans in India live 'comfortably with three or four living rooms, 58% remain in rented houses of 2 rooms or less (22% live in 1 room households), and 12% live in houses with *more than 5 rooms*'.

FIGURE 32: BIR (2013) – Image author's own

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[270] Indeed, *you should go to the south*, one young man noted to me when enquiring about settlements, *there people are very rich. You will see monks driving around in expensive cars.* The question of correlation between socioeconomic class, status, wellbeing and settlement is complex but intriguing. While it is, of course, tempting to assume that those settlements farthest from the political centre are the poorest –and home the least affluent, lowest status members of society- this is not entirely accurate (historically or today). While some (*e.g.* Grunfeld 1987) have suggested that poorer Tibetans were sent to colonise the remoter, harder settlements in Orissa, Karnataka, Ladakh and Madhya Pradesh –and while this is possibly accurate to an extent- ethnic-regional factors likely also played a role. Furthermore, some of these settlements have today become quite affluent, and while policy-makers did attest to problems with appointing talented civil servants to remoter posts, others state that resources in these areas are not a problem. Some of these settlements, furthermore –such as several in Arunachal Pradesh- are alleged to be the most affluent. Still, while the disruption caused by displacement has enabled some to become wealthy in their new home, I suspect that legacies of a classed geography of exile remain influential. It is very likely that historic designations of class and the historic wealth of families has played –and continues to play- a formative role in preserving status, determining political capital, and thus influencing inter-settlement inequality across generations. However, because resettlement was not determined *exclusively* by historic family status, and because demographic changes caused by shifting patterns of migration, educational attainment and certain external factors (such as aid or sponsorship) have impacted employment and thus the social and economic capital of families, it might be that *intra*-settlement inequality is today more of an issue. This is especially this in the quasi-formal settlements of Dharamshala and Majnu-ka-Tilla where a qualified and transient group of underemployed youth compete in capricious peri-urban or urban economies (see below).

Structural socio-economic inequality, at community and *intra*-settlement levels, is also evident, and is joined by new processes of distinction (Yeh 2007). In material terms, while the TDS shows progress in literacy, education level and school attendance, it also shows fall[271] between Middle and Senior Secondary attainment –something ascribed, especially with girls, to withdrawal for (family) employment. The survey also shows stark un/underemployment –with over fifty per cent of those of working age unemployed,[272] and over sixteen per cent[273] of those that do work depending on employment in marginal industries, *incl.* sweater-selling or seasonal service-sector work.[274] One young man implied the *structural* nature of disparity:

> [In Dharamshala] the world is competition. All the peoples are competing themselves with others, but in Sikkim all, they are not, all the fathers in the family are from the army … not educated … and the mothers and girls also are not educate… They are all the same, they are illiterate, they are illiterate, uneducated peoples … And, on the summer, when the winter came then all the girls, then all the mothers from the family used to goto the business and as er, they have, the want money to survive so they have to go to sales, to business, er, winter business in Rajasthan.

Yet while some settlement-level variation here suggests the effects of historic distinction, as has been noted, the dynamics of material inequality are only partly explained by legacies of classed processes of resettlement. Indeed, while never random, such inequality is overdetermined by several factors, including new material-discursive processes responsible for acute *intra* as much as *inter*-settlement inequalities.[275] Penury in this way is often especially noticeable among older (15-25 year-old) new arrivals (*sarjor*), whose lack of qualifications, skills (*esp.* language skills), social or economic capital, combine with new forms of discrimination (Yeh 2007 – see below) to exclude them from the labour market and society, forcing a reliance on economic assistance from the CTA or foreign sponsors. Indeed, one INGO worker explained:

> [They] basically sink to the bottom. Even though they have a TCV education they have no networks, they have no business acumen, they have no confidence, they have no

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[271] From 38% to 17%

[272] 36,755 people.

[273] 5525 individuals.

[274] The TDS also reports over five thousand non-respondents, which, while probably comprising a large number of individuals that failed to respond, could also include those involved in high-risk or criminal enterprises such as prostitution or trafficking.

[275] Of course, given the time-frame over which processes of class distinction operate we should remain open to the idea that these are not so new –with new arrivals, for instance –in contrast to earlier refugee cohorts- increasingly including lower class and status groups displaced by neoliberal reforms in China. More research here is required.

connections, they have no … and so they basically become part of the bottom strata of the day-to-day Dharamshala society.

In Dharamshala especially – as one of the largest Tibetan populations outside of Karnataka State, and home to most new arrivals – such inequality is keen, with 'poor' quarters, where people can live ten to a room, located at the town margins. One Tibetan friend complained about the privations of exile here, recalling once seeing a woman collecting water from a sewerage pipe. Indeed, my NGO interlocutor noted:

> In Dharamshala we feel like 'everybody's doing okay, hey it's a pretty cool town like'… and… there are people who don't eat, you know. And it's not just like the crazy [guy] who shouts on the street like; there are other people who don't eat. […] I think that food security is a problem; domestic violence is a big problem. For the poorest of the poor […] and I think that just depression, just being depressed.

As noted in Chapter Three, while 'depression' might be accounted for through the trope of historical trauma, or attributed to the effects of the refugee 'condition', neither explanation is wholly satisfactory. Social suffering also entails understanding in terms of parallel forms of cultural distinction. My respondent continued:

> Even the people who come from Tibet […] get disillusioned really fast. They see how often he [the Dalai Lama] is not in town. They see how the security guards treat them like shit when they try to go into the temple. It's all these subtle things. You know I don't get my purse checked, but the poor lady behind me gets her *chupa* lifted up. Right? These small things, these micro-aggressions end up making you depressed, and making you feel like every minute you know you're poor, every minute you know there's not a lot of upward mobility. And you're in India you know, there's lepers on the street […] at least you're not that. But what is the possibility in a ninety-nine per cent unorganised labour force. What is the possibility of you ever having a stable job?

Symbolic inequality in this way has not entirely dissipated in exile, and indeed, new forms have emerged. While equalising reforms – *e.g.* introduction of meritocratic recruitment in the public sector (Roemer, 2008) – has enabled greater equality, and as my one respondent noted there is a general amnesia of class among the young, this is not entirely true. As one friend from a remote settlement confided in me, despite the *theoretical* prospect of equal opportunity in securing coveted government positions, in truth nepotism remained rife – before we even begin to take account of legacies of familial privilege or disadvantage that

structurally help or hinder young people from an early age. Moreover, while prejudice may be uncommon among the young, this is less true of elder generations. Parents, as my friend earlier noted, still consider status in deciding appropriate marriages for their children. So, Deckyi (#1D) notes: [*I*] *do not think this equality stance among the classes is right. Equality in democracy and human rights is a separate issue but to claim so among the classes* […]. *In '59, as children of ngadak, we were* […] *with bad people like blacksmiths and slaughterers as by the Chinese themselves who forced* […]. *It happened to me.*[276] Traces of historic distinction remain. In assisting one young man with a social research project, I was told that we should avoid questions about livelihoods, as some people would avoid them – a problem that similarly confounds the Tibetan Demographic Surveys. Even now, while critique of the elite is common, the claim to classlessness is dented when considering the deference shown them by Tibetans (*e.g.* through the use of honorific address). As with gender, class is in this way entrenched: *Class is there, in our language*, one friend noted, *the very word 'aristocrat', in Tibetan … it means to be better, to be higher.* The same young man voiced frustration for how even while on business for the TCV monks in the Dalai Lama's office would snub him. A foreigner living in Dhasa for several years noted:

> When you look at the […] in Dharamshala who is representing the pre-1959 style elite and who has those connections, it's the people who are working for the government […] so the settlement officers, the people who work in the office, the people who work at Gangkyi. A lot of the time they are really replicating that bureaucratic situation […]. It's really whoever got to Dharamshala first laid their claim and built the future for the next generations. […] It's like, inherited privilege that shows itself in different ways […] it is leverage. […] Everybody has a hustle, and there's nothing wrong with that, but you have to look at it and see where it's coming from and how it was made possible. […] The leverage comes from […] a traceable inheritance.

While the traces of this 'inheritance' may in some ways be 'traces without an inventory' (Gramsci 1971), it seems that class *does* sometimes surface as a way of articulating grievance. With the school discipline case above, for example, one reader, on discovering that the student involved had not been expelled, grumbled that he must have had '*some VIP behind him*' for '*if he was from a simple family or a refugee from Tibet, he would*

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[276] It is unclear what exactly Deckyi means here, and she does not elaborate. It is possible that she refers to violence (perhaps sexual violence given the context of the discussion) inflicted on her and other *ngadak* children by lower class and caste Tibetans during the GPCR –a prospect corroborated by Chinese women's accounts of the period.

have been expelled from the school [a] *long time ago*'.[277] Class also surfaced during the 2010 *Kalon Tripa* elections, where Harvard-educated 'commoner' Lobsang Sangay ran against aristocrat Tethong Tenzin Namgyal for *Sikyong*. In remarks posted to his blog after Norbu wrote in support of Tethong,[278] some Tibetans expressed their feelings for what they saw as a contest between the traditional order and a more egalitarian future: *Tibet was ruled by Kudraks for centuries*, writes one Tashi Dhondup, *Why we lost our country is all well known to everybody. […] Kudraks were picknicking while commoners were trying to fight the Chinese invasion. The way the commoners were kept as slaves, illiterate and underdeveloped was all due to the ill-designs of Kudraks. […] Now it's time to say thank you and let the younger generation take charge.* Another, Kalsang Phuntsok, sees this as inappropriate: *beware of people who bring up the strawman issue of Kudrak vs. Commoner. […] I also used to hate Kudraks when I was younger and I still think people's grievances were real against that class. But today it is not important. Time and people have changed.* Some, importantly, implicate Jamyang Norbu, implying connection with *rangzen*: *Jamyang la stop being partisan*, writes Lhakpa. *You support TN on the platforms such as Rangzen Alliance making it seem that he is a rangzen-wala. Although he really is your family circle man.* Such posts raise questions over status in contemporary exile -encompassing disputes over the past, the best options for the community's future, and indexing tensions with other faultlines (*e.g.* the *Rangzen-Umaylam* dispute).[279] While many see class as unimportant, and while the governing elite does show capacity for reformism, structural privilege and constraint persists.

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[277] See: http://www.tibetsun.com/news/2013/11/20/student-teachers-tussle-disrupts-classes-at-tcv-school
(Accessed: June 22 2016).
[278] See: Norbu, J. (2010) *Attention all Katri Election Junkies!*
Available at: http://www.jamyangnorbu.com/blog/2010/11/18/attention-all-katri-election-junkies/ (Accessed: June 23 2016).
[279] As discussed later, while it may be tempting to hypothesise a classed dimension to this dispute –with, for instance, *rangzen* appealing to elites not included in governance and *umaylam* to ordinary Tibetans- few seemed to think this to be the case. With this said, with its privilege of the nation above all else, *rangzen* –as I claim later- harbours elitist potential even if its support base is not strictly elite. The apparent *rangzenpa* aversion to Lobsang Sangay –and their support for aristocratic contenders- does give pause for thought. An intriguing article submitted by Rinchen Tobgyal to *Tibetan Political Review* in 2010 in this way criticizes what he describes as the 'elitist relics' targeting Sangay during the election (see Chapter Six).

Gender & Youth in Contemporary Exile

The displacement of *gendered* experience is a final point of concern. For some, Tibetan women – relative to others – enjoy extensive freedoms.[280] Indeed, ethnographically, I was initially struck by the freedom allowed young women in what is effectively a conservative society. In an interview with two schoolgirls I was told:

> They're all equal, because, in India there's a culture that the women are bad and boys are considered [*the second respondent interrupts*: to do more things than girls]. They didn't give opportunities to girls to do something, and they always considered that boys are the best and girls are the worst. It's not like that in Tibet. All the boys [and girls] are equal, and sometimes there is a boy who is not better than girls. But most of the Principles are the boys, but we are not saying that girls are worst - girls can do better than boys if they try their best. Yes.

Awareness that women's fortunes have improved in exile is keen, and several girls in Ladakh stressed their privilege relative to their 'illiterate' mothers (R19&R20).[281] In my experience of working in exile schools and living with Tibetan families, I also felt that the young women I knew enjoyed respect and investment, and seemed to face less acute forms of structural discrimination than many of their Indian peers. Yet, as with class, valorisation can be misleading. Early in my fieldwork I was startled to hear a foreigner working on cultural preservation claim that a senior religious figure had once told him of a place he knew in Tibet where they could 'rape girls'. Such an anecdotes is, of course, problematic, but it contrasts with idealised views of a historically 'gender neutral' culture, and creates space for considering concrete issues facing women in Tibet and exile. Indeed, while I was at first impressed by young women's freedom, and while literacy, school attendance, and attainment data imply progress, I later became aware of deeper inequalities in attitudes toward girls and women. As with class, such inequality can be traced to embedded notions of women's subordination in Tibetan language and culture. So, Sharling (2015) notes, 'the word for woman in Tibetan "*keth-men*" translates as "lower-birth"'[282] and, while infant girls rarely face selective abortion or other such injustices, others note the lesser value of a girl-child –traditionally marked by black smoke- and

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[280] As I discuss in Chapter Six, this is a point often reemphasised by those critical of efforts to cultivate a Tibetan feminism.

[281] *We have more freedoms*, one young woman from Ladakh told me. *Our mother is uneducated. She had no qualifications. Right now in the 21st Century, most girls are educated.* It is also noteworthy, however, that these young women also hinted at families in Sonamling who did not send their children (boys or girls) to school. They declined to offer a reason, but intimated that financial problems play a role.

[282] This, notes Sharling (2015), has much to do with cultural perceptions of women's bodily *impurity*.

the pervasive desire to be 'reborn as a boy' (Sangmo 2015). In reply to (former 'Miss Tibet') Tsering Kyi,[283] Sangmo (2015) verifies the cultural subordination of women, tracing it to 'deeply rooted patriarchal idea that men are inherently more competent than women'. Women's status in this way, notes Sharling, is evident in aphorism:

> "*A girl should be efficient in the kitchen so she can find a better husband*"
>
> "*A girl's future lies in her husband's home*"
>
> "*Men have not spoken yet; women spoke*"[284]

While the actual impact of such norms is likely not straightforward, internalised beliefs about women's ineptitude, 'proper role' and 'purity', are clear –evident, not least, by the under-representation of women in political or civil society roles, and a tacit acceptance (as implied above) that this is normal. In an everyday way, norms over propriety and purity shape the conduct and treatment of young women. Although female friends for instance seemed to enjoy freedom to socialise and travel in exile, it was very clear that few of those who 'wandered' freely around McLeod Ganj were young women, whose movements were more regulated. Such regulation was in part self-directed. After asking a friend visiting from a nearby settlement whether she would be attending a colleague's party, I was told that she had already been out that week, and to go about too much looked 'bad'. While such activity is neither forbidden nor unusual, and while self-constraint is not always bad, it may also signal fear among young women for appearing improper, and facing rebuke for it, especially by elders. Notions of sexual purity – while complexly varied by class and status, and likely taking on new valences in the Indian cultural milieu and state of siege (see: McConnell 2010; Dahlstrom 2005) – play a role here, particularly with the rebuke reserved for young (notably BiE)[285] women appearing to spend too much time with (male) foreigners. Such attitudes are not restricted to the elder generation. In discussing a young woman known for her indefatigable community work, I was

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[283] Tsering Kyi had at an earlier date written a letter –one oblivious to its own irony- accusing Tibetan feminists of 'aping' western culture.

[284] This opaque maxim presumably implies that a serious conclusion cannot be drawn on a woman's reasoning alone.

[285] This does not seem to be the case for young women coming from Tibet itself, who –while not immune to censure (see: Dolma 2013)- appear to enjoy slightly greater latitude.

distressed to hear a friend say that many thought her a 'whore' for fraternising too much with foreigners.[286]

While this censorial attitude – related to traditional ideas of women's inferiority and their symbolic role as reproducers of the nation[287] – might be the most common symptom of patriarchal domination in exile, evidence of more acute forms of violence also raises concern for more severe consequences of culturally sanctioned marginalisation. 'Frankly,[288] if we tell the truth', argues Kyi (2008), 'the culture supports the physical and emotional abuse of women'. While fetishized elsewhere, *abuse* has received little attention in the Tibetan case. Tibetan benevolence is again challenged by Sharling (2015) who writes, 'another example of gendered language is a common Tibetan profanity that bears a metaphorical meaning that compares a woman to a drum, wherein the harder you beat it, the louder the noise it makes'. Recently, alarm over levels of abuse in exile has been raised. Violence against women was the focus of TWA's 2013-2014 'Legal Empowerment of Tibetan Women in Exile' (LETWE-I) research and outreach project. Determining the extent of and responding to VAW, however, is fettered by its covert nature, a lack of awareness, and a dearth of institutions able to offer monitoring, protection, and prosecution. As a refugee group, such issues are the responsibility of the Indian authorities, but GOI sources offered no insight here. Despite its aims, the LETWE-I report (TWA 2014) is also unhelpful, providing careful aggregation of survey results that, with the exception of two case studies and a chart showing rates of perceived 'sexual harassment' (10 per cent), offers little quantitative insight into the incidence of VAW. The report *does* however imply greater levels of violence than are evident, noting 'recurring cases of sexual harassment, domestic violence and sexual violence against women – of varying degrees and magnitude'. Qualitative accounts are more

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[286] Please refer to Dolma (2013), who offers account of her own relationship with her American husband to be: 'I had to keep my relationship with Evan secret from other Tibetans. It was considered bad for a Tibetan woman to be with a white man. When other Tibetans saw us together, I always told them Evan was just a friend. […] I couldn't be honest about our relationship with even my closest Tibetan friends. McLeod Ganj is a small place, one where everyone knows everyone else and news spreads quickly'.
[287] Refer to: Sharling (2015). Available at:
http://www.hystericalfeminisms.com/reproductive-governance-in-the-tibetan-community-in-exile-discrepancies-and-digressions/; and Wilde-Blavatsky (2013), at:
https://lazydakini.wordpress.com/tag/dhardon-sharling/ (Accessed: June 23 2016).
[288] 'Frankness', as I will discuss in Chapter Six, is a frequently celebrated value in Tibetan culture and relates well to my discussion of *parrhesia*.

helpful, and while I did not meet women claiming such experiences,[289] and while my perceptions of

domestic life were positive, prolonged exposure in the community revealed greater complexity. A monk

friend told me that images of social benevolence are in this way misleading. In Tibet, he said, (drunk) men

often beat their wives – although he thought this was less true of exile. Dolma confirms this. In her

autobiography she writes:

> While my mother did her best to look after us, my alcoholic father mostly made things worse
> for the family. […] The more he drank, the more he became demanding, selfish, and violent.
> We were all afraid of him. He would beat any of us he found when he got home, usually my
> mother. He would beat her with a shovel or whatever else he got his hands on. One time he
> broke her nose with a bottle.

Such accounts are not unheard of in exile. One NGO worker told me of a young woman in Dharamshala

whose alcoholic husband was prone to violence, even while she was pregnant. In an egregious case the

same respondent me of a neighbour who had impregnated his one daughter, and prostituted his other in

lower Dharamshala: '[*She*] *would dress up with a lot of makeup and tight clothes, and he would drive her on a motorbike*

to lower Dharamshala, leave her at the Chowk, and then some guy would pick her up and after he was done drop her off

back at the house'. A 'public secret', my informant vented frustration at the wilful ignorance of neighbours –

common to other stories of domestic abuse s/he encountered in exile. Also, s/he noted, 'they all drank

excessively'. As with depression, violence might in this way be attributed to a 'melancholic agency' born of

historical trauma. Yet to overstate this would be to repeat the masternarrative and elide other social and

cultural determinants of loss. We might, for instance, consider the classed dimension. So, noted my

respondent, the young woman and her abusive husband were poor, subsisting off paltry monthly incomes

and neglecting food for other expenses. There is also a tolerance of violence that transcends status here.

In 2013, this was evidenced in the when a young woman accused of adultery in Arunachal Pradesh was

stripped naked, dragged outside, and beat 'over her entire body'. *Phayul* reports '[one] of the perpetrators

tried to cut off [her] nose with a pair of scissors [and] tried to permanently stain her face with black ink'.

The official response, demanding the offenders make reparation to local temples, and ordering the victim

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[289] With the exception of Kunsang Dolma.

to prostrate herself before an altar in atonement, was execrable, suggesting institutionalised disregard for women's rights.

Sexual violence, while rarely exposed in exile, also takes place. Indeed, writes Tsering (2015) for the TFC:

> [Publicly] acknowledging and addressing these acts of violence appear to be a taboo in our society. In fact, there is strong resistance in the exile communities to acknowledge acts of violence for fear of tarnishing our image of being a peace-loving and non-violent society. Additionally, there appears to be a strong perception among many Tibetans that addressing issues of gender equality would divert from addressing our national freedom issue. As a result, perpetrators of violent incidents too often go unpunished, potentially increasing likelihood of repeat acts of violence.

The *Tibetan Feminist Collective* (see Chapter Six) has offered a virtual space for women to anonymously publish accounts here. In an acutely disturbing post, one young woman recounts her experience of assault:

> **I am a survivor of childhood sexual abuse** [emphasis author's own]. I cannot remember the first time I was touched inappropriately, but I do remember that I was touched, kissed and fondled by at least more than five older men that were close to or known by my large extended family. I think it started around the time I was six. There was one particular individual who continued to molest me and repeatedly tried to rape me from the age of ten to twelve years; but there were others too. […] When I told [my mother], she cried and confronted him. He promised he wouldn't do it again, but he did anyways – for years on end – because he knew he had our silence. We couldn't risk ripping apart the fabric of our family. We had to live next to each other for the rest of our lives, and if we did happen to cause a break in the family, there was also the risk that outsiders would come to know of this; I know my mother and the rest of the family couldn't bear to live with such shame.

Recent reports of abuse at educational institutions also highlight the vulnerability of young people at schools, and – with their apparent inability to respond suitably – key failings within exile institutions. We must recognise that the exile schools have, of course, played a crucial role in providing care for thousands of unaccompanied children from Tibet. Unfortunately, collective-care institutions do introduce risks for their powerless residents (Pinheiro 2006; Lumos 2014). During research three cases of abuse within the community came to light –the first involving the rape of a five year old girl by two men in Mundgod (*Phayul* 2013), the second the molestation of two girls by a cook at the TCV near Dharamshala (*Times of India* 2014), and the third involving abuse of female students by a principal in Kathmandu (Dechen 2015). While rare, Dolma (2014) sees such events as predictable: a result of the permissive attitude toward abuse, and cultures of silence, at certain institutions:

> I remember the cooks from when I was at TTS many years ago. Most were older men, retired from the military, men who didn't have a chance to marry while in the service and were later too old to attract a wife. So they focused on female students instead. […] The girls were regularly subjected to groping, leering, and sexual comments. The cooks could do and say whatever they felt like, without any consequences.

While such violence is itself serious, it is, Dolma infers, sanctioned by deeper norms naturalising women's and girl's subordination. Such problems are displaced and exacerbated by privileging the national cause. The intersection of gender and socio-economic status offers further insight, and most cases of abuse here seem to correlate with some degree of material privation. Progress has been made here, and increased literacy of girls in exile suggests progress with regards to gender *and* class. Still, while the TDS shows higher female achievement, it only records the *literate*, excluding the large illiterate population –most of whom are women. School attendance is also not disaggregated to show continuation rates of girls *after* Class 10, or for girls from rural settlements that, I was told, have historically been removed from school to help with the family business.[290] Again anecdotal accounts are perhaps indicative of uncommon but still inequitous problems. Dolma, for instance, explained how girls' ability to pursue higher education could be impaired following pregnancy, an issue driven by the difficulty of caring for a child while in school, *and* because such girls are often expelled for transgression. Young lower-status women with little education faced with pregnancy and abandonment are especially vulnerable to privation in the transient exile economy. So, one NGO worker said, '[*a*] *lot of the families who were part of Rogpa*[291] *were single mothers who made 2000 RS a month doing something* […]. [*When*] *I look at them I see the issues that they're dealing with are a lot different* […] *they're really concerned about food security'*. Where those faced with such troubles find help is unclear, but Dolma noted that, without other options, many must turn to marginal or exploitative industries for their subsistence.[292]

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[290] While the Secretary for Education assured me that such issues have been largely resolved, data was lacking or has been withheld, making determining the extent of such problems difficult.

[291] A mother and childcare charity operating in Dharamshala.

[292] The dynamics of inequality and the problems faced by such groups here require further, dedicated, research.

BETWEEN TRUTH & THE TIGER: DISPLACING MEANING

In the first two parts I discussed how the masternarrative of national loss displaces alternative histories of social suffering in the Sino-Tibetan conflict and exile. In exile, signifying processes seize on, rework, or exclude material traces of loss to ensure that history conforms to, and is known and experienced in terms of, the transcendent sign – in this case *the nation*. Yet it is not just the material traces of alternative kinds of loss that are displaced by the new masternarrative of social suffering, but also the *meanings* that are essential to their solidary, political potential. To form a locus for identification and agency the material traces of subaltern loss must be pressed into a meaningful shape; preventing this precludes rise of countervailing kinds of identification or association that might undermine the self-same unity of the nation, national subjectivities and, of course, the social order they sustain. The effects of 'strategic essentialism' – the 'idea that we may have to "take the risk of essence" in order to have any political purchase' (Phillips 2010), and that involves not only displacement of difference, but sometimes active forms of exclusion – is seen as reasonable under siege, with one young man likening it to *facing a tiger*, noting how social inequalities exist but must be deferred for more urgent concerns of the nation. I am, however, less certain of the representativeness of the nationalist account, or its salvationary potential now or in the future. The interpretive hegemony of nationalism, notes Hansen (2003:9), has 'reduced the space available for scholarship that is not explicitly framed as political advocacy […] nationalism –Tibetan or Chinese- polices the boundaries of Tibet as an authorised subject of study'. But elisions are not solely chance, and while some see exile nationalism as pluralistic and progressive, the displacement of meaning may also reflect, and allow reproduction, of inequitable 'patrifilial' norms. Here I review displacement of alternate visions of community historically and today. This is not to denounce nationalist resistance against China, but to *question* whether other kinds of resistance – different visions for Tibet's future – might be articulated. While the first part focuses on historical possibilities, the second considers the overdetermination of present-day suffering and agency by identifying dissonance between the masternarrative and young people's accounts of loss.

Displacing Historical Meaning

Concern for the displacement of *meaning* entails moving from subaltern experience to considering subalternity as a *dimension* of experience and subjectivity. Of course, my theoretical position bars ideas of a subaltern 'autonomous sphere'. Attempts to mark historic subaltern subjectivities are, like with nationalism, significant more for their contemporary value, than as *truths* about the past. Still, while discourses of class, gender and generational inequality may have been unformed in Tibet, they were not wholly absent. In terms of class, how far contemporaneous revolutionary discourses found purchase in Tibet, or how far inequalities hardened into meaning, is uncertain. Certainly, Epstein – keen to frame Tibet's 'liberation' as homegrown rather than brought 'holus-bolus from outside' – claims basis for grievance. '[The revolution's] causes were inherent in Tibet's society', he writes, 'for centuries there had been sporadic instances of serf-and-slave revolt and resistance'.[293] This, however, is mostly fantasy. While early reforms may have signalled emerging concerns for inequality, most Tibetans, as Tsering and Pünwang note in their accounts, were hostile to change. So, notes Tsering (Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering 1997:55), 'though a number were of several minds –like me- and saw good possibilities for change as well as bad, the monks and most aristocrats and even most common Tibetans knew exactly how they felt; they wanted no changes'. During that time, notes one of Epstein's own interviewees in describing his reluctance to call for help during his extrajudicial mutilation by a landowner, 'our minds were in darkness' (1983:127).

This is not entirely true, however, and some sources hint at events that may signal contradictory consciousness. The case of Hor Lhamo -a woman from northern Tibet who allegedly led a serf uprising against landowners demanding abolition of corvée obligations- is one example central to *The Wrath of the Serfs*.[294] Lhamo was executed following the struggle, but according to Epstein the effort vitalised peasant

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[293] Indeed, notes Epstein (1983), 'in legends about the old "contented" Tibet, its people have been presented as traditionally satisfied and even happy with their social lot, until "stirred up by the Communists". Nothing could be more false'.

[294] While he offers no source for this, Epstein writes: 'a local revolt took place in 1918 in the "39 tribes" pastoral area of northern Tibet which paid feudal tribute directly to the *kashag* (local government). It produced the popular heroine Hor Lhamo, today commemorated as a main figure in the famous monumental group sculpture, "Wrath of the Serfs." Hor Lhamo had gone with a delegation from 150 households to petition the *dzongpon* of Khrirdo County (part of present-day Dengqen), against onerous increases of corvée and taxes. When the plea was rejected, she

defiance. While verification is difficult, one account -ironically used by nationalists to prove Lhasa's power in Hor- *does* record deployment of troops to suppress unrest (Smith 2009).[295] The Russian traveller Roerich (1990), additionally, details unrest in Hor; unrest possibly linked to widespread banditry throughout Tibet (see: Kawaguchi, 1990; Harrer, 1953). For Hobsbawm (1959), banditry is itself a universal mode of 'resistance to structural injustice', compelling questions over whether this marks a lost history of social protest in Tibet. For Shakya (2015), the affluence of Tibetan bandits suggests not, but he does note how banditry may have stemmed from regional-religious tensions generated by political centralisation, and concerns for Lhasa-*Gelugpa* hegemony.[296] While likely true, banditry – alongside extensive reports of robbery – is extremely common in the sources, and may still – with the Hor Lhamo case – suggest confluence of rising regional-religious frictions with deeper material -socio-economic-grievances.

Indeed, the autobiographies of Pünwang and Tsering[297] imply that such grievances – and a deeper class-consciousness – were not entirely alien to Tibet. Pünwang, for instance, notes the receptiveness of some Tibetans to change, especially those educated at schools in Guomindang China.[298] While 'the class orientation was not clear-cut, because virtually all religious Tibetans were hostile to change', many Tibetans, insists Tsering, 'were genuinely excited by the prospect of changes [and] became early supporters of the Chinese and their ideology of reform and egalitarianism' (1997:42-43). Indeed, despite his love of Tibet, Tsering quells his national sympathies out of his pragmatic dedication to a utilitarian socialist vision, and for fear of what he sees as the basic elitism of exile nationalism. For him, the lives of

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returned to her tribe and organized and led a surprise night attack on the county seat. In it the *dzongpon* was killed and the entire post of 45 Tibetan army soldiers disarmed. A larger military force sent tot subdue the tribe, subjected it to slaughter and rapine. Hor Lhamo herself was barbarously done to death. But news of the revolt, spreading to virtually every area of Tibet, put new heart into the serfs. "Do they want to end up like the *dzongpon* of Khri-rdo?" they would say threateningly of oppressive officials'.

[295] Tsering Shakya is, however, dubious, and notes that, despite his considerable research on the Hor area, he has not come across references in either the Tibetan or Chinese language. 'In the 1950s and 60s', he notes, 'Chinese social scientists cum cadres did lots of field research, and they are published in internal communist journals. One practice was whenever they came across disputes involving poor peasants, they termed it peasant revolt and tried to fit it into the idea of a conscious peasant uprising' - Shakya, T. (2016) *personal communication.*

[296] Especially, that is, among the *Bön*-following and Qing-loyal Hor.

[297] Both of which, it is important to note, lived in Beijing at the time of producing their autobiographies, and both of which in turn were also compiled by Mel Goldstein who, while for some offers a balanced and sophisticated insight into Tibetan history, is identified by others as being more 'pro-Chinese' (Powers 2004).

[298] Tsering, also, describes the advent of a 'tea-shop' scene in 1950s Lhasa, where youth met to discuss new ideas.

millions of 'voiceless' Tibetans rested on a 'middle-ground' between exile nationalism and the Chinese intervention.[299] At least for him the 'trauma' of occupation was neither immediate nor inevitable. While he describes remaining sceptical of China's 'presence and long-range intentions', he recalls thinking about how:

> The Chinese invasion of our country might have done something that we could not have done for ourselves. It had provided a revolution for us. It had swept away the old guard and its exploitative institutions and made participation by the common people in government possible for the first time in Tibet's history.

> Goldstein, Siebenschuh and Tsering (1997:77)

For many (largely pro-nationalist) scholars, of course, Tibetans were more universally opposed to the PRC and its reforms, and largely absolved themselves from revolutionary processes that were rooted in alien ideologies and material conditions. For Khetsun (2008), claims of Tibetan interest in reform are false - upheld by Smith (2009:127) who, while admitting that Tibetans *did* participate in the Cultural Revolution, notes that 'they did so primarily as tools of Chinese Red Guard leaders', and that there was no subaltern rationality for participation. Autobiographies and oral histories confirm this, noting that any Tibetans that did take part had been tricked or bribed.[300] Yet many Tibetans *did* participate in 'revolutionary struggle', and many did – and still do – work in the state apparatus. While self-interest may have motivated some, we mustn't dismiss involvement in this way any more than we should frame it as a clear expression of 'subaltern consciousness'. Of course, trying to explain involvement of youth in the brutalities and cultural vandalism of the Red Guard, is a methodologically and politically fraught task. While claims of coercion, manipulation, and indoctrination, for instance, likely offer some explanation, it would be slipshod to reduce all participation in this way -or to psychologise it as a result of a kind of 'collective madness or mass hysteria sweeping the country' (Schaik 2013:245). Indeed, as some (Jin 1999; Dikotter 2013) note,

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[299] A vision, he notes, that controversially accepted Tibet's future *within* China. This was a view shared, incidentally, by the 1930s Tibet Improvement Party –albeit at this time Tibetans confronted negotiating a relationship with the Guomindang rather than the CCP.

[300] The tropes of deceit and avarice recur frequently in attempts by elites and others to come to terms with Tibetan complicity in occupation and the violence of the GPCR. So, notes Lundhup (#12M), *They had plans to divide the people. They knew that majority of people were going to revolt against them and were making preparations. So in order to learn about the developments, they bribed some fickle people with large sums of money. Money fooled these people and the few fickle minded people went over to the other side.* Such tropes of deception –fitting with wider concerns for truth and truth telling discussed in Chapter Six- also serve as a way of dismissing any Tibetan responsibility for occupation.

similar claims of the 'imported' nature of revolutionary ideology into China, neglect the role of historic local grievances in violence, a possibility we shouldn't rule-out for Tibet. While it is difficult to extract 'authentic' grievance from ideological reworking, some accounts of *thamzing*, for instance, reveal how class, gender, and youth were indexed.[301]

Aside from class, Epstein's testimony of the Tibetan woman earlier shows how *gender* was also indexed in such rituals -rituals that, Makley (2007:93) argues, 'served as the performative pivot between Tibetan men's defiant mobility and violent resistance on one hand and the radical displacement of the participation frameworks that grounded they regional authority on the other' –the undermining, that is, of the *patrifilial* order by the 'brutal illocutionary force' of the 'Maoist metalanguage of class-gender liberation'. In 'speaking bitterness' against especially male religious elders, notes Makley, women '[displaced] the indexical grounds of Tibetan diving masculine authority for that of rational and ordinary biological sex difference'. *Generational* grievances are also clear. So, notes Tsering (Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering 1997:102-103), 'in a single moment our school's world had been turned upside down. The students now lorded over the teachers. They thought it was natural and right for them to be the ones to revolutionize their elders'. Tsering's work implies a deeper obligation among youth to revolutionary ideals than is allowed by the thesis of mass-hysteria. As Jiang and Ashley (2000:3-4) note, several 'commonalities of feeling and perception' among former Red Guard include the 'strong sense of collective identity that emanates from a shared history and the memory of a more idealistic past', and 'the belief that members of the Three Old Classes[302] were not so much passive victims as active participants in a social movement that positively helped to shape what they and China are today'. While work is required, we might ask whether participation was driven by rejection of patrifilial norms shared by Chinese *and* Tibetan societies, as well as by indoctrination.

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[301] Tashi Lhamo (#6M), for instance, recalls watching her father subjected to *thamzing*, and the role of the *miser* taking part: 'Our people [the Tibetans] were made to do it [participate in *thamzing*]. Those that did the beating were our people. The poor people and the servants were praised by the Chinese for doing so and they were so delighted. They were the ones who carried out the beatings. Our servants and the poor were those that did the beatings and destroyed our temples. The lands and properties of the wealthy were distributed to them and they were overjoyed because they had never been rich earlier. They appreciated the Chinese to a great extent. Once when there was talk about Tibet regaining independence, the servants and the poor said, "It is better not to get our independence. Once independence is achieved, we must pay taxes and undergo labor tax. We are better this way."
[302] A term used to refer to young people sent to rural areas so as to learn from the peasantry in the later years of Cultural Revolution.

It is however true that these examples of subaltern dissent pale in comparison with displays of pan-Tibetan unity such as was demonstrated in the 1959 National Uprising, and which possibly suggest the wider constitutive significance of nationalism as a determinant of subjectivity and agency. Indeed, while the attribution of *national* uprising likely reflects a recent discursive claim, it does seem that there was wide participation in the event. Yet this too has been disputed, not least by Shakya (1999) who, while retaining ideas of a 'common' Tibetan value system (cf. Hansen, 2003), reveals classed, gendered, and regional divisions in the revolt. Similar criticisms involve the *Nyemo Ani* incident of 1969, in which fifty-four members of the 'PLA, cadres and other Tibetans' were killed or maimed during a reputedly secessionist (Smith, 1996; Shakya, 2002) uprising led by a young nun. Yet, for Goldstein, Jiao and Lhundup (2010:17), 'the Nyemo disturbance was not a spontaneous Tibetan nationalistic uprising against the Chinese 'oppressor', neither was it a revolt aimed at creating an independent Tibet'. Instead, they claim, violence was linked to factional struggles and exploitation of rural tensions over collectivisation.[303] Of course, this memoro-politics is highly inflammatory: in response to a similar suggestion that this incident formed less a display of nationalist resistance than a reaction over grain prices, Lixiong was charged by Shakya (2002) of secularising the event and distorting history. But, notes Goldstein (2004:20), 'might not Smith and Shakya have also distorted the historical record [...] by downplaying economic motives?' Jamyang Norbu's censure of 'barefoot experts' he sees as 'appeasing' China shows how deviance from nationalist orthodoxy can turn rancorous. While valid, Norbu's work can be elitist. As I will discuss, although China's far stronger propaganda machine deserves greater censure, the 'moral-intellectual prison' imposed by exile nationalists also perpetuates historical elisions and thwarts understanding of the present conflict.

Awakenings: Hysteresis, Dissonance & Political Subjectivity

A similar elision of the broader material-discursive field is evident in present-day representations of violence, subjectivity and agency, both in Tibet and exile. The subsequent risk is that an underdetermined nationalist description of suffering and agency invisibilises the wider socio-historical and cultural field (*e.g.* relating to gender, age, class *etc.*) that, while possibly *exceeding* the subject's self-knowledge, overdetermine

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[303] Only sixteen per cent of participants interviewed by Goldstein cited 'independence' as a motivating factor.

their welfare and behaviour. The phenomenon of 'false refugees' who seemingly care nothing for the cultural project in exile (see Chapter Three), for instance, are often attributed to what the Dalai Lama described as 'degeneration' of the 'tolerant' and 'disciplined'[304] Tibetan spirit caused by occupation (see: Iyer 2001), but it might also reflect a failure of the masternarrative to account for the wider totality of social suffering in Tibet. This also applies to '*bone fide*' refugees, whose more complex reasons for flight may be parsed out of representations by what Dolma sees as a '1959 mentality' distorting and even excluding (as she explains regarding the overemphasis on Chinese rather than *indigenous* violence against women)[305] understanding. Dolma's interview with one recent arrival is edifying, hinting at a wider *gendered* context for flight:

> D: *Did you come to India mostly because you knew about the Dalai Lama and wanted to see the Dalai Lama or mostly because you wanted to get away from your husband?*
>
> I have three kids. The reason I waited until after I had three kids was that I thought he would get better as he got older. I thought when he got older and had kids he would start thinking about his family, but nothing changed. I waited through the first child, the second child and the third child hoping he would change his crazy life, then I started worrying about the kids' education. The family wasn't stable, there was always fighting and violence around the kids. I was worried that when the kids grew up in this family they would end up having wild lives, maybe they would become thieves. In the town if people don't have education or a stable life it was common that boys ended up stealing and fighting and girls ended up prostitutes. I could see our kids were probably going to end up like that. Kids need to be raised in a healthy family and our family wasn't healthy, it was crazy and violent.

While the nationalist account remains prominent even in the testimonies of new arrivals, a central contention of this thesis is that such subjectivity is an effect, rather than a *suis generis* source, of the nationalist account. This, of course, rejects popular belief in a universal Tibetan subjectivity fixed in a 'dark cellar' (Vahali 2009) of shared historical experience that unites Tibetans either side of the Himalaya and explains their agencies. It is not that this is false (the dialectical realist approach here allows for the historical emergence of ideal structures as 'truth'), but that it is lacking. Indeed, despite consistencies between the masternarrative and accounts of new arrivals, irregularity between subjectivities can be seen in

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[304] Yeh (2007), however, notes that this is an idealised reimagining that fails to account for a 'long history of socially and culturally sanctioned codes of honor and revenge, and the celebration of weaponry and fighting as a performance of masculinity in some parts of Tibet'.

[305] Dolma recalls how, for instance, on raising issues of violence against women *within* the refugee community at one conference she was rebuked by a foreign woman who stated this as not being a problem in exile.

deeper dissonances between (especially older) new arrivals and BiE youth. In conversations and interviews with young Tibetans here and for a pilot study, difference between young people born in exile and new arrivals from Tibet was a recurrent theme. In my pilot, I identified how youth discriminated (and *auto-discriminated*) between each other –in the BiE case attributing -and identifying with- traits such as 'easy-going', 'individualistic', and 'self-interested',[306] and in the BiT case 'determined', 'rough', and 'angry' – suspiciously sinicised. One young BiT woman noted: '[*the*] *way of thinking is a bit different; there is a 'gap'*. Curiously, a TCV director resisted this, noting no 'gap' but a '*difference*' –which he attributed to the '*tremendous stress: separation, fear of being caught, killed or imprisoned; physical hardship*' experienced by arrivals.[307] While tempting, rooting difference in adversity is problematic. Indeed, while interviews *do* imply grievance with China, they offer less dramatic accounts of persecution than expected. Though respondents cited anxiety for rights violations in discussions of pre-flight and flight, some noted that they became aware of this *after* arrival in exile, and were generally discussed abstractly, being only obliquely related to personal experience. Indeed, many claimed to have had little understanding of the 'Tibet issue' when in Tibet.[308] One (R30) noted:

> In that time [during her childhood in Tibet], at our school, there was only Chinese, not Tibetan language. Because the Chinese occupy our country. But at that time we don't know the Chinese occupied our country. I think the Chinese is the same to my country […] same people. My parents and grandfather they didn't tell us […] because the Chinese would come and kill my family.

Of course, as my interlocutor states, it is possible that fear of reprisal or the effects of patriotic re-education have inhibited political consciousness, but it is also feasible that such understanding (however justified) is shaped *after* arrival in exile (see Chapter 4). This is supported through critical reading of what several BiT interviewees saw as the revelatory function of exile. As two participants in my pilot study

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[306] Some elders described young people in this way as sometimes lacking '*good heart*'.

[307] This gentleman seemed to demonstrate greater fondness for young people born in Tibet, noting how he found them more hard working and community focused –he also, in a similar way, expressed anguish for the damaging influence of western individualism. This does not align, however, with a deeper ambivalence of the community towards new arrivals, who are often viewed with suspicion for being 'too Chinese', uncultured, or even Chinese agents.

[308] See also: Yeh (2007). In her article Yeh notes a similar sentiment in one of her sources –a young woman who claims that she only knew herself as another 'minzu' (minority) before learning of Tibet's history. Yeh points to processes of interpellation in China that attempt to inculcate a particular subjectivity.

noted, coming into exile was like '*waking up*', or '*hearing with both ears*': '*Tibetans in exile understand better than in Tibet*', one noted. This was truer, it should be said, for those that arrived in exile as young children, and as Yeh (2007) notes, the pretensions of BiE youth to greater cultural and political authority are in this way not wholly accepted by older new arrivals.[309] The trope of 'awakening' may be seen here as an result of political subjectification: a measure of how far the interpretive orthodoxy of the masternarrative is accepted *versus* how far it is felt – by older new arrivals – to reflect the complex issues precipitating flight and the subtleties of political subjectivity in Tibet. Again, this is not to reject the nationalist account or its bearing for Tibetans, but to note that this polarised account -seen as *true* in exile- inadequately explains the complexity of suffering, subjectivity, and agency in Tibet. Yet dissonance *does* underpin a rise in *intra-*generational tensions rooted in a politics of authenticity – *i.e.* over which group is more 'authentically' Tibetan (Yeh 2007) – and correspondingly to the further displacement of deeper material dynamics of conflict by privileging one account and naturalising identity. While young Tibetans may publicly downplay conflict – *all Tibetans have a deep love for Tibet*', my one friend said, '*there's no difference* [between us] *really*' – on a number of occasions during my fieldwork I was startled by the level of hostility between the groups.[310] The exile community, of course, sees itself as an archive for authentic Tibetan culture, and 'true' political subjectivity. Despite being from Tibet, new arrivals – due to their being 'brainwashed' [*sic*] by the Chinese – are suspect. *Sarjor* are seen as aggressive, dirty and Sinicised (*i.e.* speaking Chinese and having Chinese tastes), with one young blogger relating the almost racialised intensity of distinction among exile youth.[311]

While it is tempting to frame this through the lens of 'trauma envy' – that is, as a result of the projected anxieties of BiE youth onto young people who, it is feared, are more authentically Tibetan due to their experience of loss – this naturalistic reading misses how public statements of suffering and commitment to the cause by new arrivals really form attempts to prove authenticity, and make up for visible

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[309] 'They should go to Tibet and see how things really are!' Notes one of Yeh's respondents.

[310] During a pilot study in McLeod Ganj in 2010, I was surprised at the hostility evident between two groups of young Tibetan women (one of which was born-in-exile and one in Tibet) in a focus group I ran. The two groups – which had been sitting separately until I –unaware of their differences- brought them together to talk, spoke over each other and tutted when members of the other group spoke.

[311] A post from the now inactive blog *Angry Tibetan Guy*, reads: *Sanjor literally means 'new comers' but in general sense, we refer it to people from Tibet. Trust me, if you ever want to hurt a Tibetan guy or girl who was born outside Tibet, call him/her Sanjor and watch how upset he/she gets. […] NIGGER is to black people as Sanjor is to Tibetan people. That's how serious it is.*

behavioural dissonances with their BiE peers (Yeh 2007). Drawing on Bourdieu, Yeh offers cultural account of dissonance (or *hysteresis*), noting how the enmeshing of culture (and its embodied signs) with politics in exile, means that 'visceral' reactions to external – and some internal (*e.g.* referring to oneself as 'a person of China') – differences of Tibetans from Tibet are read as *political*. This, however still historicises hysteresis in nationalist terms, framing allegiances to China among such groups as an effect of interpellation, and aversion to protest in exile as due to fears over repercussions, as opposed to, for instance, an ambiguous regard for the cause. While persuasive, this may miss the material dimensions of hysteresis. Yeh (*op cit.* 651) does not, in fairness, reject these, accepting the enduring structural relevance of 'gender, age, class, and social status […] religious and sectarian affiliation, and the lay-monastic divide'. Indeed, BiE feelings of superiority, alongside a tendency to denigrate *sarjor* from poor rural regions of Tibet as violent, dirty, ruddy-faced, and uncultured, *do* seem to reflect, in particular, a *classed* dimension. The extent to which this may be ascribed to *new* forms of distinction (*e.g.* arising from variance between nascent westernised tastes of BiT youth and those of new arrivals), *over* historic processes of distinction in operation prior to and during conflict, is uncertain; and I feel it inapposite here to frame the nationalist cause as elite, or differences between BiE and BiT youth as chiefly classed. Still, historicising hysteresis in classed, gendered or generational terms reveals how consonance or dissonance in subjectivity are exclusive effects neither of a universal trauma, nor of indoctrination, but of broader material-discursive processes operating in the historical field.

Indeed, while some might argue that the failure of BiT youth to identify with the masternarrative reflects 'false consciousness', it is also possible that this account – mediated by patrifilial interests – is insensitive to non-nationalist forms of loss, or of patrifilial norms in causing it. While often reduced to the story of national trauma, sensitivity to alternate sources of loss can be helpful for enriching understanding of the overdetermined nature of agency. For example, lament over 'materialistic' reasons for flight – values thought 'un-Tibetan' – not only neglects how such agency may still be related to 'effective occupation' (Fischer 2013), but is also elitist. As Dolma's quote implies, welfare in Tibet is differentiated according to gender, class, and age, and must be seen as determined not only by material-discursive processes of ethnonationalist conflict, but within converging contexts of traditional, and recent neoliberal, orders.

While ideological concerns for occupation and resistance (*via*, for instance, joining exile schools for a more *authentic* education) certainly play part in inspiring flight, reducing one's actions in such terms may helpfully gloss other motivations, such as fleeing domestic violence, or improving income prospects *via* finding a more *effective* (as opposed to a more *authentic*) education. While these are not mutually exclusive,[312] the polarised account of subjectivity in the masternarrative is disputed by the ambivalence among some older new arrivals toward protest. Like Yeh (2007), I found this group generally avoided Dhasa's political scene, and were more ambivalent about China than their BiE peers. Several things may explain this,[313] but it might also be possible to attribute it to differing intensities of political subjectivity between these groups, or to the idea that some -holding ambivalent loyalties to China- are less certain, for one reason or another, by the exile nationalist project. This should not be overstated; in all my interviews I did not find anyone uncritical of China's role in Tibet. But, as Yeh notes, 'there is, in fact, a wide spectrum of political opinion among Tibetans from Tibet *vis-à-vis* Tibet's political status, though many are focussed on a hope for policies that will allow for equitable economic development without a complete loss of Tibetan language and culture'. This is not to say that BiT youth are politically indifferent: quite the opposite. Their aspirations to help Tibet often seem more practical than their BiE peers. Some noted their job in exile was to '*learn English so that they could return to Tibet to help* [their] *people*', whereas BiE youth tend to imagine duty more abstractly.[314]

<center>❖</center>

What implications does this have for interpreting subjectivities and agencies in present-day Tibet? As stated, I do not reject the suffering of Tibetans as a result of occupation, or the possibility of (an emergent) nationalism here. Indeed, reading the suicide notes of self-immolators, it is hard to do so, and

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[312] As one young woman told me in explaining why she came to exile: *school in Tibet is only for Chinese*, or, she added, for *rich* families. The generational dimension may also come in here. In discussing reasons for flight one young nomad [R30/31], for instance, described her frustration with having no access to school in Tibet. For her, exile offered a chance to gain an education. Like many young Tibetans her family resisted, rather than welcomed, her decision

[313] Including, for instance, aversion to protest given worries about reprisals against their families or themselves given a future return to Tibet, or, more pragmatically, owing to lack of time given work-commitments.

[314] *E.g.* By working to 'serve' the cause through personal success and raising its profile. We might indeed ask here how far aspirations are conditioned by new or historic class, generation, or gender differences.

work by several indigenous artists and writers[315] detailing the suffering caused by China in Tibet, further attest the salience of nationalist description. In *Tibet's True Heart*, for instance, the poet Woeser offers realisation of, and eponymously invokes, an essentially Tibetan consciousness –providing critique, as elsewhere, of how the violence of occupation haunts Tibetans: 'Twenty days since I left Lhasa', she writes, 'but still I see that statue of the Buddha with its face bashed in'.[316] For Woeser, as for writers in exile, this is a driver of protest: a revival of *national* consciousness. But how true is this? Woeser, and others like her, are not -it might be argued- representative of most Tibetans, forming part of a relatively new and educated cultural elite closely linked with the exile community. While accepting Yeh's (2007) charge of 'radical reductionism' against those who frame protests as a result of hostile foreign interference, and while I accept their nationalist *inflection*, I nonetheless follow others (Fischer 2014; Mills 2012; Goldstein, Jiao & Lhundup 2010) in querying the totality of nationalist explanation; noting first, that while a certain nationalist sentiment does move protest, this is not necessarily *secessionist* or consonant with exilic nationalism; second, that such nationalism is a new means for making sense of specific material grievances (especially the polarising exclusions of neoliberal reform) – although possibly galvanised through the 'feedback' effects of trans-Himalayan dialectical practices (including exilic valorisations of the martyrs); and third, that other material-discursive forces in the historical field overdetermine loss and participation in resistance.

The participation of young people in political self-sacrifice, of course, forms the most significant, urgent, and complex form of resistance. While China's claims of pathology, hooliganism, or the 'black hand' of elite manipulation are fanciful (Mills 2012),[317] the actual foundation for these acts, how far they are (from a poststructural perspective) sovereign, is less clear than implied (Mills 2012). With the former, despite national inflection, the religious charge of the immolations and their epidemiology, offer cause for qualms

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[315] See: International Campaign for Tibet. (2009) *Like Gold that Fears no Fire: New Writing from Tibet.* Interestingly, however, it might be argued that the surge in these forms of expression itself indicates –even as it is inequitably denied- a new space for protest in China.

[316] Woeser here describes seeing a Tibetan Buddha's head that has been disfigured during the Cultural Revolution. Even the damage –as a souvenir of the atrocious violence of the period- has become a marketable commodity; even Tibetans' loss has, in this way, been colonised.

[317] Reflecting, of course, an attempt at hermeneutic violence through individuation by the PRC. Although, of course, it should be noted that such explanations –while dismissed in the Tibetan case- are common in other accounts of such extreme youth agency.

over their 'fundamental reasoning' (Lhadar, in Mills 2012). For Mills (2012:8-9), the immolations reflect neither a *return* of nationalist consciousness, a 'peculiar development of Buddhism, or even the Tibetan cause', but an effort to preserve the impetus of the 2008 protests, and a very *Chinese* response to a 'wider malaise endemic to the modern Chinese state'.[318] The point here is not to deny nationalism as *a* constitutive force, but to *displace* it as *the* cause of protest, allowing space for other material-discursive determinants at intersections of, for instance, class, gender or age. While there is no clinical consensus on a universal relationship between class and suicidal propensity (Platt & Hawton 2011), Mills work infers socio-economic factors may intervene in suicidal protests, at least in China more broadly. While elites do not seem to be represented among immolators, there is regrettably inadequate data to corroborate whether this form of agency is confined to a specific social group, and indeed commentators such as Woeser and Lixiong have, in this way, been keen to cite the popularity of protests across religious-lay and status groups.[319] Indeed, while there is, despite claims to the contrary, a compelling religious dimension to protest, the classed dimension – given the scarcity of biographical detail and references in self-immolators' testimonies – is less obvious. A potential exception in this regard might be evident in the joint testimony of Tenzin Khedup and Ngawang Norphel, who account for their action in terms of their economic *value*:

> We do not have the ability to help Tibetan's religion and culture. *We do not have the economic means* to help other Tibetans. For the sake of our Tibetan race, in particular for the return of His Holiness Dalai Lama to Tibet, we choose self-immolation.

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[318] In a (controversial) lecture at the *University of Westminster* in 2013, Martin Mills argued that while self-immolations –especially in how they address *Tibetans* rather than Chinese- may index a new kind of Tibetan nationalism that offers an alternative to, and a form of indigenous resistance against, the Chinese nationalist project in the wake of religious sanctions, securitisation, and 'patriotic re-education' reforms in certain regions, they likely do not –given their incidence in areas historically hostile to nationalism- reflect *return* of such consciousness, 'a peculiar development of Buddhism, or even the Tibetan cause'. The novelty of self-immolation in the Tibetan case, for Mills, has led to elision of what is the far more prevalent and rising trend of similar forms of public suicide in China more generally –one, he notes, that 'shows little connection to rates of depressive disorders, and [in a way reminiscent of Fischer's theorisation of the 2008 protests] has been strongly linked to socio-economic changes across the PRC that generate acute financial pressures on individuals'.

[319] With the first, of course, there is no easy economic distinction between religious and lay groups, and historically – while social distinction continued to work *within* monasteries- members of all groups other than the *ragyapa* assumed religious roles. Still, while some claim *greater* involvement of lay groups in immolation, it is clear that there is major involvement of religious groups –even from individual monasteries and nunneries- in protest, and closer scrutiny often reveals lay protestors were either former monastics, or had connections to the religious community. Class and status may intervene in a different capacity here, however, and it is also valuable to note, as discussed in Chapter Six, how self-immolators' rhetoric may suggest connection with what Buffetrille (2015) sees as a new –and quite elitist- Buddhist fundamentalism in eastern Tibet.

While the role of socio-economic class in overdetermining participation requires empirical work, the gendered dimension is more immediately visible. Indeed, only eighteen per cent of the self-immolations have involved women, compelling questions over masculinities in self-sacrifice, and also over the features and effect of the twenty-six cases of female protest. In the first case, much has been made of the relationship between masculinity, suicide (Rudmin, Ferrarda-Noli & Skolbekken 2003; Payne, Swami & Stanistreet 2008), and martyrdom, linking rates of suicide among men to a crisis in masculinity (especially among lower-classes), and higher involvement in political violence to its role as a reaffirmation of manhood. While depoliticising, both accounts may help us to frame the Tibetan case, where socio-economic upheaval and traditions of male militancy (Yeh 2007) in affected areas are extant. While sacrifice itself (attended by defiant flag waving and sloganeering) support this, the religious and often-passive tone of testimonies left by male immolators complicates matters. Nevertheless, we ought still consider in this regard the possible pressure on young men in Tibet and exile as an effect of immolation, especially given the lionising of the 'martyrs' in both places (Mills 2012).[320] In the second case, attention has also been afforded to suicide among women and their increasing participation in martyrdom/terrorism (see: Jacques & Taylor, 2008). While suicide is found to be lower among women than men due to reputedly greater emotional literacy, the protective factor of gender is not universal (Barraclough 1987), and the incidence of suicide among poor rural women in China has already been noted (Mills 2012). With participation, analysis by Jacques and Taylor (2008) offers insight into the increasing role of women in insurgency, hypothesising prospects for greater gender equality as a motivating factor. In the Tibet case, while economic fears *are* indexed in testimonies of female immolators,[321] there is little else that distinguishes them from men. However, while the idea that women's participation here may reflect a wider struggle for gender equality requires empirical corroboration, the visibility of their gender, contrasting starkly with representations of resistance as an historically *male* enterprise in Tibet (McGranahan 2010), is surely significant? How far these women's actions are rooted in such histories is unclear and requires work. However, as I discuss in Chapter Six, we may see how patriarchal exilic representations of the female

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[320] While I first wrote this section in late 2015-2016, this concern turned out to prescient when, in March 2016, we learned of the self-immolation of sixteen-year-old Dorjee Tsering in Dheradun, India.
[321] Tashi Kyi, (who immolated in August 2015) for instance, noted the role of 'relocation and demolition of housing' as a contributing factor in her own account of self-immolation.

immolators often constitute them in different ways, and according to different standards, than the male protestors.

Finally, the disproportionate representation of the young in self-sacrifice compels concern for the *generational* dimension. Again, clinical research identifies high rates of suicide among (especially indigenous) adolescents (Wexler 2009), and their increasing participation in political violence worldwide, something more usually ascribed to trauma, manipulation, or coercion than to sovereign agency. While there is no mention of personal factors here,[322] the relatively unique depiction of young Tibetans as *sovereign* agents risks, as noted, displacing the 'universal material child' for the nation. While foreclosed in the Tibetan case, exploitation by peers or elite elders is often cited as a factor in explaining such extreme agency among youth in other contexts -charges, of course, made by China to delegitimise immolation. Such charges of manipulation, however, are unsubstantiated, and seem unlikely.[323] Of course, from a Foucauldian perspective, power doesn't work so transparently, and we should consider, especially given the clustering of protests in specific towns, regions, and even at specific institutions,[324] the effects of 'local links and forms of communication', and of remembrance rituals (Mills 2012:7) in mobilising young people.[325] As Makley (2015) notes, while seeming autonomous, many protests were, in fact, prearranged in small groups, underscoring the role of peers. Also, given greater freedoms and Internet access historically enjoyed by regions most affected by self-immolation, we should not dismiss the interpellative effects of overseas commentary here. In this regard, while the exile community have been divided on the ethics of immolation, such hand wringing may not have been as obvious to those in Tibet as the much clearer valorisation of the 'national heroes'. During an interview with one new arrival from Tibet I was, for instance, told that many Tibetans there think HHDL *approves* of self-immolation: that he *wants* people to

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[322] Interestingly, however, Khedup and Norphel (above), and Dorjee Tsering, each cite a feeling of worthlessness to the Tibetan cause. This might form a useful point of departure for a more probing psychological assessment and, crucially, the social origins of such feelings.

[323] Indeed, Lixiong (2013) claims elders have in fact 'repeatedly appealed to the monks and young Tibetans not to self-immolate, and retain their lives so that they could contribute to the nation's cause in the future -signaling that only the older generation should self-immolate'.

[324] Forty-five immolations (thirty-one per cent) have taken place in Ngaba and Qiang Autonomous prefectures, Sichuan. Twenty-four (sixteen per cent) were performed by monks or former monks of Kirti Monastery. Two immolations occurred at Mame Dechen Chokorling nunnery in Ngaba.

[325] It is precisely for this mimetic risk that some Tibetans believe self-immolation is immoral (Whelan-Bridge 2015) - as I discuss in Chapter Six.

do it. While it is inappropriate to suggest manipulation in the way that China does, then, we should still consider the possible feedback effects of representation and the ethics of ascribing agency, especially with the young.

TRACES WITHOUT AN INVENTORY: EXILE, REPRODUCTION & CHANGE

The previous parts of this chapter offer critique of the nationalist account of cultural trauma discussed in Chapter Four by considering alternative histories and contemporary forms of social suffering. Before moving on to discuss how we might rethink marginal agencies between ideal and material polarities, I will reflect briefly on issues of social transformation and reproduction in exile so as to appreciate how far relations of power are reiterated through producing collective memory (Edkins 2003), and to better determine the nature of the social structure productive of, and produced through, such processes. As discussed, some have hypothesised how exposure to the traumatic event (*i.e.* the 'real') serves to expose contingency and enable articulation of progressive social orders. Indeed, even Bourdieu (2002), in a manner highly relevant to the phenomenon of forced or voluntary displacement, allows for such change when 'dispositions encounter conditions (including fields) different from those in which they were constituted and assembled'. This leads to work celebrating the emancipative potential of diasporic flux; one which seems to ring true in the Tibetan case where commitment to democratisation joins evidence for concrete progressive reform in terms of class and gender. For some, however, the celebration of diasporic flux can distract from material conditions that not only shapes the event itself, but also differentiates its effects. In an empirical capacity, Donnan (1998) stresses the resilience of social structure through processes of migration, and its neglect in 'refugee studies'. Despite the successes of the Tibetan community in exile, we should query how far distinction and attending inequalities have endured in exile – as feared by Tsering in the 1960s (Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering 1997) – *versus* how far they have been transformed or replaced by new kinds of distinction. Here, I argue that the truth lies somewhere in between; accepting the transformative effect of equalising forces, while also highlighting the persistence of rooted patrifilial norms serving to satisfy specific interests and perpetuate material and symbolic inequalities.

Transformation & Democratisation

As noted earlier, Tibetan society in exile has undergone substantial transformation, resulting in better prospects for many Tibetans, including at intersections of age, gender, and class (that have, as a result, assumed new valences). In particular, high rates of effective literacy, school attendance and attainment for boys and girls of all backgrounds, join what seems to be improved living conditions and economic welfare for most Tibetans, evidenced by higher life expectancy, health, and life chances. Such transformation may be seen as an effect of ideal and material processes occurring in exile, and as an effect of displacement itself. With the former, while troubles with exile governance remain, and while change may be fragile, the 'traumatic experience of the Chinese occupation has', Dolma and Keldon (2014) assert, 'united Tibetans like never before', underpinning real commitment to democratisation. It is, as such, important to recognise the efforts of elites – inspired by the Dalai Lama – to reform, and indeed the remarkable project of democratic state-building in exile. At the everyday level, the effort to democratise and equalise exile society has in this way had a material impact, succeeding in better political representation of religious-sectarian, regional and socio-economic groups, and in improved welfare and prospects irrespective of class, status, or gender (Roemer 2008). The Dalai Lama's *Draft Constitution of Tibet* (1963), written after arrival in exile, testifies to his early commitment to such ideals, stating his vision (conceived, he claims, *prior* to invasion) for a polity founded on 'freedom, social welfare, democracy, cooperation and environmental protection'. In terms of socio-economic equalisation, socialist ideals heavily influenced the young Lama who, despite resistance during the early years of exile, attempted to incorporate them into exile governance. The draft constitution of 1963 states:

(1) The State shall endeavour to secure that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community shall be so distributed as best to serve the common good and that the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment.

(2) The system of taxation shall be so devised that the burden is distributed according to capacity.

While I am wary of claims to 'classlessness' in exile, it seems true that with the shift in priorities and contraction of social space after occupation and displacement, socio-economic class and status are not the

forces they were in pre-occupation Tibet. While inequality remains – and has been naturalised through institutions and spatiotemporal arrangements – efforts at equalisation through HHDL's repeated emphasis on equality and unity, the amplification of secular relative to religious power – epitomised by HHDL's resignation of political authority – and the institution of meritocratic public sector recruitment, have seen a reduction in structural distinction and material inequality. This appears to be true for symbolic inequality also, for while certain elders may retain prejudices toward lower class groups, and while performances of deference toward elites is still expected, several young people vented aversion to hierarchical norms.[326] Such equalisation may also be seen with age and gender. With the young, while objectifying children as 'victims' of conflict is pathologising (see Chapter Six), their elevated symbolic status as 'seeds of the future' by HHDL has brought improvements in their welfare as a social group. At the intersection of age and class too, education – all but non-existent for most Tibetans in Tibet – was now made available to all. This was also the case for girls, and, while issues remain (especially in the domestic sphere) with regard to the perception and treatment of women and girls, normative changes – enshrined in the constitutional pledge to 'adequate means of livelihood', 'equal pay' and 'equal work' for 'both men and women' – are having an real impact with increasing the participation of women in political and civil society institutions.

With regards to class especially, material as well as ideal processes have also aided transformation. Three processes in particular are identifiable. First, the education system has had a profound equalising effect on exile society. In a pedagogic capacity this is, of course, partly *ideal*, with the aim of fostering unity among exile youth a vital task. In recent years, perceived faults in education, especially reputedly poor Tibetan language ability among youth, have led to introduction of Samdhong Rinpoche's *Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in Exile* in 2004, which promises a new paradigm in schooling through institution of a more traditionalist pedagogy and (Tibetan-language) curricula. There are several issues with the new policy, not least the elitist potential of the traditionalist emphasis, but this aside the policy offers progressive points, upholding a duty to offering schooling 'free of tuition fee and without discrimination on the basis of sex,

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[326] As some sources intimated, this might be tied in part to perceptions of elite complicity in the loss of Tibet. As a source cited above notes: *Kudraks were picnicking while commoners were trying to fight the Chinese invasion.* Some respondents, equally, tend to qualify their speech through identification as an 'ordinary Tibetan' –which seems to offer a way of lending speech authenticity.

race, religion, place of origin, being rich or poor, being ordained or lay', and offering those 'obliged to leave their schools' before sixteen the chance to complete. The *materialities* of exile schooling have also aided transformation, however. The collective raising of 'semi-orphans' in schools has had an equalising effect (Shakya 2014)[327] by removing a key means by which reproduction occurs: *i.e.* the unequal accrual of social, cultural, and symbolic capital generated by asymmetries *between schools* and *between families and schools* (Bourdieu 1990). This also signals the *anonymising* role of displacement as a second material factor in transformation. The move to exile, while risky, can also offer a chance to improve one's prospects. One friend noted how the vague status of new arrivals (*a thief, a murderer, a lost Trulku?*) is an ambiguity some exploit to their benefit by feigning qualifications to gain employment and status. Lastly, the exposure to external progressive discourses in exile form a third transformative force. While these (*e.g.* discourses of gender rights, good governance, *etc.*) are, of course, partly ideal, the material constraints of statelessness make it hard – despite the self-segregation of settlements – to insulate against local or global cultural forces (for better or worse). As discussed in Chapter Six, the source of progressive discourses may be surprising here, with calls for gender equality, for instance, coming not just from the west, but also from Tibet itself.

Reproduction & Patrifiliality

While the solidary affects of identification through the account of historical loss have allowed progressive 're-narration of the social foundations', this largely elite-driven process – the success of which depends on excluding alternate accounts – and the affective bonds it engenders, enables reproduction of the social order. I query, as such, claims of a classless, gender, or generationally equitable exile society, and indeed see narration of national trauma and the passionate attachments it disperses as mode of reproduction as much as transformation. With class, while acute symbolic and material forms of distinction and inequality of Tibet's past have been reduced in exile, the continued domination of elites on one side, and remaining material and symbolic inequalities on the other, compels us to ask whether class remains (in Bourdieu's terms) *objectively* forceful, but -decoupled from any language of collective grievance- politically inarticulable. The idea that embodied class differences form 'traces without an inventory' in exile is compelling. But it

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[327] Personal communication.

can also be counter-productive if – through naturalising inequality – it prevents actors from identifying its *structural* nature. Such inequality exists, and though I accept some equalisation, dissolution of habituated and institutionalised processes of stratification takes time. The legacies of privilege and subalternity are profound, and while conflict and displacement have disrupted reproduction (providing new opportunities for social mobility in exile *and* in Tibet), the classed distribution of refugees and historic right of elites to overseas visas has, for example, preserved privilege *via* a (spatiotemporally entrenched) disparity of access to social and economic capital; one that continues to work through transnational remittance flows. Some young Tibetans, as such, are wealthy, and enjoy a fairly insouciant life in exile; others, less fortunate, must find work to sustain an adequate – but not lavish – lifestyle for themselves and their families; and a final group struggle with sometimes quite serious poverty. While schools have, as noted, helped, nepotism alongside scarce community jobs, means this advantage does not always extend into adult life; something more difficult still for older arrivals from poorer backgrounds who, lacking the skills, social, or cultural capital gained at exile schools, 'drop to the bottom'.[328] *Symbolic inequalities* may also be replicated through the 'class unconscious' (Bourdieu 1985). In this way, while many may claim class and class discrimination to be things of the past, and while evidence suggests hostility to elitism in exile – something perhaps indicative of a more palpable class-consciousness – it is true that, while distinction is more unconscious, harder to articulate, and increasingly detached from economic capital, it remains psycho-physiologically active, enabling classification according to differences in habitus ('*by the whiteness of their teeth*'), and regulating personal and interpersonal conduct. This is clear in *Lhamo and her Badness* (Dhondup 2016), a short story about a high-school graduate whose parents are arranging for her to marry a wealthy older Tibetan from France. The story reveals tensions – manifest in visceral distaste – between social, economic and moral aspects of class, when we hear of how Lhamo's parents (who are now rich despite arriving in

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[328] The diversification of exile schools (notably with rise of the *Sambhota Schools Association*) in recent years -with their different curricula and pedagogic approaches- might also worsen this -leading to asymmetries that enable the re-emergence of old distinctions or yield new ones. Already *Sambhota*, it seemed to me, tends to attract children from privileged backgrounds (*e.g.* the children of doctors or civil servants), while TCV caters to less affluent families and new arrivals.

India 'penniless') are – despite the hollow respect they receive – despised for having risen to fortune by low class[329] means:

> Lhamo saw her parents entering the venue, and the school principal bowed to them and escorted them to the front seat. Her parents were respected in Bir not because of their character or education but because of their money. Some people say bad things about their source of income, as they own a business exporting statues of Buddha and bodhisattvas. The principal himself thinks low of the Lhungtsang family, yet the main source of funding for school projects and festivals comes from them. So he bows to them not out of respect but because he has to; money makes you do things you feel ashamed of later.

While the Principal's aversion reflects the internalised classed sentiments of the elite, Lhamo's parents' desire for wealth and status – the reason why they are marrying Lhamo off to a rich man in France – may be seen as an *effect* of internalised class norms and ironically a source of the *classless* act of 'exporting' their daughter like one of their statues. Of course, as a piece of fiction, we must identify how the story reflects the values held by Dhondup and society more broadly. In this way, the author writes from a seemingly privileged position, and her silent critique of Lhamo's parents – alongside the apparent trivialisation of the adversities that led them to such avarice – conceals in its disregard for material hardship the *cultural* ideals of the masternarrative. This is likely not the intent. The tale is really a gendered and generational critique of the commodification and abuse of young women by elders and wealthy overseas Tibetans who come to 'invest' in young and *virtuous* brides: a hypocrisy exploited when Lhamo, by feigning wantonness (in wearing short skirts and going out with boys) manages to put off her suitor. Still, as discussed later, while Lhamo's *performance* of immorality may – in resisting patrifilial values by parodying them – form a kind of disidentification, the 'freewill and freedom' she gains comes at the expense of her material security, and returns her to the state of 'warehoused refugee' desired by the (effectively *elitist*) masternarrative. This tale exemplifies how, while subjectivity and agency are *overdetermined*, this excess – and the disidentifications it stirs – is not infinite and does not guarantee 'free will': it emerges not from a psychological lack or traumatic real, but is determined by a much wider material-discursive historical field and the rationalities it disperses.

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[329] Trading in Buddhist statues was a historically proscribed, 'low class' –even criminal- occupation in Tibetan society and culture.

While the reproduction of class norms is interesting, more clearly evident is the reproduction of gendered and generational inequality as an effect of what Makley (2007) calls the *patrifilial* norms structuring representations of loss and the production of political community. This refers to two interrelated modes of subjectification: the first being the patriarchal values of 'traditional' Tibetan culture and society and their role in rendering women 'reproducers of the nation' in ways that enable their marginalisation; the second an emphasis on a filiality which, despite valorising young people as 'seeds for the future', perpetuates their voicelessness and political exclusion. The subjectification of young people through a nationalism fundamentally defined by this patrifilial rationality allows individuals (through inculcated passionate attachments) to be drafted in perpetuating the social order through their very commitment to, and work for, the cause. So, as one young American-Tibetan woman put it, *being* a worthy subject – something of deep emotional importance – *depends* on a '*deference to elders and ancestors*' that, '*all […] political work is rooted in*'. Despite facing material and symbolic inequalities, the young, according to Norbu, are in this way 'burdened' by a 'culture of subservience' (imposed largely by the education system)[330] that renders them voiceless; a marginalisation, as *The Story of My Rape* attests, that is even more acute for girls.[331] Of course, Norbu's concern here is less for marginalisation of classed, gendered or generational forms of suffering, than for how subservience averts young people from realising and speaking out about the failure of *Umaylam* – and the elder elite that promote it – and the 'truth' of *rangzen*. While there is merit to Norbu's fears over the undemocratic nature of the single-party exile parliamentary system, and while barring debates on *rangzen* does seem to disproportionately exclude youth, in Chapter Six I express doubt over seeing reduction to an alternative – if arguably more open – kind of hyper-nationalist discourse as offering any real resolution to the displacement of alternative accounts of loss, and for how it may in fact engender equal, if not worse, inequalities and exclusions. While in no way unique to the Tibetan case, the process of identification itself, regulated by a narrative of loss structured by, and structuring of, patrifilial hegemony, will in this way result in reproduction of exclusions that are, of course, vital for its realisation.

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[330] Importantly, Norbu does not see this as a problem among youth from Tibet.
[331] Update: the recent withdrawal of Dhardon Sharling… not only external… but also internal…

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I considered how the production of national History and attending subjectivities works to displace counter-memories, alternative material histories, and alternate ways of making sense of loss at intersections of class, gender, and age/generation. In the first part I explored the potential provenance for classed, gendered, or generational counter-narratives of loss that exceed the nationalist account of suffering and wellbeing in Tibet prior to and during the Sino-Tibetan conflict, implicitly reflecting the premise central to the thesis of overdetermination that it is not possible to isolate or privilege one 'cause' above others as constitutive (Resnick & Wolff 1989). I continued this in the second part, using ethnographic and textual analysis to chart present-day experiences of violence and loss in the diaspora especially. In part three, I then reflected on how the privileging of *national* identity and explanation by the masternarrative works, as a justifiable process of strategic essentialism in the state of siege, to displace alternative ways to interpret, and critically *mobilise*, historical and contemporary experience, concluding with a section highlighting the perils of underdetermined representations of youth agency in the present era of self-sacrifice. In the final part, I took a momentary step back to respond, albeit cursorily, to how far I judge the 'experience'/'construction' of historical trauma and displacement to have precipitated social transformation in exile, arguing that while progress towards better class, gender and generational equality has been made, this has not been total, nor an inevitable effect of a masternarrative of social suffering that in part enables the reproduction of historic inequalities. In Chapter Six I return to the question of youth agency.

FIGURE 33: SANGYE DOLMA

A photographic self-portrait of the young nun Sangye Dolma taken before her death by self-immolation in 2012. Dolma reportedly left this image on a memory card for people to find after her death. Dolma's pose, and the message *Tibet is an independent country* written on her hand, implies this was taken specifically for use as a 'victim photograph' after her act of self-immolation.

SIX

MARTYRS, REBELS & GOOD LITTLE STUDENTS: SUBJECTIFICATION, YOUTH & MARGINAL AGENCY

You should make effort in all deliberations, big or small. In general, 'patriotism' is the insight that distinguishes truth from falsehood.

Jampal Yeshi[332]

Put clearly the true situation. That is my request.

HHDL

In considering how experiences of violence and loss (*esp.* intergenerational *historical traumas*) mark the constitution of youth political subjectivities and agencies, Chapter Four explored the advent of an *ideal* structuring narrative of national loss, and Chapter Five outlined the broader material-discursive field excluded from this process of signification, noting how nationalist discourse, and the inequalities it produces, are enmeshed in concrete *patrifilial* power relations. What, however, of agency – defined in terms of an ability to resist occupation *and* the patrifilial hegemony of exile *vis-à-vis* a nationalism that is embraced but that threatens to hegemonically displace difference – between these ideal and material polarities? How can we speak about agency without returning to a memoro-politics that, through *explanation*, validates a specific political agenda and hegemonic order at the expense of alterity? Moreover, how may we trust people's own accounts of their agency when it remains impossible to determine what of such accounts is authentic, and what only reflect 'distillation of power in the psyche'? Indeed, *the author*, wrote Foucault (1969) in a claim essential to my analysis, *does not precede the works*, and here I reframe subjectivity and agency as *artefacts* of a socio-historically *specific* material-discursive field. Even extreme forms of suicidal agency – and the subjectivities that impel it – are reducible neither to biomechanical pathology nor free will (Jaworski 2015), but are *overdetermined* by subjectifying processes involving 'encrustation [of the subject] onto a history and a politics that are not the mystification of one's identity but the very substance of it' (May 1993:123). '[To] speak of political subjectification', notes Fassin (2008:533):

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[332] Twenty-seven-year-old Jampal Yeshi self-immolated on March 26th 2012 in Tawu town of Eastern Tibet. See: Mills, 2012.

[Is] not in any way to predicate a Cartesian 'I', or a Freudian 'ego' but, rather, the production of subjects and subjectivities that hold political significance within the framework of social interaction. [...] We then seek no longer to know what his true experience of violence is, but rather, what the various ordeals of truth to which he is submitted by political authorities or humanitarian organisations, by religious officials or psychiatrists, correspond to.

Yet such accounts – which, dispersing the objects of which they speak into 'disciplinary spaces within a grid of social regularity' form modes of governmentality (Scheurich 1997:98) – are also, as an effect of interpellation, *constitutive* of subjects and subjectivities (Althusser 1951). However, while this has often invited deterministic concerns for how power constrains subjects, Foucault's (1984) apparent return to sovereign agency in the 'historical ontology of ourselves' – involving the '*truth through which we constitute ourselves as objects of knowledge*', the '*power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others*', and the '*ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents*' – has led others to consider, through various 'technologies of self', the prospects for *self-constitution* (see: Hacking 2002:2). 'An indispensible precondition of historical ontology, and all that is entailed by it', notes Sugarman (2009:5), ' is a uniquely human agency that not only is responsive to psychological descriptions, but also is self-interpreting and self-determining.' However, while captivating for re-theorising how people, including the young, can construct themselves as agents, Foucault, I believe, does not alter his view that agency is always 'performed under constraints, within a determining structure' (Bignall 2010:13). In this way, in their attachments or resistance, subjects' 'choice' is illusory, for the effect of power in forming the psyche (and one's loyalties, passions, beliefs *etc.*) is such that the terms of autonomy are *heteronomously* shaped. Indeed, this is unavoidable, for the terms of subjection are also those by which agency is possible (Fassin 2008); or, put otherwise, our very ability to feel and act relies on terms of recognition that subordinate us. Subjectification 'consists precisely in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency [...] the process of becoming a subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject' (Butler 1997:2). In the Tibet case –conversely to Fassin's (2008) discussion of medicalised Palestinian youth- young Tibetans tend to be constituted and constitute themselves as traumatised – but *political* – subjects of the suffering nation. Such depictions, while empowering and accepted passionately by young people themselves, can also be risky, especially when

considering the seizure of the minds, bodies, and voices of young self-immolators in Tibet (and exile) by the community and its activists for the nationalist cause.[333] This is so for exile as well as Tibet, where – as the anxiety felt by my respondent in the Introduction shows – depictions of immolation may fuse with feelings of duty to produce unique burdens for exile youth. With regards to young Tibetans in Tibet and in exile (where we cannot be sure of the range of factors impelling the 'choice' to protest), we must beware how valorising sacrifice in terms of the 'truth' of national agency displaces the material child (and the wider constitutive social field), and elides the patrifilial terms shaping identification, interpellation, and the reproduction of generational inequalities. In this way, the rise of the *rangzen* effort in exile – that works both to advocate full independence and lobby for reform in exile – is for some seen as an effort to subvert patrifiliality. However, while *rangzenpa* claim an emancipative and salvationary nationalism, I query whether in believing themselves autonomous, *rangzen* activists fail to identify how the movement also bears traces of elitism. More broadly, I consider the prospects for nationalist pluralism, and how efforts at marginal agency have fared (especially with regards to gender), noting the significant limits of such agency given the presence of deep internalised passionate attachments to the cause and its institutions.

Parrhesia

But how may we recover agency in the case of a political community that is at once a source of recognition, but also domination? Despite claims to the contrary, historicising agency does not preclude its possibility. For Foucault and Butler, 'discourses that make us into subjects also allow the creation of a space for discursive resistance and change', and for Bourdieu too, a critical reflexivity – of our indebtedness 'to the past, to each other, to our-selves' (Dumm 1996:3) – allow us in resisting what we have become 'to create possibilities for re-defining what we are and what we can become' (Caldwell 2007:14). Agency is not a quality, but a *historical practice*, an (always decentred) effort to 'act otherwise'

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[333] I am pipped-to-the-post here by Makley (2015), who, in a recent article on the social and political life of dead bodies, raises the 'painful questions for observers about the politics and ethics of witnessing, reporting, and analysing such events [*i.e.* voluntary maiming and death] from afar', and emphasises the need to 'avoid debates that assume the intrinsic morality, meanings, or efficacies of self-immolation as protest'. Makley also identifies the need for attention to the discursive field as vital for ongoing 'interpretative politics', decentring sovereign agency, and querying the equivocal rendering of immolations as either 'the destructive or wasteful violence of youthful mimicry' or 'the constructive protest of selfless martyrs on behalf of oppressed Tibetans'. While concern for the delegitimisation of suicidal agency through individuation is in this way important, the dangers of framing immolations as acts of *national* self-sacrifice, however, have received comparatively little attention.

(Caldwell 2007:3). As a heuristic here I turn to Foucault's *parrhesia* (truth telling). During research and analysis 'truth' and truth telling resurfaced often. *We are very frank*, noted a Khampa friend,[334] *you must be frank. You are very simple, very frank*, my host family told me, *we like this.* In a more political capacity many claimed how *we must tell the truth about the Tibetan situation.* So, notes Deckyi (#1D): '*My opinion concerns the suffering of the six million Tibetans, the Buddha dharma and the truth that has been converted into falsehood* [...] *I requested to be sent to the United Nations to tell the actual truth*'. (Indeed, some young people I spoke with claimed to be learning English so that the *truth* about Tibet may be spread -and not, for example, for better employment prospects). We might recall, in addition, the student film *The Burning Truth* about self-immolation, and the Dalai Lama's call (see above) to 'put clearly the *true* situation'. Yet truth is a slippery thing, and the 'true situation' or 'true history' for Tibetans, as much as for China, is a positional – and ineludibly political – ascription made in the present. The later Foucault, however, tried to salvage truth, turning to the *parrhesia* ('free speech')[335, 336] to describe when a subject compels herself to give accounts that reflect 'an exact coincidence between belief and truth' (Foucault 2001:14). Brady and Schirato (2010:132) explain:

> The parrhesiastes is always involved in telling the truth to an audience [...] The audience needs both to comprehend the truth and be moved by it [...]. Parrhesia constitutes a critical attitude directed at a form of behaviour, irresponsibility, attitude or set of beliefs that stands in the way of the subject's duty; and in making this criticism the parrhesiastes will often point to their own experience and fallibilies [...].

Not all truth-tellers are parrhesiastes, however. For Foucault, *parrhesiastic* authenticity depends on a specific moral quality exhibited, principally, by the speaker's duty to truth in the face of risk to self – *e.g.* in terms of 'backlash, unpopularity, and in some instances, physical injury or (in the case of Socrates) death'.[337] Self-immolation might, in this way, be regarded as the (literal) embodiment of parrhesiastic

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[334] This also signals contrast with Tibetans from *U-Tsang* -who are often regarded by Khampas as less direct in their speech and manner.

[335] *Parrhesia*, Foucault informs us, has a dual genealogy here. One the one hand, *parrhesia* 'is often found in anti-democratic and Christian contexts, and refers to a situation where someone speaks without sense or thought'. On the other hand, 'found most frequently in classical texts', it 'is associated with truthfulness' (Brady & Schirato 2011). The distinction, of course, is heternomously determined, and is as such entangled in power relations.

[336] We might also draw parallels with the Ghandian principle of *Satyagraha* (truth insistence) and the role of the *Satyagrahi* (he/she who insists on truth).

[337] So Miller (2011:55) notes, '[when] engaging in *parrhesia* "you risk death to tell the truth instead of reposing in the security of a life where the truth goes unspoken."'

practice: the self-immolators as ideal parrhesiastes. But we should be wary of voluntarism here. Certainly, immolation speaks to *a* truth, but is this identical to that in exile interpretations, and how free is the constitution as *parrhesiast* to start with; 'is parrhesia presumed to be performed, or exercised, by an individual' (Butler in Sossi & Tazzioli 2015:31)? Indeed, 'truth' is still externally determined, and still can serve hegemonic purposes – *e.g.* with Yeshi's defining of truth through patriotism above – to the exclusion of others.[338] Other, very different, kinds of truth may also be spoken. *I am telling you the truth*, my friend (a young monk from eastern Tibet) told me leaning across the table on the rooftop terrace of a small café, and speaking to me in a hushed but urgent tone. *Other people will lie. But now I am telling you the truth*. His usually mischievous demeanour seemed to give way to a graver one as he informed me of his concerns for gender violence in Tibet. *In Tibet*, he said, *some people beat their wives and children. It is a big problem. They get drunk and beat them* (he punched the air). To my mind, the constitution or self-constitution of *parrhesiast* is still heteronomously determined, compelling us to ask 'who is able to tell the truth, about what, with what consequences, and with what relation to power' (Foucault 1983; Butler 2005)? While the nation comprises *a* truth, I do not believe Foucault intended *parrhesia* to reference *the* truth,[339] but the status of a relation to oneself within the terms of historical constitution; and in the Tibetan case may be seen as contingent on competing moral (*e.g.* 'knowing' the national truth), and experiential (one's actual experience of loss)[340] genealogies. In my view, how far the truth told aligns with the nationalist narrative forms – alongside

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[338] Indeed, this hierarchisation of grief is apparent in the neglect of an unsuccessful self-immolation attempt by a thirty-eight year old Jonang monk protesting sectarian discrimination in exile (see: Wangyal 2015), relative to the 'national' sacrifice of sixteen-year-old Dorjee Tsering. While the different conditions (*e.g.* Dorjee's young age and the fact that he died from his injuries) may partly account for this, it is also possible that the sectarian grievances of the Jonang are displaced by the national cause.

[339] While possibly contentious, the practice of *parrhesia* here is understood as referring to a specific kind of subject –a (historically contingent) truth-teller- engaged in a specific type of activity –speaking what she sees to be a (historically contingent) truth. We know identification as *parrhesiast* must be historically contingent (*i.e. within* discourse), because Foucault explains how the criteria for being one has changed from the classical emphasis on being the 'best among citizens' (*i.e.* usually higher status and male), to a Cartesian stress on *experience* –a turn that encompasses, for instance, the clinical assumption of truth being rooted in a materiality (*e.g.* the injured mind of a trauma victim) accessible to specialists (Fassin 2008). (With this said, *parrhesiastic performance* (Butler 2015) does entail certain enduring criteria: namely involving the critical nature of disclosure by an individual in a subordinate position to the addressee, and at a significant risk to himself or herself). We also know -given Foucault's earlier work- that the truth told is contingent - for it is an artefact of power/knowledge, and 'true' only if spoken by a valid *parrhesiastes*. Indeed, both the classical and modern definitions of valid *parrhesia* have exclusory potential here; for while classical theory acknowledges the faculty of truth telling to rest on inherent moral qualities, the modern roots it in experience certified by witnesses working within a wider (politicised) hierarchy of grief (Butler 2004).

[340] A point Sonam (2012) attests by prefacing *Yak Horns* with the quote: '*What Kabir talks of is only what he has lived through. If you have not lived through something, it is not true*'.

certain qualities of the speaker (principally age, gender, and class) – a *moral* precondition to *parrhesia* in exile. Nevertheless, the concept of self-risk is interesting, and while the decentred-ness of agency is as true for marginal (class, gender, youth) as for national agency, this heuristic is helpful in framing concrete cases where individuals have risked censure, ostracism, and even harm in attempting to cite alternative material histories and experiences of loss (*i.e.* alternative *truths*) [341] as a way of visibilising the inequalities of patrifilial nationalism.

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[341] Of course, we must beware normativity. This is a discursively constituted reflexivity –without guarantees. My concern for marginal (*e.g.* class, gender or youth) agency here does not see these as 'teleologies of positive freedom' (Dumm 1996), but as historically contingent discourses by which subjects may be constituted and self-constitute. Yet what of the material? Do 'counter-memories' referring to past loss offer any foundation for resistance? To some extent, possibly. While I recognise the immanent constitution of loss within discourse –preventing us from reifying 'hidden injuries' of class, gender *etc.*, as a concrete basis for collective agency- and accept Butler's anxieties for the 'loss of loss', I accept that 'our present is one in which the past is always co-present' (Colwell, 1997), and that total displacement of subaltern loss is unlikely. While –like with nationalism- we ought not mistake present interpellations for transhistorical subjectivities, the signification of marginal suffering may offer nodal points for alternative kinds of subjectification –for 'acting otherwise'.

PLATE 29: PERFORMANCE & PATRIFILIALITY

Young girls perform at a celebration to mark the anniversary of the Tibetan Children's Village Schools. While such performances of identity are important for the preservation of Tibetan culture in exile, for community morale, and for raising the profile of the Tibetan Cause, they may also work to reinforce questionable class and gender social norms.
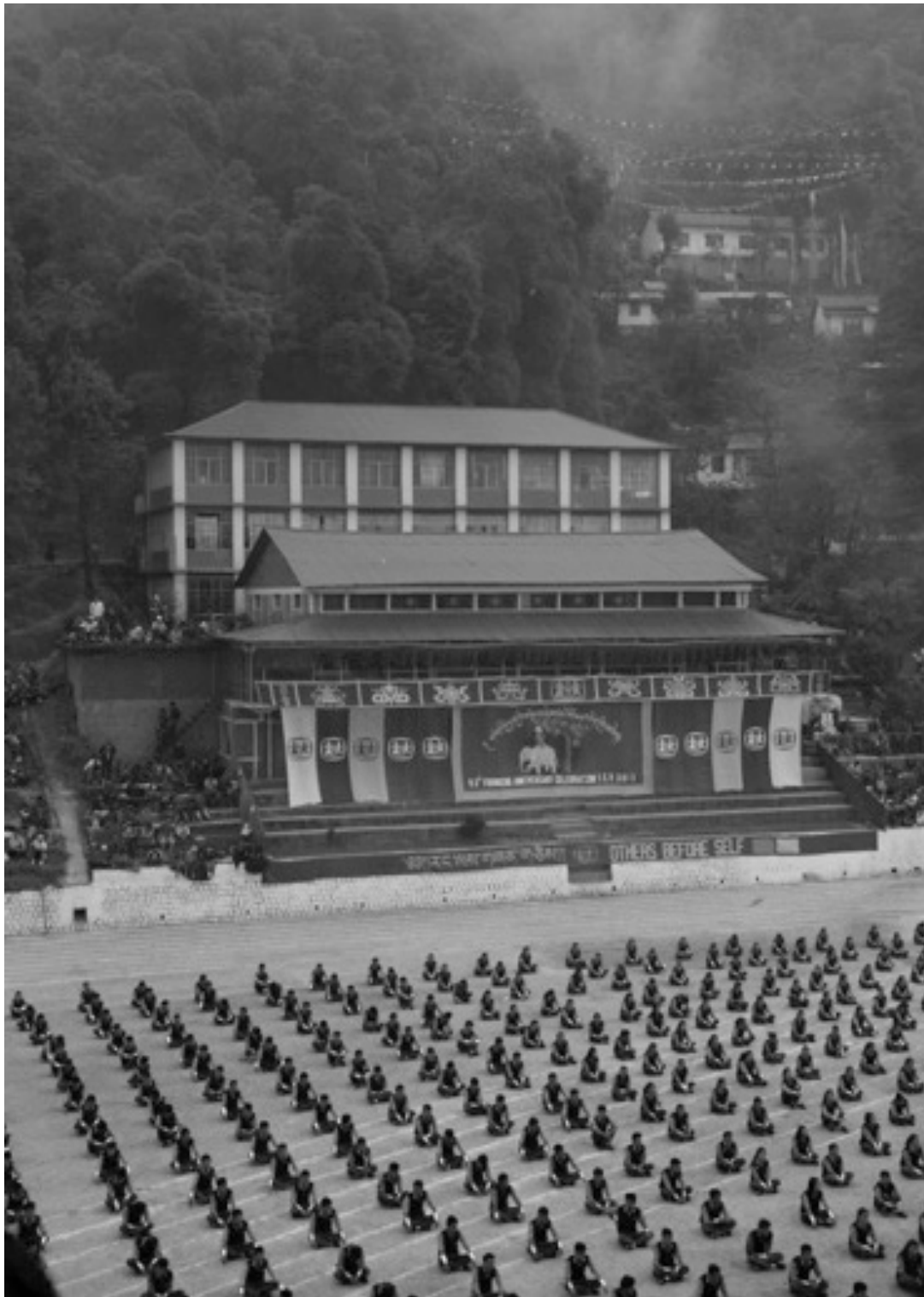
PLATE 30: PERFORMANCE & PATRIFILIALITY

School students perform a carefully choreographed routine to mark the anniversary of the Tibetan Children's Village School at TCV in Upper Dharamshala. In the background a large banner depicts imagery from the Buddhist tale of *The Four Harmonious Friends*, and beneath one can make out the TCV logo 'Others Before Self'. The careful regimentation of this performance illustrates the persistent regard for 'traditional' pedagogies of order and discipline that, while questioned by some, remain popular in the exile education system.

PLATE 31: PERFORMANCE & PATRIFILIALITY (3)

Young women dressed in traditional *Lhamo* (Tibetan Opera) outfits perform at the Upper TCV in Dharamshala. As noted earlier, while the state of *Lhamo* has emerged as a site of struggle between exilic and Chinese accounts of Tibet's cultural development since occupation, the post-colonial/nationalist account is but one tension. Further work is required to analyse how such practices reflect and reproduce gender or class politics.

PLATE 32: PERFORMANCE & PATRIFILIALITY (4)
Girls dressed in the traditional striped aprons of married women perform a folk-song and dance at the Upper TCV in Dharamshala. While further research is required, relations between men and women seemed to feature consistently in such performances – which may play a key role in the reproduction of patrifilial norms. As noted, analysis that goes beyond understanding such practices in post-colonial terms may be illumining here.

INTERPELLATIONS

Here, I consider three prominent rationalities through which young Tibetans are constituted and regulated as agents. These include the trope of '*Good Little Students*' (involving images of children as resilient but dependent victims and 'seeds of the future'), the epitome of which is '*the Martyr*' (including 'national heroes' who sacrifice their lives for the cause), and the antithesis of which is '*the Rebel*' (a contested position that, in the Tibetan case, sometimes overlaps with that of martyr).

Innocent Victims & Good Little Students

FIGURE 34: THE CHILD REFUGEE

An image of young Tibetan new arrivals clipped from ICT's *Dangerous Crossing* report (2009). While important, such reports – usually published by activist-oriented organisations – also play a significant role in the production of 'refugee children'.

The construction (within humanitarian reports, scholarship, literature, film, *etc.*) and interpellation (*e.g.* by teaching in schools and families) of the 'traumatised Tibetan child refugee' has become a popular mode of representation over the past fifty years, particularly since the UN's *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1990). In Chapter Three, I used such sources to review the violence faced by young people. Yet, in dictating the precise context in which childhood welfare, children's subjectivities, and agencies in Tibet or

exile are located, these are not only 'objective' records of injustice, but also – through assuming a subject's internal relationship to violence – sanction a more generalizable account of loss and (political) psychology. The imposition of this specific psychology of experience, subjectivity, and agency onto young minds and behaviour has been reinforced by rising numbers of clinical studies (*e.g.* Sachs, Rosenfeld *et al* 2008; Mercer, Ager & Ruwanpura 2004; Mills *et al*, 2005; Terheggen, Stroebe & Kleber 2001; Hussain & Kleber 2001; Crescenzi 2002; Holtz 1998) that concretely link agency, subjectivity and a *real* historical event, by isolating traces of this event in the minds of the young. As a systematic review by Mills *et al* (2005:7) concludes:

> Our findings indicate that the prevalence of mental health illnesses within this population are higher than those reported in most refugee populations. Of particular concern is the high prevalence of PTSD and depression among the children examined. The Tibetan Government in Exile should be urged to encourage children to report on violations and provide specialized treatment programs for children.

The introduction of psychological expertise both offers new ways for interpreting and validating violence – a new 'political expression of the state of the world' (Fassin 2008: 552) – and also makes possible a new kind of (passive) political subject (the *clinical* trauma victim) with a specific psychological status, and prescribes several (therapeutic) interventions for remediation. Indeed, discourses of psychological distress have become more popular as both an official and informal way of expressing personal loss and a relationship to the past, and have resulted in projects aimed at isolating and easing trauma among Tibetans of all ages.[342] While these projects are beneficial, seizure of such discourses – despite having little provenance in Tibetan culture (Lewis 2013) – and the wider aesthetics of child suffering, at once enhance the legitimacy of the cause, and offer a new pedagogy and technology of the event through which young people are – *via* the reworking of experience – remade, and remake themselves, as traumatised subjects of a fallen nation. While identification through such discourses can be empowering, their proliferation also promotes professionals working with young people as uniquely qualified to speak or account for those

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[342] *E.g.* The 'Dukar Project', the TGiE Department of Health *Tibetan Torture Survivors Program*, and the '*Mental Health Welfare Program*'. Also notable as therapeutic interventions for young people are the art-therapy workshops offered by *Art Refuge* at the Dharamshala Refugee Reception Centre (see Chapter Four).

who have experienced trauma on account of their supposedly unique access to subjectivity.[343] Yet these scientific ascriptions are no less political. Indeed, reifying the figure of the young trauma victim through clinical validations of narratives of persecution and flight – images contrasting with those of happy and healthy children and 'traditional' childhoods before occupation and in exile – may evoke pity. However, pity Sekula (1999) notes, can 'supplant' political understanding. On the one hand, while naturalising the event through imposing a reductionist account of agency onto young people's behaviours (*e.g.* flight) may visibilise real injustices committed by China, this reflects less a concern for the actual pre-conditions of suffering, than for reaffirming, and indeed *establishing as a matter of clinical fact*, nationalist grievances against China. On the other, the demonisation of China attends an idealisation of Tibetan culture – something that can mean neglect of suffering irreducible to national loss – *e.g.* domestic violence in exile (see Chapter Five).

In turning to the issue of post-traumatic agency, clinical work further affirms the masternarrative by confirming the idea of a unique Tibetan *resilience* stemming largely from Tibetan Buddhism. Despite high rates of 'potentially traumatizing events', note Sachs, Rosenfeld *et al* (2008:199), 'levels of psychological distress were extremely low. Coping activity (primarily religious) and subjective appraisals of trauma severity appeared to mediate the psychological effects of trauma exposure'. While constructed as victims, this turn underlines the capacity of young people, by virtue of the resources provided by the community and culture, for resilience and agency. Yet representation and interpellation of young people as resilient *agents* of the cause – *via*, for instance, depicting them participating in schooling or various preservative cultural practices (*e.g.* traditional dances or music concerts) – disregards both the dangers of clinically validating the 'essentially' protective function of Buddhism (of *traditional values*), and also the disciplinary function of such supposedly neutral discourses that operate *via* the paternalistic privilege they sanction (see Plates: 30, 32). In this way constructing young people as 'seeds of the future [Tibet]' (Pema 1997) in need of protection and nurture may seem progressive, but through the designation of 'good little students' – emphasising a duty of obedience that is signified as central to the success of the cause – also has

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[343] Indeed, as Fassin (2008) notes, in many cases the testimony of these agents 'probably has more impact in the construction of [the cause] than the testimony of the survivors themselves who lived through the events or the observers who witnessed them'.

disciplinary potential. The affective weight of this duty and one's perceived success or failure in performing it are especially acute given the belief that (particularly with education) one is fulfilling the wish of the Dalai Lama. One's calibre as a student here depends on qualities that are socially determined but tied to a concrete, rooted, and not easily disputed hierarchy. I have already offered reflection on the nature of this vulnerability to power, but we can see here how various practices exploit this for social control. Especially prominent for instance are ritualistic forms of recognition for 'good' students, whose successes are often publicly fêted, rewarded, and reinforced. Several images in *Journey in Exile*, depict 'good students' being helped by or standing beside eminent leaders such as HHDL, Rinchin Dolma Taring, or Samdhong Rinpoche, with two emphasising the reward for student diligence (one showing two young men being 'honoured with gold medals' by HHDL, and another showing a young woman in a formal *chupa* receiving a scholarship from Samdhong Rinpoche). While such practices are common elsewhere, reverence for HHDL and elders in the patrifilial Tibetan social order amplify the importance – *and disciplinary potential* – of public recognition. Other images in *Journey in Exile*, continue this function of inuring subservience and obedience: several images, for instance, show young students listening ardently to or presenting themselves before elders and donors (something during fieldwork I observed often when young people gave poetry readings or performances for elders); in another photograph, several young students stand to attention as they welcome, and are inspected by, a western sponsor and two heads of school; and a series of images reinforce the value of disciplined uniformity or performing their duty towards the cause – depicting children standing in ordered formations, overseen by adults, or participating in various sporting or cultural activities such as traditional music recitals and dances (*Fig.* 42, 43, 44; see also: Plates 26, 30).

FIGURE 35: RECOGNITION

Photograph of a young woman receiving a scholarship from Samdhong Rinpoche –reproduced from DIIR's *Journey in Exile.*
Such forms of public recognition from respected spiritual-political leaders are an important form of governmentality.

FIGURE 36: ON SHOW

Image of students meeting a western benefactor to the Tibetan exile schools. Reproduced from DIIR's *Journey in Exile.*

FIGURE 37: ON SHOW

Image of students meeting benefactor – Reproduced from DIIR's *Journey in Exile*

The community is, of course, proud of its young people and its success in providing for them in hard conditions. Moreover, disciplinary power is not necessarily deleterious, allowing adults to constrain behaviours that might be seen as harmful either to individuals or to the community in exile. This, however, is not always so. As with the silencing of young female victims of sexual abuse (see Chapter Five), internalised feelings of respect and duty to elders and cause can, given the institutionalised voicelessness of the young, be inequitable. The definition of what constitutes 'virtuous' youth agency can in this way serve to replicate historic patrifilial norms and inequalities, while the deference that is expected of, and taught to, students as a part of the traditional value system to be preserved, can work to naturalise these inequalities. This is acutely clear with regards to gender, where the subjectifying discursive trope of 'good students' is joined with a longer-term patriarchal one of 'good girls'. 'In our society', notes a contributor to the *Tibetan Feminist Collective*:

Tibetan women are still expected to be docile, obedient, "good" mother/daughter figures, usually defined by the kind of clothes we wear, the degree of servility and acquiescence we show towards elders, readiness to agree with the men in control, lack of any inclination to argue, and being expected to want to settle down and marry. A vast number of women may be running everything in their households and society, from domestic duties to family businesses to being political leaders, but to be a truly "good Tibetan woman" one is expected to be "obedient" and be good wives/mothers/daughters (which, more often than not, entails surrendering to men).

We may in this way note how subjectification of girls and women through the masternarrative of national loss also works – in addition to concealing and perpetuating the inequalities discussed in Chapter Five – to constrain agencies in contemporary exile. The above quote, for instance, signals the different expectations levied on women in serving the nation, and in Chapter Five I noted how this underpins social proscriptions on the girls' conduct relative boys, proscriptions that may vary according to class, diasporic location and BiE/BiT status. As Dolma notes (see Chapter Five), these norms can have damaging ramifications, such as when girls are expelled from schools for pregnancy, or, as with the Tenzingang case, physically assaulted for perception of immorality. Indeed, women's subordination within the patrifilial order here can cause exclusions where, as discussed earlier, authorities fretful of the 'national' interest assert the right to arbitrate, or even *forbid* publicising, experiences of gender violence – such as with the Mundgod incident, where (male) settlement officers pressed the young girls' parents not to charge those guilty of sexually assaulting their infant daughter (Dolma 2014). This, of course, is worsened by the lack of women in positions of authority. Such underrepresentation may reflect an effect of and compound violences and the norms underpinning them, and while efforts to improve this are being made, concerns remain for 'backlash' against women that try to effect change (see below). Indeed, while many young men expressed belief in women's rights, these attitudes were held largely by educated, activist youth. Moreover, how far such politically convenient views will result in real transfer of power remains to be seen.[344] Indeed, historic biases defining women's 'proper place' limit their roles in what is the essentially sacred project of national salvation. Here, women have often been seen as the 'reproducers of the nation', responsible for literally producing new national subjects with scant regard for their welfare or interests

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[344] As I discuss below, while I was encouraged, for instance, to hear about the rising support for women's football from a foreign volunteer involved with the community, even here problems exist, and how far recognition attained in the relatively apolitical 'field' of sport will transfer to greater equality in the public, or more difficult still the domestic, sphere, remains uncertain.

(Sharling 2015). Indeed, it is with this in mind that led me to regard the ubiquitous youth performances of 'traditional' Tibetan dance –often strongly indexing gender roles – with caution. Here, the gaze of the spectator/political sympathiser, and an aesthetics that at once politicises and depoliticises, conspire to 'supplant political understanding'.

Martyrs

FIGURE 38: 'TSEYPEY'

Image (n.d., author unknown) retrieved from Save Tibet [https://www.savetibet.org/resources/fact-sheets/self-immolations-by-tibetans/]. The caption reads: *Tseypey* (19), *was identified by exile sources as [...] the fourth of six children from a family in Meruma township, and the same sources say that she died on the scene. Tseypey was described by Tibetans who knew her as "well-behaved, honest and gentle", according to Kirti monks in Dharamshala. She had not received a formal education but grew up working as a herder with her parents. According to the same sources her 60-year-old father and 50-year-old mother have reportedly been taken away by police, but it is not clear whether they have been detained'.

The *martyr* forms a second way by which the young are identified, an injunction that has become especially acute with the rise of self-immolation in Tibet and also in exile. According to Agamben (1999:31), in Greek 'martyr' simply means 'witness'; the sacrifice of one's life, notes Fassin (2008:541), 'bears witness'.[345] Similarly, notes Fassin (*op cit*), 'the Arabic word *shahid* which means witness, also designates a martyr (supposedly a man) – one who dies while performing his duty as a Muslim or in a holy war. The witness is therefore the sacrificed person, the one who has chosen to give up his life to affirm his religious – and by extension, political – *truth'*. Martyrdom for some, then, constitutes a form of testimony: an unassailable avowal of a cause. Extending 'speech' to comprise a mode of action- martyrdom may be seen as a modality and trope of speech: a 'perlocutionary speech act' (Fierke 2012), a position *and* a mode of agency. The martyr, some claim, is speech embodied: the exemplary *parrhesiast*. Indeed, despite uncertainty over the morality of these actions (Mills 2012; Whelan-Bridge 2015),[346] in the Tibetan community the self-immolators are in this way depicted as national heroes (*pawo*) [347] who take the *sovereign* decision to sacrifice their lives to (literally) illumine the truth about suffering in Tibet (Woeser 2016). Such representations are established *via* literary, embodied (*e.g.* remembrance vigils), and also *visual* practices, usually involving the presentation in various forms (*e.g.* on television, in newspapers, or on large canvases around town) of the victim's photographic portrait (usually depicting them smiling, participating in everyday activities, and in

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[345] Martyrdom has a long and contested history in Abrahamic culture, often associated, on the one hand, with the persecution of early Christians, and on the other with recent suicide-bombings and other forms of 'predatory' self-sacrifice by fundamentalist *jihadis*. Recent work on 'political self-sacrifice' (Fierke's 2014), offers more nuanced socio-psychological reflection on individual histories and pathologies, or –as is true here- on the constitutive effects of wider social discourses.

[346] While the provenance of martyrdom in Tibetan culture is, given wider proscriptions on taking life, suspect, it is true that certain texts (such as the *Jataka Tales* and the *Lotus Sutra* –in which one bodhisattva is shown to '[pierce] his body with a thousand wicks and burning it with torches' to protect the *Dhāmma*) *do* in this way extol sacrifice (Whelan-Bridge 2015). This is, of course, ethically complex. The right *motivation* for an act is key to its justness. As Whelan-Bridge notes, the risk for imitation suicides lacking 'right' motivation is great. 'Once an action is performed', notes King (in Whelan-Bridge, 2015), 'in effect publicly available, there is no way to stop others from imitating that action, even though their motivation may be quite different from the motivation of a bodhisattva'. See: Cabezon, J. (2013) *On the Ethics of the Tibetan Self-Immolations*. Available at: http://religiondispatches.org/on-the-ethics-of-the-tibetan-self-immolations/ (Accessed: June 22 2016).

[347] While political suicide through self-immolation has precedent in Buddhist culture –most famously being Thích Quảng Đức's protest at the persecution of Buddhists in Vietnam- subjectification *through* and common use *of* the concept and term 'martyr', bears more uncertain provenance in Tibetan culture and language. There is, as Whalen-Bridge (2015) argues, no Tibetan equivalent for 'sacrifice'. Still, he notes, 'Tibetans who protest, both within and outside Tibet, are part of the larger world and are not limited strictly by the precise limitations that might bedevil a translator of texts'. Indeed, the historic notion of *pawo* ('hero') and act of *rang srog blos btang* ('giving up one's life') are, note Whelan-Bridge, easily glossed with the idea of martyrdom –as is evident (see Chapter Four) with the translation of 'hero' in this way at the 'Martyrs Memorial' in Dharamshala, and the regular use of the term in exile media (see below).

traditional clothing).[348] A short caption attends each image, offering basic biographical details of the protestor, description of their actions, and account of their justification. In each case these stress the moral character of the protestor, and how his or her actions were rooted in distress at the suffering of Tibetans under Chinese misrule.

Yet while the reasons and responsibility for immolation seem to align in representations, are things in reality so straightforward? As discussed, the ascription of agency is *externally* determined, and while they must be interpreted *vis-à-vis* histories of conflict, explaining what exactly induces an individual to take such action, what it means, and what it calls for, is complex. Even in exile there remain tensions between pathologised and politicised accounts. On one side, official depictions frame protests as acts of religiously inspired *despair*: admitting the *cause* of such actions, but reducing agency so as to quell theological issues over their morality, dampen their potentially secessionist significance, and of course, to ensure that interpretative authority remains with exile leaders rather than protestors themselves or other social entrepreneurs. On the other side, however, others interpret and represent them as acts of clear sovereign defiance: a call for *complete* national independence. Those with *rangzen* sympathies attempt to 'systematise' what may be more local acts of dissent (Shambaugh 2008; Mills 2012) through politicised representations of the protests (*see Fig. 46*). As Makley (2015) explains, graphic images of charred, blistered corpses take on an afterlife here where they are often affectively interwoven with nationalist slogans or symbols (see above). Reciprocally, she notes, stylised flames have now been appropriated more widely as 'frames' for publications and other items of material culture. In describing immolations these sources are also clearer. TYC web pages for the immolations append a category of 'Slogans' to their biographies, including considerably more narrative detail than official sources.[349] Yet, while the religious dimension of protest is de-emphasised for emphasis of its resistive *secular* nationalist underpinnings, it is also clear that actors must try to accommodate religion without ceding it (or religious leaders), interpretative authority. As such, in resisting reduction of protest on one hand to a 'pan-Buddhist practice' (Benn 2001) – that removes the

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[348] In some cases where an appropriate photograph is unavailable –although, as I shall discuss, this is not always the case- a protestor is represented instead with a blank box and black silhouette.
[349] Following the immolation of schoolgirl Tsering Kyi (19) –an event that draws just a short paragraph of text by ICT- for instance, it is made very clear that Kyi 'torched her body […] in protest against the Chinese illegal occupation of Tibet'.

issue from the socio-political to the doctrinal sphere – or on the other to a localised (and 'Chinese')

response to (material) grievances (Mills 2012 – see above), Whelan-Bridge (2015) discusses how Norbu

appeals to a specific *Jataka* tale, where Buddha sacrifices his body to a starving tigress so that her cubs may

eat, as a more suitable cultural rationality for self-immolation.[350] Reading the tigress story to indicate

selfless *provision* for others through self-sacrifice, frames immolation not as an act of religious *inspired*

despair, but of spiritually *sanctioned*, but chiefly *political* sacrifice, for *the nation*.[351] So, Jamyang Norbu (2012)

claims:

> The courageous action of the thirteen self-immolators in Tibet must be seen in this specific
> doctrinal light. I emphatically disagree with the opinion some people are circulating that the
> monks and nuns burnt themselves in despair because they were not allowed to practice their
> religion. […] Hence we must see the self-immolations in Tibet as action taken for the welfare
> of others, for the freedom of the Tibetan people and the independence of Tibet (as some of
> the self-immolators expressly stated). Even the call by most of the self-immolators for the
> return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet must be interpreted as a call for the restoration of an
> independent Tibet, as the Dalai Lama is regarded as the legitimate sovereign ruler of
> independent Tibet, and should not merely be interpreted as a plea for the return of a
> personal spiritual leader, as those attempting to de-politicize the events have been claiming.

Norbu's concern for *depoliticisation* is instructive, referring not just to efforts to identify a broader, and less

obviously *nationalist*, rationale underlying the self-immolations, but also to attempts by exile authorities to

advance the *umaylam* over the *rangzen* agenda, a process Sperling (2011) has called 'extinguishing rangzen'.

There is, despite my apprehensions for the similar reductiveness and instrumental value of the *rangzen*

interpretation, evidence for such depoliticisation. Indeed, for some, the conservatism of official accounts

arguably marginalises more militant nationalist feeling in Tibet, most notably by (mis)translating Tibetan

calls for '*rang-btsan*' ('complete independence') as calls for '*rang-dbang*' (freedom). This struggle over

subjectivity was clear in dispute between the Tibetologist Eliot Sperling and ICT following the self-

immolation of Norbu Damdrul in October 2011 and the reporting of his call for *complete* independence

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[350] Jamyang Norbu claims that this specific tale features heavily in Tibetans' own representations of self-immolation:
'[The] spiritual motivation for the sacrifice of our young monks and nuns in Tibet might have come from another
direction […]', he writes. 'The Golden Light Sutra tells us [how] Buddha gave up his body to feed a starving tigress
and her four cubs. This is a popular Jataka story with all Tibetans and is often brought up in conversations whenever
an example of self-sacrifice or selfless conduct is required'. While Whelan-Bridge notes he personally '[does] not
remember the hungry tigress coming up once' in years of working on Tibetan Buddhism', it is true that the account
does surface in the testimony of Sonam Wangdu -who immolated in January 2012. The young protestor claims: 'I am
sacrificing my body with the firm conviction and a pure heart just as Buddha bravely gave his body to a hungry
tigress'.
[351] For Whelan-Bridge (2015) this might be seen to enable a kind of 'Buddhist Liberation Theology'.

(*Bod Kha-ba-can la rang-dbang rang-btsan dgos!*) by *Phayul*. Sperling's comments, which reproached ICT and other *Umaylam* advocates of distorting the actions of Tibetans in Tibet by mistranslating calls for 'independence' as 'freedom', struck a nerve and compelled ICT to insist that this was not their intention. Sperling replied once more, reproducing an ICT leaflet from the 1990s that does the same thing, and stating that it is time to 'set the record straight' and stop 'putting words into the mouths' of immolators. In this way, it is telling that, despite being readily available, the photograph of Sangye Dolma – a 17-year-old nun who self-immolated in November 2012 leaving a self-portrait with the words '*Tibet is an independent country*' tattooed on her hand – *is not* included on ICT's page, or other *official* publications on immolation.[352]

FIGURE 39: SELF IMMOLATION OF JAMPHEL YESHI

Photograph by Manish Swarup (AP, 2012) depicting the self-immolation of Jamphel Yeshi in Delhi. Images of Yeshi's agonising suicide are frequently used to depict the immolation crisis; this image forms the basis for the reworked version below.

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[352] Such misrepresentations are also evident in other pro-establishment media. *Tibet Post*, for example, also relates Dramdul's protest in an incomplete fashion, noting: At around 11.50 am on October 15th, Norbu Dramdul, age 19, of the Padmatsang house in Soruma, Choeje township, Ngaba county, set fire to himself in the streets of Ngaba county town, shouting "Freedom for Tibet!" "Return of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Tibet!" and other protest slogans.

FIGURE 40: SYSTEMATISING DISSENT

Image by AK Rockefeller (2013) [retrieved from: https://www.flickr.com/photos/akrockefeller/8476046666], offers an interesting example of how the event can be encoded as an act of *nationalist* resistance. Although the psychological history and personal lives of the limited number of exiles engaging in self-immolation have not been adequately considered, this nationalist interpretation is perhaps easier to substantiate in exile, but in Tibet we have more reason to be circumspect about the complex driving factors and meanings of self-sacrifice. As Thich Naht Hanh wrote, 'to burn oneself by fire is to prove that what one is saying is of the utmost importance' – a quote frequently repeated in reference to the self-immolations – but at the same time the precise message of the self-immolations is often less clear and open to contestation. The attempt by activists to seize upon and rework images – such as is the case here – exemplifies the interpretative politics that surrounds the self-immolations.

Despite the value of Sperling's critique for *misappropriation*, it is notable that his concern does not extend to the costs of nationalist *appropriation*, or the dangers of assuming representativeness of a subjectivity that, even if it is as historically polarised as claimed, may still only apply to a narrow band of Tibetans in Tibet itself. Indeed, while *umaylam* representations de-emphasise the political agency of immolators, is this any less unethical that the (also reductive) politicisation of subjects – some of them only *children* – by a postcolonial militant nationalist account that is just as remote, and just as insensitive to the wider forces overdetermining subjectivity and agency? Of course, while I will later critique of the sovereignty of such self-constitutive discourses of identification, it is true that many young protestors *do* represent themselves

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and their actions in nationalist terms. So, as sixteen-year-old Dorjee Tsering – who self-immolated in exile in March, 2016 – pronounced:

> The reason I resort to burning myself like a choemey (Butter lamp) is because Tibet was occupied by China since 1959 and I have always felt like I needed to do something for the Tibetan cause. Yesterday, I felt as if burning myself up was the only resort left for me.

Even where purpose seems clear – as is apparently the case here – we must however consider the disproportionate authority of others (usually adults) in representing motivation and agency, and the related elision of contextual factors. Indeed, following his death activists moved swiftly to pay their respects but also to reaffirm the meaning of the event. The TYC, publishing news of Tsering's death on *Facebook*, wrote:

> It is with heavy heart and great sadness to hear the news that Dorjee Tsering has passed away. We offer our highest respect, honor and salute for his sacrifice for Tibet's freedom and Independence. Please keep him and his family in your thoughts and prayers. *Om Mani Padme Hum.*

Dorjee's transformation into a national hero (*pawo*) is in this way similar to that experienced by young Tibetans in Tibet. Especially striking here, as noted, has been the use of photos through which the individual is visually reconstructed as martyr. The prominent display of young immolator's images in exile – and struggles to define the subjectivities beneath – corresponds to Edkins' (2015:3-6) 'face politics', the politics *of* the face and of the face *as* politics: 'a much deeper politics [that] enshrines specific regimes of signification and subjectivity'. On one hand – as we *may* see with Sangye Dolma's use of portraiture (see below) – Edkins theorises the radical potential of such politics, but on the other, as the convenient 'disappearing' of Sangye Dolma's image in official sources shows, she isolates how the face (as a 'politics that reflects and inscribes a particular intersection of two regimes of signs: the signifying and subjectifying regimes') does not just exist but is *made* to '[stultify] the human beings [and] make it submit to particular regimes of power': it 'produces the person as object […] pinned down like a specimen insect'. Indeed, while the subject in effect escapes the erasure of death through the preservation of the image of their face, their continued presence is, paradoxically, an effect of their literal absence; and it is, moreover, a *mediated* presence. In exploiting the tendency to 'search for what someone is thinking or feeling in their face or in

an image of the face', and in 'the belief that the real person is to be found beneath the face […], despite the way that we know we may well be mistaken in this belief' (*op cit*.), these images work to suture protestors to a concrete subjectivity already pre-constituted by the (in this case *nationalist*) masternarrative.

FIGURE 41: DORJEE TSERING

A now iconic image of the sixteen-year-old Dorjee Tsering before his self-immolation [n.d., author unknown. Image retrieved from *Tibet Express*: http://tibetexpress.net/dorjee-tsering-succumbs-to-burn-injuries/]. Contrast with the photograph below, showing Tsering's injuries following self-immolation. The image of Tsering at school at school increases the power of the image by emphasising his age and vulnerability, but might also risk reproducing paternalistic norms as well as inadvertently prompting questions about institutional failure, and alternative factors that precipitated his action (including feelings of academic failure).

The display of these images forms an affective-discursive practice, a technology by which young people are reconstituted through a specific account of violence and loss; something assisted by the insertion of

the images into the 'textual milieu' of the attending captions that demand it be understood in these terms. While not false, my concern here is first, for how (regardless of how true the injustice they index may be) such actions emerge as a new norm of self-constitution (see below), second, for the wider field of determinants displaced by this account, and third, for the power relations driving, and being reproduced, through such agencies. Of course, with regards to the first of these, it is vital to note that some Tibetans *were* disturbed by Dorjee's treatment,[353, 354] and by the chance that valorisation of such acts may influence others. One young blogger wrote:

> Our rush to valorize these acts of self-immolations must be preceded and followed by a deeper examination of the lost lives and their environment, and the consequences of said valorization. *We need to reckon with the truth that these are suicides*. And that by glorifying these terrible finalities, we are laying down a risky blueprint by which similarly distressed people will commit these violent acts of self destruction.

With the second, reconstitution is of course only ever partial, risking –in one of its many elisions- neglect of the material child or adolescent, or of the generational inequalities tied up in conflict and portrayals of subjectivities and agencies shaping it. Indeed, while it is noteworthy many of those who have sacrificed their lives are under eighteen, the ages of immolators rarely feature in analysis other than where they are used to mark injustice so grave that it drives such 'young people' (some of them only *children*) to self-destruction. What of the humanist critique that is so easily applied to other cases? What of the 'storm and stress' of adolescence as an explanation for such action? Or how about the role of broader stress factors: bullying, peer pressure, domestic violence, sexual abuse, school failures, or unemployment? In this way, Tibetan martyrs seem immune to the humanist critique that prevents identification of Palestinian or First Nation youth as agents: the psychological history of the child is *displaced* for a cultural account of

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[353] Indeed, while the widely circulated photograph of the young Dorjee Tsering, pictured smiling at school, in many ways aligns with those of other self-immolators, the later image of him in his hospital bed –bandages and ventilator obscuring his swollen face and the burns that covered ninety-five per cent of his body- seem to strike a different chord, and have perhaps had an unintended disruptive effect on nationalist signification.

[354] It is notable that the recent exile critique of the material pain and loss experienced by families as a consequence of self-immolation rarely extends to Tibet. Makley (2015) cites a Tibetan from Qinghai, who argues: 'Many Tibetans in exile have never been to [my hometown]. They don't understand what is going on with us. Every time someone self-immolates, they put them in the news, or they call them heroes and patriots, shout in the sky and make inspirational speeches in a way that encourages more people to immolate. They don't think of the family they may have left behind in Tibet and the real pain we are going through'.

subjectivity and agency.[355] Of course, while we shouldn't return to depoliticising humanitarian modes of subjectification that roots such action in *natural* childhood traumas, this account is also troubling for its reduction of behaviour in terms of an underdetermined view of national subjectivity and agency, a point that, as mentioned, was not lost to some Tibetans. The same writer as quoted above goes on to explain:

> Although we were shocked at hearing about this self-immolation from India […] and the fact it was someone so young, we quickly readjusted and played along with a familiar script, hardly missing a beat. We anointed him a hero and a patriot. It was a sacrifice for Tibet, we said. A non-violent act too, let's not forget.

Despite his nationalistic affirmations, the question of what led to, and who is responsible for, Dorjee's death, however, is not straightforward. While most blame *China*, in social media debates between Tibetans there was surprising criticism reserved for authorities and schools.[356] *It is lucky for the CTA that pleasantries about the bravery of the child will be enough*, one individual noted, however, *in the west such an event would result in comprehensive enquiries into the school and teachers*. Another criticised the role of 'regressive nationalism' and warned of simplification, reminding readers that Tsering also cited his struggles at school as a factor in his sacrifice – something troublingly omitted from foreign language translations of his account. This interrogation of motivations is less apparent with self-immolation in Tibet itself. Socio-politically speaking, *generational* aspects are ignored beyond China's claim over the coercive influence of the 'black hand' of the theocratic elite. While this is almost certainly fabricated, it is worth querying why the sovereignty of Tibetan agency in self-immolation is so readily accepted relative to, for instance, similar extreme cases elsewhere. As noted earlier, we do not require a 'black hand' to accept the structured nature of self-immolation.

Such issues also compel attention to the deeper disciplinary effects of martyrl discourses, both on the living, and the deceased subject herself. On one hand, the existence of the young martyr is in itself a

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[355] To the extent that one Tibetan commenting on *Facebook* following Dorjee's death asked whether it was not time to bring clinical psychologists into exile schools!

[356] Jamyang Norbu (2016) –in a clear act of memoro-politics- has also in this capacity attempted to resignify Dorjee's death –more contentiously- in terms of exile politics. "If China's occupation and repression in Tibet was the principal reason for this young man to set himself alight', he notes, 'then – in a real sense – the secondary cause was almost certainly the Tibetan government abandoning the struggle for Tibetan independence'. Dolma (2016) has subsequently criticised Norbu for his politicization of Dorjee's death in this way.

standard by which to hold other young people and by which they hold themselves: a kind of symbolic violence. The psychological impact of self- immolation on young Tibetans in Tibet or exile in this way has not received adequate attention.[357] On the other, more complexly, the death of the individual does not always free them from cultural governance. In official media, images of young protestors and attending eulogies stress their virtue, piety, and good behaviour. For the large part, of course, this affirms the legitimacy of their act, but in other ways it can serve a subtle disciplinary role. This is particularly acute with gender, where we may detect how cultural norms pattern representations. Take, for instance, the descriptions of nineteen-year-old Tseypey who immolated in December 2014. Captions (from ICT to TYC, and the CTA statement) report:

> She was identified by exile sources as Tseypey, the fourth of six children from a family in Meruma Township, and the same sources say she died on the scene. Tseypey was described by Tibetans who knew her as "well-behaved, honest and gentle", according to Kirti monks in exile in Dharamshala. She had not received a formal education but grew up working as a herder with her parents.

The accent on her good character and *behaviour* is not accidental reflecting, as discussed earlier, a specific concern for the moral standing of the young, and especially of girls. As the citation in the previous section highlights, Tibetan girls and women are culturally valued for their obedience and their roles as 'good' mothers and daughters. The fact of the female martyr thus requires and offers opportunity for her reconstruction in a way that reaffirms these values. While descriptions of men also contain reference to their good character, Tsepey – according to the *monks* in exile – was especially 'well-behaved'. Similar sentiments are evident in other descriptions of self-immolators -with 'Tashi Kyi', for instance, being a 'generous Buddhist […] devoted to her family'. Such representations reinforce such standards through the valorised injunction of martyr.

Rebels

The rebel is a third designation through which young people may be identified. In the context of the exile community, rebellion can have broad or more specific meaning, although the two are often interrelated.

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[357] Indeed, the evident distress experienced by the young man considering immolation noted in the introduction to this thesis emphasizes the need for attention to this effect, and, perhaps, the need for effective interventions/policy responses.

With the former, it may refer to an actual or perceived rejection of the socio-cultural values – or more likely *aesthetic* norms – of elders by the young. Indeed, it is unsurprising that sixty years of exile has resulted in a certain degree of hybridisation, where traditional values and markers of identity such as language, clothing, music, art and beliefs are fused with those of India, the US, Europe and Korea. This has led to generational tensions, with some criticising the irreverence of (especially BiE) youth. Indeed, the community remains conservative, and censure can follow even mild trespasses, as I found when watching a friend chastised for styling his hair 'like a Korean'. But perception, notes Sonam (2012), is 'not always reality', and as I discuss below, even where seeming radical, young Tibetans remain quite conformist. For Sonam:

> Of course there are our self-righteous teachers and elders who sternly lecture us about our lack of patriotism, non-adherence to Tibetan culture and religion, ending their sermons by describing how they had struggled and suffered when they were young. 'You spoiled brats!' they berate us. They also tell us that we are the seeds of the future. But most of all they wanted us to be like them. In front of such people we generally remain silent –hoping they will understand that our inner anxieties and love for Tibet are hidden behind global disguises of Gap sweatshirts and Nike shoes.

While I agree, it is possible that changing attitudes – including over alcohol and substance use, the role of religion, the choice of marriage partner, or sexuality – and duty to the cause – *e.g.* whether to stay in exile or to help 'from a distance' – reflect sharper challenges, and may also involve generational politics and the failure of elites to address conventions that affect the young. In this way, charges of rebelliousness, which can be cutting given the patrifilial loyalties discussed earlier, can form a disciplinary mechanism in individuating, dismissing, and delegitimising discontent with, and efforts to resist, the social order. As with 'martyr', the impact of ascription seems differentiated relative to social position. Young men, young women from Tibet, or those returning from the West, for instance, enjoy greater latitude in terms of how they spend their free time or what they wear, than young women born and raised in exile. While some may subvert attributions of rebel and related images of immodesty to resist inequalities (see below), in general the injunction in this way serves to *constrain*. Indeed, the rebel designation works not only to reproduce everyday forms of patrifilial hegemony, but has also in recent years come to refer to a much more specific type of conflict, indexing the increasingly bitter political struggle between *umaylam* and *rangzen* supporters.

Rangzen, thus, has come to be identified – and often identifies – as a youth movement, embodying the grievances of a nationalistic but progressive younger generation disempowered by a conservative and even corrupt elder elite. For this elite, the *rangzenpa* are, for their rejection of the Strasbourg Proposal of 1988, subversive, an attitude made clear in 2010 after the *Kalon Tripa* Samdhong Rinpoche declared *rangzen* groups to be – on account of what he saw as their disrespect for the Dalai Lama – 'radicalised', risking community harmony and Sino-Tibetan relations, and – the cruellest cut – 'more dangerous than the Chinese Communists or Dhogyal practitioners'.[358] While the Rinpoche perhaps only meant to admonish young people for losing faith in the Dalai Lama (see: Samphell 2010), for *rangzenpa* the speech was seen as a deliberate effort at 'enemy designation' (Nyinjey 2010) intended – *via* distortion (Wangdu 2010) of their beliefs – to delegitimise them in a way that could even put their lives at risk. Indeed, *rangzen* supporters rarely show irreverence for HHDL and, as mentioned, in interviews I was assured of their categorical love for His Holiness, who in their view would simply not be safe returning to anything but a fully independent Tibet, but a frustration with a mulish conservative elite and an overzealous public in refusing space for opinions that do not directly come into line with his. While I have sympathy for what beyond the polarising issue of autonomy/independence may be a wider call for improved democratisation, we shouldn't unreservedly accept this, for while it is claimed as representative and progressive, support for, and the benefits, of *rangzen* are unclear, with the value of its salvationary nationalism being inconsistent and of uncertain value for young people generally, and for those of different classes and genders. As with *umaylam*, despite the democratic promise of the *rangzenpa*, in 'facing the tiger' the nation always comes first.

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[358] The source of Samdhong Rinpoche's anger here seemed to be an article published in an exile newspaper where it was asked whether the Dalai Lama or democracy were more important to exiles –an impudent question that, it was deemed, failed to appreciate how Tibetan democracy had only been made possible by the Dalai Lama in the first place. See: Rangzen Alliance. (2010) *A Bit More Dangerous than the Chinese Communists*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-_7sBcuyqA (Accessed: June 22 2016).

FIGURE 42: TECHNOLOGIES OF SELF

'*A Tibetan student dressed as a self-immolating martyr awaits his turn in a school performance that recounts the Chinese occupation of Tibet*'. Photograph and caption by Cam Matheson (2012): reproduced with kind permission of the author.

As Tsundue (2002) shows in describing how as children his friends used to play Tibetan-Chinese 'war-games', subjectification also involves a degree of *self-constitution*. Foucault's hermeneutics of the self in this

way refers not only to the way power presses on and shapes subjects, but also the seemingly sovereign selection of the 'truth through which we constitute ourselves as objects of knowledge', the 'power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others', and the 'ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents'. Here, I consider how ethics of suffering, sacrifice, and rebellion also serve as 'technologies of self' (Foucault 1988), practices by which people come to identify, regulate, and constitute themselves. Such processes, however, are not always positive or progressive. In both Tibet and now in exile, the advent of an ethics of self-sacrifice, while vindicatory for the cause, has led to practices that, through agonising forms of self-sacrifice, can transform young people into the 'glowing red skeletons' of national heroes.

An Ethics of Suffering

In exile, the designation of the suffering child/youth has become a key discourse for constituting young subjects, and -through practice- traumatised subjectivities. Without ignoring the privations and mutilations of displacement, we may identify how, from one angle – and with specific regards to the more abstract category of national loss – there is a kind of willing acceptance of loss here. The exile condition is as such internalised not only through technologies of power, but also seemingly autonomous technologies of self. Being born in exile, Tsundue's pain and grievance for instance, while real, is not real as an effect of direct experience, but has become so through practice. Indeed, like others of the cultural elite who could likely secure visas to resettle abroad, some of Tsundue's suffering is *chosen* -a kind of *aksesis* (Foucault 1984). Creative practices (*e.g.* art, writing, photography, filmmaking) form key technologies of self in internalisation of loss and self-constitution of subjects here. *Poetry*, for instance, forms a startlingly popular practice among young refugees. Of course, poetry has always been an important part of the Tibetan arts (Jabb 2015). But while reading and writing were once restricted to the literate few, today, both in Tibet and exile, reading and writing (mostly English-language) poetry, is of wider prominence, marked by the emergence of an intergenerational cultural elite comprising poets and writers like Lhasang Tsering, Jamyang Norbu, Buchung D. Sonam, Tenzin Tsundue, and Tsering Wangmo Dhompa, influential for their activism and sometimes controversial views on the political establishment, democratisation, and independence. The work of these writers is widely available and widely read by Tibetans in print and

online, and as one writer – an artist working with the community in exile[359] – defines it, often encompasses:

> [A] tapestry of hopes in opposition to the squalor and uncertainty, if not outright (seeming) impossibility, of the fulfilment of those hopes. […] Their poems, which are filled with a sorrow, longing and a sort of inner frenzy to escape, a near maddening sense of loss […] reveal the inner reality – another reality. […] The poems are near screams, a form of release and contain the frantic gestures of a prisoner pulling at bars. Some have the desperation of a man pulling his hair to feel a pain greater than the one in his heart.

The emotionally enlivened and enlivening force of exile poetry is great. But to regard poems as *cathartic* of trauma neglects that in reproducing loss they are *productive* of suffering, reflecting the affective enmeshing of individuals with the national historical experience: the *engraving* rather than 'release' of the 'heart's pain'. Writing and/or reading poetry forms a materially constitutive process of affective-discursive 'looping' (Wetherall 2012) by which subjects are socialised in to loss, the community, and cause. Tsundue's poem *Refugee* is illustrative, reaffirming his innate identity (*via* the imagined 'R' on his forehead) and binding to the cause:

> When I was born
> My mother said
> you are a refugee.
> Our tent on the roadside
> smoked in the snow.
>
> On your forehead
> between your eyebrows
> there is an R embossed
> my teacher said.
>
> I scratched and scrubbed,
> on my forehead I found
> a brash of red pain.
>
> I am born refugee.
> […]

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[359] See: Rafiqui, A. (*no date*) *Dream Palaces: Tibetan Poets in Exile*. Available at: http://noorimages.com/feature/dream-palaces-tibetan-poets-in-exile/ (Accessed: June 22 2016).

The 'red pain' of the refugee condition is articulated and reproduced through Tsundue's *Exile House* and *When it Rains in Dharamshala* –poems that naturalise his feelings of dislocation despite the fact that India is, essentially, his home. This emotion of melancholy marginality is also repeated in *Space Bar A PROPOSAL*:

> Pull your ceiling halfway down
> And you can create a mezzanine for me
>
> Your walls open into cupboards
> Is there an empty shelf for me?
>
> I'll sleep under your bed
> And watch TV in the mirror

As noted, however, during fieldwork I found poetry writing to be more widely practiced by young people, with many poems, like those of Tsundue and other popular writers, reflecting similar affective-discursive performances of the nationalist account. So, for instance, one fifteen-year-old student writes in a poem:[360]

> In 1959 they came into our peaceful land,
> the red Chinese, very cruel, who captured
> our father land.
> They destroyed our monasteries,
> our cultures, our customs
> they made our peaceful land
> into one horrified land.
> In 1959 they made
> our white land into red.
> They played with our blood.

A seventeen-year-old student, introducing affective themes of familial rupture and misery –but also traces of the masternarrative with her concern for 'human rights' writes:

> Like orphan children
> Departed from parents,
> Punished like animals,
> Without human rights,
> We ran like camels
> Without food or water for weeks.
> Owl-like, we cross the borders at night.

In a poem published on the TCV's *Children's Corner*,[361] an eleven-year-old pupil writes in a similar vein:

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[360] *Destroying our Customs* by Sonam Thakchoe. Reproduced by Hurd (1999). Available at: http://www.artrefuge.org/artproject/c_exchange/poetry/pagea.html. (Accessed: June 22 2016).

Tibet, My beautiful land, once
It's no more beautiful, now
Cause of cruel Chinese,
It's fading away.
Our holy place
It's now fallen.
Into pieces like
torn papers.
Oh! Mighty God,
Can't you help us?
Our Tibetans are suffering,
under the cruel Chinese rule.

While many such pieces *have* been written by young people from Tibet, and may as such be seen as examples of *catharsis* rather than construction, as with trauma drawings, we cannot dismiss the role of adult facilitators here in selecting certain pieces for publication or in helping reinterpret experience. Indeed, some poems in this way differ from the master-narrative in conveying different approaches to exile, or different sources of struggle. A piece of short prose published by a student in the �n School newletter, for instance, contrasts noticeably with Tsundue's *Exile House*, revealing not only how far he has, through his writing practices, cognitively re-patterned his experience in, and relationship to, India, but also how others have quite different feelings about the environment of their adoptive home. The young girl writes:

I have a pretty garden. It is situated in front of our home. The garden is not too big. The soil there is soft and fertile. It helps the plants to grow rapidly. We have grown lots of fruits in our garden, most of them are sown by my parents. You can also feel the sweet fragrance of the colourful flowers blooming from every corner of our spacious garden. The colourful flowers embellish our sweet home more than ever. This garden adds to the beauty of our home. Our garden is everything to us. […] The garden is like a family member to us. I love my pretty garden a lot'.

In addition other pieces reveal alternative problems facing the young – challenges possibly related, but not reducible to, the broader Sino-Tibetan conflict. While family separation runs throughout these poems, for instance, some suggest more complex reasons other than flight for it. One pupil at *Children's Corner*, for instance, describes her grief at her parent's divorce –which, she notes, still confuses her. A poem by a fifteen-year-old student in the ▢ school newsletter is more cryptic, and while may feasibly still refer

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361 Available online at: https://tcvupdate.wordpress.com/56-2/

to separation caused by remote schooling, raises the spectre of family fragmentation noted earlier in this thesis:

> You are forever in my heart.
> When you are with me,
> I always feel happy.
> When I see you,
> My heart always sings a song.
> But you left me.
> When you left me,
> I was totally shattered.ß
> Why did you leave me?
> A day without you
> Is very scary and lonely.
> A single day seems very long.
> Since you have left me alone,
> My days are like days without water.
> My tears never stop from falling.
> I can't stop thinking of you.
> Mom, Please take me back with you.

The practical involvement of young people in direct or symbolic forms of protest forms a further vital modality through which they construct themselves through the rationality of national loss. In Chapter Four I discussed how young people are, from childhood, socialised into loss *via* their inclusion by parents or teachers in various performances –such as, for instance, vigils. This process continues as young people begin to more 'autonomously' involve themselves with certain practices that deepen their affective enmeshing in the cause. At the most widespread, this might manifest in the decision, for instance, to take part in the annual March 10th National Uprising Day march, or the weekly *Lhakar* or 'White Wednesday' tradition – a re-affirmation of Tibetan identity and form of resistance whereby 'a growing number of Tibetans [make] a special effort to wear traditional clothes, speak Tibetan, eat in Tibetan restaurants and buy from Tibetan-owned businesses'. Many more – especially students – become more directly involved (albeit to different degrees) in the campaigns, protests or organisation of activist or quasi-political organisations like SFT or TYC, who have been instrumental in organising popular protests, charitable events, and even the self-immolation vigils. Participation in silent sit-ins or historical re-enactments– usually portraying abuses of Tibetans by the Chinese or involving mock funeral processions for political prisoners executed by the PRC- are powerfully affective technologies of self. Protest in this way can in

rare cases be more corporeal. With Feldman's (1997) work on the body as political canvas in mind, I came across several instances of young people using tattoos as a means of physically demonstrating their political identities. Several new arrivals I met had given themselves pen-ink tattoos (usually the word 'Tibet' etched just above the wrist) while one tattooist in McLeod Ganj offered free tattoos to anyone who accepted artwork with a political 'Free Tibet' message. While infrequent among very young Tibetans, more intense forms of painful corporeal performance are also evident, including the practice of lengthy hunger strikes or, as we have seen, self-immolation.

A Risky Blueprint: The Ethics of Sacrifice

FIGURE 43: SACRIFICE

Dorje Tsering following his self-immolation attempt and shortly before his death [n.d., author unknown. Retrieved from: http://www.tibetanjournal.com/index.php/2016/03/02/a-monk-self-immolates-in-tibet-on-same-day-of-dorjee-tserings-self-immolation-in-india/]. New Delhi, 2016

The ethics of sacrifice has become a critical mode of self-constitution for youth both in exile and Tibet. On one hand, I have already noted how an ethics of public service and 'sacred duty' (to spread the truth about Tibet and regain freedom for the homeland) is cultivated from childhood. This is affectively fixed in

the narrativised sacrifices of elders and martyrs, and as Lobsang Sangay said in his inaugural speech as *Sikyong* the importance of accepting indebtedness to the 'legacy of our elders' above all. This forms a principle technology of self and others, compelling young people to proudly identify as having put aside personal interests or desires for the wider needs of the community and cause. Indeed, despite the onerous potential of postmemory (Hirsch, 2012), several young people emphasised that they did not mind their duty, and in fact were proud for it:

> **R1 –** No we don't feel a big weight … as you know our sad story about our motherland so if the teacher says something to do to save our language, then, first personally we have to think about the old peoples who have suffered due when the Chinese occupied the Tibet, so when we think about them our problem is not so big, our problem is so small compared to them. So when the teachers or elders say something to do to preserve our language or our culture then we don't take it as a [… Tibet] burden, we just take it as our work to do…

> **R2 –** Responsibility

> **R1 –** …Responsibility, as our responsibility. We have to save our … culture and languages, so I don't think that the elders say, pressure, we are living in the pressure, when they are saying… they have experience of lots of years they're much older than we, so what will they say they have thought a little bit about what they will say and they will say the good one not the bad. So I don't think that we are getting pressure to save this.

As the rise of self-immolation in Tibet and exile shows, the idea of sacrificial duty among young people can, however, be more severe where young people identify as martyrs through political self-sacrifice. While the reduction of self-sacrifice to sovereign nationalist subjectivity and agency is empirically and theoretically dubious, it remains true that in both Tibet and in exile evidence for self-constitution through the discourse of martyrdom is extant. This is illustrated by the self-immolation in December 2012 of seventeen-year-old nun Sangye Dolma (pictured above) from eastern Tibet -who burned herself alive apparently in protest at Chinese occupation. Before her act, and in a way evocative of tapes left prior to acts of suicide elsewhere, Dolma took a picture of herself and left it on a memory card with her final message. The image, showing Dolma looking straight into the lens, her hand (tattooed with the words 'Tibet is an independent country) pinching her chin in thoughtful serenity and resolve, is especially haunting when we consider that she was already aware of her intentions. Indeed, Edkins (2013) notes, such images of the missing or departed, are usually 'not images of atrocity or suffering', but are 'instead snapshots, torn from the family album, of people unaware of what their fate was to be'. Yet this image

was staged: created for a specific purpose and left for a specific use. It was an act of *self-constitution* through the visual. While we might ask – given that the message on her hand is in Tibetan rather than Mandarin – whether she saw her act as resistive or pedagogic (*i.e.* intended for a Chinese or for a Tibetan audience), the tattoo – as effectively a caption that restricts interpretation in advance (Edkins 2013) – seems to verify the nationalist account. The suicide testimony of Dorjee Tsering in exile forms a second example that, while addressed to the international community, is still classifiable as an act of martyrl self-constitution:

> This act I think will evoke shock from anyone who hears of it. People will think that a boy has burned himself for his country and it will create awareness. Countries like England, America and Africa will know of Tibet and support for us will strengthen.

While these cases seem to confirm autonomy in martyrl (living or otherwise) identification for the cause, and while I do not belittle young people's feelings of pride in their duty, we should remain wary of the basis for such sentiment, or of treating the process of self-constitution as fully sovereign. With 'softer' sacrifice, for instance, the costs to young people of pressure to remain and serve the community rather than pursue opportunities outside of it are potentially significant. Moreover, 'duty' is flexibly defined, with class playing a key role in mediating opportunities, and better-off youth enjoying the opportunity to serve the cause from the offices of respected international charities, law firms and agencies, while their less well-off peers are expected to serve through supporting their parents and community in underpaid sweater-selling, agricultural, or settlement jobs. While more extreme forms of suicidal agency are, with the recent exception of Dorjee Tsering, rare in exile, we might still query how far the valorisation of self-immolations works – as a 'risky blueprint' – to encourage such acts here and in Tibet. Indeed, the re-enactments of protest by school children in exile are –when looking beyond any pro-Tibetan sympathies to their pedagogic effects – in this way disturbing. Before March 2016, I felt that while self-immolation in exile was feasible, its drivers rested more within the context of socio-political developments in eastern Tibet, and was less likely in the more politicised, but also more comfortable, exile community. Dorje Tsering's self-immolation proved this judgement wrong and, like those in Tibet, indexed the similar sentiment that such forms of self-destruction offer a suitable modality of resistance for those who consider themselves

otherwise inadequate to the cause. Indeed, while in this way eagerly represented as a (courageous) 'choice', even for nationalists in Tibet the sovereignty of this choice is illusory. As one Lhasa-based blogger writes:

> They [the immolations] have touched us profoundly and also caused suffering, the reason being that they have, for our sake and with their own blood, started a new blazing chapter of our history. This must not be forgotten by our homeland, it must not be forgotten by anyone who belongs here. Our generation is burdened with the duty of such sacrifice. Others can shout and demonstrate to express their disagreement and protest; we have to protest by giving our cherished lives. Why is that? The foundation for the path of our progress and for a bright future for our homeland has been laid through sacrifice of blood and years of youth. Don't we have to step on this founding stone to strive for the peak of the mountain?

However, while with Dorjee it is easier to highlight other issues influencing his self-sacrifice, the incidence of self-immolation in Tibet means that, while other structuring factors certainly exist, it is harder to reject the agential, nationalistic significance. Still, it is possible to question not only, as noted, the wider context and range of forces impelling and differentiating self-immolation as a collective and individual response to grievance, but also – if accepting a nationalistic dimension to them – the *source* for such subjectivity. Neither the dismissal of sacrifice in pathological terms (as criminal or psychopathological) nor their valorisation as transhistorical national consciousness, is adequate –the first, despite some evidence of a religious-fundamentalist dimension (see below), reflecting an effort to delegitimise real grievances by China, the second being untenable from the theoretical position of this thesis. As in exile, national consciousness in Tibet is a relatively recent innovation, and while to identify such subjectivities in terms of historical ontology is not to reject the *reality* of grievance, it is to acknowledge that things now seen as *natural* are not, and needn't be so. This is, of course, hard to accept when claims of Tibetan nationalist political subjectivity seem to be consistent from occupation and uprising to current protests. As argued, however, these unities, while not false, are produced through symbolic work. While certain forms of nationalism are extant in Tibet, it is not certain what shape it takes or what its provenance might be. Indeed, it is worth asking whether the discursive practices of the exile community or *local* entrepreneurs here – notably intellectuals like Woeser or educated monastic classes – have been instrumental in intensifying the nationalist charge of grievance and protest in Tibet. As noted in Chapter Five, the regions of Tibet where self-immolation has been most prevalent have been historically permitted greater religious

and political freedoms, and less restricted access to the media. Mills (2012) has already noted the role of *local* communication in explaining the concentration and 'bushfire-like' spread of the self-immolations, but we should also not dismiss social media technologies in enabling local, trans-Himalayan and transnational dialogic processes. As seen, new technologies are exploited to circulate news and images of self-sacrifice as it occurs. While regulated by censorial state apparatus, images and recordings of protests slip the net and proliferate on sites such as *YouTube*. While doubtlessly limited, 'feedback' effects from diasporic and wider global discourses of the Sino-Tibetan conflict cannot be ruled out as a source for nationalist subjectivity and the ethics of sacrifice through which they constitute themselves as agents.

An Ethics of Rebellion

FIGURE 44: IF WE REALLY WANT FREEDOM, DAMDUL

A screenshot from the Tibetan film *We're No Monks* (Dhondup 2004), which fantasises about a terrorist attack by young Tibetan men against a Chinese diplomatic delegation in New Delhi. In this scene the central character can be seen making a Salafi-Jihadist-style suicide video.

The designation of rebel also offers an ethics for self-constitution. In a way consistent with performative theory, rebellion here reflects less a radical departure than an appeal to, and reinterpretation of, various narratives in ways that might be subversive. As I discuss shortly, this can include efforts by young women,

for instance, to resist patrifiliality by turning inequitable moral strictures of this order back on it in a way that frustrates its abuses. Dhondup's (2016) *Lhamo and her Badness,* in this way tells the story of a young girl who, faced with the prospect of being married off to a rich older Tibetan man overseas, dresses and behaves improperly (*e.g.* wearing short skirts and smoking, even through she 'never liked the smell of cigarettes from the beginning') in an effort to repel her suitor. In general, however, discussions of rebellion in exile usually refer to the contentious *rangzen* movement, and it is perhaps predictable that even in Dhondup's ostensibly feminist piece, Lhamo's realisation of the inequities of exile society is shown by a new interest in the work of *rangzen*-sympathetic author Buchung D. Sonam. Youth rebellion in exile is, in this way, conflated with the *rangzen* project. Again, without stepping too far from patrifilial terms – and perhaps in some ways appealing more forcefully to them – the *rangzenpa* have to varying degrees of success managed to seize on and exploit counter-narratives of Tibet's historic martiality to contradict Middle-Way representations of Tibetan pacifism, and modern discourses of democratisation (dear to the Dalai Lama) to make space for, and legitimise, dissensus in a community largely averse to deviance. In both regards, while secularist sympathies are likely more prevalent than is stated, *rangzenpa* justify their rebellion through claims to a deep respect for the Dalai Lama and commitment to the view that restoring an *independent* Tibet is the *only* way to guarantee his welfare and that of all Tibetans. This, of course, is not always successful. The intellectual (and elite) secular nationalism and progressive rhetoric of *rangzen* conflicts with the ambitions of the religious-political order – which, after all, it seeks to moderate – and more difficult still (as the editor of one pro-*umaylam* paper grumbled) is alien to most Tibetans in Tibet itself.

Perhaps most controversially, crucial to self-constitution through the *rangzen* rebel position is an unclear relationship with the ethicality of *violence* as a mode of resistance. To be clear: the *rangzen* movement is non-violent and officially rejects force as a means of resistance. But *rangzenpa* also emphasise that this is a *choice* exercised by Tibetans rather than an effect of some inherent pacifist nature (Dorjee & Tethong 2015).[362] For Norbu (1997), the misleading image of Tibetan pacifism has resulted in exiling the histories

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[362] Indeed, write Dorjee and Tethong (2015): 'There seems to be a growing misperception that advocating independence is synonymous with endorsing violent separation of Tibet from China, opposing the Central Tibetan

of those who 'took up arms for the freedom of their country' (see also: McGranahan 2010), and while it has had a regulatory effect, also propagates the illusion that surrender was inevitable. The spectre of violence haunts *rangzen* accounts, manifesting as a performed psychological tension among the *rangzenpa*.[363] This tension is clear in Tsundue's poetry who, incidentally, claims *rangzen* as central to his refugee identity: *The R on my forehead*, he writes – subverting the pathologised construction of the displaced – *between my English and Hindi/ the Tibetan tongue reads: RANGZEN.* In one poem Tsundue expresses this tension in terms of his feelings of treachery:

> My father died
> defending our home,
> our village, our country.
> I too wanted to fight.
> But we are Buddhist.
> People say we should be
> peaceful and non-violent.
> So I forgave my enemy.
> But sometimes I feel.
> I betrayed my father.

In *I am a Terrorist*, Tsundue plays out a violent fantasy; imagining the life of the insurgent he 'left behind':

> I am a terrorist.
> I like to kill.
> I have horns,
> two fangs
> and a dragonfly tail.
>
> […]
>
> justice constantly denied,
> patience is tested
> on television, battered
> in front of the silent majority
> pushed from that dead end
> I have returned.

Administration, and even opposing His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth, and we would like to address these dangerous myths here. We wholeheartedly believe in, practice and promote nonviolent means of achieving change in Tibet and ultimately, independence. But our belief in nonviolence is not based on faith or morality alone, it stems from our study and practice of nonviolent theory that shows us a peaceful resolution to the Tibetan issue is possible if we wage a struggle that combines strategy and nonviolent discipline'.

[363] This was most strikingly demonstrated through a story a former political prisoner told me of his internment in a Chinese prison. During his imprisonment, my interviewee said, he had asked his brother –who was visiting him- to bring a pig's heart the next time he came. When he did, my respondent described how he had ritualistically tore the heart apart with his teeth, convincing himself that it belonged to his enemies.

[…]

I am a terrorist.
Shoot me down.

[…]

I am the life
You left behind.

This poem bears striking parallel to Dhondup's (2004) film *We're No Monks*, in which four young men disenchanted with the stagnating Tibetan cause and its invisibility relative to Palestine, plan a suicide attack against a Chinese delegation in New Delhi. While fictional, this ambivalence should not be excluded as reflecting sympathies for more militant resistance among some in the *rangzen* movement, or wider uncertainty about the efficacy of *umaylam*. It is an ambivalence that might explain the reluctance of many to condemn the self-immolations when they first arose in eastern Tibet, and that continues to determine their valorisation regardless of the human cost. Indeed, Mills (2012) may be right here to argue that, were it not for the Dalai Lama, mounting concerns over the futility of the cause paired with the growing irrelevance of the exile community, would drive Tibetans to promote self-immolation as a way of restoring the urgency of the cause. It is *exactly* this elitist willingness of nationalism to abide or even inspire material sacrifice for symbolic gain that should stir caution. Simultaneously, rebellion as expressed by *rangzen* arguably extends beyond the independence/autonomy debate to embody – through appeals to good governance, social inclusion, and gender rights discourses – a wider *progressive* nationalist (Vahali 2009) project against the limits and dissipations of patrifilial hegemony in exile. As has been noted, while efforts at reform have been made, the democratic system in exile remains vulnerable to spasms of authoritarianism.[364] Indeed, despite recent rhetoric for greater youth political participation, this often seems tokenistic in practice. In this way *rangzen* – especially considering its young demographic – may be seen as a form of collective youth agency, something apparent in Dolma and Kelden's (2014) defence of the TYC: 'The youth have always been a great force of change in a society', they write, 'therefore, we think, that the TYC offers an extremely important platform to act independently as the voice of the youth in exile'. While I am sympathetic to this, and while I find the movement and its young advocates to be

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[364] As was seen with the last minute change of rules that barred Lukar Jam Atsok from electoral contention in 2016.

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unfairly maligned, I remain unsure of how far the project can realise equitable representation of all groups. Beneath discourses of democratisation and transformation remain national urgencies structured by prevailing patrifilial norms; and as such, we must ask whether issues like children's or women's rights can ever be offered equal standing as the recovery of the nation, and whether the appeal to such discourses is based more on the symbolic capital association with them brings.

THE LIMITS TO AGENCY

So far this chapter has reflected on the discourses through which young people are constituted and constitute themselves as agents in the context of national loss. Part Two especially reflected not only on how young people appear to self-identify as agents of the national cause, but can also exercise some agency in resisting patrifiliality. But how effectual is youth agency in exile? How far can young people effect change given their passionate attachment to the nation? Indeed, I remain cautious of claims to sovereign agency, and find efforts to move too radically against the social order tend to reflect and reinforce – either as an effect of external pressure or of internal disciplinary mechanisms – the patrifilial terms of recognition on which agency depends in the first place. Here, I discuss this in relation to the possibility of pluralism in exile -and with reference to the facility of young people more generally, and of young women specifically, to resist hegemony.

Multiple-Discourses of Tibetanness: **Youth and Class**

Tibetan nationalism, states Dhardon Sharling 'reflects not a unified discourse, but rather serves as a site of contention, with conflicting visions competing for allegiance'. For Tsundue also, 'exile Tibetan society has developed more acceptance of the variance in ideologies and perspectives'. This variation he notes, 'becomes both beauty and power'. The tolerance for what Anand (2000) identifies as 'multiple discourses of Tibetanness' in exile, suggests a polyvocality supportive of the essential pluralism of exile nationalism. While partly true appearances, as Sonam notes, can be deceptive, and despite regional tensions or those over *rangzen* a deeper conformity is clear. This is plain, for instance, in the cultural sphere, where despite variations between younger and elder generations in terms of taste, comportment and attitudes – differences brought about through appropriation of Indian and Western aesthetic norms – a deeper

conventionality (for Sonam stemming from a pervasive 'inner [anxiety] and love for Tibet'), is discernible. Indeed, while subaltern concerns flare up in creative work – such as with efforts by the writer-directors of *We're no Monks* and *Seeds* to highlight gendered issues like family abandonment and sexism – in general such works rarely deviate far from the nationalist account, and in some of their more 'radical' forms even *reiterate* conservative norms. This was clear early during my fieldwork when, after watching the popular young Swiss-Tibetan rapper 'Shapale' perform (see: Plate 35) at a fundraising concert, I was initially startled by what I thought at the time seemed like a widening generational gap in exile, evident by the incredulous expressions of many elder Tibetans in the audience presumably used to more 'authentic' displays of Tibetan culture. Yet closer scrutiny of Shapale's work reveals not the subversive content associated with the hip-hop genre, but reaffirmation not only of the masternarrative but also of filial values. In his perhaps best known record, the young artist states:

> *Mother and father, if your kids don't behave just call me up. I'll be there in a minute and give them a Shapale* [a Tibetan fried meat pie]. *Hey if you live in the west, don't forget that Tibet is where you come from. Speak Tibetan and write Tibetan. Be proud to be Tibetan.*

In a very similar fashion another young rapper, 'Tenkun', sings:

> *Nobody hear your cry, when you are stateless, sad and shouting for support. Your nation, your culture, your language, must be cared by you! Your Lama, your nation, your teachers, must be respected by you!*

This reveals not only how an art form regarded – aesthetically and historically – as radical serves to reinforce orthodox values, but also how it works to reproduce a specific moral pedagogy and, with it, certain (patrifilial) relations of power. Indeed, young people's attempts to 'speak up' are, in this way, often foreclosed by external insistence in the state of siege to '*stop fighting for* [their] *rights'* (Dolkar 2015),[365] and even for *rangzen* youth a reluctance to do so inured *via* internalised, deeply affective 'traditional' principles

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[365] Efforts by young people to contest perceived inequalities of the social order here often invite censure –and often from other young people. In Chapter Five I cited cases of public scandal during my fieldwork where young people were reported to have protested against their schools in response to unfair disciplinary practices. Readers' responses to reports reveal little sympathy for the 'disgraceful' attitudes of young people involved. One notes: '*Hi brother, thanks for having a feeling for the school that you were fed and if you are really worthy for your words then you should know the reality. So tell me the reality and you should know that the chaos makers are sinful. So don't try to draw public attention. Otherwise you are becoming one to pull out the leg of this school.*' And another: 'Shame on you people! If you could do nothing to bring pride to your institution then please I beg on behalf of our brothers and sisters stop doing anything that bring shame not only to your foundation but to our country. Don't make us a laughing stock in front of other people'. See: Wangyal, L. (2013). Available at:
http://www.tibetsun.com/news/2013/10/13/senior-students-of-tibetan-homes-school-protest-discipline-practices
(Accessed: June 22 2016).

of filial piety amplified by loyalties to the cause and fear of failing it. Such loyalties are admirable. But the uncritical filial commitments in this way can also engender and re-enforce a culture of naivety that enables, through eliding 'inconvenient truths', the perpetuation of an inequitable social order. Dolkar (2015) writes:

> *"Thobthang matsol!"* (Tibetan: Stop fighting for your rights) is an expression I hear all too often in our community. I hear this in schools when students stand up for themselves; I hear this when a woman raises her voice against injustice; and I hear this even when people criticize the workings of their own organization. We are often lectured by those in power that we must focus less on fighting for our rights and instead fulfill our responsibilities as obedient, respectful, and hardworking people. This seems to be a very convenient way to silence us in the face of inconvenient truths. What is frustrating, however, is that we do not realize the negative impact of such utterances. Such irresponsible statements do not only insult our intelligence but also endanger the future of our community. It stifles our critical thinking skills and turns us into cattle unable to think for ourselves – let alone an entire nation. Then there are those who accuse us of giving a "bad name" to the community (even to the extent of calling us traitors) when we have the courage to try to improve ourselves. If these people are so concerned about the image of our community, they should actually be attacking the perpetrators of injustice and not the victims.

As this suggests, the fear of being thought disobedient, gaining a 'bad name', or being branded a 'traitor', forms a powerful disciplinary mechanism for preventing individuals from realising, or, if they are able to realise, *challenging* the injustices of the social order. The subordination of young people here may contribute to what is, perhaps predictably, a low rate of youth involvement in exile politics. Indeed, where young people do participate, the need to justify even mild dissensus through underscoring their reverence to elders is acutely felt -as is apparent in Dolma and Kelden's (2014) defence of the Tibetan Youth Congress:

> We, as former board members of the Tibetan Youth Association in Europe (TYAE), which was founded in March 1970 in Switzerland, are very aware of the hardships faced by the founders and our elder generation. When we spend evenings with them talking about Tibet, we always feel inspired and have a sense of deep respect and gratitude.
>
> On the one hand, we often hear Tibetans saying that the youth play a key role regarding the future of Tibet and that we are the ones who need to carry on the Tibetan struggle. On the other hand, we feel that active political participation of Tibetan youth is only wanted as long as it doesn't challenge the status quo.
>
> We often hear words like "preservation" or "continuation". Of course, we preserve what has been given to us. But that does not mean that we cannot bring in new ideas, new forms of cultural or ideological expressions that are reflections of present circumstances. In this process, there needs to be an exchange between generations at eye level and without patronisation. This kind of exchange can only be beneficial for every society.

This last extract, of course, returns us to the controversial *rangzen-umaylam* dispute that, for some, has become emblematic not only of an intergenerational conflict, but a broader one between the hegemonic and other political projects. In this way, Tsundue's concern for 'variance in ideology and perspectives' above refers specifically, I believe, to tolerance of the *rangzen* critique rather than any other, and the ways in which the power relations reproduced and internalised by young people preclude it. Similarly, in an interview with two young SFT activists I was told how rather than pluralistic, exile society is in fact generally intolerant of dissensus,[366] something that concerned them most with regards to *rangzen*. Earlier I noted how, for some, *rangzen* in this way offers a progressive potential in exile. While I sympathise, and see a progressive promise in *rangzen*, this project seems to encompass not – *pace* Vahali (2009) – a *post-national* movement, but a turn to a more pronounced nationalism that, with its stress on the recovery of pure origins (Hacking 2002) – of the totality that was *lost* (LaCapra 1999) – may involve the less radical displacement of alterity. Members are largely well-educated young Tibetans from elite families,[367] sometimes raised or schooled in the west, and often seen as the community's future political leaders. Elitist leanings – structuring, *via* hyper-nationalism, an exclusory identity-politics that elides social troubles for the 'national good' – may, in this way, inflect *rangzen*, a case strengthened by the elite status of its

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[366] My interlocutors drew on McGranahan's notion of 'historical arrest' to describe what some see as the closure of political space in exile. This not only emphasises the erudition of my respondents, but also the interpellative power of scholarly engagement with the community.

[367] As discussed earlier, this was denied by many of my respondents who didn't consider *rangzen* to be particularly elite. As also mentioned earlier, however, Rinchen Tobgyal's (2010) article criticizing what he terms the 'elitist relics' responsible for besmirching Lobsang Sangay's *Sikyong* campaign appears to dispute this –many of those he singles out, of course, being prominent *rangzenpa*. Indeed, in this way Tobgyal identifies what he sees as the three categories of elites. First, he notes, are 'those high headed individuals who got an opportunity for education, exposure *etc etc*, when parents and grandparents of common Tibetans were digging dirt by making roads across Shimla borders. While a common Tibetan child was getting education in the worst of human conditions possible at a CST back then, these people were getting private education at an English medium school, in some of the best locations across India. Of course then, these would be the people in a better position to work for the Tibetan government in exile. Sometimes, service comes out of inheritance and not achieved through excellence'. Second, he argues, 'comprises of a group of individuals, some self-declared intellectuals, some armchair thinkers and some just toady wannabes. These people somehow have thought of themselves as sole caretakers, or I would rather say, tyrants of the Tibetan intellectual world. Rise of a common Tibetan, not just as a leader, but also as a highly educated intellectual, threatens these people. Jealousy obviously is the result, and then comes groundless banter of negative critique, subtly hidden within smart-ass words and sentences. Jamyang Norbu la, becomes a shining example of this category'. The last category, he concludes –in a way relevant here- 'mostly contains a small group of Tibetan youths, well educated and groomed overseas. What these youths fail to see, apart from the glamour of riding on the Tibet Inc., is an utmost failure to understand the real grass root problems of exile life in India, where majority of Tibetans live, not all of them have relatives in US or other countries. These group of youths are manipulated and channelled effectively by the above two categories of "Elitist Relics"'. Interestingly, the editors of the Political Review feel themselves compelled to point out that Rinchin la works as Sangay's website manager –only serving to re-emphasise how such disclosures, while likely indexing real grievances, reflect forms of affective-discursive practice.

loudest sponsors. Class is not the only issue displaced here. *Rangzenpa* valorisation of self-sacrifice elides the ages of the protestors and may even incite such action. As noted, Dorjee Tsering's suicide reveals the very real risk of how privileging the nation may play a part in the heart-breaking loss of some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

Gender & Marginality

As with the young, external pressure and internal disciplinary mechanisms limit the capacity of women to exercise agency in exile, especially at the intersection of age and gender. Of course, tensions between nationalism and gender rights and feminism are well established (see: Yuval-Davies 1997). Yet in exile, while many women are aware of this, their loyalties to the nation have resulted in a possibly incongruous commitment to a 'strong female nationalism' (Sharling 2013) involving a project of retrieving women's voices through the nation. So, explains Jamyang Kyi (2008):

> Today, a few thousand years late, there are a few women who have grown beyond the patriarchal traditions and are using their own minds to think through their individual stress and desires […]. In general, our society is made of monks. There are no women's voices, experiences or histories, *but there is room to claim women's voices.*

Indeed many young people, especially those identifying with the progressive ideals of the *rangzen* movement, respond positively to such attempts at recovery, and some progress has, as discussed, been made in improving gender equality in material terms. In a symbolic capacity, too, both women and men have tried to redress the historic subordination of women (McGranahan 2010; Sonam 2011). Progress seems evident today also. In an interview with Cassie Childers, the young American coach of the Tibetan girls' football team, I was told of widespread and growing public support for women's football despite the failure of the men's team; and, for Childers, despite the disempowerment of women in other fields of social life (see Plate: 33). A vital part of the training programmes, she explained, were 'empowerment' workshops that, she felt, alongside the success of the team have had a profound impact on the young women. *In Tibetan society*, she informed me, *young girls simply don't just stand up to elderly men* – yet she had seen the girls on her team increasingly develop the confidence required to do so. Yet even within the relatively neutral field of sport, things have not been easy. Childers also noted that the team has faced efforts by 'a

small elder male elite' to frustrate them, including the withdrawal of funding from the Sports Association that led, ultimately, to reforming the team as a charitable organisation. Also, popular support for the girls has not stopped some men from using their success for self-promotion. The arrogation of girls and women's agencies and bodies in this way manifests in a different way in the contentious annual Miss Tibet contest. While some see the contest offers an example of women's emancipation in a conservative society, and others consider it just harmless entertainment, others see the contest as a demeaning commodification of women's bodies, and symbol of their wider subordination and appropriation for the nation (*i.e.* Sangmo 2015).

I am thus sceptical that nationalism under siege offers the vehicle for realising greater gender equality in exile, a point reinforced when efforts by women to exercise agency in raising awareness of inequalities must negotiate censure or pushback. Even the *rangzenpa*, who are clearly more progressive with their inclusion and celebration of women in the independence struggle, are not entirely blameless here. Following publication of her remarkable *A Hundred Thousand White Stones*, Dolma for instance, noted that rather than support her efforts to visibilise gender violence in Tibet and exile, some of the so-called progressive (male) cultural elite did little to denounce the rebuke she received from the community, and were in some cases themselves critical of how her work might reflect badly on the community. Indeed, this pernicious silencing of injustice for upholding the 'good image' of the community is a recurring problem, and seems to reflect and reproduce pervasive patrifilial norms operating in both official and everyday institutional contexts. In the first instance, even in cases of severe abuse, such as the assaults at Mundgod, TCV, and Tenzingang, the response from the authorities has been at best neglectful, and at worst complicit (see above). In the second, those (women) that try to expose such problems can face aggressive backlash from the community. In talks with Kunsang Dolma and TFC founder Tenzin Pelkyi I was told of the hostile 'pushback' experienced due to speaking out. Such interactions, of course, are generally removed from public view, but they may be witnessed in more anonymous online spaces. After her remarks on sexual assault in exile, for instance, *chitue* Dhardon Sharling faced rebuke from those who thought her remarks damaging. In a comment left on a *YouTube* video of an interview in which she raises

the issue,[368] views on women's 'proper' place are indexed, with advice that they refer themselves to elite male elders for 'proper' tutelage:

> Today she is dividing between genders and tomorrow she will take another topic to divide Tibetan society… Fuck Dhardon Sharling. […] What results has she produced in Tibetan society due to her 'ass hole' workshops and lectures … Looks at the gals who follow her and listen her lectures… In the name of women empowerment they now consume alcohol, go to disco pubs, smoke, divorce and even hesitating to marry […] Pls attend lectures of His Holiness and other good Lamas as only they can show the right paths to Tibetan women[369]

Yet marginal agency here is not only limited from the outside, but also by the individual herself and her body – *via* the passionate attachments that serve as disciplinary mechanisms in deterring dissension – working against itself to ensure compliance. Indeed, this embodied subordination can operate even where an individual is aware of, and disagrees with, their subjectification in this way. In one account, Choezom (2016) describes meeting an elderly woman from Tibet during a religious teaching in Southern India. The woman, noticing the author and a teenaged girl sitting with several monks, told them of how 'women are born half and religiously doomed', and insists that women must recognise their impurity and inferiority, and work always to respect and obey men and monks, physically situating themselves lower when possible. The monks, Choezom notes, did not correct the woman, but then she notes, somewhat surprised, neither did she. '*I did not dare to speak against her'*, she claims, '*because I thought she might carry the message to Tibet and convince my family that I am being unreligious and disrespectful towards monks'*. More striking still, she continues, '*since then I have started sitting on lower seats, holding lower positions, and bending my head down a little when my monk cousins are around, especially in the presence of those who came from Tibet. I do this in order to leave an impression that I am as respectful and obedient as women in Tibet'*. Critically, Choezom's submission to inequality here seems to stem, as discussed, from fear of the shame and personal loss associated with betrayal of the family, school or community. As argued in Chapter Four, love for the paternal figure of the Dalai Lama as symbolic of community, can constitute an especially profound disciplinary mechanism here. In 2013, Dolma for instance reported having to remove from her blog an interview with a victim of sexual assault,

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[368] See: TibetTV (2014) *Prevention of Sexual Assault in the Tibetan Community: A Panel Discussion.* Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Dfkj40cR9s (Accessed: June 22 2016).
[369] In another comment 'Tibet King' criticises authorities for not tackling Indian assaults on Tibetan women: '*These two jobless women, especially Dadon Sharling demonising and making fun at Tibetan men… They don do anything when the Indian taxi drivers rape Tibetan women again and again. Who gave these two fake people to defame Tibetan men?'* The reference to 'jobless' possible marks a classed dimension here too.

not only because the woman faced reproach from the community, but also because she could not cope with the prospect that she might cause the Dalai Lama humiliation. As Dhondup's attempt to define criticality in terms of nationalist *rangzen* terms reveals (see above), the extent of internalised constraints on agency – limits that affectively fix terms of grievance and action beyond the subject's conscious awareness – preclude the prospect of sovereignty here. As noted, while *Lhamo and her Badness* may offer hope for transgressing patrifiliality by turning inequitable gender norms against it through the lead character's simulation of being a 'bad girl', this still ends in a *real* loss of reputation, and moreover plunges her back into a refugee condition that, while freed from her arranged marriage, may in many ways be materially worse.

PARRHESIA AND MARGINAL AGENCY

In previous parts I discussed how, while young people *do* exercise what seems to be a sovereign agency in constituting themselves as subjects, including in ways that confront the inequalities of the patrifilial order, the terms of their constitution inevitably remain determined and inhibited by dispositions affected by socialisation. But if individuals are so constrained, then what prospects remain for agency and change in exile? Drawing on the concept of *parrhesia*, here I reflect on the possibility of 'truth telling' as a culturally salient modality of *decentred* marginal agency. Taking for granted the idea that 'truth' refers not to an ontological truth 'out there', but instead a relation of the subject to herself in the compulsion to speak what she knows to be true, I reflect first on the constitution and self-constitution of the subject as *parrhesiastes* in the nationalist cause, and second – and rarer – as one who speaks of non-nationalist forms of gendered, classed or generational loss.

Parrhesia and Nation

FIGURE 45: PARHESIASTES?

Parhesiastes of Tibetan History (from left to right: Lungshar, Gedun Coephel, Rangdrol, Jamyang Norbu, Shokdrung, Jamyang Kyi, and, interestingly, 'Tibetan Youth'). Reproduced from Norbu, J. (2013) *Reading JN in a Banakshol Teahouse.*

Despite reservations for provenance and sovereignty, we must recognise the value of those who are identified or self-identify as *parrhesiastes* within the prevailing narrative of national loss. Those who speak truth about national loss – *e.g.* those *rangzen* activists who speak in criticism of China and exile authorities; those writers and artists living in China itself whose explicit or implicit critique of authority puts them at very real risk of reprisal; or the self-immolators, who sacrifice their lives in what are held to be *parrhesiastic* acts – 'speak' from subordinate positions and at great risk to themselves (key criteria for *parrhesia*). Yet, while each may be claimed as, or claim to be, truth tellers, the contingency of this position in relation to truth, encourages attention to the criteria that allow each to speak – and that determine the 'truth' to which they speak – and their differential authority. The *rangzenpa*, as the first of these groups, often identify as *parrhesiastes* in all but name, attesting (like all exiles) the truth of historical loss, but going further in positioning themselves as critics of the 'stupidity, intolerance and fanaticism' (Norbu 2013) of exile governance and society: the last of an uncorrupted minority devoted to the 'true' project of independence. While safe from Chinese reprisal, telling such truth invites community censure that, for Norbu, parallels that faced in Tibet. The cartoon above, taken from his blog – and purportedly produced for a website in Tibet – illustrates this, depicting seven reformers from Tibetan history facing *thamzing* by an angry faceless mob. Norbu (centre), appears dejected as the crowd pelt him with stones and shout charges of '*Traitor! Unbeliever! Red Guard!*' Reflecting on the cartoon, Norbu writes:

> It's not every day that you can make both your enemies and your friends happy with the same blog post […] My detractors will be pleased to see an image of me being stoned by a mob, and recall those heady days in the autumn of 1985 when I was subjected to a full dress *thamzing* or "struggle" […] in Dharamshala by the religious-right. My friends viewing this cartoon will be pleased and reassured to see that our compatriots inside Tibet have read (in Tibetan and Chinese translations) some of the postings on this blog-site, and that they, furthermore, appear to be perfectly aware of the stupidity, intolerance and fanaticism that permeates our society today.

While the image and Norbu's response to it seem to confirm the extent and gravity of 'senseless' social censure faced by and constitutive of the *parrhesiastes*, they also imply a Socratic willingness to accept, and delight in, the role of *pharmakos* (Derrida 1981): *i.e.* a performed exclusion. Indeed, while Norbu's work does invite censure, in reality the risk he faces as an aristocrat and respected intellectual based in the US is negligible, and incomparable to that faced by others in the cartoon. While provocative, for his status and

station *inside* the borders of the masternarrative, Norbu is hardly radical. Although he and *rangzenpa* more widely rhetorically valorise the *parrhesiastic* ideal of critical thinking, it seems as if criticality is defined in terms of one's alignment with *rangzen*, and Norbu himself has often shown hostility to the scholarship of 'barefoot experts' (see Fischer 2013) that appears to contradict nationalist accounts. Indeed, the criticality of *rangzen* accounts, and the truth they reveal, is highly contingent. I do not entirely accept, in this regard, the idea – expressed by some in exile that vilify the 'kudrak struggle' of Norbu and his 'gang members' – that *rangzen* comprises a solely elite movement. Nevertheless, we may ask just how critical *rangzen* 'truth', defined in terms of how far it benefits the wider populace, actually is. Of course, majority opposition to *rangzen* in no way undermines the *parrhesiastic* claim, and may indeed be constitutive of it. At the same time, a normative assumption might be that such speech, while inviting risk for the speaker, is intended to help the very people that, benighted by their rulers, threaten her. As the cartoon proves, this is very much the perspective of many *rangzen* supporters. Nevertheless, as Tsering (2016) contends:

> The bitter fact for these *Rangzen* activists is that more and more Tibetans are becoming more and more rational, and starting to genuinely appreciate and follow the vision set by the Dalai Lama. The general Tibetan public is neither blindly following the Dalai Lama's vision, nor respecting him merely just because he is the Dalai Lama. They believe his vision is realistic, and that his contributions towards the Tibetan cause are unfathomable.

For some *rangzenpa*, popular support for *umaylam* is often seen as symptomatic of a broader, usually religiously motivated, false consciousness. Yet by turning the *rangzenpa* outcry for rational democratic engagement back on them, Tsering here frames such claims as elitist. Of course, as with Norbu, some escape this by claiming to speak also for voiceless (but, it is assumed, *rangzen*-sympathising) Tibetans in Tibet. One respondent to Norbu's blog writes, '*It's great to know that Tibetans in Tibet are aware of what is going on with the Tibet question. Every aspect of it. They are no starry eyed 'raised in exile' who spew out verbatim what's been [fed] to them*'. As implied by my editor-friend earlier – who queried how changes to institutions made in exile could be democratic given that they were implemented without consulting the millions of (conservative) Tibetans in Tibet – this equivalence is, however, uncertain. Indeed, the *parrhesiastic* legitimacy of *rangzenpa* is hence limited by their lack of experience of present realities in Tibet. This is not

however a problem faced by truth-tellers in Tibet itself.[370] While such voices are less frequently heard than those in exile, many show tremendous courage in speaking out against injustices in, and against, Tibet. The risk faced by such activity is very real, and as the report *A Raging Storm* documents (ICT 2010), increasing numbers of Tibetan bloggers, intellectuals and artists have, since 2008, been imprisoned for such 'subversive' activity. In an open letter to her friend Norzin Wangmo – a cadre officer sentenced to five years in prison for 'passing on news over the phone and internet about the situation in Tibet to the outside world' – Jamyang Kyi, who has herself been imprisoned for alleged 'criminal subversion', lamented:

> In your thirties, the prime of life, the critical juncture when your child needs educating, you and other heroes and heroines like you parted ways with your parents, split up with your spouses, and made orphans of your children *for the sake of truth*, and had to take the path alone. [Emphasis added].

In representing events in a certain way, reports like *A Raging Storm*, while vital for exposing violence, project an equivalence and continuity to indigenous struggle that, while nationalistically *inflected*, rarely shows the secessionist sentiments shared by exiles and supporters, and is more likely rooted in specific structural contexts and the pernicious liquidations of neoliberal reform. Indeed, in regarding violence, grievance, and protest in Tibet *vis-à-vis* the eternalised '1959 mentality', not only are nuances of historical change in the nature of conflict and violence excluded, but so too are gendered, classed, or generational dimensions of these as they relate to such contexts. Jamyang Kyi's designation as *parrhesiast* is interesting,[371] for while she is certainly a witness to national loss, her critique of the *gendered* dimension of suffering through conflict and occupation, and its extension to gender issues in Tibetan society and culture – including to the resistance effort in Tibet – risks a move beyond the terms of *parrhesia* as *morally* defined. Indeed, while much of Kyi's work records the violences committed against Tibetan women by

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[370] *E.g.* Writers such as Woeser, Tragyal, Jamyang Kyi.
[371] Indeed, Kyi identifies with the concept of *parrhesia* in all but word –articulating it in terms of 'freedom of speech': 'Irrespective of time and place, the intellectuals have led society and faced the injustice of the authorities head on and ultimately many have paid the price with their lives. It is thus that Buddha renounced his kingdom and wandered alone for the sake of freedom of thought. Jesus Christ sacrificed his life on the cross to prove truth from falsehood. The executions and persecution during the Spanish Inquisition was about freedom of thought. Socrates was killed by serving poisoned drink because he wrote plays that promoted freedom of speech. In this way, the human civilization has sustained and developed by stirring thoughts and honing freedom of speech'.

China, recent pieces have turned inward, to document the 'truth' about inequality within Tibetan society and culture. In one piece, she writes:

> The truth is that our culture fosters the physical and mental abuse of women. Women are expected to be obedient housewives. Women are expected to remain silent and when they speak their mind, it is seen as a bad omen. Women spend their lives near the stove in a house that belongs to the brutal and egotistical man.

Kyi's attempts to articulate truths about national and *gendered* truths have, in this way, led to her arrest and torture by China, as well as – following her criticism of the backwardness, parochialism, and 'ulterior motives' of Tibetan 'holy masters' (the 'big Lamas and Khenpos') and their 'brutal' propagation of Buddhism in eastern Tibet – her denunciation as a 'demon-ness' by the community (Buffetrille 2014). This latter issue refers explicitly to several recent articles by Kyi that, from her role as a woman and a mother, attacks the rise of a patriarchal, elitist 'Buddhist fundamentalism' regulating social life in eastern Tibet, and of course offers rare illumination of the wider overdetermination of grievance and protest in present-day Tibet. In two pieces, Kyi criticises the unjust imposition of harsh sanctions[372] by those 'who hold high titles' against Tibetans that have violated certain prescripts (*esp.* vetoes on meat-eating and speaking Mandarin) of the puritanical 'Ten Virtues'; a movement that, likely forming a reaction to and form of resistance against China's alleged policy of assimilation, is also apparently responsible for perpetuating inequalities among Tibetans.[373] While, through enforcement of policies such as 'coercive vegetarianism', this movement might be seen as elitist – discriminating, here, against the 'masses of Tibetan farmers and pastoralists' who need meat to subsist in Tibet's harsh climate – Kyi is concerned mainly with the impact on gender. Indeed, for Tibetan women, mothers and infants, she contends – appealing to scientific evidence – that vegetarianism can be especially deleterious for health and wellbeing. Concern for class and gender intersect where she notes the acute vulnerability of rural women who -burdened with 'heavy work'-

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[372] Including fining people or through the manufacture of guilt. The social and emotional pressure to conform here is clearly intense –comprising a form of symbolic violence. Tibet Web Digest reproduces one anecdote of an individual who violated the virtues by selling his livestock: 'Ramang Pema sold his livestock and transgressed the Ten Virtues. Because of this, the door of dharma shut on him. After this, one of his child died. He begged for the dharma door to be opened many times but it wasn't opened. Finally not even a single monk came for the funeral and he had to throw the child's body into the river'.

[373] The irony, notes Buffetrille (2014:121), is that 'these lamas can be perceived as indirectly accommodating state efforts to sedentarise and marketise rural Tibetans, along with other activists (development NGOs and missionaries) who help the work of the modernising state'.

are caught between state abuses (*incl.* forced sterilisations and poor diet as a result of failed development), and cultural prohibitions, factors she sees as underpinning rising rates of dietetic and psychological disorders.

Extending the context of suffering and protest in Tibet in this way may allow reconsideration of the most urgent *parrhesiastic* agency of the self-immolators. Indeed, while self-immolation may, as was noted earlier, be considered an ideal kind of *parrhesiastic* practice – a statement about the truth of *national* suffering in Tibet – this account assumes a theoretically untenable agential sovereignty. Empirically, it may be in this way worth noting, with Buffetrille (2014), the parallels between the substance and didactic tone of the Ten Virtues (*e.g.* instructing Tibetans not to fight or kill animals, and to speak Tibetan), and the testimonies left by the self-immolators, an issue Kyi, incidentally, does not broach. If true, this is of course significant, returning us to questions of whether local forces might play a part in such acts. Certainly this is not to reject the nationalist valence of sacrifice, or the passionate attachment of young protestors. Quite the contrary, it seems to imply – in agreement with the *rangzenpa* – the emergence (but not *resurgence*) of an indigenous nationalist project, but one rooted in the material context of economic reform and – *pace* Norbu – based in, and spiritualised by, local religious institutions. The imagined equivalence of Norbu and Kyi as *parrhesiastes* in the cartoon above, then, belies vital dissonances in the truths they tell. While Norbu passionately advocates a secular nationalist reading of protest, Kyi opens space for understanding them as mediated by the religiosity Norbu spurns. Still, the constitution and self-constitution of subjects through this discourse remains a potentially elitist process that elides the overdetermination of individual welfare. In stressing the nationalistically *inflected* rather than determined nature of political subjectivity and agency, I do not reject the value or legitimacy of nationalist grievances, or deny self-immolation as a *performance* of this truth. At the individual level I argue, however, this is a truth that always comes from outside, and only *partly* accounts for such sacrifice.

Tibetan girls' football team play against an Indian girls team at Upper TCV in Dharamshala. The training programme, which involves empowering young women more broadly alongside football training, has shown remarkable success. Even still, young women struggle to assert their interests and rights in a paternalistic and patriarchal order where gender violence remains a significant problem, and where attempts to draw attention to such inequalities are resisted out of interest for the 'national cause'.

PLATE 35: MARGINAL AGENCY? (3)

The young Swiss-Tibetan rapper Shapale performs at a benefit concern at the Tibetan Institute for Performing Arts (TIPA) in Dharamshala. While the choice of musical form and its popularity among young Tibetans contrasts markedly with 'traditional' styles, this is deceptively superficial. Shapale's choice of clothing (his traditional shirt and *chupa*) and the lyrics of his records hint at a more deep-rooted conformism among youth.

PLATE 36: MARGINAL AGENCY? (4)

A poster for the 5ᵗʰ Tibetan film festival in 2013 (*Image: Students for a Free Tibet*). The image, depicting a young Tibetan woman posed as Marilyn Monroe in a traditional Tibetan *chupa*, proved controversial in the community – seen variously as appropriative, improper, and (for some) sexist. The image and struggles over it effectively illustrates the difficulty of marginal agency. While in some respects it represents resistance against traditional patrifiliality, in deploying 'western' imagery and objectified (sexualised) images of women to meet 'subversive' ends such exercises in disidentification may also be argued to reproduce inequitable social norms.

Alterity and *Parrhesiastic* Agency in Exile

In exile, as we have seen, attempts to index loss that falls outwith the '1959 mentality' of national trauma have been uncommon. As Sharling's (2013) resolve for a *feminist* nationalism shows, the experiences and interests of marginal groups must be situated and justified *vis-à-vis* this prevailing cultural framework. This is unsurprising. Foucault's discussion on *parrhesia* after all implies how truth will likely only have force if the conditions of its telling, and the moral qualities of the speaker, align. In classical times one's recognisability as truth teller depended on status and gender. These, with age, matter in exile too – some voices, as discussed, are less valid than others – but more important still is whether one speaks in a way consistent with the masternarrative. In *The Story of My Rape*, the writer (as a young woman speaking a difficult truth) explains how her right to recognise and speak the truth are invalidated by what she describes as her 'modern-ness': '*I have been told*', she says, '*that I do not understand enough about our community, that I view things through the lens of the 'modern', 'western' education I have received*'. Still, as this proves, efforts to index alternative histories and experiences of loss in exile are extant, and while the speaker may not be identifiable as a *parrhesiastes* within moral exilic terms, material experiences of suffering may be recognisable from the outside, compelling the community into action for fear of losing its reputation (and privileges). Such efforts to speak of marginal loss, however, come less from the Indian diaspora, than from youth living in the West, or even in Tibet. The Internet, given the almost infinite space it offers for swift, relatively anonymous contact between Tibetans and non-Tibetans world-wide, has also been of tremendous significance here, and together these have contributed, over the course of my research, to a notable increase in the volume, complexity, and candour of the conversation about gender inequality, violence, and rights in exile. Perhaps most symbolic of this new concern was the founding by several young American Tibetan women of the *Tibetan Feminist Collective* in 2014. As *The Story of My Rape* illustrates, TFC offers a site both for articulating a wider feminist agenda for the community, and a space for publicising (often quite harrowing) accounts of gender violence: working as a technology not only for restoring displaced histories, but also, in allowing for *signification* of these traces of loss, for the constitution and self-constitution of new (feminist) subjects.

Returning to *parrhesia*: because she remains anonymous, the *parrhesiastic* status of the author of *The Story of My Rape* may, of course, be queried. This is not the case, however, for the young women who created TFC despite knowing the rebuke they would face for speaking 'out of turn' and exposing possibly damaging secrets. The deliberate self-constitution as *parrhesiast* in this way was revealed by one of these women as she described '[embarking] upon a very risky, unknown journey', a decision for which, she claimed, she has received much backlash, and that has barred her from opportunities. The work of these women is, of course, vitally important, and I in no way seek to lessen it. At the same time, much like Jamyang Norbu, while the elite status of my interviewee may bolster her claim as *parrhesiast*, we might ask whether her status and education not only cedes her license and security not enjoyed by most Tibetan women, but also reduces her representativeness. With this said, my respondent, who was acutely aware of her privilege as a daughter of a rich merchant family who received one of the 1000 discretionary US visas, stressed the greater sensitivity of young Tibetans to the socio-political intricacies of the conflict and contemporary exile politics, noting divergence with the culturalist concerns of elder Tibetan and non-Tibetan intellectuals. Moreover TFC, as seen, does not shy from pieces critical of the community. Still, while they are vital, the eloquence of the testimonies offered on the site suggest a degree of exclusivity; the extent to which they are read, find traction among, and represent the views of, the thousands of far less-privileged young women living in Tibet and in exile, remains uncertain.

Despite evidence of brutal forms of gender-violence enacted against Tibetan women by China in Tibet, and despite the persistence of detrimental *indigenous* gender norms and practices there, it is possible that, given efforts by the CCP to kindle gender-consciousness in Tibet (Croll 1978 – cf. Makley 2007), some impetus for gender equalisation might have emerged dialogically through encounters – either *via* migration or in virtual space – with Tibetans in Tibet itself. In this way, while nationalistically *inflected*, we should perhaps not see the work of those such as Jamyang Kyi as equivalent to nationalistically *oriented* exile feminism. As my last nominee for the designation of *parrhesiast* here, I signal Kunsang Dolma who, after recording her own experiences of domestic violence, sexism, and rape in Tibet and exile, has sought to raise awareness of women's rights either side of the Himalaya, encouraging others to tell their stories, and being unafraid to criticise exile authorities and institutions. Dolma, more than others, has faced rebuke

from the community as a result of her work, forcing her to sever ties and move to the US with her American husband. The harshness of Dolma's treatment may reflect in part, as discussed earlier, her rural BiT status and engrained classed perceptions about her viability to speak, but it may also be due to her refusal to politicise women's rights *vis-à-vis* the nationalist masternarrative, and even to directly challenge it. While her work includes much criticism of China, in her interview Dolma told me of her frustration with 'big politics' that prevents engagement with everyday concerns of Tibetan women especially, a point that recurred in her critique of the '1959 mentality' pervading much exile discourse. Yet Dolma does not *disidentify* with the nation (indeed, she expresses deep nationalist sentiments), neither is she free of the cultural norms through which she identifies as Tibetan, telling me of her struggle over the 'right' way to raise her daughters when torn between traditional Tibetan patrifilial values, and western liberal materialism. But in refusing to reduce her experience of suffering to a totalising fiction of national loss, and in speaking in a way that gently and obliquely criticises exile society while leaving herself vulnerable, Dolma simply tries to 'act otherwise' in offering a different truth, and creating possibility for a distinct, *but non-antagonistic*, gender politics.

<div align="center">❖</div>

After all my enquiries I remain divided over how to see marginal youth agency in exile. On one hand, engagement with the community seems to reveal a dynamic, politically engaged, and progressive youth involved in creative reimagining of identity and society. On the other, deeper exposure compels caution, revealing a youth at once enabled and constrained by a profoundly affective governmentality of national loss that is constituted by, and constitutes, a conservative patrifilial order. Certainly, young people play a vital role in the resistance against China, but identification by young people as national agents must not be seen as sovereign, but as an overdetermined social process that can have, for its inherent inequalities, painfully tragic costs. In exile, efforts to resist hegemony are precluded by deference to a narrow nationalist narrative that, even with more 'radical' *rangzen* youth displaces alternative histories of loss and their (alternative) political potential. Yet this is not wholly true. Despite scant evidence for clear or politicised class or generational consciousness in exile, over recent years the advent and mobilisation of gendered consciousness has been more apparent, helped by the Internet and the rise in women's voices

from diasporic locations such as Europe, the US, and even Tibet. Criticism of patriarchal values and the failure of exilic governance to redress gender inequalities can be keen. One writer argues:

> Why should only the wife cook dinner and wash dishes while the husband watches TV or catches up on some paperwork from the office? Why are our daughters raised never to question and always to "listen to your elders" (even if the elders in question are wrong), to not fight for themselves ("good girls don't fight"), to "accept their fate" and sacrifice all the time (because "that's what Tibetan women do")?

Yet identifying one's enthrallment does not invariably enable resistance against the terms of recognition that also make life meaningful, and here too we should be cautious of overstating the extent of agency. As *The Story of My Rape* testifies, the pressure on women with stories deemed inconsistent or counterproductive to the nationalist masternarrative and cause to remain silent is enormous, imposed -as Choezom's *We, too, Have Women's Issues* corroborates- as much internally by the individual against herself or by family members (including other women), as by external coercion. The inability to speak in this way reflects the shaping of the 'horizon of affect and meaning' (Alexander 2012), through historically specific relations of *power*; the workings, that is, of patrifiliality *via* internalised passionate attachments to the nation and its more concrete familial and communal institutional offices. As my respondent from TFC noted (see Chapter Five), 'filial piety' or 'deference to our elders and ancestors', is what 'all our political work is rooted in'. She attested to the constraining effects of such loyalties on youth agency, emphasising in particular the intense – but *learned* – respect for the 'paternalistic' figure of HHDL, and how such attachment produces vulnerabilities that make it '*very difficult to make a contribution as a young person, a legitimate contribution, and especially one that challenges the prevailing forces of our society.*' Indeed, she noted: '*it becomes nearly impossible.* As with Dolma, Kyi, or my interviewee from TFC, where individuals *are* seen to be speaking truths dissonant with the masternarrative or in violation of patrifilial norms, the risk of external censure or worse is great. With Dolma it is curious, for example, that criticism against her often centres on the idea that by disclosing her father's violent abuse of his wife and children he is disrespecting him, and by extension the community. This, however, is a shallow reading of her work that offers a more sensitive exploration of the loss endured by Tibetans as an effect of Chinese occupation *and* of other cultural violences that the 'trauma' of occupation has displaced. Dolma offers vital corrective here, noting how her

autobiography in no way seeks to make anyone 'look bad', but was instead intended as an exercise in self-care through examination of her past. Quite contrary to a betrayal of her father, Dolma notes, its release reconciled them: '*when my father listened to my interview with Radio Free Asia*', she noted, '*him and me both felt sad and cried. Later, he told me everything I talked about was the truth and that's all that matters*'. Of course, understanding the conditions that enable such mutual recognition of truth remains lacking; and we must remember that any gender politics here, like national politics, is performed rather than natural. Still, while wellbeing in exile remains defined in national terms, Dolma's story testifies to how the *parrhesiastic* performance of gendered narratives of loss *may* allow advent of new political subjectivities, and to a more progressive social order. Loss has for much of this work been denaturalised as a way of governing self and others, but it can be a source for social transformation when paired with collective critical reflexivity and a 'responsibility to difference'. 'Acting otherwise' entails resisting the displacement of different kinds of loss (or, in Dolma's words, 'hiding the bad times') in efforts to ensure unity, and instead accepting and being vulnerable to radical and constitutive alterity and the alternate prospects for freedom it allows. It entails the 'impossible' task of inhabiting the intersection 'between the play of institutions that have produced us – institutions that we continue to reproduce even as we resist their effects – and the fearful emptiness that contemplating their loss evokes': a site, notes Dumm (1996), that 'establishes many themes to be challenged and many truths to be lost and found.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has offered less a continuation than a theoretical repositioning on the issue of how young people experience, make sense of, and respond to conflict and displacement. Drawing on the concept of political subjectification, the first two parts of the chapter examined the discursive field through which young people are constituted and work to constitute themselves as subjects and agents in the Sino-Tibetan conflict and exile society, dealing specifically with the positions of 'victim', 'martyr', and 'rebel'. In the third and fourth parts I tried subsequently to contend with the implications of this for agency, considering first, in part three, the limits on sovereign agency – determined by the internalisation of profound passionate attachments that double as disciplinary mechanisms in regulating desire – and then reflecting,

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in part four, on the prospect of a decentred marginal agency through efforts to fearlessly speak the 'truth'

of alternate kinds of loss in the face of power.

CONCLUSION

This thesis considered the constitution (and self-constitution) of youth subjectivities and agencies in the context of conflict, displacement, and intergenerational loss. With specific reference to the Tibetan case, it attempted to respond to queries over how violence might be understood to mark youth (political) socialisation. In a theoretical capacity, I rejected clinical and cultural approaches to explaining this relationship. While persuasive, I argued that clinical theory fails to take account of how violence, loss, and agency (and the relationship between them) are enmeshed in processes of cultural representation, meaning that the young experience, make sense of, and respond to loss in ways that are socio-historically and culturally contingent. Simultaneously, while accepting the anti-mimetic premise of constructivist *cultural trauma* theory, I also questioned its voluntarism and tendency to remove the ontological weight of loss, as well as, of course, its valorisation of the terms of cultural recognition. Indeed, with both accounts I queried what might be seen as the *universalisation* of loss, and the subsequent *underdetermination* of experience, subjectivity and agency. Efforts to explain subject's experience of and response to violence, I argued – attempts at *memoro-politics* (Hacking 1996) – in this way form constitutive but always-partial accounts that displace the wider constitutive material-discursive field. In response I turned to concepts of subjectification and overdetermination in an effort to identify the finite but irreducible field of ideal and material forces through which the individual is *historically* constituted, and constitutes himself, as a subject and agent. While this seems to leave little space for agency – understood either conventionally as a quality of a sovereign subject, or in more unconventional psychoanalytical terms – I nevertheless accept the possibility of *decentred* agency through (heteronomously governed) efforts by subjects to constitute themselves through identifying with alternate histories of loss, turning to Foucault's *parrhesia* as a heuristic. With this theoretical context in mind, I turned to consider the unique case of the Sino-Tibetan conflict, and to violence, loss, and agency among young refugees of the exile community. Here, I asked how young people are constituted, and work to constitute themselves, *via* discourses of national loss; what other histories of loss and accounts of present social suffering are displaced through this process; and what possibilities exist for marginal agency. More specifically, I asked: (1) *how is the masternarrative of historical trauma produced, transmitted and inherited?* (2) *How absolute is the masternarrative, and are alternate accounts of loss,*

subjectivity and agency available? And (3), *how are young people made, and how do they make themselves, as refugee subjects of the 'lost nation' – how total is this process, and what prospects exist for indexing subaltern (classed, gendered, or generational accounts)?* I conclude here by drawing together findings from the empirical chapters. In the first part I reflect on my empirical contributions as they relate to the research questions. In the second, I consider the possible theoretical contribution of this thesis, with specific regard on the one hand, to the implications of my finding for debates on the transformative nature of the traumatic event, and on the other, to the wider value of overdetermination and subjectification as means for theorising 'extreme' youth agencies. In the final part I reflect on limitations, suggesting areas where the study could be enriched, or avenues for further work that have been revealed or inspired by this project.

EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

My empirical contributions correspond to each of the empirical chapters, each responding to the three main research questions. In **Chapter Four** I consider the construction, transmission, and inheritance of loss, by exploring how the structuring masternarrative of national loss – and with it the national community, cause and attending subjectivities – is constructed through various affective-discursive practices. This, of course, contradicts orthodox or even radical psychoanalytical views of the singularly traumatic 'event' and its effects, relocating the force of loss and the means of its transmission from material reality to discourse – or *narrative* practice. Drawing on Alexander's (2004; 2012) 'cultural trauma' theory, I discussed how 'national' trauma – and the political community it is held to have marked – did not emerge at the point of occupation, but has arisen later (although as no less 'real') through imaginative processes of cultural representation, and may even have its locus in different events (*e.g.* occupation, surrender, or exile itself). Much of Chapter Four involved discussion of the ways in which this national trauma is transmitted and inherited, so as to emerge as a psychological (or experiential) reality. I focussed, in particular on the affective-discursive practices or technologies – especially in the aesthetic arena – through which young people are socialised into loss, noting in particular the role of the traumascape and pedagogic practices occurring in families and schools. This discussion, however, also politicised the transmission and inheritance of loss here, not only with regards to how the 'truth' of violence, suffering, and agency are affectively established *vis-à-vis* the Sino-Tibetan conflict, but also how such institutions in

providing care and *recognition* establish the primary 'passionate attachments' (Butler 1997) on which the subject's vulnerability to power is established.

Chapter Five tempers the cultural account by accepting the mimetic nature of loss, subjectivity and agency, but decentring the singular – or even the transeunt *causal* – significance of what is really a *relational* rather than discrete event by considering the alternative and present-day histories and accounts of loss displaced by the masternarrative. In the first part I tried to extend appreciation of the constitution of loss, subjectivity, and agency beyond the ideal account of national trauma, to take account of the broader historical material-discursive field. In particular, given my interest in age, gender and class, I attempt to illuminate historical traces and material legacies of loss that while irreducible to and even controverting the nationalist masternarrative, are excluded from accounts of subjectivity and agency. Evidence of classed, gendered, and generational violence and inequality in this way destabilised claims of a harmonious pre-occupation polity, and for universal opposition to occupation, with the '*blessing in disguise*' forming a prevalent counter-narrative in accounting for the impact of occupation on Tibetan society. Turning to alternative forms of loss in contemporary exile I continued consideration of classed, gendered, and generational counter-narratives of loss, noting how, while progress has been made toward equalisation with respect to each, structural inequalities and exclusions remain, especially with regard to age and gender – with old and new forms of class distinction extant, but, as I will discuss, in less acute and less easily articulable ways. Identifying and articulating inequalities in terms of identity remains difficult, in part foreclosed by the masternarrative of national loss, and processes of risked essentialism under siege; something likened by one youth to '*facing a tiger*'. In the penultimate part of Chapter Five I discuss how such processes result in the displacement of meaning – the displacing, that is, of alternative interpretations of loss and different kinds of political identification – both historically, and in the contemporary conflict. In the first case, I discuss the possibility for classed, gendered, or generational consciousness in pre-occupation Tibet, noting that, while such consciousness was likely limited, this does not wholly preclude grounds for classed, gendered or generational reading of the event, or agencies within it. For lower classes, women, and the young, I argue, experiences of conflict have been framed nationalistically, with behaviours at odds with this explanation (*e.g.* participating in revolutionary violence) dismissed in terms of ignorance

or avarice. More research, particularly with Tibetans that joined the Red Guard, is needed. In the second case, I considered the sources and significance of loss and agency in the present conflict, with specific reference to flight, protest, and self-immolation. While I do not reject the nationalist account, I argue that it is by itself inadequate, and ask whether rising *intra*-generational tensions between young people born in exile and new arrivals may be ascribed as much to 'very different sentiments and loyalties' – owing to differing generative conditions – between the groups, as much as to cultural dissonance in habitus. While national loss forms a vital interpellative force in overdetermining each of these forms of agency, and might even be becoming more accepted, extreme (suicidal) behaviours (sometimes of children) cannot and should not be entirely reduced in this way, but requires sensitive classed, gendered, and generational analysis that goes beyond the narrow (and fairly contemporary) nationalist interpretation. In the last part I return to consider how far the material process of displacement or the ideal signification of national loss have enabled, as some theorise, 're-narration' of the social foundations, and articulation of a progressive social order in exile. While I respect the community's efforts and successes at transformation, I argued that valorisation of the community and cause also generates institutional disregard, or even dismissal, of *intra*-communal material inequalities. As such, I reassert that the nationalist account, rather than a natural result of trauma or the product of consensus, is an artefact of, and works to reproduce, a specific social order. While, as I note below, I do not dismiss the classed dimension, I (tentatively) define this social order in terms of *patrifiliality* (encompassing both its patriarchal and generational exclusions and inequalities).

Finally, **Chapter Six** returned to the issue of agency between the structuring account of national loss and other material-discursive forces operating in the wider historical field, introducing more directly the concept of political subjectification to consider how young people are constituted, and constitute themselves, as agents in the struggle against China, and as a subordinate group in Tibetan society. Part One considered the constitution of young agents as 'victims'/'good little students', 'martyrs', and 'rebels' (reflecting three discursive tropes prevalent in the community); each, of course, defined against the (patrifilial) norms of the masternarrative of loss. In a way that continued my discussion in Chapter Four, I discussed first how depictions of victimhood and trauma have been internalised by the young as a felt

condition, but also how a parallel discourse of cultural resilience after loss interpellates them as (passive) agents: 'good little students', with a duty to the nation. While empowering, and likely – as theorised by Wexler *et al* in Chapter One – an ideological source for the observed resilience of Tibetan youth, this can also be a disciplinary mechanism, with concepts of im/propriety and moral agency defined by elders, and constraining young people through exploiting their passionate attachment (their love, fear, guilt, and desire for recognition) to the cause, and the concrete relationships it symbolises. This contradicts clinical or cultural accounts that fail to identify that the status of agency ('good', 'bad', 'extreme') is not an external quality determined by a structural trauma or sovereign agent, but a contingent ascription. This is clarified as I moved to discuss the designation of matryl agency, especially in terms of the self-immolations that, in other contexts, may be seen as pathological (*e.g.* an effect of childhood abuse) but are here seen by many as sovereign (and an effect of, and response to, national loss). This designation can also be disciplinary, and I discussed how misappropriations of the young martyr and their intentions can be used to advance the wider nationalist cause and other political agendas in exile (to the detriment of local causal factors), and also how valorisation can form not only an ideal standard by which to (implicitly) hold (and discipline) other young people, but also a 'risky blueprint' by which young people feeling they have nothing else to give the cause (a classed rationale?) attempt to self-constitute. The issue of self-constitution was central to my discussion in Part Two, where I discuss the various practices – notably poetry – through which young people affectively constitute themselves as 'victims'/'good students', 'martyrs', or 'rebels'. In discussing self-constitution as rebels I considered, with specific regard for *rangzen*, how young people resist patrifilial hegemony in exile, noting the valuable role this plays in improving democratisation. My theoretical wariness of precultural agency, however, leads me to query the salvationary promise of this resolutely nationalist cause, and in Part Three I turned to discuss the limits of agency. Here, I noted how even allegedly radical *rangzen* youth can, in their passionate attachment to the nation, reproduce institutionalised and internalised patrifilial norms and inequalities. With special regard for gender, I noted how agency is constrained not only by external social censure, but also by internal feelings of duty and guilt: the psychic life of power (Butler 1997). In the final part I attempted to recover (decentred) agency after loss by drawing on the Foucauldian concept of *parrhesia* –or truth telling. First, I discussed those who may be

identified as nationalist *parrhesiastes* – notably *rangzen* activists such as Jamyang Norbu, writers from Tibet, and the self-immolators, each of whom expose themselves to varying degrees of risk in speaking. While emphasising my respect for *rangzenpa* like Norbu, I note that the risk to which they are exposed does not compare to that faced by those such as Woeser or Jamyang Kyi, and more importantly, the truth to which they speak is only partial, shaped by historic privilege and inadequately grounded in the present-day realities of life in Tibet. Kyi is more interesting, for her writing extends beyond the accepted bounds of the national account to index deeper gendered and classed drivers of loss and agency in Tibet, possibly revealing a religiose and elitist dimension to self-sacrifice. In the second section, I consider, while remaining wary of any teleology of positive freedom, prospects for marginal *parrhesia* in exile. While maintaining a relatively cautious view of the possibilities for youth agency in general, I note here the promising advent of feminist discourses that index gendered histories and present-day accounts of loss to incite consciousness in exile. In particular, I signal Kunsang Dolma, whose efforts to speak the truth at risk to herself do not seek to establish an antagonistic identity politics, but comprise a decentred effort to 'act otherwise'.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEORY

This research offers three principle contributions to theory. First, offering refutation of claims over the essentially transformative nature of a traumatic event; second, providing theoretical and empirical reasons for rejecting both clinical determinism and constructivist voluntarism in discussing the ways young people experience, make sense of, and respond to violence; and third, in a related way offering an alternative onto-epistemological and critical framework for interpreting youth subjectivities and (extreme) agencies today.

Trauma, the Traumatic Event & Social Transformation

The findings of this project seem to suggest that, at least in the Tibetan case, 'the event' does not offer an essential spur for progressive social change. This, in effect – after Fassin (2008; Fassin & Rechtman 2009) – contests views of 'the event' as a universal, solidary singularity of inassimilable loss (*e.g.* Badiou 2001) inspiring new forms of consensual collective action, and in the Tibetan case resists efforts to depict – in a

way equal with this – exile society and the national cause as fundamentally progressive. There is, of course, value to these views, and the emergence of an outwardly benign and in some ways socially reformed nationalist community and cause out of the ashes of loss offers some validation for them. So, notes Anderson (1983) 'in an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals (particularly in Europe) to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other, and its affinities with racism, it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love'. In many ways this work reflects an anatomy of the 'love' and passion for the cause noted by Anderson, the social-structural roots of attachment, and the exclusions and inequalities they generate. Nationalist solidarities, subjectivities, and agencies have not, in this case, come from outside – *from the external event* – but have been composed by, and work to reinforce, existing relations of (patrifilial) power, sometimes at cost to subordinate groups. My analytical and ethical task in this regard corresponds to what Derrida might term 'hauntological', an attempt to consider the possibilities of alternative accounts and political futures. This is not, as noted, to desert hopes for an agonistic democratic project in exile: one built around acceptance of a political order that, rather than seeking return to 'pure origins' (Hacking 2002), resists 'every attempt at final realisation' (Butler 2000). Despite theoretical and empirically based concerns for their role as ideological state apparatuses and sites for enacting and reproducing inequality, my analysis and fieldwork tempt me here to depart from my Foucauldian convictions for Bourdieu's cautious Pascalian optimism for institutions – *esp.* schools. This warrants further research.

Marginal Agency Under Siege

The findings here contradict both fatalistic clinical, and more optimistic postmodern-relativist approaches to understanding young peoples experiences of, and their socialisation and agency within, violent social processes like conflict and displacement. First, while it is clear that 'trauma', despite having limited provenance in Tibetan culture, is increasingly emerging as a discourse for articulating young Tibetans' experiences of conflict and displacement, it is also clear that (materialist) clinical theory insufficiently accounts for sequelae among groups that have never directly experienced violence, and moreover, is incapable of accommodating the cultural force of loss or the apparent faculty of the young for meaningful

political participation. At the same time, while I respect calls to foreground young people's own accounts in such contexts, I am also wary that efforts to valorise the sovereign individual agency misrecognises what is, for better or worse, the thoroughly socialised and historicised nature of any subject. As a contribution, this more flags up a potential oversight in the otherwise laudable new sociology of childhood that, in recognising how a young child soldier (for instance) might *willingly* participate in conflict, must also consider the *social* origins of 'will' itself. The Tibetan self-immolations are a perfect example here of how a 'positive' cause can obscure the exploitative instrumentalisation of the material child and wider forces constitutive of her suffering, subjectivity, and agency. Still, my turn to overdetermination allows, to some extent, for accommodation of both ideal and material approaches, and my empirical work, as noted, offers some insight into the (limited) prospects for youth agency under siege.

Extreme Youth Agency in Contemporary Global Politics

As a case study, the generalisability of the findings here may be limited. However, especially given the turn toward macro-social theory – drawing on dialectical realist/dynamic nominalist theories of causal overdetermination and political subjectification within a wider theory of practice – it may be argued that the work bears significance for the wider theorisation of (extreme) youth agency, especially in similar contexts of social danger or trauma. The anthropological resolve – one that I continue to respect here – insists of course on the truth of relativism, (Nietzsche 1873); but the meta-principal I point to is precisely this constitutive, but socio-historically contingent, power of cultural representation. While I do not, therefore, in any way seek to claim that young Tibetan self-immolators can, or should, be compared with indigenous youth suicide in Australia, North or Southern Americas (although I *do* feel such comparisons can be instructive in a critical sense), I do argue that given the general disempowerment of young people globally that their subjectivities and agencies in any context cannot be reduced to any singular narrative of causation but must be situated in a specific material-discursive context. Analysis in this way involves, as I have attempted here, what Hacking (2002) terms a 'local historicism'. In the modern world, however, with the increasing proliferation of technologies of self and others, I feel it is more and more the case that attention to local constitutive forces must be supplemented with recognition of penetrating global ones – as the Tibetan case makes clear. The rise of trauma – which in many ways is still experienced and

represented 'locally' (see: Diehl 2004) – exemplifies this. Early on in this project I stumbled across cases of suicide among first nations communities, which interested me for several comparisons with the Tibetan case. Remaining distantly abreast of this issue over the last five years I have become increasingly aware of how first nation communities (through social media especially) are more and more representing such tragic events as the suicide of twelve-year-old Sioux girl Santana Marie Janis in February 2015 as results of *historical trauma* –marking change from what I identify to have historically been the construction of such events in psycho-pathological terms. Of course, such new modalities of representation, as Fassin (2009) notes, can be politically empowering, but they can also – as with the Tibetan case – displace material factors too. The synthesis of political subjectification, historical ontology, and overdetermination here is valuable for allowing us to accept the constitutive force of ideal narratives, while simultaneously ensuring recognition that they are just part of a wider – but, *pace* psychoanalytical theory, *positive* – material-discursive context that, in '[exceeding] the capacities of recording, memory or reading', resist *authentic account*.

LIMITATIONS & FUTURE WORK

Here I reflect on some of the limitations of this work, alongside suggestions for refinement and for further research.

Limitations

While I have already in Chapter Two discussed some of the more general limitations pertaining to my design and methods, it is proper to define some of the more specific weaknesses of my empirical methods and practices as they relate to the conclusions drawn here. Foremost among these is a shortage of official interviews with younger, but especially older, BiT youth, a problematic issue given that dissonance between BiE and BiT youth of different ages later formed an important faultline for my enquiry. There are a number of reasons for this deficit: principal among these being a difficulty in accessing young BiT youth, and a general difficulty in securing respondents that was not experienced with my earlier pilot study. I did, however, eventually manage to conduct interviews with several young people of each gender from each of these groups to offer insight. Moreover, what I felt to be the more general shortage of

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official interviews is mitigated first, by a much larger number of informal conversations during fieldwork, second, by a methodological shift away from ethnography towards discourse theory, and third an engagement with wider sources and virtual spaces approved by this shift. Still, despite some strong interviews, conversations, and this wider shift away from such forms of data, I would ideally have increased my interviews to better represent each group –something that, while precluded by inadequate resources, still of course reduces the impact and generalisability of the argument.

A second limit, here, is my relatively brief treatment of settlement location which, among other things I believe, prevents richer insight into class issues in exile. An inter-settlement comparison was a feature of my original design –which involved equal stints of fieldwork at three sites in the exile community- but was thwarted largely by the complexity of research in Dharamshala – which demanded more of my time and resources – and also by official restrictions on foreigners visiting remoter settlements. However, while I would ideally have liked more time to achieve the level of immersion and develop the trusting relationships vital for meaningful comparison, I did manage to spend some time at, and interview young people in, Sonamling, Ladakh – an experience that significantly enriched my work. While I did not reach quite the understanding of class that I had anticipated when I commenced this project, my findings nevertheless offer a strong foundation for future work. Indeed, each of these limitations might be traced in this way to the significant complexity of the research site and topic. Research in Dharamshala, in particular, was difficult, complicated by a local research fatigue, and the town's many-layered intricacy, which required considerable time to realise. This was compounded by the difficulty of conducting research on the diaspora in general –which, for a relatively small community, receives much expert scholarship. My research theme, questions, and methodological approach here, while compelling for their scope, generated a very large quantity of data and analytical possibilities, leaving a significant challenge for editing. However, while these factors have made writing up a complex and difficult-to-contain process, I also feel they offer many rich opportunities for refinement, and innumerable avenues for further research.

Refinements & Future Research

In whole or in part, insights elicited by this work will, with appropriate refinements, offer contributions to several fields (including the wider literature on youth, conflict and displacement, or the specific field of Tibetan studies). As a whole, the work could be refined as a monograph dealing specifically with themes of historical trauma and youth agency, or form the basis for one dealing with the concept of *parrhesiastic* agency, which, I feel, emerged as a particularly productive heuristic for conceiving youth agency in the Tibetan case. Parts of this work might also be parsed as submissions for publication – with the discussion on *parrhesia* and immolation, the construction of cultural trauma, hysteresis, and the rise of gendered marginal agency forming the most obvious contenders. A further methodological piece dealing with the use of Internet message board/blog-post replies (as a kind of modern-day marginalia) is also promising, as is, from a conceptual angle, work examining the rise of historical trauma as a mode for representing wider acts of indigenous youth suicide. In terms of further research this project has, in its successes and failings, revealed a number of possibilities, three of which I will note here. First, the question of youth agency in the patrifilial context of the exile society deserves further dedicated research. While there is still, of course, much suffering in Tibet, and while the impending death of the Dalai Lama threatens feelings of ontological security, my work implies that it is the *distance* from material suffering in Tibet and exile (or at least its complexity) that undermines the momentum of a cause reliant on feelings of acute loss and clear political grievance. While a return to repression in China may reverse this, it strikes me that it is the growing *inconsequence* of the community and cause in exile that poses the greatest challenge to its survival. It is for this reason that I believe the community needs to strengthen and diversify its democratic processes; something that, given the incidence of material and symbolic inequalities outlined here, requires greater participation of young people in imagining the political future: a fertile field for further research. Second, while I failed to offer comprehensive answers, this research successfully emphasised the need for dedicated analysis of historical and contemporary issues of class, social structure, reproduction and transformation, issues under-theorised in refugee studies and generally displaced by the nationalist account and scholars sympathetic to the cause. 'Old' and 'new' forms of class distinction, I confirmed, *do* form important factors of experience in the conflict and exile society today and historically, and require better

empirical insight and more refined theorisation. At least three questions interest me, the first involving, as a continuation of my study here, the status and provenance of classed distinction between BiT and BiE youth; second, involving the reproduction of privilege in exilic geographies (and the role of remittances in sustaining this process); and third, involving how new forms of distinction are arising among BiE youth, especially with respect to marginal settlements or to young Tibetans leaving settlements altogether to compete for work in Indian cities. Finally, and most ambitiously, a comparative study between Tibetan youth in Tibet and those in exile is, in the urgent context of self-immolations, required. As I have noted, while work with the exile community is important and valuable, restrictions have meant very little has offered insight into the conditions faced by young people in Tibet, forcing reliance on largely nationalistic second-hand work carried out in exile, or (increasingly scarce, and not necessarily representative) refugee testimony. Revealing the effects of local, regional and global material-discursive forces in shaping youth experience, subjectivity, and agency in this way, forms a compelling task for advancing this line of research.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has worked to question prevailing clinical and cultural approaches to understanding how conflict and displacement, or the experience of violence and traumatic loss more generally, is seen to mark young people's subjectivities and agencies. On the one hand, it refutes mechanist clinical theory – with its assumption that violent experience determines violent behaviour – and on the other it tempers otherwise enriching cultural approaches to loss that, by valorising the terms of cultural recognition and overstating the sovereignty of an individual's agency, displace the wider material-discursive field constitutive of experience, subjectivity and agency. Instead, the subject, her subjectivity and agency are reframed as socio-historically constituted: *overdetermined* by immanent material-discursive processes of subjectification occurring within the historical field. Turning to the case of Tibetan community in exile – where young people are generally framed as sovereign agents – it considered the production of national 'truth', subjectivity, and agency, and moved to deconstruct this to reveal alternative forms and legacies of loss displaced by, and even generated, by the nationalist account, as well as the patrifilial basis for this account. Towards the end, it offered compelling re-theorisation of a 'decentred' *parrhesiastic* agency performed

under constraints, drawing particular attention to gender. More broadly, the thesis offers a challenge to contemporary representations of youth subjectivities and agencies, urging far greater reflexivity with regards to the inequitable, and potentially dangerous, ways we account for, and *constitute*, the young.

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ANNEX 1

TEXTUAL SOURCES CONSULTED

(1) Official Publications And Policy Documents

The Tibetan Demographic Surveys (1998; 2009); collected Statements of the CTA (2010-2013); the Department of Education's *Basic Education Policy for Tibetans in Exile*; collected issues of *Tibet Bulletin* (March 2008–April 2014); select publications of the Tibet Museum in Exile –including *Tibet's Journey in Exile* (2012); and, finally, collected reports of the CTA –including: DIIR (2010). *Middle Way Policy and All Recent Related Documents*. Narthang Press: Dharamshala; DIIR (Undated). *Political Treaties of Tibet (821 to 1951)*, Narthang Press: Dharamshala; DIIR (2013). *Religious Freedom in Tibet*, Narthang Press: Dharamshala; DIIR (2005). *Tibet and the Tibetan People's Struggle – 10 March Statements of His Holiness the Dalai Lama (1961-2005)*, Narthang Press: Dharamshala; DIIR (2010). *2008 Uprising in Tibet: Chronology and Analysis*, Narthang Press: Dharamshala; DIIR (Undated), *Tibet under Communist China – 50 Years*, Narthang Press: Dharamshala; DIIR (2008). *The Continuing Use of Torture Against the Tibetan People –A Report Submitted to the United Nations Committee Against Torture*, Narthang Press: Dharamshala. Tibet Policy Institute (2013). *Why Tibet is Burning*, TPI Publications: Dharamshala; DIIR (2009). *Tibet: A Human Development and Environment Report*, Narthang Press: Dharamshala; DIIR (2001). *Racial Discrimination in Chinese-Occupied Tibet – A Report Submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination: On Violations by the People's Republic of China Against the People of Tibet*, Narthang Press: Dharamshala.

(2) Newspaper Articles, Local, And International NGO Reports, Institutional Publications And Unofficial Materials

Including collected articles of *Phayul* (2010-2014); collected articles of *Tibet Political Review* (2011-2014); collected articles of *Tibet Post* (2013-2014); articles from *Tibet Telegraph*; back-issues of *Tibet Review* (2010-2014); *Tibetan Self-Immolations: News, Views and Global Responses* (Kirti Monastery, 2013); back issues of *Dolma Magazine* (2007-2015) and select publications by the *Tibetan Women's Association*; select reports of *Tibet Centre for Human Rights and Democracy* (including: Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013) *Annual Report – Human Rights Situation in Tibet*, TCHRD: Dharamshala; Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (2010). *Dissenting Voices: Targeting the Intellectuals, Writers & Cultural Figures*, TCHRD: Dharamshala. Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (2004), *State of Education in Tibet*, TCHRD: Dharamshala. Herzer and Rabgey (1996). *Housing Rights Violations in Occupied Tibet*, ICLT: San Francisco; Tibet Justice Centre (1998), *Violence and Discrimination Against Tibetan Women*, TJC: Berkeley; Tibet Justice Centre (2002), *Tibet's Stateless Nationals: Tibetan Refugees in Nepal*, TJC: Berkeley; Tibet Justice Centre (2011). *Tibet's Stateless Nationals II: Tibetan Refugees in India*, TJC: Berkeley; Dulaney & Cusack (2013). *The Case Concerning Tibet: Tibet's Sovereignty and the Tibetan People's Right to Self-Determination – Update and Executive Summary*, TJC: Berkeley); collected reports of the *Tibet Justice Centre* and *International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet* (including: Tibet Justice Centre (2005). *Violence, Discrimination and Neglect Towards Tibetan Children – A Report Submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child: On Violations of the Convention of the Rights of the Child By the People's Republic of China Against the Children of Tibet*, TJC: Berkeley; Herzer (undated). *Options for Tibet's Future Political Status: Self-Governance Through an Autonomous Arrangement*, TJC: Berkeley; International Committee of Lawyers for Tibet (1992). *The Relationship Between Environmental Management and Human Rights in Tibet*, ICLT: San Francisco); and selected reports by *International Campaign for Tibet* (including: International Campaign for Tibet (2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012) *Dangerous Crossing – Conditions Impacting the Flight of Tibetan Refugees*, ICT: Washington DC; International Campaign for Tibet (2004). *When the Sky Fell to Earth: The New Crackdown in Buddhism in Tibet*, ICT: Washington DC; The International Campaign for Tibet (2007). *The Communist Party as Living Buddha: The Crisis Facing Tibetan Religion Under Chinese Control*, ICT: Washington DC; The International Campaign for Tibet (2012). *60 Years of Misrule – Arguing Cultural Genocide in Tibet*, ICT: Washington DC; The International Campaign for Tibet (2009). *A Great Mountain Burned by Fire: China's Crackdown in Tibet*, ICT: Washington DC; The International Campaign for Tibet (2009), *Like Gold that Fears no Fire – New Writing from Tibet*, ICT: Washington DC; The International Campaign for Tibet (2010). *A 'Raging Storm' – The Crackdown on Tibetan Writers and Artists after Tibet's Spring 2008 Protests*, ICT: Washington DC; The International Campaign for Tibet (2012). *Storm in the Grasslands – Self-Immolations in Tibet and Chinese Policy*, ICT: Washington DC; The International Campaign for Tibet (2008). *Tibet at a Turning Point – The Spring Uprising and China's New Crackdown*, ICT: Washington DC).

(3) Visual Sources –Including Found And Made Photos, Images, Cartoons And Films

Including: visual sources (made and found) and films, *e.g.* photographs taken during fieldwork; the *Lung-ta Project's* (2012) pamphlet *Escape to India: Tibetan Refugee Children Tell their Stories through Art*; images purposively sampled and

reproduced for analytical purposes from reports articles noted above, from published books, magazines, and websites below; screen-captures from films and recorded community events uploaded to *YouTube*; and films themselves -including, *Dreaming Lhasa* (Sarin & Sonam, 2005), *Windhorse* (Wagner, 1998), *Phörpa* (Norbu, 1999), *Bringing Tibet Home* (CIT), *Seeds* (Dazel, 2009), *The Silent Holy Stones* and *Old Dog* (2005; 2011).

(4) Oral-History Sources –Such As The Tibetan Oral History Project (TOHP),[374] Autobiography, Literature And Poetry

Including: autobiography, literature, and poetry, *e.g.* ninety-four transcripts taken (with permission) from interviews conducted at three settlements in India (Dharamshala /Tashi-Jong/Bir, Bylakuppe, and Mundgod) by the *Tibet Oral History Project* (TOHP); autobiographies –including, Gyatso (1962; 1991); Taring (1986); Norbu (1987); Yuthok (1990); Tapontsang (1997); Pema (1998); Goldstein, Siebenschuh & Tsering (1997); Khetsun (2008); Thondup and Thurston (2015); Nulo, (2014); Yangchen (2006)- novels, poetry anthologies and unpublished samples of poetry by young people –including *A Home in Tibet* (Dhompa, 2013), *Muses in Exile* (Sonam [ed.], 2004), *Yak Horns* (Sonam, 2012).

(5) Websites And Blogs (See Annex 2).

Including: websites for the CTA, various NGOs and Tibet-interest sites, and blogs at: *Burning Tibet*, *Drugma Lives*, *High Peaks Pure Earth*, *Shadow Tibet*, *Tibet Web Digest*, *Tibetan Women's Reality*, *Lhakar Diaries*, *Yarlung Raging*, *Yuthok Lane*.

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[374] Available at: http://www.tibetoralhistory.org/