

Closing Remarks by Janadas Devan, Director, Institute of Policy Studies

1. Thank you, Shawn. We've come to the end of your lecture series. It was quite a wild swing from the previous S R Nathan lecture, Piyush Gupta on Singapore's finance sector, to Shawn's series on biodiversity and nature and the world reimagined. But I think it was a swing well worth it.
2. Over three lectures, Shawn has asked us to reconsider something that should be obvious, yet miraculously perhaps isn't — that nature is not somewhere else. In many modern cities, nature is imagined as a place we visit rather than one we inhabit.
3. But Shawn has persistently challenged that assumption. He has reminded us that nature is here, woven into our lives, our cities and our communities. His call has not been simply better policy or more science, but for a change in how we see our place in the world, a society that notices, values and feels a genuine connection to the nature around us.
4. Shawn has gone further. He has argued that biodiversity is not simply a scientific or environmental concern but is also social. It shapes well-being, community and identity. Building a meaningful relationship with the natural world, he has argued, requires us to start young, stay close to home and start with wonder, something that he has emphasised repeatedly.
5. Finally, today, he challenges another assumption that because Singapore is small, our role must necessarily be small. History suggests otherwise.
6. Indeed, if there is a thread connecting all three lectures, it is that scale and significance are not the same thing. A small patch of forest can contain extraordinary richness. A small island can make an outsized contribution. And a small shift in perception can change how an entire society understands its own relationship with the natural world.
7. So Shawn, on behalf of IPS and everyone gathered here, thank you so much for sharing your scholarship and above all, your passion and your sense of wonder.
8. If I might add on a somewhat personal note, Shawn's wife, Evelyn Ng, passed away soon after his first lecture. Despite his grief, he has persisted to complete the entire series. I'd like to think he did so in memory of Evelyn.
9. I would like to thank Shawn's three moderators, Ms Audrey Tan, Associate Professor Teo You Yenn and of course, Dr Geh Min. Thank you for the quality of the discussion all three of you have brought to each lecture.
10. Some housekeeping matters. Our 17th S R Nathan Fellow, Mr Piyush Gupta, will be launching his book based on his lectures, *"Singapore's Financial Sector: How Did We Arrive, How Do We Thrive?"*, in August.
11. This is also a reminder that your work is not complete as an S R Nathan Fellow, nor I might add is the work of your research assistant because you have to convert your lectures into a book. I'm not sure how those videos are going to fit in, but we'll figure out something.
12. Unfortunately, I'm not ready to announce the next S R Nathan Fellow. It is still in the works, but we will do so as soon as possible and we are not likely to miss a beat. The next semester, we will have another S R Nathan Fellow, and I look forward to seeing some, if not all, of you at the following sessions.
13. Thank you very much for joining us this evening.