

HERITAGE AS CIVIC PEDAGOGY: AFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND RITUAL LEARNING IN POST-SOCIALIST HANOI

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ABSTRACT

Aim. This article examines how heritage functions as a mode of civic learning in post-socialist Vietnam through an ethnographic study of the Temple of Literature in Hanoi. Rather than treating heritage as a passive site of remembrance, the study explores how ritual atmospheres, embodied conduct, and affective coordination quietly train people to sense what is appropriate, trustworthy, and morally shared within rapidly transforming urban life.

Methods. The research draws on twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2023 and 2024, combining participant observation, affective fieldnotes, emotional diaries, on-site recordings, and thirty-five semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, pilgrims, guides, and heritage staff. Analysis focused on affective rhythms, embodied adjustments, and moments where emotion organised moral recognition before explicit interpretation emerged.

Results. The findings identify three interrelated mechanisms of civic learning. First, visitors learn embodied discipline through silence, slow movement, and self-regulated conduct. Second, collective attunement emerges through shared affective adjustments that align strangers without direct instruction. Third, ethical reflexivity develops as individuals continue to participate in ritual practices while remaining simultaneously aware, uncertain, and reflective about belief itself. Together, these processes enable heritage to operate as a moral infrastructure that stabilises forms of civic coexistence under post-socialist conditions of social acceleration and uncertainty.

Conclusions. The study argues that heritage functions not only as cultural memory but as an affective technology through which civic sensibilities are continuously recalibrated. This perspective repositions civic learning beyond institutional education and suggests that moral life may be sustained through shared atmospheres, ritual rhythms, and everyday practices of affective coordination.

Keywords: civic education, affect and heritage, emotional pedagogy, post-socialism, Temple of Literature

INTRODUCTION

How does a city learn to educate itself—not through formal schooling, but through its own memory and rituals? The answer is not to be found in pedagogy, but in the rhythms of heritage, where emotion, morality, and power intersect within the intricate architecture of modern urban life. From this perspective, heritage is no longer a relic of the past but an affective learning technology—a moral device through which society relearns how to trust, to know, and to coexist.

Across post-socialist Asia, spaces once considered static—temples, old schools, squares, museums—are turning into invisible classrooms of citizenship, where memory

and market, ritual and affect, converge to generate collective moral lessons. In Vietnam, the “post-socialist” is less a historical period than an enduring emotional condition, in which communal ethics survive within the accelerating tempo of market rationality and individual aspiration. Within that condition, sites such as the Temple of Literature no longer merely conserve Confucian legacy; they operate as ethical laboratories where society experiments with how to believe and how to doubt, how to remember and how to endure.

Three decades after *Đổi Mới*, Hanoi appears as a city learning to feel. As the market permeates every layer of urban life, heritage is reconfigured not only as material memory but as a symbolic infrastructure of citizenship. The Temple of Literature—founded in the eleventh century as a monument to learning and virtue—now functions as a nexus linking ritual, education, and affective economy. Here, ceremonial writing events, top-graduate honours, heritage-learning programmes, tourism, and cultural commerce interlace in a moral choreography where state, community, teachers, and enterprises negotiate through three idioms: the sacred, the pedagogical, and the profitable.

Whereas Western scholarship tends to interpret heritage as a practice of public memory, in Vietnam it acts as a technique of emotional governance. The fusion of Confucian tradition and post-socialist affectivity turns the Temple of Literature into both a “sacred site of aspiration” and a “civic classroom of moral feeling,” where Hanoians learn how to sense, to trust, and to relate to the past. Learning, in this sense, does not unfold through instruction but through lived rituals—lighting incense, asking for calligraphy, listening, taking photographs—small gestures that generate ethical energy and allow society to recognise itself through emotion.

Yet most international approaches to *public pedagogy* and *heritage learning* (DeSilvey, 2017; Harrison, 2015; Smith, 2006) remain confined within a Western rationalist frame, where “learning” is defined as knowledge transmission rather than the cultivation of communal affect. Conversely, the line of *cultural negotiation* (Harrison, 2015; Ocón, 2021) focuses on governance but rarely asks what people themselves learn from those negotiations. Positioned between these paradigms, this article advances another path: reading heritage as a pedagogy of collective feeling, where power, memory, and ethics do not simply collide but co-produce shared moral knowledge through ritual practice.

The concept of *Heritage-as-Civic Pedagogy* is developed here as a Southern epistemic model. Rather than treating heritage as a museum of remembrance, the article approaches it as a living learning body—where emotion functions as a mode of cognition and morality is taught not through doctrine but through sensation. Within this framework, the state learns to evoke belief without compulsion, communities negotiate between pride and pragmatism, and individuals modulate between skepticism and hope. Heritage thus emerges as an *affective learning technology*: a moral instrument through which society recalibrates itself in the post-ideological era.

This study proposes to understand post-socialist civic learning as a form of *affective governance*—a mode of rule that trains citizens not merely to reason well, but to feel

rightly, to care appropriately, and to trust with discernment. Learning here represents the softest yet deepest form of power: the power that makes people sense what is right. Building on a mixed-methods design—twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork, surveys, and semi-structured interviews—the research analyses three operational layers of the Temple of Literature: first, as an open classroom of citizenship where memory is felt through embodied actions; second, as a space of value negotiation where the sacred, the educational, and the commercial converge; and third, as a model of moral governance in which state, community, and market learn to coexist within difference. Through this lens, heritage is revealed as the emotional intelligence of the city—both mirroring and shaping society’s capacity to learn.

Rather than a contemporary phenomenon, the emotional life of the Temple of Literature has accumulated through successive political orders. The site once embodied Confucian statecraft, where ritual and learning fused into a moral technology for governing imperial subjects. During the colonial period, its symbolic authority was contested yet never fully erased, and after 1945 it was repurposed as a civic emblem of revolutionary virtue. The Đổi Mới reforms introduced another layer: heritage became entangled with tourism and the market, creating new affective expectations around pride, aspiration, and national visibility. What appears today as an atmosphere of quiet reverence is thus not a spontaneous sentiment, but the sediment of multiple historical regimes of feeling. Reading the present affective practices as historically layered allows us to see the Temple as a *longue-durée* pedagogical body in which old moral orders persist, adapt, and reappear in contemporary civic life.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To understand how civic emotions are formed and governed through heritage in a post-socialist society, this study approaches heritage not as a static object but as a living body of learning—where affect, memory, and power meet, interact, and instruct one another. In this sense, heritage becomes an open classroom of citizenship in which people do not learn what to think but how to sense what is right, how to recognise what belongs.

The affective turn in the social sciences has revealed that power operates not only through discourse or institutions but also through atmospheres of feeling. Ben Anderson (2009) calls these *affective atmospheres*: the social air that shapes behaviour before reason intervenes. Heritage, in this regard, functions as an *affective infrastructure* (Waterton & Watson, 2016)—a material-symbolic network sustaining a community’s capacity to resonate emotionally with its own history. Within such infrastructures, matter itself becomes pedagogical: incense smoke, stone stelae, sound, light, and human breath all participate in teaching the moral sensibility of the world.

While affective infrastructures operate in the present, their force is genealogical. The emotions expressed at the Temple today draw on older repertoires of moral senti-

ment shaped under imperial Confucianism, revolutionary civic virtue, and late-socialist aspirations for educated citizenship. These regimes did not disappear; they layered themselves onto one another, producing a historical palimpsest in which contemporary visitors sense echoes of past moral orders. Approaching affect genealogically allows us to understand heritage not only as a space of emotion, but as a historical technology that has repeatedly trained citizens to feel in particular ways across political eras.

Michalinos Zembylas (2022) and Jennifer A. Sandlin et al. (2011) expand this view through the notion of *emotional pedagogy*, suggesting that civic education unfolds not through rules or theory but through affective orchestration—where people learn to feel pride, shame, or compassion as moral reflexes. Learning, then, becomes an ethical art of emotion, a *pedagogy beyond instruction* in which sensation replaces discourse as the primary medium of moral cultivation.

At a deeper level, Anne-Marie Fortier (2010) names this process *affective governance*: the power to make people feel what is right. It is not coercion but a moral persuasion through emotion—the state does not command belief, it enables the conditions in which belief can arise. When these perspectives intersect—*affective infrastructures*, *emotional pedagogy*, and *affective governance*—heritage emerges as *heritage-as-civic pedagogy*: a moral learning infrastructure where instruction and regulation merge within the same affective process.

This theoretical architecture does not impose itself from outside but arises organically from the pulse of the Temple of Literature—where the sacred meets the market, where scholarship transforms into belief, and where emotion binds the state, the people, and national memory. Education here comes not from curriculum but from ceremony; faith is not decreed, but cultivated through smoke, gesture, and attention.

Heritage, therefore, not only preserves civic emotion but also acts as a civic apparatus of knowing. It teaches people to apprehend the world through feeling and teaches feeling to think alongside knowledge. At a still deeper layer, this becomes a *moral epistemology of affect*—a form of knowing born not of reasoning but of shared resonance. The things that teach—the stone tablets, roof tiles, drumbeats, tree shadows—and the people who listen together compose an affective universe of learning, where to live is to learn, and learning itself becomes a way of living.

METHODOLOGY – ETHNOGRAPHY OF VIGILANCE

If heritage constitutes an affective and moral infrastructure of society, the researcher cannot stand outside as a detached observer. They must relearn the very emotional literacy that society itself is cultivating. From this premise, the study adopts an *ethnography of vigilance*—a cognitive stance rather than a data-gathering technique. Here, emotion becomes a mode of knowing, and the researcher is not merely the one who sees but also the one who is seen by the sacred space in which they are present.

The guiding principle of this approach is simple yet radical: to study vigilance, one must become vigilant.

During fieldwork at the Temple of Literature (2023–2024), I not only recorded words and actions but also trained myself to listen to the smallest layers of sound—the sweep of leaves, the echo of footsteps, the mechanical click of cameras—rhythms that seem mundane but embody the ethics of place. Vigilance, in this sense, does not mean suspicion; it is a disciplined sensitivity to fragility, a moral attentiveness to the thresholds where meaning, belief, and power touch without articulation.

The research combined long-term participant observation, thirty-five in-depth interviews (with students, teachers, pilgrims, guides, and heritage staff), emotional diaries, and on-site recordings. Each encounter became not a “source of data” but an ethical lesson: I did not attempt to extract information but to understand through sensation. If heritage teaches people how to feel what is right, the researcher must also learn this lesson through their own body—through standing still, remaining silent, or bowing before a stele. Ethnography of vigilance thus does not seek truth as empirical fact but explores how truth is sensed and trusted. It treats emotion as an epistemic material, where silence, shame, or hesitation before the site’s commercialised aura become forms of data. Notes capture not only actions but also the researcher’s fluctuations of feeling, for only within such oscillations does one discern the fine boundary between morality and performance, between belief and display.

Data analysis followed affective rather than linguistic coding. Themes such as “sacredness,” “pride,” “shame,” “achievement,” “photography,” and “ritual” were read not as semantic content but as affective rhythms. Each rhythm revealed a different operational layer: the material level, where objects impart lessons; the emotional level, where society learns to resonate; and the moral level, where affect crystallises into knowledge. Moving through these layers discloses the circular flow of civic affective pedagogy in Hanoi’s everyday life.

Reflexivity is not external to the method—it is its core. I maintained a dual-column field diary: one for events, the other for sensations. This practice preserved sensitivity to self-transformation during fieldwork and resisted the illusion of objectivity—the trap that turns the ethnographer into a recorder without feeling. Vigilance here means guarding against academic numbness, recognising that knowledge acquires value only when it is born within an ethical relation to others and to space.

Ethnography of vigilance is therefore not only a method but an existential stance: learning to move slowly, to listen carefully, and to let the world teach one how to think. In each conversation and glance, I sought to discern which emotions were organising knowledge—pride, shame, or doubt. During one observation of the ceremonial writing festival, I stood beside a group of students waiting their turn. One quietly asked another, “Should we pray before writing?” The question was trivial yet arresting. I realised I was hearing the very lesson this study seeks to understand—how people learn to approach the sacred through hesitation. That moment revealed that vigilance

is not meticulous observation alone but the capacity to sense the threshold between belief and doubt, ritual and reflection. From such moments of feeling, this paper reconstructs the epistemic structure of heritage, where emotion functions simultaneously as the medium and the outcome of civic learning. In this sense, it offers a *moral phenomenology of fieldwork*, where understanding others becomes an ethical exercise in relearning how to understand. Although developed in Hanoi, this reflexive posture may inform studies of affective governance in other post-authoritarian contexts, where citizens learn moral sensibility not through institutional discipline but through everyday rituals of vigilance.

FINDINGS

Ethnographic fieldnotes and thirty-five interviews conducted at the Temple of Literature reveal that this heritage site operates as a civic school of emotion, where diverse social groups relearn moral sensibility through embodied engagement with the sacred. The data does not merely illustrate theoretical propositions but opens a multilayered circuit of affective learning—where emotion generates knowledge, knowledge shapes morality, and morality in turn nourishes emotion.

Embodied Discipline

Emotion is first learned through the body, as a discipline of silence. Many visitors confessed, “I don’t fully understand what the Temple means, but somehow I speak more softly here.” A tenth-grade student reflected, “No one told us to, but everyone walks slowly, so I do too—as if something makes you move that way.” Such modest statements disclose the micro-politics of affect, where the body self-regulates before cognition intervenes. As Anderson (2009) suggests, *affective atmospheres* work prior to language: power does not impose itself, it seeps into posture, breathing, and tone. The Temple thus teaches through shared quietness rather than explicit instruction, guiding bodies to intuit what is proper.

Collective Attunement

From the body, learning expands into the community, where emotion becomes a shared language across generations, genders, and classes. A long-serving guard explained, “I can tell at a glance who comes to learn and who comes to take photos. Some only take selfies, but they still pause to pray. Maybe they feel something sacred and want to ask for themselves.” This vignette captures a gentle morality of self-

adjustment—a soft vigilance in which people sense the boundary between the sacred and the profane without external command. In many records, such hesitations recur: a hand pausing mid-selfie, a gaze lowered, a voice softened. These micro-gestures form the pedagogy of emotion, where morality arises not from doctrine but from collective hesitation—what Zembylas (2022) terms the *emotional reflexivity* of citizens under affective power.

Ethical Reflexivity

Affective learning also extends into moral reflection, where individuals learn to believe while remaining aware of belief's performative nature. A high-school teacher shared, "I teach students to respect tradition, but honestly, I don't really believe in ritual offerings. Yet when I stand here, I feel differently—as if something sacred makes sense again." This statement encapsulates the paradox of post-socialist faith: people continue to believe while knowing their belief is staged, and that very awareness renders belief ethical. Fortier (2010) calls this *affective governance*—the power to make people feel what is right rather than force them to obey. Learning in such a space thus becomes an art of believing without naïveté, performing without deceit—a moral competence attainable only through affective experience. In this sense, Vietnam's post-socialist condition of "believing while doubting" resembles what Lauren Berlant (2011) calls *cruel optimism*: sustaining moral faith despite knowing its fragility.

Assemblage of Learning

Across all layers, people and heritage continuously teach one another. The state stages ceremonies honouring top graduates; communities and individuals reinterpret them through personal emotion—pride, awkwardness, or tenderness. A parent confided, "I know the city organises this event, but I still teared up—it feels like our ancestors are watching." Such layered feelings render the Temple an *assemblage* in Manuel DeLanda's (2016) and Brian Larkin's (2013) sense—administrative yet sacred, sentimental yet institutional. Public ritual becomes private emotion, and bureaucratic heritage transforms into the moral affectivity of everyday life.

Moments of Disruption

Occasionally, the affective circuit falters. A group of students recalled, "We came only to take graduation photos, but afterwards we felt strangely lost—no one spoke loudly anymore." That sense of displacement is itself an emotional epiphany, revealing

the dissonance between amusement and reverence. Without admonition, they adjusted—slower steps, quieter tones, gentler movements. This is the unspoken civic lesson: learning to feel what is right before knowing what is right, sustaining just enough belief to coexist with others (Fortier, 2010; Harrison, 2015). In these minute modulations of rhythm and gaze, one perceives the lived force of *affective governance*—a power learned through the skin rather than through doctrine.

From these scattered moments emerges a pattern: heritage does not merely transmit memory; it regenerates the society's capacity for emotion. It acts as an informal moral training ground through which people apprehend ethics by being present among others. This mode of learning does not oppose institutional structures but complements them through a logic of moral vigilance—a counterweight against civic numbness. Thus, *heritage functions as affective civic pedagogy* (Waterton & Watson, 2016), yet beyond that, it constitutes the city's moral self-learning infrastructure, where state, community, and individuals collectively cultivate emotional responsibility.

Global Implications

These findings extend existing theories of *public pedagogy* and *affective governance* (Fortier, 2010; Zembylas, 2022). Whereas in many Western societies civic learning occurs within institutionalised frameworks of emotion, in Vietnam it appears as a collective self-learning capacity—uncommanded, unscripted. This ability to learn morality through feeling—to remain vigilant yet trusting, skeptical yet compassionate—constitutes Vietnam's distinctive contribution to global knowledge on *affective citizenship*: a form of civic being that both feels and thinks, and that continually monitors its own affective ethics.

DISCUSSION

From a Southern epistemological perspective, this case demonstrates that *affective governance* is not merely a technology of power but a moral practice through which society learns to sustain itself. The findings suggest that emotional governance in post-socialist Vietnam should be understood not as a mechanism of control but as a form of ethical pedagogy—a civic education through which a society trains its capacity for empathy, trust, and self-regulation. At the Temple of Literature, emotion is not mobilised to discipline conduct but to refine moral perception, enabling citizens to feel the right before they reason the right. The three layers of learning—embodied, communal, and reflexive—illustrate a distinctive mode of soft governance: the state does not instruct through slogans but allows morality to permeate through ritual rhythms, atmospheric warmth, and subtle gestures that quietly guide the affective conscience.

In this sense, the Vietnamese case extends Fortier's (2010) argument on affective citizenship: the most effective form of power is not coercion but the conviction that one acts voluntarily for good. Yet unlike Western models of affective governance, emotion in Vietnam is not simply governed from above but learned and negotiated from below—through collective gestures, momentary hesitations, and the moral attentiveness of everyday life. This dynamic crystallises a Southern epistemology of governance in which empathy and ethical resonance hold higher value than rationalisation or bureaucratisation.

This becomes clearer when viewed alongside regional models. In South Korea, Confucian rites at Sungkyunkwan have been restored to reinforce national identity under globalisation, yet they remain tightly managed within an institutional frame—where emotion is bureaucratised into a symbol of moral citizenship. In China, Confucian temples and the Guozijian have been heavily commercialised, turning civic affect into an economy of sentiment (*emotional capitalism*, Illouz, 2007) in which morality is packaged as heritage consumption. By contrast, the Temple of Literature operates through an open logic of learning: its rituals do not impose but invite ethical reflection through sensation. This flexibility allows heritage to serve the state while simultaneously preserving an autonomous emotional sphere for the community—a *civic reflex* characteristic of post-socialist societies, where feeling is negotiated rather than institutionalised. In this sense, Vietnam avoids the *cruel optimism* (Berlant, 2011) typical of growth-driven cultures, maintaining moral belief as a collective ethical practice rather than a consumable value.

Placed within the global post-socialist trajectory, Vietnam enters dialogue with contrasting experiences. In Eastern Europe, *nostalgia tourism* has been described as an affective governance of memory (Balcerzak, 2021), with sites such as Budapest's House of Terror or Moscow's Soviet monuments serving as arenas where official and counter-memories collide (Forest & Johnson, 2002). In South America, memorial projects like Chile's *Museo de la Memoria y los Derechos Humanos* act as devices of emotional reparation, organising affect to restore moral justice to communities. In contrast, Vietnam does not dramatise emotion through mourning or critique; it performs emotion as everyday moral learning—a form of *everyday pedagogy* that enables society to maintain collective affective capacity without institutionalising memory (Millei et al., 2018; Sandlin et al., 2011). This quiet pedagogy makes Vietnam not merely another case but another epistemic ground for global post-socialist studies.

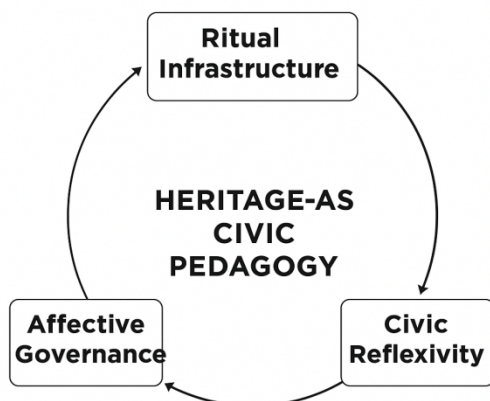
More profoundly, socialist memory in Vietnam has never been severed but continually reborn within emotional life: in the respect for teachers, the moralisation of learning, and the purity of knowledge as a civic virtue. As market rationality expands, this memory does not vanish but transforms into collective moral affect, sustained through rituals and social atmospheres. The state of "believing while doubting" forms an *ethics of vigilance* in which power and morality coexist—mutually maintained through the rhythm of civic emotion. From this vantage point, one can envi-

sion a Southern epistemology where heritage functions not only as preservation but as a moral infrastructure of knowledge. If Caitlin DeSilvey (2017) describes heritage as *curated decay*—the effort to conserve what is fading—the Temple of Literature reveals heritage as self-renewing through present affect: a living body that learns, recalibrates, and transforms ritual energy into communal ethics. This process is not symbolic but epistemic: affect, memory, and power intertwine to form the moral learning infrastructure of the post-socialist city.

In this perspective, *heritage-as-civic pedagogy* ceases to be a metaphor and becomes an epistemic architecture in itself: ritual constructs affective atmosphere; power softens through sensation; and citizens cultivate the ability to believe while remaining alert. Together, these strata compose a *Southern epistemic loop* of moral cognition—illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Southern Epistemic Cycle of Affective Civic Pedagogy



Source. Author's synthesis based on ethnographic data (2023–2024).

Viewed more broadly, the Vietnamese case clarifies a philosophical contribution: heritage can function as a social learning technology, where governance and education are not separated but resonate within the rhythm of affect. In an era of global crises of trust, the capacity to *learn emotionally*—to remain vigilant yet trusting—suggests a new moral epistemology: to govern is to learn emotionally.

What emerges from this case is not only a contemporary mode of affective governance but a historically continuous civic pedagogy. Across imperial, colonial, socialist, and post-socialist moments, the state and the community have negotiated how citizens should feel in relation to knowledge, virtue, and collective duty. The specific emotions shift—reverence, patriotic pride, quiet aspiration—but the underlying expectation that moral life is cultivated through ritual and space remains remarkably stable. This diachronic continuity suggests that today's affective learning at the Temple

of Literature is the latest configuration of a much older moral technology that has long shaped Vietnamese civic subjectivity.

Rather than treating the Temple of Literature as a relic of the past, this study situates it within a global epistemic project on how societies relearn morality amid crisis. *Heritage-as-civic pedagogy* thus not only illuminates Vietnam but also contributes to a political anthropology of emotion—an emerging field that understands heritage not as a container of memory but as a medium that trains the capacity for empathy, vigilance, and coexistence, the most refined foundation of human ethics.

In contrast to Western models of liberal civic education—which privilege rational debate, individual autonomy, and institutional civility (Smith, 2006)—the Vietnamese case reveals that civic morality can arise not from argumentation but from collective sensibility. This epistemic divergence compels us to rethink what democratic learning means in the post-socialist South, where moral knowledge is generated not through discourse but through affective resonance.

CONCLUSIONS

Returning to the initial question—how does a city learn to educate itself?—the Temple of Literature suggests that a city learns through feeling before it learns through reason. When power is sensed rather than decreed, and when morality is cultivated through rhythm, sound, and silence, the city teaches itself how to coexist through affect—the deepest language of governance.

The findings from Hanoi offer a renewed understanding of the “post-socialist” condition, not as a residue of the past but as a collective moral learning mechanism. Socialist memories of faith, sacrifice, and civic virtue have not vanished; they persist in new affective forms, inhabiting spaces where society simultaneously believes, doubts, and experiments with its faith through ritual. This mode of emotional learning has enabled both institutions and communities to preserve their moral sensibility in a world fragmented by speed and skepticism.

At a global level of knowledge, Vietnamese heritage opens a new way of thinking about *public pedagogy* and *affective governance*. Whereas most Western theories define civic education as the rationalisation of ethics, here citizenship is trained through collective feeling—through shared ways of sensing what is right. Heritage, in this sense, is not merely where memory is preserved but where it is *retrained*—to feel correctly. Vietnam, with its post-socialist heritage, contributes not just another empirical example but an epistemic proposition: that societies which continue to trust in the pedagogical power of emotion can cultivate more humane forms of governance.

The Temple of Literature is therefore not only a monument but a sentient body of instruction—where the state, the people, and national memory learn anew how to feel, to trust, and to coexist. If in the West knowledge is produced through reason and cri-

tique, here it is forged through ritual and affect—through the warmth of empathy and the discipline of silence. When a city learns to feel, it also learns to govern itself—not through law, but through moral rhythm. And perhaps, in this fractured age of disbelief, learning to keep faith in humanity is the deepest form of learning there is.

From this vantage point, heritage not only helps us understand Vietnam but also compels global humanistic knowledge to relearn itself: to think of learning not as transmission but as resonance, and to conceive of governance not as regulation but as the affective capacity of society. By reframing heritage as *civic pedagogy*, this study argues that emotion—rather than institutions or doctrines—constitutes the most profound infrastructure of ethics and governance.

Naturally, the study has its limits. By focusing on affect and ritual, it does not encompass the full material and policy dimensions of heritage governance. Yet this limitation may itself serve as an opening—inviting us to see governance not as machinery but as an emotional practice continually learned through everyday life. Future research could extend this inquiry by comparing *affective learning infrastructures* across post-socialist contexts—from educational museums in China to ritual spaces in South Korea—to explore whether affective civic pedagogy might constitute a shared moral model for Asia.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

The study was approved by the Ethics Review Board of Author1's University, and all procedures complied with institutional and international guidelines for research involving human participants.

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