**The Accidental Nation**

Violent history

Ppl came 2 make $$ -> ‘drawn into’

Chinatown – site of independence

Few until then thought of Sg as home – few = Straits Chinese

Malays & Indians – join Japs. But Chinese nationalists persecuted.

Power – if you control by force & life depends on you – can make them comply and change their attitutes to you

Blood sacrifice – legitimacy –

Chinese High – imbued with communist teachings of Chariman Mao

China’s success had an impact on us –

Harry Lee worked within English system

‘Chinese speaking’ LCS PAP radicals: found it slow and cumbersome (then why join Parliament). For the mods: hope lay with the British

Dreams to turn Sg into a pro-communist stronghold

**Diminishing Memories**

Can’t remember

Diff b/w kampung and house

Pulled to ruins

Beyond recognition, everythings gone

Worry a lot, no joy left

Privacy, intimacy – huge compound of our own, used to cycle, rooster.

Still dream of rambutan trees – jewelled in red colour in dreams

**She went to uni overseas tho – rich.**

**A lot of discussion about money:**

* **factory lost (fine),**
* **entrepreneurs (sponge recycling, more money(),**
* **govt discouraged family agricultural business,**
* **Wang Songfa: relieved because started making money – should have moved earlier (no concerns about coconut trees – readymade juice!). don’t wanna go back.had to remember his coconut trees**

**Justify govt**

* **personally think the government was right to resettle us, lot of families said its for the better (Songfa)**
* **9 out of 10 people are better off, cant push blame, government cant take care of everyone, you have to look after everyn,e conflict of interest ppl blame govt(mom)**
* **What did I gain? Nothing. Victimization rather (dad)**
* **Treat diff, missing an old friend, (TCB)**
  + **When a LCK patient tells me hes got no money, I believe straight away, know he’ll pay me**
  + **New patients will tell me a sob-sob story, but ill found out that they cheated me**
  + **Medicine must be practiced in the countryside, wife says why not go to to town to get rich**
    - **More than doctor: wrote letters to gov when ppl were in trouble**
    - **Doctor: politician, individual: masses**

**Neo Tiew scion: Langshan, customer**

* **Financially good – can afford to buy a landed-property – its like reliving the good old days again**

**Cousin: Liang Wen, Zhou Lifang**

* **Couldn’t sleep first few nights, noise of planes and cars**

**Housing**

* **2003: 84% pop in HDB, 5% in houses**
* **Flats don’t have yard, houses do**
  + **Not the same as village**
  + **Format of living is similar but not the environment**
* **‘Can’t see myself ever living in a house’**
  + **Possible to get that life back?**
* **Lixing**
  + **You think one million can buy you this place with such an environment**
  + **Millions in Sg, im the only one still living on a farm**
  + **New farm house**
  + **Fam lives in flats now, he insists staying in farm, alone (lonesome)**

**Community: Ama Keng**

* **Since the dispersal of LCk community, survival of AK under threat**
* **Old are passing away, yong are not interested, left to its own destruction**
* **Wedding intivtations, ppl ask who this: they have forgotten**
  + **Lixing reminds them where the senders used to live**
* **Neighbours**
  + **Knew neighboiurs well despite miles**
  + **In flats, closed doors**
  + **Society**
    - **Gov built flats, people close doors, people turn cold**
    - **Doors vs human relationship:**
  + **Festivals**

**Memories**

* **Siding**
* **Kitchen**
* **Still visit LCK, got gold course**
* **Caught fishes in drains, muddy drain -> concrete drain, redi dirt road to bitumen road, until finally it was our t**
* **Unless you’ve bee there you wont know how it felt**
* **Theres this sense of lost whebever we talk about it**

**Liang Meican**

* **66 years, never missed**
* **No point living there alone, very lonely, no one to talk to**
* **She angry and disappointed, but impressed**
* **Sometimes people move on, then they forget and let it go**

**Impacts**

* **Pride**
* **Old folks committed suicide, got depressed**
* **Preventable suicides: psychological training programme? Moving too fast. Breaking up the fabric of Asian society**
* **Hard for common people to see what the government doing**
  + **Impacts seen years later, that’s they they gov**
  + **Givrn a choice, would you rather put Singapore on a fast track to achieve today’s prosperity or otherwise so as to preserve some villages?**
    - **Lianshang: present, grew up with Sg, don’t wanna go backward, times change, ppl gotta deal with it**
    - **Liang Wen: choose village**
      * **Prosperous city need not come at expense of diminishing villages. Govt didn’t want to preserve it**
      * **Given a chance, would mirgrate.**
    - **Liang Meican**
      * **Hard for country to survive without people caring for each other.**
      * **People thnk I cant catch up with time**
      * **CATCH UP? NOT ANYMORE. OUR BLOOD AND sweat already spilt onto this earth. I was born in the village, wanna die in a village.**
    - **TCB: no choice. Had to industralise or get left behind; “our  
       priority was education, jobsstrong economy, strong army. But now we are more settled, promoting the arts, Sg sense of culture, sense of belonging, now we can afford it. In the past is a luxury**
      * **Best part of life is medicine, not politics**
      * **Got street sign of Ama Keng in my house**
    - **Dad: memory of visit daily, interest of the whole country, dream never come true.**
    - **Mom: I don’t don’t mind not having as much prosperity in order to live in a village. “Matters pertaining to the hearts can be diminished as time goes by. Time is a powerful machine. Slowly youll feel less nostalgic. ….. You wont entirely forget it though. The feeling with linger on.”**

**Author**

* **Emotion enveloped me. Started grieving. Cried for 10 days.**
* **Johnny die.**
* **Agency: I want to remember every single little thing. This time I promise I will not forget.**
* **Only Chinese ppl.**

**Singapore Dreaming**

Codeswitch man, cigarette + tries to mimic swim

Closed doors of HDB flats.

Terrorizing ah ma for son (filial piety)

Office codeswitch too. Life insurance. Old school photos.

Irene codeswitch too.

Most people who live in public housing don’t have social graces. You live in public housing too! (he’s a scammer)

Housewife: sweep, mop, shower, herbal tea, is there anything else you know? Love thru cooking. “It’s maid work. Pinky take over”

Sister earns more than the husband.

Overseas important.

Money: So any luck today? Be more thick-skinned (alr thick skin). In English,

Codeswitch when Seng come.

Children: Seng god. Sis: just a secretary, spent savings.

Face: Don’t make me lose face, sell insurance like this? Linked to daughter’s husband. But dad is a scammer. Sis looks out for Irene. Women shouldn’t be stupid. It’s right to support your husband (mom)

Repay: make sure you get a good job, to repay us. Move to condo.

Pinky: also from overseas. Domestic help. But International. Mom can’t communicate directly with her - through employer.

Women talk shop. Switch to Mandarin when explaining discomfort, but English for social expectation (“where are u and Seng gonna get married? Maybe after he gets a job. You’re not tired of waiting. Ma, wo zhe shuo , Irene lent money, Seng really neded”). Better grades for sis. Mom helps by taking care of the kid. Better if they have a son (dad), continue Loh.

Language: Don’t wanna learn Hokkien, English. Uni degree. Success.Respect. Just work harder?

Irene talks of marriage n baby photos. He says money repay.

Mom can’t go US because stupid (no English). Husband dismisses. I just want to visit!

Stay in HDB whole life?

Polytechnics. Piece of paper = degree. What do we tell clients?

Butts cigg before entering home.

Happy fam when money.

42:50 (I need u to be more understanding)

45:23 Domestic worker stay with person. Hierarchy: maid -> husband’s secretary -> wife (aircon?)

48:05 30 mins early! Golf Club could be the one in LCK.

50:03: condolence money? Why about money?

52:00 who is the woman?

54:31 Tear old flats down and build shopping centre

55:41 With dad in the coffin, you’re making us look bad. Then later play mahjong. 5C cash credit card car condo country club

1:03:18 Singapore is like that, everywhere is like that. Robotic. Trauma. Stress.

1:09:23 Don’t daughters count too?

1:11:40 Seng talks about how he is the disadvantaged one. “Blew all that money on me and it made no difference”. “The monk says you both need to go down” (English)

1:12:22 Mandarin not good? “You Singaporeans are always complaining. You think your life is tough? You have nice homes, nice cars.” “And for what? To drive a car instead of taking the bus, can stay in condo wah. You buy something but you always want more. Won’t stop”

A musician in Singapore? Cannot make money lah.

1:15:00 Singing in Muar. He promised that he would take care of me for life. It’s because of his promise that I married him. But I don’t know what happened to me. Ever since we got married every morning I’d wake up and all I’d know is to wipe the tables, mop the floor go to the market, cook, and make herbal tea. I never sang again. Really! Not even a single song. It’s as if I had never sung to begin with! *Sings*. The wife is not involved in the ceremony.

1:20:07 Irene leaving. So ashamed that Seng doesn’t even bother to meet her. She takes photo.

**Ilo Ilo**

7:01 Give passport

8:20 Lottery again.

9:42 Page ‘Sir’. Gives old clothes. Can’t call home to Ilo Ilo. “Yes ma’am.”

16:30 Caught for stealing cause Jia Le runs. Else I’’ve have to call the police. “Why you do that to me? If you don’t like me, I don’t care. But your mom employed me. Im here to do my work properly. I’m your maid but I didn’t come here to be bullied”.

17:56 Man fired. “Here goes another one.” But she’s admin and stayed longer.

20:38 Filipino neighbour. Is it your first time. Yes. How old are you? 28. Good. You can still work here for a long time. You brough a rosary? Yes. You know, just put that away. You don’’t need that here. There is no room for God here.

24:15 Pushes her. *Dont be kaypoh* Cycles away. Only person with maid.l, Lipstick.

26:00.Lino drinks. Kid asleep. Harder for you. ‘Is there a problem. No Sir?” Don’t tell ma’am.

31:53 Suicide (Diminishing Memories). Kid trivialize death. The view so good no wonder everyone come here to jump.

32:00 Funeral (like Sg Dreaming). No privacy – “your boobs are smaller than my mum”.

38:57 Auntie Terry cooks better. Is mom angry at kid’s insolence or jealous?

39;30 Hairdresser Illegal. $4/hr. Check if dress really hers

44:04 Owns car How much in the red packet? Do you have another hundred? Take it yourself. I don’t want my siblings to think we are stingy. Are we that well-off? Do we need to give that much? I’m not going to argue with you.

45:30 Fixated on job (Sg dreaming). Suggests starting a business for BBT. Are you crazy? You have a job. Why sell tea? Are you cut out for business? Are you as smart as the others? What if you lose all your capital? Can you be more practical and just do your job? Look at the economy.

46:00 One more chair? Im fraid not, else hard to serve food. Sit outside, serve food. Like Siti. Why are you saying sorry? Jia Le feels bad. Brings shark fin to her. I don’t like, but very expensive.

48:11 Flexes sales. Then passed out – Jia Le finds him. Security guard!

50:55 Family photo, without Teresa. Jia Le points out. Mom feels jealous. *Red packet*: Chinese thing. Gifts chickens as a pet (tbt to Diminishing Memories).

58:50 Snoops. Calls to room. She cries.

1:01 I lost a lot of money. In stocks. $100k. Boy’s bday numbers won starter prize at lottery.

1:03 Baby girl good.

1:05:25 Pray at grandpa tomb. Kill chicken. Terry does too?

1:08:30 Mom jealous of Terry driving? Or worrying about inevitable?

1:08:55 Lotter for teacher (corrupt). Inspiration for mother. Hope is within yourself.

1:12:13 My maid saw your maid at Lucky Plaza. So whgat? Your auntie was working as a hairdresser/ She must really love money. Why would she need extra money? Doesn’t your mom feed her? Don’t insult. She only loves you because she gets paid by your mom. She is just a maid.

1:16:53 Sg pledge. Kids bring out caning board. Discipline is an integral part of our education. Knowledge without discipline is of no value to our society

1:18:03 12 months old baby. You left the baby to go away for work. Then why did your mom get a stranger to look after her son? Your mother.

1:20:03 Discussion: about money, scrapping car, and how much the apartment is worth. Later, gets fleeced by the man. Money problems are mostly self-created.

She knows that he is a security guard.

Ciggarettes

Figure out provenance.

**7 Letters**

**Cinema**

Movie in a movie (Return of the Pontianak)

Malay actress.

**That Girl (1975)**

Money: starts off with no money for mom. Lack of money due to gambling (self-imposed). That’s how she wants to win him. Dad chasing for money.

Cantonese. Kampung life. No medicine for grandma. Government wont help. Jalan Kedai.

Lottery = lucky tickets. *Kampung* in English.

**The Flame (1971)**

Black and white.

Wife can speak in Malay.

English: “We have to leave for the office soon”

Wife wears ethnic Indian, they’re wearing suits.

You don’t have a job here. In England, the British will provide. Why do you want to stay in a country where no one will take care of us? We came with the British, we will leave with them.

Response in Tamil: Can find a job here.

You dare defy me? You won’t go? She throws plate. Madhavan never asked. No one has the right to be so disrespectful to the father of my child. Do you think we’ll be happy if we move to England?

Pregnant woman!

Weren’t we born in this country? Then our child should be born here too. No matter how much we suffer, I don’t want my child to grow up in a place where he or she will be a second-class citizen.

Tell your dad that we’ll stay here -> but not directly.

Came for British, stayed for Singapore.

‘Home is that journey back to myself’

**Bunga** **Sayang**

Similar house layout as Sg Dreaming. Closed doors.

1:04:56 Closes tap himself despite running water.

For the unspoken words in our hearts

**Pineapple Town (Pekan Nanas)**

Birth mother

Li Ning: Michelle back. Most people don’t want trouble. Dress badly, only slippers.

Michelle mom – early 20s, first child.

Reversal: the birth mother wants to observe. In Pekan Nanas too! Behind the camera.

Birth certificate: Amy, Christian name. Why?

1:20:44 After a while, Michelle grows up.

We are what we know!

**Parting**

Tanjong Pagar, no longer goes.

Von Trapp family, train instead: so did he! Block 74 no longer exists.

I didn’t have an answer (why couldn’t I leave with u But I didn’t follow my heart. Maybe I was a coward. Or really happy here.

**Mrs** Heng: he sad. Wee Beng prolyl Heng.

Random person’s kid goes to Australia to study too!

“I don’t care what my dad will say”. “My little brother will be happy to see you”

He sees himself in other ppl: women on MRT, young in bus, guy at station, couple at station.

Deceives with movie in movie.

Multi-racial couple: try saying awak kecak (you are handsome). Cigarette. He has a daughter – meaning he married someone else too.

“for the ones we love and the place we call home” – Boo Junfeng

**GPS**

We come every year, still get lost. Crowded.

Religion: tombstone festival thing like in Ilo Ilo.

Grandpa’s number is 95. Break in daily routine: swimming lesson for kid, viewing at 2. Throwing of 2 red blocks (like in That Girl).

Government cooling measures – bad for real estate

Goh Keng Swee – loosen regulations

Ah Huat lucky for wife, she prepared ll the dishes

Daughter listeing to music, Ah leng, college in USA, doesn’t matter color

Ah soon is 7, 1st grade, will take exams, ensure exam questions are easy so that he can be the top student in the class. He asks grandma if they can burn offerings (money).

1:43 You tell dad the same things. He must be bored. Offers latest Phone, build-in GPS.

Misses viewing. Ah leng meeting friends.Youll reach kampung. Torn down by gov in 1989 to make for a bigger Woodlands checkpoint. Poliece station at 10th milestone -> shopping mall. Cobbeler Taoist goddess temple – village – gone. Battery factor gone, railway tracks gone, but rail no more. TP. Beauty World Amusement Park – car park. 7th milestone; BT market and food center – carrot cake and beehoon still there. BT Road changed. Ysauce factory, Singapore turf club in kranji, villages there gone, replaced by luxury housing. Adam Road Food Center, renovated, nice & clean. Ginger tea. Coffee Hill: Exhuming graves to make way for a new road. Bishan – 18th floor green door, is our home.

2015

95: no more grandma. They bought the food! Didn’t prepare themselves. This afternoon 1pm viewing. Let’s go. Fire still burning. Swimming at 3pm (earlier). No more GPS (going round in circles). New TV delivered at 12pm.

Now 2.70 to enter Sg. Moved to rehill, easier to get to our new house. Woodlands road.

They cry. Pics of changed stuff. Plans and models. Kamping.

“Home is the road travelled together” – Kevin Tong