1. The Accidental Nation – episode 2 (Main title: The history of Singapore -

|  | [videorecording] / produced by Lion Television for Discovery Networks Asia. 2006 |
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1. Diminishing Memories 2005
2. Singapore Dreaming 2006
3. Ilo ilo 2013
4. 7 Letters 2015

Provenance

Themes: Money and Power

1. **Money**

**Money as dominant in life (sacrifice family, maid, job -> English vs dialect, tradeoff)**

* Origins: TAN: people ‘came to make money’, ‘drawn’ into national struggle. Stay in chinatown (crowded scenes) -> but DM shows sprawling village.
* Capitalism vs communism 🡪 ‘dreams to turn Sg into a pro communist stronghold’, ‘radicals’
* Ownership: money only thing you can own
  + DM
    - 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
  + Suspicion of maids: Pinky and boss’ maid in SD, Terry in Ilo Ilo
* Tradeoff
  + “personally think the government was right to resettle us, lot of families said its for the better” (Songfa). What did I gain? Nothing. Victimization rather (dad)
  + Need money to enjoy kampung paradoxically: Langshan and landed property.
  + Lixing priceless: ‘one million not enough’, ‘im the only one still living on a farm’ due to livelihood.
* Community feeling defined in terms of money and trust
  + TCB
* Plot of Ilo Ilo: mom and maid for money
  + Also: capitalism.
    - 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.
* Sg Dreaming: old friends for life insurance, marriage
  + Switch to Mandarin when explaining discomfort, but English for social expectation (“Seng really neded
  + Funeral: condolence money. 5Cs.
  + 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.

**Money as glue (family, nation, romance, ancestors, funeral)**

* Sg Dreaming
  + Terrorizing ah ma for son (filial piety)
  + Repay: make sure you get a good job, to repay us. Move to condo.
  + Women shouldn’t be stupid. It’s right to support your husband.
  + Ma helps Mei non-monetarily early on (‘help with baby’). Then gives her money at end
  + Irene talks of marriage n baby photos. He says money repay.
  + Happy fam when money. Falls apart when no money.
  + 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)
  + 1:15:00 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.
  + where are u and Seng gonna get married? Maybe after he gets a job. You’re not tired of waiting. Irene lent money,
* Ilo Ilo
  + 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.
* That Girl
  + 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.

**Money as metric of fortune / status / deservedness (uni job, lottery)**

* Status and deservedness
  + Hierarchies: SD maid -> secretary -> boss,
  + Language: English with employer, other langs with else
    - Ilo Ilo maid Filipino, Hwee Leng home (not kid, Bunga Sayang)
    - SD boss
  + Suspicion of maid
* Lottery**:** 
  + SD obvious in plot (‘lucky’ numbers and who chose them)
  + Ilo Ilo Jiale (teacher and terry, shows the money sign to teacher),
  + That Girl lucky tickets (rigged system)
* Gambling: Teck’s stocks, That Girl boy, Hwee Leng’s scam,

1. **Power:** relationship between the individual and a collective: family, employers, government, society, supernatural. Concl: society n discipline supersedes agency of the individual (TAN, teacher). Fitting for a lion city. With Malaysia (Pineapple Town).

**Family: tension between indivs within fam, and indivs & fam. Ultimately fam wins.**

* DM: housewives
* SD: Housewife: sweep, mop, shower, herbal tea, is there anything else you know? Love thru cooking. “It’s maid work. Pinky take over”
* Sd & II: 2 pregnant women played by same actress: struggle
* The Flame: internal family politics – pregnant woman in ethnic wear, intermediary son in dilemma, father ‘has decided’. They have a ‘choice’ of going to britian.

**Government: *zheng hu,* trauma, knows best, won’t help (7 letters), GPS. Neither knowledge nor agency. Nature landscape change.**

* TAN Power – “if you control by force & life depends on you – can make them comply and change their attitudes to you”
* DM
  + 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)
  + TCB: ‘no choice but to industrialise or get left behind’
* 7 Letters GPS.
* Changed the way the country looks: kampung to metropolis.

**Society: caning, blood sacrifice for Chinese not Indian (hence latter’s dilemma).**

* **TAN**: blood sacrifice
* **The Flame:**  only main Indian actors. Other movies they are cogs in a system (Sumathi and principal). They attach emotional appeal to being born, not dying.
  + 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.
  + job = attachment to nation.
* **Teacher in Ilo Ilo**

**With Malaysia: ‘accidental nation’, ‘what do we do’, parting, Sg economy, Pineapple Town reversal, go overseas for uni (director, Sg dreaming, person’s son in 7 Letters).**

* 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
  + Suicides in DM and Ilo Ilo