

To explore the Chinese language education and cultural roots of contemporary Chinese Singaporeans through the film *Wet Season*

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Abstract

Wet Season is a film by Chinese-Singaporean director Anthony Chen. First, the film tells the story of Ah Ling, a female middle school Chinese teacher, who encounters marriage, career and cultural crises. Secondly, *Wet Season* reveals the psychological conflicts between ethnic education and national education, ethnic identity and national identity of the overseas Chinese community. It stimulates the audience to think about the future of Chinese education and Chinese culture in Singapore, and tries to arouse the attention and reflection of the society.

The rootless drift of Chinese Singaporeans is a psychological state that developed mainly in the 20th century. Before the 20th century, overseas Chinese had a clear sense of their homeland and their identity was relatively stable. Since the second half of the 20th century, with the establishment of modern countries, overseas Chinese have blurred their sense of motherland and gradually weakened their sense of identity with their ancestral country. Coupled with other economic, political and cultural reasons, the plight of the spiritual world of overseas Chinese has become increasingly obvious. In order to meet the challenges of a new historical period and new social outlook, overseas Chinese groups, including Singaporean Chinese, need to face up to cultural differences and constantly update their cultural cognition. The Chinese culture represented by the Confucian tradition needs to be reconstructed in the new context to meet the requirements of the globalization era.

Keywords: *Wet Season*; Chinese Singaporeans; Chinese language education; Confucianism ideas; The cultural roots

Introduction

In 2019, Anthony Chen, a Chinese-Singaporean director, won the Best Director Award at the Macau International Film Festival for his film *Wet Season*. At the third Pingyao International Film Festival, the film won the "Fermu Honor · Best Film" Award. The film tells the story of Ling (Yeo Yann Yann), a Malaysian Chinese woman who marries to Singapore and faces a crisis in her family, career and culture. At home, Ling is unable to have children with her husband Andrew, who has been married for eight years. He is indifferent to her, and has had an affair and a child out of wedlock. Their marriage was fraught with rifts and she had to take care of her father-in-law, who had been paralysed and unable to take care of himself for years. In her career, as a female Chinese teacher in a secondary school, Ling faced disdain for the Chinese language from students and schools, and her efforts were not recognized and she could not feel a sense of accomplishment. After failing in her marriage and career, Ling has an incestuous affair with Wei Lun (Koh Jia Ler), a middle school student who loves Chinese culture. At the end of the film, a divorced and pregnant Ling returns to her hometown in Malaysia, called "Taiping"(太平).

"Rain" is a typical image in *Wet Season*, which sets the film's dark, oppressive tone. There are numerous scenes of rain: a thunderstorm at the beginning of the film; Rain on the way to send

Wei Lun home; Rain on the way home from a tiring day at work; Artificial inconception failed in the car crying rain, when the car was playing is the rain is tears is Hui Guanjie; Seeing the rain when her husband cheated on her; The pouring rain when my father-in-law died; The rain when I said goodbye to Wei Lun...LEI Jingjing believes that rain and tears in the film have isomorphic relationship, and different rains represent Ling's mood changes (LEI Jingjing, 2020). Through the image of rain, the film creates an atmosphere of anxiety. On Ling, a Chinese character, the film presents numerous crises faced by the contemporary Chinese community, such as female identity, middle-aged emotional rift, the weakening of family meaning and huge life pressure. The film reveals the chronic and serious cultural anxiety that has spread among the Chinese community in Singapore. In fact, this kind of cultural anxiety is not exclusive to Chinese Singaporeans, but a common problem faced by all overseas Chinese communities. The success of *Wet Season* is of great significance to Anthony Chen's directing career, the Singapore film industry, and the survival observation and reflection of the Chinese community.

Materials and Methods

The language and cultural dilemma of the Chinese in Singapore

In Singapore, more than 70% are ethnic Chinese, and other ethnic groups such as Malays and Indians together account for about one-third of the ethnic Chinese population. Singapore has always stressed that it is a multiracial and multilingual country, and a Chinese family in Singapore may use English, Mandarin, Malay and more than a dozen Chinese dialects for internal communication. This feature is also reflected in *Wet Season*, in which the characters communicate with each other in Chinese, English, Hokkien, Malay and other languages and dialects, which is a typical "Singapore phenomenon". In this film, different languages are given different emotional and cultural overtones. At the end of the film, for example, Ling and his mother talk in Hokkien, a special Chinese dialect that is given warmth, peace and confidence in the film. It is in the atmosphere of Hokkien that the sunshine outside the house appears for a long time. As the carrier of Chinese culture, Mandarin implies such characters as antiquity, tenacity and tolerance, but it has become a lonely and marginalized language in Singapore. This awkward situation is highlighted in *Wet Season*.

Development of Chinese language education in Singapore

After the British colonial period and the Japanese occupation period, Singapore became a British colony again in 1946; In 1959, Singapore gained further self-government and established its first government as a self-governing state. It seceded from the British and joined Malaysia in 1963. It seceded from Malaysia in 1965 and became a fully independent country. After its independence, Singapore constantly adjusted its Chinese education policy, which CAI Minghong summarized as the "bilingual policy" carried out in the 1950s and the two Chinese education reforms in the 1990s. These policies and reforms have taken on a strange appearance: On the one hand, the government of Singapore seems to spare no effort to care and to promote mandarin, guide the Singapore national Chinese language level, such as according to the survey report of 1978, the Ministry of Education, Chinese students use too much Chinese dialect, the Singapore government has launched a "campaign", in an attempt to break the dialect of communication. The campaign was successful to some extent. "Around 1982, Mandarin surpassed dialect to become the main household language of Chinese primary school students." (ZHAO Yi, 2020) "On the other hand, these policies often caused a significant disadvantage to Chinese education. "The fact that Chinese was 'premeditated encirculation' and 'bright rise and dark fall' was the essence of the Singapore government's policy towards Chinese. (CAI Minghong, 2013) "For example, in 2004, the" Review Committee on Chinese Curri-

culum and Teaching "of the Ministry of Education of Singapore submitted the" White Paper on Chinese Teaching Reform "after an investigation. Measures such as the cancellation of Chinese as a compulsory subject and the cancellation of the policy linking Chinese with entrance examination have caused various adverse effects on Chinese education in Singapore. "Listening and speaking are emphasized while reading and writing are neglected in Chinese teaching, resulting in the phenomenon of 'language without language' and 'strong language and weak language'" (CAI Minghong, 2013). In fact, students' willingness to learn Chinese has been greatly reduced.

The reform of Chinese teaching in Singapore can be interpreted as follows: due to the strong position of Western culture over Eastern culture, when the "cultural values" of the first world are squeezing or even dwarfing the original values of the third world in a high way, Singapore chooses to lean towards the Western culture. Although Singapore is a foreign culture different from the Western culture and an "other" that is difficult to be truly accepted by the Western culture, this does not prevent Singapore from making efforts to build a unified education system with "English as the main language and mother tongue as the second language". According to HUANG Ming, after 1987, Singapore's bilingual education entered a period of finalization, which was characterized by "giving great emphasis to English and moderately retaining mother tongue", which was specifically reflected in that all schools in Singapore adopted English as the common language, the first language and the main medium of teaching. On the other hand, the practice for mother tongue such as Chinese is to retain its learning and application, and "under the mainstream trend of highlighting English, the requirement for mother tongue is gradually and appropriately lowered" (HUANG Ming, 2008).

For a long time, the government of Singapore in the multi-ethnic and diverse language "under the guidance of the strategy, Chinese teaching has been occupying and eating into English teaching, the consequences are" Mandarin will dominate for around 2005 in English, English become the main family of a new Chinese small everyday, until today, the situation has not changed. (ZHAO Yi, 2020) "English has become the common language of contemporary Chinese families in Singapore, and Chinese is no longer dominant and even regarded as a foreign language. In this case, Chinese education in Singapore is bound to be marginalized and barren. The life experience of Anthony Chen, the director of *Wet Season*, can prove this "marginality".

Anthony Chen was born in Singapore and studied at film school in Singapore and the National Film and Television School in the United Kingdom. In his view, Singapore, a former British colony, has become an English-speaking society since it converted all its Chinese schools into British schools in the 1970s. "English is the first language in Singapore. It is the official language. Meetings, reports, emails, legal documents, everything is done in English. Even when I was growing up, I spoke English at home and subscribed to English newspapers. We didn't have any Chinese newspapers because my father didn't care about writing." (YAN Ruyun, 2019) "His Chinese listening, speaking, reading and writing skills were slowly acquired under the guidance of Chinese teachers in primary school. This experience of "language regression" made him more aware of the language education and use of the young generation of Chinese in Singapore, and more aware of the cultural dilemma of Chinese in Singapore: After decades of "westernization", young Singaporeans of Chinese descent have given up the identity of Chinese culture. They grew up in an English-speaking environment, could not write or speak Chinese, and even lost their interest in Chinese culture and blindly approached Western culture. In the film, the middle school students Ling teaches are not interested in Chinese classes, so she has to repeatedly emphasize the need to speak Chinese in Chinese classes. When the students' Chinese homework is in a mess, Ling offers to help them make up the lessons, but all the students except Wei Lun skip class. Even Wei Lun, who likes traditional Chinese culture

and Chinese language, was asked why he didn't skip class with other students. He said he was afraid his parents would be angry if he failed Chinese. "They said if they don't know Chinese well, how can they do business in China in the future?" In Chen's opinion, this is a phenomenon that calls for alarm and reflection.

Reciprocal photos of Chinese education in Malaysia and Singapore

In *Wet Season*, Anthony Chen sets a "reference" for the crisis of Chinese education and Chinese culture in Singapore. The reference is not mainland China, but Malaysia, which is adjacent to Singapore and has close ties in history and culture.

XU Jie and WANG Hui once put forward the model framework of Chinese language circle, including northern Chinese dialect area, other parts of mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Singapore, other overseas Chinese society, traditional Chinese character culture circle and radiation circle.(XU Jie et al., 2015) In this framework, Chinese in Singapore and Chinese in Malaysia belong to the middle circle, which belongs to the transition link from the Chinese language center in mainland China to other overseas Chinese character cultural circles. Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia are similar and comparable in terms of language acquisition and language use atmosphere, so it is feasible for Anthony Chen to use Malaysian Chinese education to contrast Singapore Chinese education.

It should be noted that, for one thing, although Singapore and Malaysia are regarded as the same circle as Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, there are considerable differences between them in terms of geographical location and application environment. In Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, Chinese education has a natural and unshakable legitimacy, while Singapore and Malaysia do not. In addition to China, other Chinese societies, including Singapore and Malaysia, are faced with the major problem of the preservation and continuation of Chinese culture, but with different degrees of severity. Secondly, the proportion of Chinese population in Malaysia is much lower than that in Singapore, so Malaysia does not have an innate advantage in Chinese education. However, whenever the Chinese education in Malaysia was in danger, the Chinese community would eventually improve the situation through unity and persistent efforts. Unlike Singapore's initiative to embrace Western culture, Malaysian Chinese have always refused to give up their own culture: "The survival of Chinese education in Malaysia is mainly due to the fact that the local Chinese community has always adhered to the basic point of maintaining the integrity of Chinese education." They have always adhered to the principle of 'teaching mother tongue and mother language, inheriting national culture' in Chinese schools." They have the strength and perseverance to fight against the unified national education policy, which is contrary to the basic concept of Chinese education, and strive to maintain the foundation of national language and culture education.(WANG Ruiping et al., 2020) In 2019, when the *Wet Season* was released, three private Chinese colleges, including New Era College, Nanfang College and Hanjiang College, were approved by the government to be upgraded to universities, which was a milestone event for Chinese education in Malaysia and even Southeast Asia.

In *Wet Season*, Ling assumed the dual identity of "Malaysian Chinese" and "Singaporean daughter-in-law". Anthony Chen tries to observe the social aspect of Singapore from Ling's perspective, so as to make the comparison of "Malaysia-Singapore" possible. His cognition of the current phenomenon of "Chinese loss" in Singapore is fully demonstrated through Ling, a Malaysian Chinese, and various "Singaporean Chinese" around her. Interestingly, Ling is played by Yeo Yann Yann, who was also born in Malaysia. She attended a Chinese-language school from primary school to secondary school. In terms of cultural identity, her role in the Singapore film *Wet Season* can be described as "playing herself".

Ling is from Taiping, a small town near Ipoh, the capital of the Malaysian state of Perak. Ipoh has a 95 percent Chinese population, and the Chinese culture is well inherited. After marrying in Singapore, Ling worked as a Chinese teacher in a secondary school, which makes her an enforcer of Chinese education in Singapore. However, in practice and in life, Ling shuttles between different languages: in class, she speaks Chinese with her students; At work and at home, school colleagues, students and her husband communicate with her in a mixture of English, Chinese and Singlish. Her mother back home in Malaysia speaks Hokkien when she calls her and chats with her father-in-law...Different languages are symbols of different cultures, and Ling lives in the midst of different cultures in Singapore.

In addition to the language, this "sandwiched survival" is clearly reflected in her dealings with the three men. As a representative of the older generation, her father-in-law maintained his affection for Chinese culture, but he lost his mobility, language ability and eventually died. The husband, who grew up as a "social elite" under the Western education, as a middle-aged generation, was indifferent and did not show any enthusiasm for Chinese culture. Wei Lun, a student full of vitality, as the young generation, seems to be full of "love" for Chinese culture, but his "love" is not based on the real understanding of the connotation of Chinese culture, identity and practice. On the one hand, his "love" is due to the oppression of his parents, on the other hand, due to the youth passion similar to "mother/lover" for Ling, and his passion makes him finally violate the "propriety and shame" advocated by Chinese ethics. Among the three, the one who can really maintain emotional communication with Ling is his father-in-law, who can't speak. His father-in-law loves HU Jinchuan's martial arts movie Xia Nu. Wei Lun, who comes to his home for tutoring, scribbles on his arm the Chinese character for "帮", which he cannot write, and points to the Chinese character for "笑" to comfort Ling. "Calligraphy and paintings at home, martial arts films on TV, and the Mandarin mixed with Hokkien that Ling speaks to his father-in-law, All speak to the two men's shared cultural identity.(LEI Jingjing, 2020) The old man is Ling's "fellow traveler", which is a kind of irony, suggesting that the older generation of Singaporean Chinese, who still have strong Chinese cultural identity and have experienced "Singapore-Malaysian-Chinese family", have "lost their language". And the inability of the next generation to write Chinese characters suggests the "cultural amnesia" of the younger generation of Chinese Singaporeans.

Contemporary Singapore men of old, middle-aged and young people between the cracks, local thought after the European and American culture immersion of "Chinese elite" and "complex" native culture exist in the contradiction between "traditional Chinese", "close to the west" of Singapore Chinese philosophy with the Malaysian Chinese traditional "protect" concept of dramatic collision, In the film, it is presented with Ling as the center. The identity of Ling's Malaysian Chinese and Singaporean daughter-in-law has become a subtle symbol, which encapsulates the cultural entanglement and collision between East and West.

Mixing Mandarin and English: Cultural consciousness or confusion

English is the main spoken language in Singapore, and the large Chinese population means that Mandarin also plays an important role in daily communication. As a result, Chinese Singaporeans tend to use a mixture of Chinese and Singlish (Singlish).For example, Ling and Wei Lun embrace in the rain:

- 这是我第一次breakup，你可以让它memorable一点吗？
- 你想怎样？
- 我要hug你！我的心很痛，真的很痛。

What is called Singlish is as opposed to the Standard Singapore English. The former is mainly used in homes, markets and other informal Settings, while the latter is used in formal Settings such as government work. It is even more peculiar when mixed with Chinese and Singlish, as in "Go go go, go sit car", or "目前 regional 经济 crisis, 很多人被 retrench, 我们要 tighten 裤带, 做 boss 的也要割 cost". YUAN Caihong (2000) Such language is used in a way that is unimaginable to most countries..

Singlish, however, had a counterpart in China a hundred years ago. When China was just opening its eyes to the world, there were quite a few intellectuals who had been influenced by British and American culture and used a mixture of Chinese and English to communicate. This quite eerie Chinese-English pidgin actually represent the contemporary Singaporean identity: on the one hand, they admire in western culture, must have its advantage cultural status, use it as a learning example, on the other hand, they hard to abandon their own natural ethnic identity, therefore can only play the most close to the west "" the Oriental world group roles.

Singlish and Chinese-English pidgin on English syntax and grammar specification, although to a certain extent, affect the value as the language of communication, but it is precisely this way is not the pure language use is considered to represent the unique identity, Singaporeans "fully reflects the Singapore local English language features and cultural characteristics, This is something that Singaporeans are proud of ".For a significant number of Singaporeans, this distinctive blend of Mandarin and Singlish builds a Singaporean identity, unites Singaporeans and signifies Singapore's "local" and "national identity". As former Singapore Ambassador to the United Nations T. T. B. koh once said: "When I open my mouth abroad, I want my fellow Singaporeans to be able to easily identify me as a Singaporean."(YUAN Caihong, 2000)

Wet Season doubts whether this Chinese-English hybrid language can truly build Singaporeans' national identity and identity. In this film, different languages are used to imply different social atmoses. Chinese including Hokkien symbolizes tradition and warmth, English symbolizes modernity and indifference, and the strange mixture of Singlish and Chinese symbolizes the unconscious reliance of Singaporean Chinese on the Western world and their own indecision. In most people's eyes, I'm afraid, this Chinese-English hybrid in the film is rather superficial and can only be regarded as a comedy element. Solemn national identity and national pride can be based on a British English syntactic deviation, can have its own cultural gene at a slightly disordered and casual way of language use, the so-called Singlish is Singapore cultural consciousness, or a relatively narrow range in time, It may still be an issue that needs to be carefully examined.

Propriety, Decency and Shame: the impact of Confucianism on the Chinese community in Singapore

Singapore's Chinese education can be described as a struggle, but the country embarked on a huge Confucian movement in the 1980s, trying to build an international image as an overseas Confucian center. At that time, Singapore invested a large amount of money and adopted various means to promote Confucianism and revive traditional culture. For example, in academic research, the government and the business community invested a huge amount of money to set up the Institute of Oriental Philosophy in 1983, and held many international Confucian conferences. Eight famous international Confucian scholars, such as TU Weiming, Yu Yingshi, Tang Degang and Xu Zhuoyun, were invited to give lectures and discussions. In terms of education, the textbook Confucian Ethics was compiled in both Chinese and English. In 1983, "Confucian Ethics" became one of the moral courses in Chinese schools, and in 1987 became an elective course for students in English

schools...However, these vigorous activities failed to achieve the desired political effect, and "came to an end" at the end of the 1980s. Although the government made active efforts to promote Confucianism, little effect was achieved.

Of course, this does not mean that Singapore has since abandoned Confucianism. In 1991, the Singapore government published a White Paper on Shared Values, which laid out the "Five Values", namely, "country first, society first; Family as the root and society as the foundation; Care support, pull together; Seek common ground while shelving differences and reach consensus through consultation; Racial harmony and religious tolerance". These values emphasize the state, society, community and family, and are considered by some to be the expression of Confucianism. "The core is the Confucian rule of virtue, the foundation is the Confucian family ties, and the purpose is the Confucian harmony and harmony." (ZHU Renfu, 2003) On October 15, 1994, Lee Kuan Yew, who was elected Honorary President of the International Federation of Confucianism in Beijing, delivered a speech at the inaugural ceremony: "My experience in governing Singapore, especially during the difficult period from 1959 to 1969, has convinced me that we would not have been able to overcome the difficulties and setbacks had it not been for the fact that the majority of Singapore's people had been imprinted with Confucian values."

However, in the film *Wet Season*, it is Ling, a Malaysian Chinese married to Singapore, who truly embodies the concept of Confucianism and shows the quality of Confucianism.

The image of Ling as the carrier of Confucianism

Anthony Chen once said, "Ling in my mind is a more traditional Confucian woman, with a gentle maternal temperament." (NI Jianjia, 2019) He took Ling in the film as the object of Confucian ethical scrutiny, trying to show the close relationship between Ling's words and deeds and Confucianism. Therefore, what *Wet Season* shows is not only the disappointment of Chinese education in Singapore, but also the reflection on Confucianism, the guiding ideology and code of conduct of Chinese people.

The values related to Confucianism designed in *Wet Season* were not reflected in the role of Andrew, a Singaporean male Chinese. Andrew, who should have assumed the role of head of the family, did not take the responsibility. He pushed the responsibility of taking care of his father who had a stroke to his wife and the burden of bearing children to his wife. He did not attend the one-month wine of his sister and daughter on the pretext of making an appointment with a client...He plays the role of an indifferent Western elite, who has lost any of the "filial piety" advocated by Confucianism. Even his willingness to live with his father, who had suffered a stroke, was most likely motivated by the enjoyment of his father's house. In contrast to Andrew, the Confucian values advocated by the Chinese community can be found in Ling, a female character. She painstakingly cares for her father-in-law, who is paralyzed by a stroke; She values her family and puts up with a cold and unfaithful husband; She yearned for a child and agonized over her failure to have one; She attaches great importance to family relations and takes her father-in-law to attend the full moon ceremony of her sister-in-law's daughter, even though she is embarrassed because she has no children. When she and the student Wei Lun cross the thunder pool, she has been insisting that "we are so wrong", and there is a meaningful shot in the film, she used a printed "etiquette and shame" folder pressure in the hands of two people.....Although Ling also has some characteristics of modern women, such as her marriage, family, career in extreme depression, there was an instant desire to indulge; She bravely divorced her cheating husband, etc., but she more reflects the traditional values and personality qualities of Chinese.

In the film, what Anthony Chen wants to show is not that after the vigorous revival of Con-

fucianism, Singaporean Chinese generally have Confucian values. On the contrary, he wants to depict the loss of contemporary Singaporeans' moral concepts. The dishonor, perseverance, gentleness and serenity shown by Ling are indeed close to the moral qualities advocated by Confucianism. However, these moral qualities are cultivated in Malaysia, and some of them are exploited by Andrew, a Singaporean Chinese, while some of them are destroyed by Wei Lun, a younger Singaporean Chinese. It is interesting that such a meek, Stoic, and traditional Oriental female figure, Ling, so many years after arriving in Singapore, should violate the Confucian ethic of "propriety and shame". This cannot but make the person think of Singapore at the beginning of Confucianism campaign reason: the government hopes to solve the problem of colonization by force of moral education, national customs, cultural differences and westernization of moral crisis, in the rapid urbanization and industrialization situation, to strengthen the traditional social values and norms, strengthen the national identity and sense of belonging, the cultivation of national consciousness. However, decades after the Confucian revival movement, these problems still exist among the Chinese community in Singapore.

In addition, Anthony Chen shows his understanding and imagination of Confucianism through Ling, which is not necessarily required by Confucianism to be a woman who obeys her husband or other male members of the family. Ling does not say that she embodies the character of Confucianism, but rather that she represents a slightly narrow and rigid folk ethics. However, in some historical stages, these folk ethics had some similarities with the Confucianism at that time. In this special social and historical period, traditional Confucian concepts should be adjusted. For example, contemporary Chinese society has already reexamined Confucianism and combined it with new values such as freedom, equality, justice and the rule of law. In the view of this value concept with Chinese characteristics, which is born and reconstructed from Confucianism, Ling has a side that makes people "mourn for their misfortune", and also a side that "annoyingly does not fight for them".

Singapore Confucian Movement and Confucian spirit

The linguistic and cultural difficulties encountered by the Chinese in Singapore and the sense of drifting come from the cultural consciousness and cultural choice of Singapore for a long time. To put it simply, cultural consciousness refers to the self-knowledge of one's own nationality and culture, the understanding of social history and the assumption of the goal of survival. YI Junqing believes that cultural consciousness is "the core problem for us to understand the deep connotation of human spiritual condition and history in the 20th century". It is first of all "the realistic and focal survival problem of the 20th century" (YI Junqing,2003).After the establishment of the Republic of Singapore, the Chinese in Singapore consciously chose their own way of existence and cultural norms, and regarded the Western world as the benchmark of national material and cultural construction. They tried to integrate into the Western developed first world with a new identity different from the Third World, and succeeded to some extent. But Chinese Singaporeans were also worried about the erosion of values caused by Westernization, so they hatched the Confucian revival movement in the 1980s mentioned above.

This Confucian revival movement formed a sharp contrast in academia and society. In the academic world, Confucianism has been the subject of numerous research works, large conferences and heated discussions, and its contemporary significance has been explained in many ways. Many Confucianism researchers take a positive and even romantic view of Singapore's efforts to promote Confucianism. For example, Chinese-American TU Weiming argues in his book "Singapore's Challenge: The New Confucian Ethics and Entrepreneurship" that Confucian ethics played an important

role in Singapore's economic rise: "It focuses on self-discipline, transcending self-centeredness, active participation in collective welfare, education, individual advancement, work ethic and collective effort, all values that are critical to Singapore's success." (TU Weiming, 1989) "The virtues of diligence, fortitude, tenacity and courage embodied in the Confucian tradition become indispensable spiritual resources for them to get through difficult times" (TU Weiming, 2002). There are also some scholars believe that the Confucian traditional culture in the historical process of modernization in Singapore's role is limited, WANG Gengwu WANG gungwu argues that "although the Confucian values may have help type industrialization of capitalism, but too much to believe in Confucianism or too close to the center of Confucianism is probably an obstacle of the development of this." (WANG Gengwu, 1994) But whether the conclusion is positive, doubtful or negative, the academic community has shown great interest in this issue.

On the other hand, the movement does not seem to have made much of an impact on the spiritual outlook or values of ordinary Chinese Singaporeans. After analyzing the development and spread of Confucianism in Singapore in a systematic way, LIN Weiyi points out that "there is no institutionalized Confucianism in Singapore...The academic tradition of Confucianism in Singapore has not been established, the talent is limited, the whole academic foundation is weak compared with mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the Confucian gate is weak, flowers and fruits are scattered, and the Confucianism spread in the system cannot penetrate into the people and form the ethos." (LIN Weiyi, 2010) Singapore's huge investment in the revival of Confucianism has not gained much response from the Chinese community. This community had just experienced the closure of Nanyang University, the first overseas Chinese University, by the Singapore government in 1980, and many Nanyang University students were immersed in loss and pain throughout the 1980s. Whether this sudden and dramatic revival of Confucianism is a political exercise or whether the Singapore government is indeed starting to value Chinese culture and Confucian traditions, they may not agree with scholars like TU Weiming. LU Zhengtao bluntly stated, "The main purpose of the government is to legitimize the People's Action Party (PAP) rule by reinterpreting Confucian values of loyalty, filial piety, courtesy, righteousness and shame, and to consolidate Singapore's sense of nation-state in the name of Confucianism and realize the political purpose of PAP rule." (LU Zhengtao, 2007)

Singapore is trying to rebuild its national image and consolidate its national identity through Confucianism. However, Confucianism itself is a complex structure formed after continuous enrichment and transformation in China's long history of thousands of years. Even if it is advocated for a few years, it may not play a key role in an overseas Chinese colony like Singapore. As far as Confucianism is concerned, we should pay attention to the following: Firstly, Confucianism in China has presented different characteristics in different historical periods, which can also be regarded as different stages or different levels of the development of Confucianism. However, these stages and levels are not a simple progressive relationship. For example, Neo-Confucianism in the Song and Yuan Dynasties was just a kind of adjustment under the social conditions at that time, which does not mean that its spiritual value and applicability to the contemporary society will definitely exceed that of various Confucian thoughts in the early period. Secondly, for a long time, Chinese Confucianism existed only as an ethical or political theory, and did not regard itself as witchcraft or religion. However, some Southeast Asian Chinese turned Confucianism into Confucianism, which contradicted the basic ideas of Confucianism in many ways. Thirdly, in the long course of history, Confucianism has been deeply intertwined with traditional Chinese philosophy, art, education, language, customs, norms, values, cultural spirit, etc. due to its long-term respect by feudal dynasties. It

has extensively influenced the spiritual and material achievements of Chinese civilization throughout the ages. That is to say, Confucianism, which was congealed in ancient Chinese history, is no longer a theory or a concept. It is actually one of the stable and deep core elements of Chinese culture. If one tries to abandon other components of Chinese culture and only advocates Confucianism, he is afraid that he can only gain its appearance.

Considering the above points, from the *Wet Season* "propriety" folder decipher the new content: once the value of the Confucian ethics, Confucianism in Singapore to promote, Chinese Singaporeans is no stranger to the thought of "propriety", even more familiar with these than Ling from Malaysia from Confucian moral requirements. But the Confucian movement in Singapore is actually trying to capitalize on its economic and political usefulness, rather than an endorsement of Confucianism itself and the Chinese cultural system behind it. The revival of Confucianism in Singapore without Chinese elements is more like a propaganda and performance. Its influence on the mental state of the Chinese in Singapore is quite limited. It is the outsider Ling who really practices the ethical concepts of Confucianism in daily life. In this, Ling and her husband Andrew stand in stark contrast. So the words "decency" on the folder also seem to be a silent question: are these moral requirements, which should be the basic code of conduct in Singapore, just a pile of old paper?

Reflection and criticism of Confucian moral concepts may not be the main theme of the film, but because of its special nature as a code of conduct, every action of Ling, Wei Lun and other characters indirectly reflects the influence of Confucianism. As the father-in-law of the older generation, who has the closest relationship with Chinese culture, he should have the deepest and most natural understanding of Confucianism. However, his father-in-law, who carries the memory of Chinese culture and the spirit of Confucianism, has lost his speech, which seems to imply that Confucianism has been fading in the life of Chinese in Singapore. Anthony Chen designs some details in the film, such as the father-in-law writing the word "help" on Wei Lun's arm, and pointing the word "smile" to comfort Ling -- helping and optimism are exactly the qualities advocated by Confucianism, and can be seen as part of Anthony Chen's understanding of Confucian spirit.

Cultural choices and cultural anxiety among Chinese Singaporeans

Anthony Chen described the cultural fragmentation and spiritual loss in *Wet Season* as the lack of "roots". In a sample survey on cultural values conducted by Dr. Zhang Hanyin of the Department of Sociology at the National University of Singapore, he found that nearly a quarter of Chinese students did not want to be Chinese again, and the identity of the Chinese in Singapore was even weaker than that of the Malays and Indians (XU Feng, 2008). Anthony Chen said that it is a reality that Chinese secondary school students in Singapore are unable or unwilling to speak Chinese as reflected in the film. For Chinese, this is a "rootless" state, which shows the embarrassment and dilemma of Chinese Singaporeans in cultural identity. Anthony Chen believes that no matter whether Malay or Chinese must have roots, it is impossible for a society to unite without roots. We should go into the future on the basis of respecting tradition, looking back at the past and understanding our own background: "I would be very worried, a country or a society, whether you are Chinese, Indian, Malay, I think people have to have roots, an ethnic group, a community has to have roots, otherwise how can they stick together?" (YAN Ruyi, 2019) Since "there are no roots", we have to "search for roots", but the process of searching for roots is not easy for Chinese Singaporeans.

The Wound of Shu Li: The game under inevitability

"From 1981 to now, there have appeared in Singapore literature with the unique significance of new Chinese literature and sentimental thoughts of Shu Li's injury. During these 30 years, the im-

balance of the language education environment has led to changes in the social and cultural landscape, and Xinhua writers have all presented the hidden danger of losing the cultural foundation of the Chinese people in their works, which has caused a strong sadness of Shu Li."(WU Mu, 2014) He used "Shu Li's injury" to describe the sense of desolation and powerlessness among the Chinese community in Singapore due to the flagging of Chinese language education and Chinese cultural undertakings.

"Shu Li's wound" reflects the cultural anxiety of the Chinese community in Singapore. In medical terms, anxiety refers to "an unpleasant feeling of nervousness, anticipation of something that seems to be about to happen, and difficulty in coping with it."(XU Junmian, 1996) While cultural anxiety refers to a confused and dazed reaction when one is worried about the development prospect of one's own culture." Cultural anxiety caused by globalization means that the culture of some countries and regions is in danger of being melted and changed due to globalization. First of all, you lose your identity."(WANG Meng, 2006) Therefore, cultural anxiety is the worry about whether one's national cultural identity will be reduced to a weak and marginal "other". In the rapidly changing era of globalization, this kind of worry is actually common in all countries and nations in the world, no matter whether it is in the mainstream cultural status in its own country. In other words, cultural anxiety is a common social psychology, because cultural consciousness itself is inevitably accompanied by a series of complex concepts such as cultural anxiety, cultural crisis and cultural criticism. It not only appears in the Chinese community in Singapore, but also widely exists in the cultural consciousness of other countries and nations. On the one hand, there is only a cultural model that occupies a dominant position due to the different economic and political strength of a country, and there is no perfect cultural model. Therefore, due to their own cultural shortcomings, some countries or nations may form cultural anxiety; On the other hand, cultural models of different countries and nations are bound to communicate, compare and even collide in the tide of globalization, and cultural anxiety may also arise in this process. In terms of the Chinese language circle, no matter the Chinese in Singapore, other overseas Chinese, the Chinese in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, or the people in mainland China, they have been immersed in cultural anxiety for a long time. The same is true in the Western world, otherwise there would be no such work as Oswald Arnold Gottfried Spengler's *The Decline of the West*. Cultural anxiety is universal, but the content and extent of it vary.

The cultural anxiety of the Chinese in Singapore has its own particularities. The first thing to note is that the overseas Chinese community in the 20th century had a distinctly "discrete" character. After the Second World War, with the collapse of the world's colonial system and the independence of Asian, African and European countries, overseas Chinese groups had to change their national identity, and their allegiance to the "motherland" was no longer China but the country where they lived. The role of the concept of "overseas Chinese" in maintaining the Chinese in different regions gradually faded, and the cultural inheritance problems faced by overseas Chinese mainly depended on the policies of the host country. The communication space of Chinese in different countries was narrowed. In this case, and after the establishment of New China, the cultural, political and economic ties between mainland Chinese and overseas Chinese have been weakened, and the cultural landscape of mutual echo and close connection between mainland Chinese and overseas Chinese in the past no longer exists. It can be said that the seeds of cultural anxiety have been planted since the change in the orientation of the "motherland". This is not a new problem that has been formed since the 1980s, it just erupted at that point in time.

Secondly, as far as Southeast Asian Chinese are concerned, the cultural anxiety in reality is

mainly expressed in the attitude of various governments towards Chinese education. Southeast Asian countries are often multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-religious. In order to implement national cultural policies and establish national identity, the government mainly considers political stability and inter-ethnic harmony, and mostly adopts the practice of suppressing the development of Chinese culture and maintaining language balance. Governments around the world do not want to see Chinese people overemphasize their ethnic identity. YANG Ruiwen once said that due to the large proportion of Chinese in Singapore, "some people nicknamed it as the third China" (YANG Ruiwen, 1993). Therefore, the government was worried that the relatively closed Chinese education would cause pressure on other disadvantaged ethnic groups, leading to cultural suspicion and even social unrest. Therefore, the essence of the Chinese education reform of the Singapore government is regarded as a "premeditated containment" and a "bright rise and dark decline" of the Chinese language. This kind of suspicion and even suppression of Chinese education has become an important source of "trauma" among Chinese Singaporeans.

Thirdly, there is a more important issue that Chinese in Southeast Asia, including Singapore, must face: the government's attitude towards Chinese education has its economic and political legitimacy. Singapore only became independent from the Malaysian Federation in the 1960s. On the one hand, it had to deal with the problems of communism, racism and Chinese exclusion, and on the other hand, it had to deal with the core problem of economic development. It is understandable that Singapore chose to lean towards Western culture from the perspective of colonial inertia and realistic circumstances. Singapore's economy is related to exports and trade to Europe and the United States. All kinds of business activities are in line with those of Western countries. In the process of urbanization and modernization, English education, which is more conducive to integrating into the global economy and quickly forming economic benefits, is bound to take advantage in Singapore's education system. Therefore, it is natural to adopt a cold treatment and repression policy towards Chinese language education and Chinese culture. This makes the cultural anxiety of the Chinese more profound. They feel powerless to fight against the national choice, so they have a strong sense of frustration, and their "wounds of Shu Li" appear more and more painful.

Finally, in Singapore to western culture in the process of modernization, under the social atmosphere of mercantilism and pragmatism, there has been a disease of western society, interpersonal relationship is becoming more and more cold, the original system of ethics in advocating wealth with the interests of the individual impact of western values, "for Singapore Chinese, For Chinese in Singapore, the most anxious is the impact and subversion of Western values on traditional Chinese culture and family system."(LEI Jingjing, 2020) This motivates the Singaporean Chinese to reflect on their own cultural heritage and basis points, thus causing the "wound of Shu Li" to spread to all aspects of society and become a spiritual dilemma deeply entangled with life.

To a certain extent, *Wet Season* can be regarded as the condensation of the "wound of Shu Li" that has been diffused in the Chinese community for a long time. In other words, it is inevitable that the artistic works describing the plight of Chinese culture in Singapore, such as *Wet Season*, will appear in view of the existence and death of Chinese culture in Singapore after systematic suppression. From this perspective, we can even associate the typical image of *Wet Season* -- rain in Singapore -- with the cultural loss of Chinese. From a deep perspective, rain also has an isomorphic relationship with the "injury of Shu Li" of the Chinese in Singapore. This dark tone reflects the hesitation of the Chinese in their own cultural inheritance. The tropical rain reflects Ling's inner depression and even despair, as well as the unbroken feelings in the spiritual world of Chinese Singaporeans. The sunless tropical rain symbolizes the homesickness that Ling, who insists on the Chinese

cultural identity, cannot make public. It also implies that Singapore has become a different cultural space for the Chinese. Finally, after living in Singapore for many years, Ling gave up the practice of integrating into the cultural environment of Singapore and returned to Malaysia, where she could truly accommodate and grow up with Chinese people. This meant that Ling, who insisted on not being assimilated into the Singaporean atmosphere, gave up being a "Singaporean". She was spiritually liberated by the "return", but it also meant her escape - the cracks did not go away, just could not be mended, cultural anxieties were not substantially assuaged, and there was not even a solution short of leaving. For Chinese Singaporeans, the problems persist and will persist for a long time, which seems to suggest a slightly pessimistic attitude towards the future of Chinese education and Chinese cultural heritage in Singapore.

Contemporary reconstruction of the spirit of overseas Chinese culture

As an artistic work, *Wet Season* discovered the cultural inheritance of the Chinese in Singapore, which was a major problem that the Chinese community had to face after the independence of Southeast Asian countries. Since cultural anxiety inevitably exists and is widespread, the main task at present is not to emphasize anxiety, but to face it squarely and reconcile it. *Wet Season* reveals the cultural dilemmas faced by Chinese Singaporeans, but it also leaves an open-ended ending without a clear response to "Where should Chinese Singaporean culture go?"

Some researchers believe that English has a high rank in Singapore since the colonial era, while Chinese is mainly used by the middle and lower levels of the society, and most young people are not proficient in Chinese, so the use of Chinese is limited to "areas of low reputation". Therefore, to improve the status of Chinese language, it is necessary to make it "elegant", abandon "economic oppression" and emphasize "cultural appeal", so as to promote the development of Chinese language and restore Confucian culture (CAI Mjinghong, 2013). This view is reasonable to some extent, but the problem lies in that the Chinese language with thousands of years of history and cultural accumulation is mature, beautiful and elegant, while English itself does not mean noble and rational. Judging the language as superior or inferior, or even dwarfing the native language itself, is to fall into the trap of thinking of the other party. It seems naive to deny the correlation between language and economic and political power, and to ignore the background that English itself has gained global linguistic advantage because of the world colonial system. It is unrealistic to suspect that Chinese is not "elegant" enough and that it can be raised to a "higher rank" by being "elegant". It can be said that behind the so-called "high and low level" of language is the comparison of economic and political power between the East and the West, as well as the comparison of values between the East and the West. This "high and low level" understanding is temporary and does not have natural rationality.

Results and Discussions

To reconcile the cultural anxiety of the Chinese in Singapore, we can adjust our cultural attitudes and face up to the cultural differences between the East and the West. "Facing up" can be divided into three aspects: first, facing up to the Oriental culture to which our ethnic group belongs, especially mainland Chinese culture, which is the spiritual root of overseas Chinese. GU Qingyang, an associate professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, once said he felt "insecure" about two things. One is that young Singaporeans do not know enough about China; The second is that there are not enough "know-China" groups. (XING Xiaojing, 2015) In the *Wet Season*, young Chinese represented by Wei Lun have a strong personal interest in Chinese culture, but this interest does not necessarily mean that they have experienced the

essence of Chinese culture, namely the core values of China. The understanding of the inner spirit requires long-term attention and understanding. The Chinese community in Singapore should give up the sense of superiority at the intersection of Eastern and Western cultures, reverse the stereotype and unwarranted contempt of their own history and culture, and make up for the compulsory course of their own culture and spirit.

Second, Singapore is a society dominated by Western ideas, but this does not mean that the Singaporean Chinese community can definitely face up to the Western culture. On the contrary, the one-sided worship of Western culture is the self-dwarfing of our own culture and Eastern culture. Excessive beautification cannot be called facing, because it represents rigidity and misreading. The fundamental reason for Singapore's intensive English education is the long-standing economic imbalance between the East and the West. The Western world is in a dominant position in the face of the Eastern world. However, with the change of times, when this dominant position is not obvious, it becomes inevitable to re-examine the Eastern and Western cultures including values, break the wishful thinking of the ideal of "Western gentleman", and make the Eastern culture gain its due position.

Third, face up to the local culture in the intersection of the East and the West, and face up to the actual needs of the host country. Overseas Chinese should be clear about the duality of their identity. On the one hand, they should affirm rather than self-demean their ethnic identity, let alone "deconstruct" their Chinese education. It should be realized that Chinese education is not only language education and paper education, but also related to the basis of the existence of the Chinese ethnic group and the foundation of the existence of the Chinese society. Overseas Chinese should actively participate in the political construction, social atmosphere, way of thinking, living habits and even culture and art of the country where they live. On the other hand, the overseas Chinese community should form a national identity with the host country. While safeguarding Chinese language education, it should also promote the steady development of Chinese language education within the educational policy framework of the host country. Chinese language education is an integral part of the education system of the host country, and the concept of "cross-cultural education" is indispensable to Southeast Asian countries, including Singapore. The Chinese language education has the aspect of cultivating the sense of kinship and ethnic group, but it should also bear the responsibility of cultivating the national consciousness and national identity of the host country. It is necessary to harmonize the original values of the Chinese community with the national cultural spirit advocated by the host country. In the process of mutual aid and complementarity between the two countries, the single-minded, borderline rigid and narrow "egotism" should be eased to promote the sustainable development of Chinese language education and Chinese culture.

In short, a deep understanding of and respect for Eastern and Western cultures is the premise of "facing up to". Without an accurate understanding and removal of hostility or contempt, it is impossible to face up to them. On the premise of facing up to it, the extreme consciousness of "one or the other" and "one or the other" should be removed, and the education and cultural inheritance of Chinese language education, Chinese culture and other ethnic groups should be regarded as a game under the framework of the state. With win-win cooperation as the goal, it is necessary to reconcile the relationship between Chinese self-orientation and national citizenship, the relationship between ancient historical feelings, cultural identity and modern national consciousness, and rationally carry out cultural choice and cultural construction, which still requires quite a long time of joint efforts.

Conclusion

In a word, the *Wet Season* in 2019 shows the social landscape of Singapore after more than

50 years of independence, which will clearly show the confusion and helplessness of the Chinese community. This rootless sense of drift is a psychological state that was gradually formed mainly in the 20th century. Before the 20th century, overseas Chinese had a clear sense of their homeland and their identity was relatively stable. Since the second half of the 20th century, with the establishment of modern countries, overseas Chinese have blurred their sense of motherland and gradually weakened their sense of identity with their ancestral country. In addition, due to other economic, political and cultural reasons, overseas Chinese have been permeated with the wound of "leaving" in their spiritual world.

To meet the challenges of a new historical period and new social outlook, overseas Chinese groups, including Singaporean Chinese, need to face up to cultural differences and constantly update their cultural cognition. LUO Chuanfang said when talking about Singapore's modernization process and Confucian tradition: "The modern social system and economic life reshaped the new Confucian tradition, which created conditions for separating the ideological resources conducive to modernity from Confucianism...The transformation from traditional Confucianism to neo-Confucianism is fundamentally a selection process of social practice and history. Only the selected Confucianism is the living Confucian tradition that plays a role in Singapore's modernization and participates in the formation of the 'Singapore model'." (LUO Chuanfang, 2002) This is a statement that is pertinent to the heart. The Chinese culture, represented by the Confucian tradition, needs to be reconstructed in a new context so as to meet the requirements of the globalization era.

Wet Season reveals the psychological conflicts between ethnic education and national education, ethnic identity and national identity of overseas Chinese groups, and stimulates the audience to think about the future of Chinese language education and Chinese culture, in an attempt to arouse the attention and reflection of the society. In the film, Ling can go back to his hometown in Malaysia and return to the familiar Chinese environment, while the hometown of Singaporean Chinese is here and they cannot and should not escape from it. How they should face and deal with these problems in this era may require a long and arduous effort.

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