

MASTER'S THESIS

Feelings and the racial other: race, affect, and representation on Hong Kong television

Leung, Shi Chi

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STUDENT'S NAME: LEUNG Shi Chi

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Hong Kong Television

This is to certify that the above student's thesis has been examined by the following panel members and has received full approval for acceptance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

Chairman: Prof. ROBINSON Douglas
Chair Professor, Office of the Dean of Arts, HKBU
Designated by Dean of Faculty of Arts

Internal Members: Prof. ERNI John N.
Head and Chair Professor in Humanities,
Department of Humanities and Creative Writing, HKBU

Prof. LO Kwai Cheung
Professor, Department of Humanities and Creative Writing,
HKBU

External Member: Dr. LEUNG Yuk Ming Lisa
Associate Professor
Department of Cultural Studies
Lingnan University

Issued by Graduate School, HKBU

Feelings and the Racial Other:

Race, Affect, and Representation on Hong Kong Television

LEUNG Shi Chi

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Philosophy

Principal Supervisor: Prof. ERNI John N.

Hong Kong Baptist University

November 2015

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been done after registration for the degree of MPhil at Hong Kong Baptist University, and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree, diploma, or their qualifications.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. J. Lee', written in a cursive style.

Date: November 2015

Feelings and the Racial Other: Race, Affect, and Representation on Hong Kong Television

Abstract

This cultural research explores the relation between racial representation and emotions/affects as part of the struggle for racial minorities' visibility. It is informed by conjunctural theory in cultural studies, with the use of textual narrative and affective analysis. It focuses on Hong Kong's television culture as a site for context configuration, or conjuncture, for constructing the inter- and intra-ethnic relations between the dominant ethnic Chinese and ethnic minorities (EMs), via the production of emotions.

Chapter One introduces a conjunctural understanding of the construction of EMs in Hong Kong through revisiting some of the most prominent theoretical works that explore the transformation of Hong Kong identity, in order to point out an underlying Hong Kong-Chineseness as a cultural center, and to argue that the demand of the present conjuncture is to respond to the necessity of generating an alternative "EM-context" suitable for reimagining Hong Kong identity. Chapter Two attempts to map out this "EM-context" by reviewing the major popular non-Chinese figures on TV, namely Louie Castro, Gregory Rivers (known as "Ho Kwok-wing") and Gill Mohinderpaul Singh (known as "QBoBo") in order to study how their particular cultural visibility can open up ways to rethink the problems surrounding visibility. The narrative affective approach to study racial relations is applied to the reading of *No Good Either Way* (TVB) in Chapter Three and *Rooms To Let* (RTHK) in Chapter Four. Together, these two core chapters

explore the affective configuration of “anxieties” and “shame” in the two TV programmes. It is suggested that these affective landscapes help position EMs as either a “sweetened trouble-maker” (in the work place) or “assimilating neighbor” (in the domestic sphere), both of which fall short of being able to construct a new context/conjuncture for understanding the cultural presence of EMs. This research rejects the study of race/ethnicity through content analysis of stereotype, and opts for an approach that reads affects and narratives in the search not for representational visibility, but for what is termed “conjunctural visibility.”

Ultimately, Chapter Five concludes with a discussion of the dynamics of “soft” and “hard” representations of the ethnic other: the former in the mode of “sugarcoated racism” which involves the figure of EM as the sweetened troublemaker appealing for audience’s sympathy, and the latter in the form of public pedagogy aimed at educating the audience (through shaming) to treat their EM neighbor as the assimilated other. This research study aims at making a small contribution to the understanding of the struggle for conjunctural visibility among EMs in Hong Kong.

Acknowledgement

In the past two years, I have often been asked a question—as an ethnic Chinese, why did I opt to study South Asian ethnic minorities (EMs)? This is never an easy question to answer. I can only respond by saying that my concern for EMs is *not* because they are seen as minority in terms of number and are often put in socially unprivileged positions, but because of EM's cultural invisibility. For me, inspired by Lawrence Grossberg to do a project of cultural studies using the concept of conjuncturalism, I intend to open up possibilities to overcome the existing cultural invisibility which renders EMs invisible neighbors, unfavorable strangers, or even outsiders rather than repeat the victimization narratives. The project was so complex that I am sure I would have not been able to overcome the theoretical and empirical challenges without the support and guidance by numerous people.

First and foremost, my deepest gratitude goes to Prof. John Erni, my supervisor, for his continuous help, encouragement, critical insights, and guidance throughout this entire journey of mine. I still remember my undergraduate time at Lingnan University, when I liked to randomly rush into his office for his advice, his comment or some casual chat. As my mentor, John can always narrow down my fancy thoughts, inspiring me to come to a better realization of what's doable. Knowing my ambition as well as flippancy, John has pushed me to go beyond the margins of my thinking with many steady steps, by rearticulating the unfamiliar thoughts, like conjunctural analysis, affect theories and advanced racialization analysis, into the thesis. The times when I have shared my concerns, ideas, and

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
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| ATV | Asia Television Limited |
| CKM | Chungking Mansions |
| EM | Ethnic Minority |
| EMs | Ethnic Minorities |
| EOC | Equal Opportunities Commission |
| HKSAR | Hong Kong Special Administrative Region |
| NGEW | No Good Either Way |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| PRC | People's Republic of China |
| RDO | Race Discrimination Ordinance |
| RTHK | Radio Television Hong Kong |
| RTL | Rooms To Let |
| SSS | Singh Sim Sim |
| TVB | Television Broadcasts Limited |

Chapter One

Telling a Conjunctural Story about South Asian Minorities in Hong Kong

Introduction

This study attempts to explore racial othering through a focus on the racialized feelings portrayed through Hong Kong television. Through studying two local TV series, *Rooms to Lets* (RTHK, 2009) and *No Good Either Way* (TVB, 2012) which the interracial dynamics between Chinese and ethnic minority characters are situated in ordinary neighborhood and the work place respectively, this cultural studies project explores the linkage between feelings (affects and emotions) and racial relations in local society textually and theoretically.

The task is to engage with the representations of feelings in TV texts and require an analysis of the social imaginary of racial relations (particularly addressing the aspects of racial harmony and racial difference) at the same time as it accounts for a specific racialized structure of feelings, like *shame* and *anxiety*. The textual analysis in this research intends to make it clear that the claim about individualized emotion simply is not the case. Rather, evaluating and appreciating the multiple purposes of feelings in popular texts is an eminently viable and valuable endeavor. In this sense, feelings in this research are very crucial textual elements, whereby the emotions or affects I am reading in the chosen TV dramas are not understood in a psychological sense, but in a textual meaning that shapes the racial difference between Chinese and other ethnicities. Therefore, the research generally lies on the following question: *How can the configuration of racialized feelings construct the particular racial relations in particular TV texts?*

The significance of this project rests on its attempt to enrich the debate on racial relations in Hong Kong through the application of a cultural affective approach to the study of race and ethnicity in the field of local TV culture. It will contribute particularly to the study of race/ethnicity in popular culture in cultural studies and communication studies that has rarely been attended to before in Hong Kong cultural studies. Further, by utilizing a cultural affective approach to investigate the crucial impact on shame-interest polarity and by problematizing our traditional notion of the social construction of race, a small contribution within the humanities and social sciences can be made. Finally, I hope that this exploration can engender a new kind of affective politics with respect to race, discrimination, and racial relations in Hong Kong.

In order to accomplish the purpose, the first question should be raised is who ethnic minorities in Hong Kong are. Keeping this query in mind, this introductory chapter revisits some of the most prominent (and rather popular) theoretical works that explore the transformation in Hong Kong identity at large, and attempts to figure out a conjunctural understanding about the construction of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. The works which will be mentioned include Lui Tai-lok's theory of the hegemonic market mentality, Eric Ma Kit-wai's de/re-sinicization thesis, and Ackbar Abbas's thesis of the culture of disappearance. These works have long centered on a taken-for-granted Hong Kong-Chineseness and, I shall suggest, risked erasing ethnic multiplicity. Last but the not least, an *unfinished migrant milieu* will be proposed to be the new conjuncture for doing further studies on race/ethnicities.

Who Are the Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong?

Hong Kong is so-called a "Chinese society," yet about 6.4% of its whole population (about 45 thousand people) is categorized as ethnic minorities¹ (hereafter shortened to EM or EMs), and the

number of EMs has increased significantly by 31.2% over the past ten years, from 343,950 in 2001 to 451,183 in 2011 (see *2011 Population Census*, HKSAR). According to the statistics, in 2011, about 54% of the EM population was contributed by domestic workers from the Philippines and Indonesia², which spark off the major discussion on legal identity of citizenship. However, this research is not going to cover all ethnic minorities and their relations to Hong Kong society; instead, the groups of “South Asian” Hong Kong people are the focus of this research. It is worth noting that the term of “ethnic minorities” used in this Hong Kong society refers mostly to South Asians instead of pointing to the Caucasian expatriate class living in Hong Kong as other ethnic groups. The term “South Asian” commonly conjures the immigrants and settlers from both South and Southeastern regions of Asia, including India, Pakistan, Nepal, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and so forth. In the recent study on South Asians living and working in Hong Kong, John Nguyet Erni and Lisa Yuk-ming Leung (2014) elaborate further on the term:

The terms [“ethnic minorities”(少數族裔)] that more clearly delineate this difference are “South Asians”(南亞裔) on the one hand, and “expatriates”(外籍人士) on the other.

Notice that the latter term used to refer to the Caucasian population is de-racialized; the Chinese words for “race/ethnicity”(族裔) are absent. Meanwhile, the local press often uses a shorthand “Indo-Pakistani race”(印巴裔) to refer to all South Asians, suggesting a compressed racialized imagination that highlights perhaps the visible dark skin and facial features deemed to connote a minority race [. . .]. (4)

This commonsensical naming leads to a stereotypical imagination on the South Asians by perhaps, drawing attention to their visible features cultivated in the Chinese people’s perception on their EMs neighbors. In addition, unlike Caucasian expatriates and other Asians minorities (e.g. Japanese and

Korean), these EMs groups generally are at a less favorable position in terms of economic and social status, and are subjected to discrimination by their ethnic or racial³ makers.

The government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has made effort to integrate the residents of EMs into this Chinese-dominant community, but there is much criticism of the governmental practice made in the local research findings of NGOs and social scientists. To arise the public concern at the predicament of racism in Hong Kong, since the 1990s these local literatures have highlighted different kinds of discrimination and social exclusion concerning various aspects of their lives. For instance, employment, education (inclusive of additional linguistic education), social interaction, application of public housing, and so on (Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor, 1998; Chan, 2001; Loper, 2001; Ku, Chan, and Sandhu, 2005; Ku, Chan, and Sandhu, 2008; Carmichael⁴, 2009; Equal Opportunities Commission, 2012). They criticize that the practices of racism on the social, economic and policymaking levels inevitably perpetuate the disadvantageous status of EM groups on the one hand, and the dominance of Chinese group on the other. Therefore, compared with local Chinese population, not only are EMs seen as the minority in terms of number⁵, they also suffer from being put in an unprivileged position. What these sociological analyses can offer is that EMs groups are excluded and powerless in the existing social structure under an uneven relation between the groups of ethnic Chinese and EMs in Hong Kong society. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the process of turning an ethnic group or some ethnic groups into the position of minority is not only social but also cultural.

Some local EMs studies with cultural criticisms illustrate that Hong Kong society ignores its EM neighbors and even considers them outsiders. It cannot be simply explained by the fact that local Chinese usually regard EMs as “foreigners” and deny their local status; the (re)presentations of EMs

which have undergone a negation of Hong Kong cultural identity should be taken as a major attribution. Lo Kwai-cheung (2008) claims that, from the past of being a British colony to the present stage of being under China's sovereignty, in order to erase the ethnic others who are not White, the local society has long turned EMs into its "invisible neighbors" through the way of under-representing them in the political engagement and in literary expressions. Furthermore, Hong Kong society's strategy of under-representing its EMs is effective in masking the failure of a propagandized ideology of racial harmony; Lo (2008) argues that Hong Kong as "a place where over-crowding can easily exacerbate racial antagonism, perhaps pretending not to see the existence of ethnic others may create a more peaceful public sphere" (60). Ku, Chan, and Sandhu (2008) argue that the South Asian minorities as "the outsiders" are ignored and degraded by the imagination of Hong Kong people, who only see themselves as "a westernly civilized and developed group." This cosmopolitan sense somehow produces the fear of EMs among the local Chinese people and also labels EMs as the poor with threat from ghettos. Gordon Mathews (2011) finds that the major reason why the local Chinese are terrified of Chungking Mansions⁶ (hereafter shorten to CKM) is that "they are afraid of the developing world and the masses of poor people who come to the developed world for some of the crumbs of its wealth....CKM is in Hong Kong, but it is not of Hong Kong. It is an alien island of the developing world lying in Hong Kong's heart" (15). What's more, Erni and Leung discover that dark-skinned Asians are labeled as the "unfavorable strangers" who have long been abandoned strangers trapped in socially isolated, sub-economic existence. As a result, both strategies of the stigmatizing and underrepresenting Hong Kong society has chosen is to turn its apparently visible EMs members into an insensible and invisible state, and an imagination that EMs have been the others in the society who do not belong to Hong Kong people's homeland is projected.

Therefore, to overcome such existing cultural invisibility and stereotype, an intervention concerning the (trans)formations of Hong Kong identity wherein “Chineseness” has become the hegemonic center is needed. The adoption of Lawrence Grossberg’s *Conjuncturalism* (2010) is an analytical method for doing a project of cultural studies; in the following part, this research will re-articulate three predominant narratives of the formation of local identity into a conjuncture given by local scholars. In addition, some critical EMs studies (some of them have mentioned above) with specified critical cultural approaches will also be jointed. Not only does this research show that Hong Kong society is going to erase its multi-ethnic component in its history and culture, it also opens up the possibilities from this context with the conjunctural demand on the politics of multiculturalism.

Configuring a Context for Problematizing the “Locals”

The 2012 Census report shows that 94% of the Hong Kong population is Chinese, but this statistics is overly simplified when it comes to the discussion of Hong Kong identity. This statistical reality does not guarantee the cultural reality that “Hongkongness,” or its localness was only registered with either Cantonese or Hong Kong-Chinese. In order to understand the reason why Hong Kong identity has been dominated by Chineseness, some questions should be inevitably asked. For example, who the “locals” are, and why this local identity has only been constructed through Chineseness/Cantonese (Erni, 2012).

In a sense, telling the Hong Kong stor(ies) is not easy. One of the major reasons is that the emerged Hong Kong identity in 1970s is rapidly shifting and has been subjected to respond to the changes in the local society (Lui, 1997; 2007). However, the fluidity does not make it easy to tell an EM version of Hong Kong story; it is still difficult to find any popular Hong Kong narratives whose protagonists are EMs. Apart from the HKSAR government’s oversimplified Hong Kong story where

Hong Kong was initially a fishing village which was transformed into an industrialized city first and eventually became an international financial center as well as an “Asian World City” paralleling a China’s city, this research traces back to the formation of Hong Kong cultural identity and finds three scholars who have provided major popular narratives⁷ in the discussion of Hong Kong identities. Ackbar Abbas suggests a culture of disappearance in his colonial criticism, Eric Ma emphasizes the de-/re-sinicization of representation on media and Lui Tai-lok explains the development of the hegemony of market mentality in socio-economic terms. All scholars have proposed their specific political projects for making reflection and social change; some even admirably point out which trajectory Hong Kong society has been proceeding to. Nevertheless, their ideas do not account for the possibility for EM’s engagement due to the hegemonic Chinese-centered thought.

Consequently, I attempt to explore how these narratives have been constructed and indirectly positioned South Asians in Hong Kong. Most importantly, while there is no doubt that the (trans)formation of Hong Kong cultural identity is an ongoing project in its post-colonial era, those narratives are interrogated because they condition the possibility of imagining and defining the “local” with their seemingly-overwhelming paradigms and convincing trajectories they trace. To open up the possibilities of Hong Kong identity, I choose Grossberg’s conjuncturalism as the analytical method in analyzing the situation of EMs in order to offer a conjunctural understanding of who EMs in Hong Kong are, for this method of articulation, “the reconstruction of relations and contexts,” given by Grossberg, can tell a conjunctural story of EMs. As Grossberg says, doing cultural studies as an intellectual-political project attempts to initiate productive and celebrative conversation in search for a better way to tell the story of what is happening, by opening up “new possibilities from imagination and struggle, even for rethinking imagination itself, and in particular for imagining new possibilities for a future that can be reached from the present” (67).

In general, the notion of context cultural studies constructs has the purpose to avoid reproducing the dominant practice of knowledge-creation of universalisms and essentialisms. More radically, Grossberg theorizes the notion of context as a singularity as well as a multiplicity that is an active organization and organizing assemblage of relationalities that also produces the context itself (30-31). When relationalities are constructed and conditioned discursively and temporarily, it means that a context can be built and destroyed. In this case, to break down the three grant narratives for Hong Kong identity generated from the works of sociology, communication studies and cultural studies, a paradigmatic shift through conceptualizing each of them into the form of context is required. At the same time, adopting conjuncture as a theoretical tool, I should articulate the three contexts into a conjuncture venue, where we can research for what the problematics⁸ of understanding EMs will be, within the Chinese-dominant culture, and what new possibilities for taking other forms of Hong Kong identities can emerge. With this reason, the notion of conjuncture should be elaborated by adopting Grossberg's (2010) view:

[A] conjuncture is constituted by, at, and as the articulation of multiple, overlapping, competing, reinforcing, etc., lines of force and transformation, destabilization and (re-) stabilization, with differing temporalities and spatialities, producing a potentially but never actually chaotic assemblage or articulations of contradictions and contestation....A conjuncture is that accumulation/condensation that produces a particular problematic (or set of problematics)...that constitutes the conjuncture. (41)

From the above quote, we can see that a conjuncture approach is not only a mapping of relationalities, but also a transformative mechanism to produce a new conjuncture through its disarticulation and rearticulation with other contexts. On the one hand, the disarticulating feature of a conjuncture

analysis always intends to destroy the fragile stabilities of a certain context. We can identify the temporary relationality constituted and practiced by a context as its problematics, which resonate Grossberg's argument that the correlation between knowledge and politics should not be lazily "guaranteed." On the other hand, we should view the rearticulation as a method to reconfigure "the relation and contexts." What Grossberg remarks here is that the ontological assumption of the conjunctural analysis cannot be understood as a totalizing project where the relationality includes everything; instead, it aims at figuring out a particular problem-space, or a problematic, which generates a new kind of conjunctural demand and condition for the "better politics" in doing intellectual-political projects.

What's more, in response to the demand of the new conjuncture, what is called "EM-context" will re-map the relationalities. To meet this end, I have to deploy Grossberg's analytical tool—"milieu"—as a particular mode of contextualization to map the material specificity of a location. For instance, the representation of ethnic figures in Hong Kong cultural industry has never been mapped before; in this case, as Grossberg insists, the milieu can be understood as the object of theorized empiricism that functions to describe a "social-material" context which can be comfortably defined by spatio-temporal boundaries (33). In the last part of this chapter, I will elaborate how to use a milieu to map the "EM-context" in detail.

Back to this EMs study that will begin with a conjuncturalist analysis in this chapter, the goal of a background review to portray the statistics, historical and socio-economic status of the South Asians is no longer primary when we tell the story at the very beginning, since it can only work for a number of flank attacks on those predominant narratives; more critically, it may justify the marginalization of the South Asian's presence that is distant from the Chinese-centered local identity.

Nonetheless, it is possible to take EMs as the subject within the new context when one could avoid being trapped into such margin-center dialectic logic. Again, this more theoretical background review on articulating three contexts come together to tell a Chinese-centered Hong Kong story. Moreover, this consistent story permits and offers the ethnically politically correct guidance to the urge for the transformation of the local identity in the post-1997 era. It attempts to interrogate how those contexts respond to two main questions: (1) what are the ongoing politics of race, ethnicities, and identity those contexts offer? (2) where are the EMs, or how do those contexts map out the presence of South Asians in Hong Kong?

Now, the way I restrict the review of Hong Kong studies to these three works with two historical and sociocultural reasons is elaborated. Firstly, these works appeared at the historical moment when post-coloniality was about to take place, or, began to take place in the early 1990s. That is more a conjunctural moment to look at how major intellectuals talked about Hong Kong identity, because this historical moment when the crisis of the handover appeared. This explains why I would not go back to the “calmer time”, the time when the atmosphere was still calm in 1970s and 1980s and when people talked about “utilitarianistic familism”(Lau, 1978) and “administrative absorption politics model” (Ambrose, 1975)⁹, or went further to the current postcolonial debate, like Law Wing-sang’s “collaborative colonialism”(2009). Secondly, their concerns over the political struggles of contemporary Hong Kong consistently begin with the standard narrative that Hong Kong is a migrant city since the 1950s with an overwhelming influx of Mainland migrants, even though their researches are of different fields. Thus, their works somehow have long centered on a taken-for-granted Hong Kong-Chineseness that has underlined the Chinese settlers’ migrant history, I shall suggest, risk erasing ethnic multiplicity. So, this strategy of rearticulating them into a conjuncture allows me to problematize the seemingly stabilized notion of migrant city into the critical notion of

“unfinished migrant milieu” in the following that allows the rethinking of the migrant experience of EMs.

Re-articulating Three Predominant Contexts into a Conjuncture

The following part attempts to examine the contexts of three popular narratives including Ackbar’s argument of the culture of disappearance, Ma’s theory of de-/re-sinicisation thesis and Lui’s context of the hegemony of market mentality. They offered different perspectives on the formation of Hong Kong society and its identity, and proposed their specific political projects for making reflection and even social change. Thus, this part will illustrate their works on constructing the local identity through questioning how each of these narrative contextualizes specific Hong Kong stories, mapping their own relationalities over various historical events¹⁰, and articulating the corresponding living experience of Hong Kong people in the colonial and postcolonial period. And also, the research will further examine how such stabilized relationalities have narrated and even dominated the imagination of local identity in their proposed ongoing political project

Adopting Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s notion of “reality producing self” that “offers a realist ontology in which reality is constantly producing itself, and hence that change (or becoming) is the only ontology itself” (36), Grossberg converts such operation of reality production into the contextualizing machines that accomplish the production of the actual by stratifying, coding, and territorializing, and embody three forms of relationalities or articulations—connective, disjunctive and conjunctive. Grossberg suggests that the idea of machines, which will be used below, in multiple stratifications of contexts is mainly to organize matters and functions as well as content and expression that “[defines] the real as a practical and practice-able reality” (37; emphasis added). Therefore, it is necessary to revisit how those scholars have stabilized their contexts for forming the local identity and

what kind of politics they have offered, and how they respond to questions of the presence of South Asian EMs.

There are two ways to de-stabilize the totalities from those contexts with the presence of the local EMs people. For one thing, the duration these scholars choose to work on in their works should be taken into consideration. In socio-historical contexts, the scholars tend to draw from a longer term (such as from 1950s to 2000s), trying to provide a totalizing project which can map out every thing and change. They articulate the very facts to describe the social change, which contributes to their approaches, but the approach of conjuncturalism reminds us that seemingly stabilized unity can be witnessed by its temporariness and fracture. For the other, it has to make EMs a visible presence for de-stabilizing these contexts on the formation of local identity with the hegemonic center of “Chineseness”. In the following, the conjuncturalist approach chosen to review the formation of the local identity which is not just a method of mapping, but also a transformative method to produce a new conjuncture through its disarticulation and rearticulation with popular contexts. To fill the gap of local literature on presenting EMs, I also invite some critical EMs studies to join this conservation, for instance, John Erni and Lisa Leung’s *Understanding South Asian Minorities in Hong Kong*, Gordon Mathews’ anthological work on Chungking Mansions, Lo Kwai Cheung’s notion of “Invisible Neighbors” and Barry Sautman’s discussion on “Hong Kong as a semi-ethnocracy.” Through re-articulating the above-mentioned contexts into a conjuncture, the unique-ethnic context in which the local identity is only subjected to Hong Kong Chinese or Hong Kong Chineseness can be destabilized. Moreover, this proposed conjuncture mainly targets on the possibilities of reconnecting Hong Kong EMs members to the local identity.

A Context of Stabilizing Hong Kong Identity

To start with, Lui's context of the hegemony of market mentality is a sociological study examining the transformation of Hong Kong local identity, and Lui argues that the local identity has been built up by the contradictory but cooperative contestation between their "market mentality" and the sense of home. His study depicts how the "refugee mentality" of Hong Kong in 1950s and 1960s had been transformed into "market mentality" that will later characterize Hong Kong society and its identity from 1970s to 1990s and even has its impact till today. Lui traces the emergence and the influence of the market mentality that attempts to produce the instrumentalist characteristic and has been embedded into Hong Kong identities, and how this mentality can absorb the impacts from the unpredictable political and economic changes. After his two popular semi-academic Chinese books were published in 1997 and 2007,¹¹ the two chapters of the text of Lui's context that summarized his researches for over ten years were entitled, "Fleeing the nation, creating a local home: 1949-1983" and "Rejoining the nation: Hong Kong, 1983-2006," in a volume entitled - *Hong Kong, China: Learning to belong to a nation* (Ma, Mathews & Lui, 2008)

In the period called "borrowed time, borrowed place" during 1950s and 1960s, the arrival of over than a million refugees from China saw Hong Kong as a lifeboat with a mindset of "refugee mentality" without any sense of belonging. The reason why Lui remarks this "refugee mentality" upheld by the first generation is that it was the precursor to the "market mentality." Regarding the 1970s as a decade of social conflict and popular mobilization in addition to the emergence of a new political agenda, Lui has found that the strategy of "administrative absorption of politics" given by the British colonial government enables the development of the "market mentality" that was embedded in the awareness of "local" for the second generation¹² by making the state and government unrelated to any kind of political loyalty but at the same time reinforce the administrative efficiency to meet various social needs. More precisely, unlike the "refugee mentality" which was based on a fight

against poverty and national oppression, this emerging “market mentality” is constituted by the identities of affluence, confidence, and cosmopolitan. The second generation was once incorporated into colonial semi-democratic administration, and finally transformed Hong Kong into a home that opened them to the world, instead of a lifeboat. In other words, their ethic of market mentality has “fabricated” its sense of “the local” on a scale of the global market through their practice of engaging in the economic system. This seemingly cosmopolitan identity for Hong Kong people only refer to the basis of global economic with the increased economic interdependence between Hong Kong and other parts of the world; thus, a kind of global citizenship has not been developed.

Remarkably, the local identity embodying such sense of market mentality becomes the hegemony¹³—a term in Gramscian sense—promoted by the colonial state and the colonized elites. Facing the huge influx of (il)legal immigrants¹⁴ in the late 70s, the local society was mobilized to deliberately reject these “new immigrants.” Meanwhile, the differentiated identification between locals/us and “new immigrant”/other was stimulated by such market mentality. In his work written in 1997, Lui has discovered that the local people’s consent to reject the demanding others (even they are liberally defined as “compatriot”) to join their boat is not because of their ethnic or cultural difference, but just because their interest have to be defended against the poor immigrants who would inevitably deplete their accumulated affluence. To put it shortly, this hegemonic economic value has become the major cultural resource for forming Hong Kong identity and people with this local identity oppose the arrival of disadvantaged others. More significantly, upholding this contribution legacy, Hong Kong society was legitimized to be a unique-ethnic society, which serves and belongs to Hong Kong-Chinese only.

In the 1980s, Hong Kong people facing the anxiety aroused by Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, which stated the returning of capitalist Hong Kong to Communist China in 1997, and the fear generated from the event of the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989, more than one percent of the population in Hong Kong that mostly were well-educated and rich chose to emigrate. In Lui's interpretation, the strategy of emigration is effortlessly adopted by the middle class who were local-born because the instrumentalist logic have been embedded into their local identity already, so it was easy for them to play down the "moral commitment" while they are confronted by PRC regime; the flexibility is granted when it comes to handling the matters of people's personal lives or even the larger issues like the choice of citizenship and the decision on whether to stay or leave under the political uncertainty. On the other hand, such instrumentalist characteristic is also adopted by a significant business clusters foreseeing that the integration between China and Hong Kong will bring them long-lasting benefit. This business cluster brushes aside the proposal of political reform for a greater autonomy and requires the interdependence of Hong Kong and China. This instrumentalist approach, in the viewpoint of Lui (2008), is about taking advantage of China's reforming economy and knows clearly to antagonize China could be costly, so many business people choose not to confront with the intervention imposed by China due to their economic interest:

This signifies the discourse of the market becoming complicit with the discourse of the state—these Hong Kong businesspeople generally felt no new love for China, but realized that their future profits lay with China; based upon a cost-benefit calculation more than any sense of "love for country," they chose accommodation rather than conformation. In this sense, the disparate discourses of state and market came to fit neatly together. (48)

After the transfer of sovereignty, Lui has found that this hegemony of market mentality ensures a highly possible integration of Hong Kong and China. Moreover, Lui's context effectively points out that the "market mentality" works as the glue that makes sure the cooperative alliance of political sector and business commercial sectors so the policy itself is no longer effective enough to solve the emerging political crisis and social needs. Instead, this political-economic alliance has cooperated with a new master, and successfully transformed the administrative legitimacy of SAR government into a so-called "tycoon regime" or "corporate state."

Similarly, based on his own experience, another bestseller of Lui (2007), *Hongkongers in Four Generations* (四代香港人) seems to be Lui's self-reflection from the privileged position of the second generation, who can cooperate with the political masters (British colonizer and PRC party) so as to be benefited, becoming more conservative and passive towards social changes. In Lui's criticism, certain groups of people, like the local capitalists and politicians who uphold such 'market mentality' and are in the higher position, should stop viewing things from their standards, and offer the space of freedom and social mobility to the third and fourth generations who lack opportunities to make possibilities. Recently, Lui's context has been transformed into a discourse of "conflict between generations" (世代論) in some conflicts, such as the conflict between opportunities and that of value. As a result, the politics of the "ongoingness" given by Lui's context of the hegemony of market mentality in transforming Hong Kong society will be that, to create a local community with more equal and democratic environment, Hong Kong people should be aware that this "inherent" market mentality is embodied in the local identity, becoming the hegemonic value.

In a conjunctural analysis, the formation of Lui's context mainly contributes to the Chinese population because it attempts to map out how the shifting of the practices of the hegemonic

market mentality has deeply influenced the formation of Hong Kong society and its local identity. However, in fact, it only applies to the different generations of Chinese. When Lui wrote this reflective volume in 2007, it is his observation and participation in Hong Kong Chinese community that makes him feel familiar with. However, within Lui's context on the development of such emerged local identity, it has trouble comprehending the role of the EMs. What follows will be the criticisms of Lui's works from the viewpoint of EMs studies.

First and the foremost part should be pointed out is that Lui's narrative on local identity with the unique-ethnic contribution is highly similar to the discourse of the Hong Kong success story in which all credits for turning Hong Kong into "Asia's world City" go to the colonial regime and the hardship and flexibility of Hong Kong Chinese. Both discourses emphasize that the advance of Hong Kong society is co-constructed by the colonial authority and the colonized Hong Kong elites, which has in fact resulted in the question, given by Law Kam-ye (2009), by about the contribution of—the outsider—"unimaginable" and "nonexistent" Hong Kong EMs. This context of defining who the "locals" are somehow leads to the difficulty of questioning why Hong Kong ethnic minorities have remained invisible for a long time.

Secondly, what is missed in Lui's analysis on Hong Kong Chinese's sense of belonging to a place called "home" is its seemingly transnational identity. This identification subjects to not only the Chinese settlers but also the EMs settlers in the city. Lo points out that the idea of transnational psychological complex reveals that many non-Chinese ethnics who have lived in Hong Kong for generations still call other place "home," while many local-born Chinese calling Hong Kong their home, keep their foreign passports and dual citizenships even though they do not seriously consider living abroad. In a way, many Chinese in Hong Kong, as local EMs, would see themselves more as

diasporic people rather than as Chinese nationals with all allegiance to their “homeland.” This ambiguous complex is also found while Mathews studies the cultural identity of the EMs residents in Chungking Mansions. In his study, Mathews observes that Hong Kong people have often complained in recent decades about having nowhere to belong to, belonging to neither China nor “the West;” their homelessness is claimed. If only the discrimination from Hong Kong Chinese is focused on, South Asians recognize that they and Hong Kong Chinese at large may suffer from quite parallel senses of “forced cosmopolitanism,” as what Mathews has insisted (2011: 206). This “forced cosmopolitanism” more or less echoes to the formed local identity based on the promisingly profitable global economic.

Finally, in the recent debate on the issue of the residential right for the migrant Southeast Asian female domestic worker in Hong Kong, the mainstream opinions have largely argued against it with the reason of resource deficiencies and of competitive pressure between the local and the migrant workers. The refusal mainly results from the fear of the imagination of “demanding others,” which popped up in 70s. Barry Sautman argues that there is a differentiation of rights and entitlements for different ethnic groups depending on the situation of “semi-ethocracy,”¹⁵ in which the colonial ethnic hierarchy of access to substantive citizenship rights and social status has been replaced by another one hierarchical system where Hong Kong Chinese are at the apex, and South and Southeast Asian domestic workers are at the nadir. What is understated in Lui’s criticism on the corporate state is that the profundity of ethnic inequality is a creature of continuous colonial and post-colonial domination of Hong Kong by large corporations whose profit are inherently bound up with their hegemony in a system of social relations based on sharp ethnic, class, and gender inequalities. Therefore, to replace semi-ethocracy, Sautman has argued that the abolition not merely of tycoon hegemony but of corporate elite dominance generally is required.

To sum up, the context offered by Lui could not help to figure out the presence of EMs because the totality of his context does not include the population of non-Chinese members as the “locals.” This is due to the fact that the local identity with the hegemonic market mentality could only be traced back to the limited history of “Chinese immigrant society” and this analysis on Chinese-centered hegemony fails to consider other formations of local identity.

A context of Hong Kong identity categorization

Many people believe that the cultural identity of Hong Kong people is constructed through an identity categorization which compares the image of Hongkongers to that of mainlanders. When it comes to identifying categorization, Eric Ma reminds us of the relationship between media and this sort of categorization: “Television is very influential in providing interpretive categories of identities and setting up strong emotional barriers between these categories of identities” (15). In *Culture, Politics, and Television in Hong Kong*, Ma’s theory of de-/re-sinicization in mass media, especially films and television, attempts to understand how the highly visible but shifting identity categories between Hongkonger and mainlanders has been constructed in media texts changes in response to the socio-political transformation in Hong Kong society. He intends to re-map these mediated processes of de-sinicisation and re-sinicisation of HK identity in a scale of centripetal and centrifugal interplay from the 1970s to the 2000s.

To examine the influence of television on transforming identities through either de-sinicization or re-sinicization, Ma focuses on the “reinforcement effect”¹⁶ produced by the interplaying of centripetal consolidation and centrifugal reinforcement. The underlying dichotomous logic in this conceptualization is suitable to articulate the identity categorization between

Hongkongers and mainlanders in certain space-time, for Ma's context is more clearly when the roles of television in the identity formation in different socio-historical contexts is compared.

In 1970s, Hong Kong was politically and cultural separated from China. According to Ma, it was a period of time when the need for a localized identity was strongly felt, and resentment towards (il)legal immigrants from China was widespread. TV series at that time exerted a powerful effect of centripetal consolidation and centrifugal reinforcement, through which Hongkongers confirmed their in-group prestige and label the new arrivals mainlanders as outsiders with lesser value (Ma 1999, 17), like TV drama portraying mainlanders as unsophisticated "Ah Chan,"¹⁷ namely those who are unable or unwilling to adjust themselves to the cosmopolitan Hong Kong.¹⁸ Television centripetally drew the attention from the public antagonisms against the outsiders, constructing social stigma for them, and projecting it centrifugally onto social discourses and practices. For example, a stereotypical outline is that an emergent Hong Kong is simplified as a rich, capitalist, and market-driven city, which is opposed to China that was poor, communist, and state-driven country. However, till 1990s, when China was regaining sovereignty over the British colony, and its political power was intrusive in media politics, the identity categories between Hongkongers and mainlanders became blurred,¹⁹ unstable and even contradictory. Ma remarks that there has been a deeply felt identity crisis and resentment against the "invasion" of the mainlanders.

The TV drama *Great Times* (1992) portrays a set of binary imagination of good Hong Kong versus evil mainland according to the local Chinese audiences' interpretation, along with their fear towards Tiananmen Square massacre and with their anxiety over the takeover of Hong Kong in 1997. During its transition around 1997, the once de-sinicized Hong Kong that underwent a re-sinicizing process to become a part of the Chinese nation-state was illustrated by the documentary, *Hong Kong*

Legend,²⁰ which depicted Hong Kong as an inviolable part of the greater Chinese national family, through “remembering” the popular street demonstration in 1967 as a rebellion against colonial law, but “forgetting” the violent result of China’s Cultural Revolution (109). Furthermore, “Auntie Nice”²¹ had in a sense been the cross reference of Ah Chan in television dramas, who learns to become a Hongkonger with a tough, sympathetic and wise character after her immigration from the Mainland.

This dynamic of de-/re-sinicization keeps running in Ma’s further study on the Hong Kong’s mass media. In 2010, Ma’s book was republished in Chinese²² and the chapter entitled, “the Nation in the Hong Kong Mass Media,” was also included in *Hong Kong, China: Learning to belong to a nation* (2008), which remapped the continuous struggle to understand how Hong Kong society was progressing. Ma concludes that the comprehensive re-sinicizing process over most of the media in Hong Kong had happened after the China’s takeover. In 2000s, the message spread out in the network of television proclaimed that mainlanders were “nice,” and the national anthem of China was the anthem of all Hongkongers²³. However, Ma’s response to this issue is that because the producer of television and film seeks a mainland market since 1990s, “those positive representations cannot simply be read as a transparent representation of Hong Kong people’s changing feeling toward the China, but as a calculated commercial decision as well” (76). In fact, Ma’s (1999) context opts for triggering a debate and a critique on the category of the outsiders (that include mainlanders and new immigrants from the mainland). He puts it in this way:

The construction of cultural identity is a process that selects from a rich diversity of social practices to form a public version of a common identity. The process may easily become ideological if it suppresses and displaces other identities and constructs hierarchical social relations. (163)

It is clear that the ongoing politics of Ma's context consists of the contesting, shifting, polysemic identity categories produced by the dynamic of de-/re-sinicization that corresponds to the changing socio-historical backgrounds. The difference is that the battle field is no longer limited to the traditional mass media, like television and film, but also shifted to newspaper, magazine, the Internet, especially the social network platforms.

In a conjunctural analysis, or in the position of questioning the presence of Hong Kong EMs, Ma's context of de-/re-sinicization is not much effective in mapping out the relation between the transformation of Hong Kong identity and the politics of China and Hong Kong, due to the fact that it only leads people to map the elements related to re-identifying and de-identifying the Sino-characters in cultural representations. Within the determination of this "ongoingness," this context is going to tell a story about a struggle within the Chinese-groups only. Constituting the local identity with Ma's context has never provided any possibilities to delineate any cultural reality with the ethnic diversity of Hong Kong society. Furthermore, although Ma (2009) finds that the stigmatization of "Ah Chan" for immigrants and ethnic minorities shares some common features with the configuration of those of other kinds of insiders/outsider across the globe²⁴, it is obvious that the favorable mainland Chinese image of "Auntie Nice" cannot rectify or disarticulate such uncivilized image imposed to the people who are non-Chinese, especially for South Asian groups. Representing EMs in local media, Tang (2013) argues that the creative industry that produces so-called "Hong Kong popular culture," tends to "spectacularize" and "stigmatize"²⁵ EM's images from the perspective of Chinese. For instance, the Indian in film *Running On Karma* (2003) could freely adjust the length of his hands and legs and hide himself in a can, which troubles the Hong Kong Police seriously. The effect of spectacularizing Indians with the cultural myth produces the identification with which Hong Kong Chinese recognize themselves living in the advanced modern life, by manipulating the contrast of the

backwardness/superstition (the supernatural power of the Indians) and the advance/scientism (police and gun). In addition, a South Asian man plays the role of a suspect who takes a gun from the police, and finally becomes a robber and rapes the young female protagonist in the film of *Mad Detective* (2007), which successfully turns the presence of EMs into the society's other who makes the local Chinese feel dangerous and threatened. In fact, similar to Ma's de-/re-sinicizing thesis, these two effects also yield the dichotomy of identification between local Chinese (who are civilized and advanced) and EMs (who are poor and uncivilized). In the study of how local Chinese people imagine CKM, Mathews (2011) finds that the major reason of CKM being terrifying to many Hong Kong Chinese is not its crime and vice but the unfavorable image of CKM, with the massive presence of South Asians and Africans in the buildings, from their quasi-racist imagination²⁶, such as "slum" and "a heart of darkness." When the everyday life and the diversified situations of the EMs are easily neglected in the media representation, and when they are recognized as the outsiders who are not living in the same advanced regime, it is difficult for Hong Kong society to discover and cherish its diversity in multiculturalism. It is evident that the negative image "Ah Chan" seemingly shifted into South Asians, when the local Chinese people can only identify themselves with the people living in the advanced world through degrading their EMs neighbors.

If the local identity is only constructed and represented through the dichotomy of identity categorization between Hong Kong Chinese and China/Mainlander, its ongoing politics only erase the multiplicity of the non-Chinese ethnics. Yet, to figure out the internal other in term of multiplicity, Lo (2008) argues that

If Hong Kong constructs its life history in a narrative that addresses China as the Other and defines itself against as well as along with this Other, Hong Kong forgets to account for the racial minorities within its own community that constitute its internal otherness. (73)

To reinforce Ma's context without reflection on the absence of EMs, it only perpetuates Hong Kong's general blindness to its racial minorities, in which the city remains confused about its own complex historical and cultural components.

Under the post-1997 nationalist interpellation, Hong Kong is structured around the ethnic meaning of Chinese, such as normalizing the national education curriculum in primary and secondary school. Ma's dichotomy of identity categorization between Hong Kong Chinese and Mainland Chinese "new immigrants" has been sustained, and this identity politics successfully mobilizes the local Chinese community to negotiate with the imposed nationalist identity. However, we should not guarantee the continuity and stability of the persistent identity categories given by Ma. Perhaps Ma's context on mapping the local identity and its relation to media may be unstable and fractured, not because the emerged EMs popular figures are not influential, but because it treats them with cultural indifference. It seems to be a reversed sinicization with "Cantonese-ness," not to assimilate the ethnic differences, but to ignore them. Therefore, Ma's selective representation from a rich diversity cannot respond to the presence of non-Chinese figures who have been participating in the local television productions for a long time, such as Maria Cordero and Louie Castro (being half Chinese who owns a mixed ethnicity), recent popular Indian artists who play diversified roles in local television programs and films like Gill Mohindrapaul Singh (who is popularly known as "QBoBo") and Singh Hartihan Bitto. Some of their performance in TV drama can construct other identification of "locals" that can escape from the trajectory of the context of de-/re-sinicization. This constitutes a problematic to a new

conjuncture which needs to map out other ways of forming the local identity in the midst of the struggle of transforming Hong Kong identity. Exploring the engagement and representation of non-Chinese artists in the Hong Kong television history will fill this conjunctural demand.

A Context of Disappearance

This section will consider Ackbar Abbas' *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* (1997), whose central theme is that the appearance of Hong Kong culture over the past fifteen years "is posited on the imminence of its disappearance" (7). This disappearance is being linked most directly to Hong Kong's handover to China, and also to Hong Kong as "a space of transit" and of ceaseless change. Abbas examines this theme of Hong Kong as embodying "a culture of disappearance" by examining certain cinematic, architectural, and literary works. Although some have criticized that the chosen materials and references in Abbas's analysis are not commonly shared among most Hong Kong people, the reason why his argument becomes a referent to my concern of race, ethnicities and identity does clarify how the notion of disappearance leads to a misrecognition of Hong Kong culture in colonial history, in which the cultural identity has long been homogenized by the emphasis on Hong Kong-Chineseness.

First and foremost, Abbas (1997) argues that the history of Hong Kong has been a history of colonialism. The very first disappearance is built by misrecognizing that two populations in Hong Kong and in Mainland were separated by a common ethnicity, which was claimed in the colonial history as well as history of the mainland. As "the Last Emporium," Hong Kong successfully emerged with the global economy under the British imperialistic colonialism, and as a capitalist society Hong Kong has been benefited from the developing trading port in the nineteenth century to a premier financial center of Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, with such uniqueness, Abbas has argued that the

study of Hong Kong culture cannot just refer to the old “colonialism;” it must be related to the changing space of disappearance.

Similar to what is emphasized in Lui and Ma’s writings, the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984 and Tiananmen Massacre in 1989 also play extremely significant roles in Abbas’ context, when the cultural, social and political changes taking place in Hong Kong during this critical period from 1984 to 1997. Abbas points out that people with a “floating identity” or a “port mentality” begin to collectively search for a more definite identity while facing the anxieties over 1997 and the fear towards Tiananmen Massacre. The two events confirm people’s fear that Hong Kong’s usual way of life and its colonialist and democratic dilemma was in danger of disappearing. To remark anxiety which is based on the fact that the colonial administration provides almost no outlet for political idealism for developing its civil society and led most of the energy towards the market, Abbas identifies that the unprecedented huge rallies in June 1989 points to the moment when “economic self-interest could so easily misrecognize itself as political idealism” (5). Such sense of economic self-interest has made it difficult for people to recognize the existence of Hong Kong Culture. Furthermore, Hong Kong is involved in the strange dialectics between autonomy and dependency in its relation with both to British and to China even it is a socially and economically advanced but a politically subordinated state. This leaves room for Hong Kong to transform itself over the local, national and cosmopolitan struggle. Finally, Abbas concludes that these striking features about Hong Kong’s culture space have been radically and undergone the pathology offered by the culture of disappearance since the hangover of the sovereignty.

In Abbas’s concept, the culture of disappearance is that “we are witnessing certainly not the disappearance of culture, but ‘some original and yet un-theorized’ form of culture, what I propose to

describe as a culture of disappearance” (7). Then he describes this disappearing operated in three levels - misrecognition, replacement and techniques of disappearance - that could parallel with each other. Yet, Abbas’s context is strongly criticized for its failure to describe Hong Kong Chinese culture represented via only English material (Mathews, 1998; Lo, 2008). The greatest significance to this juncture is that, in Abbas’s context, the multi-ethnic Hong Kong has never been mentioned. More than that, Lo argues that, like many works focusing on the Hong Kong’s past and reimagining its history in order to establish a definite subject position in response to urgent political exigencies during the transitional period, Abbas’s context on criticizing Hong Kong colonial history is about the underrepresentation of the local Chinese in all the discursive formation of the city. How its politics related to the need of racial dynamics is this: the requirement of “more of the local Chinese voices, though this would allow no room for the heteroglossia of other ethnicities” (2008:64).

It is evident how the South Asian members have “disappeared.” Firstly, at the level of misrecognition, disappearance does not imply absence, but recognizes a thing here as something else and even offers a kind of pathological presence. The old binary between “the East” and “the West,” with the former referring to the Chinese and the latter referring to the European is well known today. This categorical imagination of Hong Kong culture cannot identify or capture any South Asian customs within itself. Secondly, at the level of replacement, disappearance is not a matter of effacement but of replacement through representation. Frequently, the South Asian males are described as threatening and “unfavorable strangers” in news coverage, the Chinese-gaze produces and reproduces the stereotypes on them that their presence does not vanish but is replaced by unfavorable images. Thirdly, at the level of the techniques of disappearance, that disappearance consists of developing the disappearing techniques to deal with the space of disappearance. Talking about its diversity ethnically, unlike Bun Carnival and Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance promoted by

Hong Kong Tourism Board which develops an intuitional procedure for defining and preserving the customs that can be categorized as a Hong Kong's culture and heritage, Thai Water Festival Parade²⁷ held in Kowloon City is never promoted by any official department. Same as Thai cuisine, it is ghostly enjoyed but never be regarded as a part of the Food Heaven. Without a doubt, Abbas's context is self-reflective and deconstructive in the social construction of race, even though he mainly suggests how Sino-Hongkongers developed their subjectivity out of its postcoloniality. Conjuncturally, it can be said that this theory of disappearing that produces the cultural identity, especially after Hong Kong Chinese takes over the dominant position, is very significant. HKSAR government follows the former British operator to push their EMs neighbors away from the cultural stratification of the "local" and even represent them as a threat or a socially demanding member in this society.

It is undeniable that Abbas has left a critical framework on de-stabilizing the notion of "local." With the mission to re-recognize the existence of Hong Kong culture, Abbas reminds his readers of three toothsome temptations—the local, the marginal, the cosmopolitan—which are seemingly promising to overcome the colonial condition, but some off-the-shelf identities might impede the movement of subjectivity. One example Abbas has criticized is that people misrecognize adopting Cantonese as important as English as the identity of "local." Abbas (1997) puts it in this way:

The local is not so easily localizes; it is not so much what language we use, as what we use language for. The difficulty with the local, therefore, is in locating it, and this is particularly tricky in a place like Hong Kong with its significant proportion of refugee, migrants, and transients, all of whom could claim local status. (12)

Even the Chinese take over the driver seat of the dynamics of disappearing. It is risky that they keep misrecognizing the familiar symbols as "local," and cannot see the ethnic diversity that has been here.

As a result, when it comes to the presence of South Asians, we should not be satisfied with the given forms and meanings in the ongoing politics in Abbas's context to understand the racial relation between Chinese and EMs, and the boundary of the "local." Instead, we should begin to remap it in a new way. Therefore, the problematic Abbas's context I found is that it is risky to re-misrecognize its EMs members again while the Chinese took over such a machine of disappearing.

A Conjunctural Story: An Unfinished Migrant Milieu

This theoretical review has articulated three narratives in different contexts, which contribute to telling a Hong Kong story for the Hong Kong-Chinese. Through contextualizing those narratives into the destabilized venture and then transforming it into a new conjuncture, this review has illustrated that these narratives effectively configure a monocultural story, in which "Chineseness" is, consciously or unconsciously, configured into the hegemonic center of local identity. The three narratives have outlined the kind of struggles or dilemmas Hong Kong society was engaging in and the possibilities people in this society can search for, during the transitional period before and after handover. Compared with each other, the three texts tell a Hong Kong story in different ways, one's ongoing politics can initiate the particular variations of the relationalities. Despite the fact that the contexts they offer can map out the possibilities of political struggles, there still is the underlying Chinese-centered hegemony that repeatedly presents a cultural landscape that renders its EMs members invisible. It is the narratives of transformation of Hong Kong identity that excludes South Asians. Keeping Grossberg's words in mind, we should avoid considering the cultural identity of Hong Kong society as a singular, Chinese-centered machine operated by privileged Hong Kong Chinese people but make the multiplicities of this society see the internal diversity. Thus, it demands other machines to constitute a new context which can offer the possibilities for the different forms to

make the multiplicities of South Asians seen in the Chinese-dominant community. In order to shift to tell a better story, we do need to take serious empirical and theoretical work on this new conjuncture that “it may actually require us to be willing to question our assumption,” as Grossberg suggests (65).

Opting for a conjunctural analysis, this theoretical background review aims at not merely pointing to the marginalization of the South Asian’s presence that is distant from the Chinese-centered society, but avoiding such margin-centered dialectic logic, and more significantly, to configure the possibilities that we can take the EMs as the subject into a new context. As a result, this project needs to constitute a new context through articulating those three contexts and transforming their ongoing politics into a problem-space for a new conjuncture. This new conjuncture is constituted by articulating the emerged problematics that I extracted from those three contexts by a de-stabilizing process on questioning the presence of the South Asian members in their persistent totalities on the formation of local identity, and by attacking the ongoing politics proposed by Chinese-centered community. More importantly, constituting a conjuncture aims at producing the new conjunctural condition, demanding for asking a new question and searching for its answer, as Grossberg emphasizes that “too many forgotten that cultural studies is about conjunctures, and that to do it successfully, It has to reinvent itself—its theories, politics and questions—in response to conjunctural condition and demands” (65). To do a radical project of cultural studies, this articulation between three prominent narratives and critical EM studies I have done is to uncover the problem-space²⁸ for a new conjuncture, in which further EM studies should struggle to redefine the connection between EMs and Hong Kong identity, as well as racial relations between Chinese and EMs in Hong Kong. With contextualizing related works, I hope to give a new context called “EM-context” (only to differentiate from such three contexts) with the conjunctural understanding of the identification of EMs in Hong Kong. Furthermore, the EMs context mainly responds to the following conjunctural questions. In Ma’s

context of Hong Kong identity categorization, it requests the EM-context to answer how to reduce the domination of the dichotomized form of identity. As for Lui's context of stabilizing Hong Kong identity, how the EM-context rejoins to negotiate with other forms and experiences of localness under the limited history of "Chinese immigrant society" would be highlighted. In Abbas's context of disappearance, the localism driven by the misrecognition what "localness" is, the EM-context strives to answer how to re-recognize South Asian members as the "locals." What this EM-context does, therefore, is not only to figure out the interracial dynamics, but also to fabricate who EMs are in Hong Kong with other formations of local identity, under such particular conjunctural conditions and demands.

To answer the conjunctural demands, I return to bring up the fading story of modern Hong Kong as an immigrant society again. We should be discontented that the only attention to the overwhelming influx of Mainland migrants has long dominated the starting point for these local scholars to stabilize or theorize the transformation of Hong Kong society and its cultural identity. However, we should rethink the immigrant city, not by merely looking at the statistical and linguistic dominance, but by revisiting its diversity and multiculturalism, as what Erni and Leung insist:

Yet today, as in the past, many overlook the immigration of EMs to Hong Kong, from the earliest moment of British arrival in the territory in the mid-1800s, through the influx of Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s, to the sustainable rise of labor migrants since the 1907s. Others, now as before, did not forget but regard the ethnic, dark-skinned, non-Chinese population as invisible neighbors. Does all of the multiplicity mentioned above make a "Hong Kong person" easily recognizable? (2014:3)

Their interrogation for EM's long existence points out that the immigrant story of Hong Kong since the 1950s, should be brought up again, when these prominent narratives has already been essentialized, and stopped people from discovering its complexity on ethnic dimension. What the EM-context dedicates to this current discourse is to articulate the immigrant story into an "unfinished" milieu, in which the ethnic multiplicity inside itself as the residual is waiting to be discovered as other forms of migration and settlement as well as other forms of local identities. Therefore, following Grossberg's (2010) notion of milieu, as a mode of contextualization, what I propose to map this EM-context is an *unfinished migrant milieu*, which describes ways of selectively mapping the residual, in order to tell a conjunctural story of South Asians in Hong Kong. As what has been mentioned before, the unfinished migrant milieu can be understood as a mode to portray the EM-context as a "social-material" context (33). To conceptualize the modern Hong Kong as an unfinished migrant milieu in order to respond to the conjunctural demand, re-mapping a picture attempts to display Hong Kong society as a place which not only is defined by the seemingly overwhelming Chinese settlers but also other settling experience and histories of the other migrants, who may be the constructed coming others, the unfavorable strangers, the unlikely Hongkongers and so on. And, I find that the new comers are mainly constituted by the roles which have long been excluded by the center of Chineseness, such as new immigrants, foreign returners, South Asians who are not only the alienated others but also the members becoming a Hongkonger and learning local identity.

Here, the notion of "unfinished migrant milieu" can be preliminarily drawn by the changing and multiple relation of social-materials and live-experiential realities showing the cultural politics of how EMs struggle to settle down in Hong Kong. Historically, what significance the cultural community project "Our Community of Love and Mutuality" launched by HKSKH Lady MacLehose Centre in 2013 shows is to rearticulate the history of how working class South Asians immigrate to the

contemporary Hong Kong. And, its items included cultural tours, oral history and community space that aim to reshape Kwai Chung District as a multicultural neighborhood with its long-existing Pakistani community that has lived there for more than 30 years. This rearticulation of the “living” history is much more relevant to such conjunctural demand, rather than an old migrant history from 1840 to 1940 of non-Chinese groups, like Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Zoroastrianism, that is recorded by a cemetery study (Sham & Lau, 2014). The settling experience can also be proven by the self-determination of EM’s small-business enterprises that are demographically supported by the residential concentration of South Asians in Jordan and Yuen Long, Erni and Leung’s (2014) discovery. In fact, struggling to become the local, or to assimilate into the mainstream does always matter to EM youth who were born in Hong Kong. With the age-long advocacy on the education policy of “Chinese as the second language” by Hong Kong Unison since 2008, EM youth’s hardship is found in attending higher education when they have less cultural resources on learning Chinese and then are difficult to take up other subjects through Chinese, since HKSAR government widely implemented the “mother-tongue (Cantonese) teaching” as the medium of instruction policy in 1997. Such feeling of frustration and detachment resulted from mainstream schooling of EM youth are often represented among the short films from the creative filmmaking project “All About Us”²⁹ organized by ifva that has cultivated EM youths to learn to use moving images. These 30 short films that the project accumulated since 2009 largely illustrate how EM youth feel and imagine their local life, with an array of theme like violence, school bullying, love and friendship, gangsters, emotions (eg. fear and shame). In fact, these ethnic images carrying alternative imaginaries and living experiences are worthy to be further explored. These are just the few emerging examples.

More than that, the changing and perhaps increasing favorable conditions for the emergence of new EM images towards diverse radicalizations and more positive images is noteworthy in television.

In the aspect of public broadcast, RTHK has programmed EM topics with various types ranging from commentary, documentary, docudrama to drama, according to *Table 1.1* that shows the TV programmes on EMs having been broadcasted since 2007. Obviously, the treatment on EM images in RTHK follows a policy mandate that aims to promote the racial harmony and to tackle the racial stereotype and discrimination, since the implement of anti-racial discrimination law in 2008. Yet, it should be noted that when RTHK programed the reflective discourse of racial harmony by the genre of drama, like the popular show *Rooms To Let* (2009), may it deploy any underlying racialized framing, other than stereotypes?

Meanwhile, the treatment of EM representation in the commercial television TVB is significantly different from RTHK's policy mandate, with the comedic intervention of Qbobo who has casted diverse roles as a security guard, a chef, a doctor, a superintendent, a lawyer, even a terrorist and so on, in 36 TV dramas from 2005 to 2014. It has taken shape in prime time television programmes. In fact, the diverse and even more positive EM images can mainly be attributed to the dynamic for promoting racial equality from the collaboration between QBoBo and Amy Wong that are both interviewed by the author. More noticeably, when QBoBo as a well-known and comedic figure is successfully identified by the Hong Kong society, how can the role he casted offer a different imagination to being a local EM? How his Indianness and localness can be carried and performed by his role, like in *No Good Either Way* (2012)? All these questions from the productions of RTHK and TVB will be widely discussed in the following chapters. What importance from both conditions of representing EMs I found is that both can be core to respond to the conjunctural demand of unfinished migrant milieu, where EM struggle for different modes of visibility on the cultural space of Hong Kong.

Table 1.1 The TV programme list of RTHK on ethnic minorities

| Year | Title of TV programme | Programme type |
|------|--|----------------|
| 2007 | “Hong Kong’s colored life” (港色生活), in <i>A Mission for Equal Opportunities</i> | Docudrama |
| 2007 | “My given name, my family name” (我的名字，我的姓氏), in <i>A Mission for Equal Opportunities</i> | Docudrama |
| 2009 | <i>Rooms to Let</i> , with 13 episodes | Drama |
| 2010 | <i>Rooms to Let 2010</i> , with 18 episodes | Drama |
| 2011 | “Assalamu Alaikum, Hello (Part 1)”, in <i>A Mission for Equal Opportunities</i> | Docudrama |
| 2011 | “Assalamu Alaikum, Hello (Part 2)”, in <i>A Mission for Equal Opportunities</i> | Docudrama |
| 2012 | “Before The Election”(選前戰後), in <i>Hong Kong Connection</i> | Commentary |
| 2012 | “Unidentified” (身份不明), in <i>Hong Kong Connection</i> | Commentary |
| 2013 | “Minority In Number” (少數), in <i>A Mission for Equal Opportunities</i> | Docudrama |
| 2013 | <i>Dreams Come True</i> , a series with 7 episodes | Drama |
| 2014 | “Ethnics Minorities Learning Chinese, and Baees Begum Baig@My Perspective: What Is Minority” (少數族裔學中文、碧樺依@我角度：何為小眾), in <i>This Week</i> | Commentary |
| 2014 | “Integration Of Ethnic Minorities Into The Society” (愛共融), in <i>Hong Kong story</i> | Documentary |
| 2014 | <i>Dreams Come True 2014</i> , a series with 6 episodes | Drama |
| 2015 | <i>Hong Kong, My Home</i> This program offers English and Chinese versions with similar contents. Each version includes 10 episodes with same titles, such as “Three Generations of Gurkhas (Part 1)”, “Three Generations of Gurkhas (Part 2)”, “Through the Eyes of German Speaking Expats”, “50% Indian”, “Africa is not one country”, “K-ball”, “Mainstream (Part 1)”, “Mainstream (Part 2)”, “Our Ties with the Thais”, and “ Japanese Women” | Documentary |
| 2015 | “Support our people: Bungon Tamason” (撐起自己人: Bungon Tamason), in <i>Working Women 2015</i> | Documentary |

For this reason, my attempt is not simply to insert the lost past into the totality of local media study but to echoes to what Lo has said—“to repeat is not to recognize the way something really was but to appropriate a past insofar as it is failed one. . . and insofar as that past contains the open dimension of the future” (2008, 74). Returning to the prime question of this chapter—who EMs are and connecting it into the new context of an unfinished migrant milieu, in the next chapter I shall tackle the issue of cultural representation of racial others via three popular non-Chinese figures who can still be found in Hong Kong’s TV culture since 1970s. Reviewing non-Chinese characters they have performed and their struggle for visibility is important, not only because local scholarship has never offered the attention, but also because the review can display a particular cultural formation of ethnicities in representation in TV culture. Thus, the two case studies in Chapter Three and Four, the textual analyses of the chosen TV texts, *Rooms To Lets* and *No Good Either Way*, aim at understanding the social imaginaries of racial relations. From the analyses, I hope to demonstrate how the particular operations of feelings evoked can construct the differences between Chinese and EMs, as we as redefine racial relations in Hong Kong. In fact, the textual analyses should not be separated from this EM-context but to respond such conjunctural demand. The purpose of configuring social imaginaries, which is supported by the affective and emotional experience, like people’s feeling of shame and anxiety, is to further remap what Grossberg (2010) calls the “lived-experiential reality”³⁰, or what Raymond Williams (2009) calls the forgotten “felt-experience,” from within the emerging interracial relationships in Hong Kong.

In other words, what this study attempts to do is to conduct a paradigmatic (perhaps epistemological) shift from the narratives of cultural invisibility to one of conjunctural visibility. Again, this research will go along with the conjunctural approach that is significantly transformative of conducting race studies in Hong Kong. The transformation is not simply the one from the cultural

invisibility of EMs to their visibility because the argument is not about representation, but about conjuncture. In other words, the dominant conjuncture about the transformation of Hong Kong identity was written and imagined in such a way that these EM people were not a part of it, when in fact they have always been there. That makes chapter two more significant at reviewing EM public figures in the television culture of Hong Kong. By doing this, it is no doubt that we are making them more visible. But something else is going on, when the unfinished migrant milieu is productive at redoing the cultural politics. That is the relational force of practicing conjunctural visibility; it is because to rework the conjuncture is to rework relation, not just to rework the representation. It is important to not just rework the representational field, but to rework the relations that might be embedded in a complex racial relation, that are embedded in the problematic notion of Hong Kong identity. That is also the transformation I hope to demonstrate in this entire thesis. In chapter one, both what the new conjuncture through mapping the “EM-context” is and what the relations between EMs and narratives of HK identity is will be conceptualized. In chapter two, the discussion about configuration of EM is immediately launched as public figures on Hong Kong television since the 1970s. Chapter three and four both aim to demonstrate the conjunctural visibility, but in another way, through a more textual analysis, rather than a theoretical argument. The conclusion chapter will speculate what kind of ongoing racial politics can be in the Hong Kong society.

Chapter Two

Configuring Ethnicities in the Cultural History of Television in Hong Kong

The purpose of this chapter is to configure the cultural representation of non-Chinese ethnicities through reviewing the rare but important presence of popular non-Chinese figures in Hong Kong's TV culture, namely Louie Castro, Gregory Rivers (known as "Ho Kwok-wing") and Gill Mohinderpaul Singh (known as "QBoBo"). In order to do so, this chapter includes textual analysis of these three representative non-Chinese characters on TV, the in-depth interviews I had conducted with them, and other related sources, such as the relevant TV producers. My analysis in this chapter will illustrate how these ethnic figures struggle for their particular mode of cultural visibility in Hong Kong's popular entertainment industry. In doing so, I insert a new cultural landscape into the local TV culture by refiguring the role played by these non-Chinese actors in the revelation of the underlying Chinese cultural dominance in the popular imagination.

The television industry in Hong Kong, operated by Chinese people with Cantonese as their main dialect, is widely understood as a Chinese dominant culture. It results in the limited opportunities for non-Chinese talents who only can render themselves to an insignificant existence. However, in this Chapter, I show in my research that even though the production and circulation of Hong Kong's television culture (TV Culture) has long been shaped by Hong Kong-Chinese population, a small number of non-Chinese figures can be found in different periods throughout the Television history. However, they just do not get enough attention to make them remembered and the possible reasons for the indifference of the general public has already been discussed in the local literature. Firstly, the subject of the

non-Chinese figures has never been discussed throughout local television studies, either in the scope of television industry (Ng, 2003, 2012; Hung, 2012), or, of the cultural formation of identity (Leung, 2012; Lo, 2012; Ma, 1999, 2008, 2010; Cheuk, Liu & Yung, 2003). For instance, the theoretical model of transforming Hong Kong identity remains to be the struggle between Hong Kong-Chinese and Mainland-Chinese, but its scope rarely takes the existence of EMs into consideration. Secondly, researches which are interested in local race studies³¹, as I have mentioned in Chapter One, are seldom concerned with how EMs or minorities cultures are represented in popular culture. Yet, a few scholars in their cultural researches have spotted the rise of the Indian actor QBoBo in recent years and the possibility of using this figure as an anchoring point to study the representation of South Asians in Hong Kong popular culture (Lo, 2006; Erni & Leung, 2014).

The proposed idea of “unfinished migrant milieu” mentioned in Chapter One is possible to be formulated in media study in order to respond to the conjunctural demand for the “EM-context,” so this chapter will depict a cultural representation of ethnic, or namely non-Chinese, figures and the shifting racial imagination accompanying them. My attempt of this cultural review is to look at the non-Chinese signification scattered across the TV culture from the 1970s onwards. Analyses on the materials related to the local EM artists’ experience in the media industry that they are engaged in, TV programs (for instance, TV series, variety shows, music programs and etc.) and the in-depth interviews conducted with major EM artists and producers for this project are carried out. Though a broader discussion of EM artists will be mentioned here, this research opts to focus on three popular EM artists with high popularity, appearing in the drama scenes in different periods of the TV history: namely the Portuguese-Chinese actor, Louie Castro, who has been known as the first teen idol from

1970s to 1980s; the creation of the desirable “white face” in the television culture from 1980s to 2000s— Australian actor Rivers/Ho, who has long presented the roles showing the cultural signification of white images; and the “multiple brown faces” on representing South Asian, Indian actor Gill Mohinderpaul Singh, (popularly known as QBoBo), who owes his fame to his comedic image from 2005 onwards. Furthermore, while this review does not conduct a historical research on Hong Kong TV culture, it intends to tell an alternative story about the cultural identity of racial others in the local television culture through re-mapping puzzles from the ethnic aspect, and to explain how the non-Chinese ethnicities can be understood in Hong Kong’s popular culture.

The Multi-ethnic Soundscape in TV Culture

Before talking about the televisual faces of EM figures, the position of the so-called “Golden Band Era of Hong Kong,” which is a historical period of TV culture, should not be neglected. It has kept a record for the non-Chinese performers engaged actively in the production and consumption of popular culture. However, interestingly, this kind of youth culture is seldom classified under the label of “Made in Hong Kong” before the rise of Cantonese popular culture. Therefore, it is important to illustrate how this golden band scene for a short period in 1960s could be displayed possibly through a racial perspective. It is no doubt that the birth of the golden age of the Hong Kong pop scene is marked by the Beatles’ 1964 concert held in Hong Kong. From 1964 to 1969, a good number of local bands appeared, and they sung English songs from the UK or the U.S. while performing on stages, and regarded Cantonese and Mandarin songs as old fashioned³². That was the period when the popular music in Hong Kong opened up a space for other languages. Though what was

accepted might be the mainstream language from the West, it diversified the popular soundscape, the local popular cultures at that time. Well-known DJ Ray Cordeiro³³ (known as Uncle Ray) who is a local-born Portuguese, is credited as the priestly figure in Hong Kong's popular music. His appearance evidently shows that the music scene in 60s and 70s looked somehow multicultural, not only because of the performance involving in various languages³⁴, but also because of the engagement of multi-ethnic performers. Helping to promote and nurture the band scene in 1960s' with his radio programs, Uncle Ray not only imported foreign beat sounds, but also introduced the local emerging singers and bands of various ethnicities. The multi-ethnic character is showed by the variety of local bands in this soundscape. The first band star Anders Nelsson³⁵ is a Swedish. There were Hong Kong-Chinese members in The Four Steps, the Playboys and the Lotus. Joe Junior³⁶ is a Portuguese-Chinese. Michael Remedios and The Mystics are all Portuguese groups. Danny Diaz And The Checkmates are Filipino groups. D'Topnotes³⁷ was mainly formed by Christine Samson and other family members who are also Filipinos. The Quests is Singaporean. In addition, there were a few individual non-Chinese singers, such as Teresa Carpio who is a Chinese-Filipino singer from the famous musician Carpio³⁸ family in the Philippines. Besides, Marilyn Palmer³⁹ is British; Irene Ryder is a Chinese-British. The Chocksticks⁴⁰, the first girl band which consisted of Sandra Lang, a Chinese-British, and Amina, a Taiwanese aborigine. In the 1970s, Cantopop popped up and took over the dominant position of English and Mandarin genres (Wong, 2003). Yet, Chik (2010) reminds us that the creation and recording in English songs were still popular in the 1970s according to the profitable sale statistics on English song records.

The rise of television engendered the rapid growth of Cantopop culture. It was partly ascribed to the popularity of television series theme songs (Erni, 2007). In fact, rarely can those non-Chinese singers quickly make a smooth transition from band music industry to the television industry. Sandra Lang was the only one who sang the theme song for TVB's first significant drama series *Foolish Marriages* (啼笑姻緣) (1974) and earned an unexpectedly good development in Cantopop culture. She then became distinguished as “Funny Queen of Song” (鬼馬歌后) with her bold innovation in incorporating western musical elements, like rock music, jazz and rap into her own musical performance⁴¹. Yet, this picture of non-Chinese singers I recapped only hope to show that some of these faces with their fame at singing stages have occasionally been introduced into the visual scenes of film since 1972 as well as of TV dramas since 1987 in the Hong Kong entertainment industry⁴².

The Ethnic Ambiguity in the Television Culture in 1970s and 1980s

In the local TV history, the time when the first figure of so called “prince charming” (白馬王子) showed up in the local Hong Kong-Chinese community was in 1970s.

Interestingly, the image was portrayed through a teenager with long hair in the white high school uniform riding a bicycle across the grass lawn (see *Figure 2.1*). This brown-skinned boy called Louie Castro, who is a Portuguese-Chinese, actually came from Macau. Castro was definitely the first EM pop star in the local TV history in 1970s, and his popularity even lasted till 1980s, even though he only took part in a few television programs like TV serials, music programs and variety shows. In fact, there were also other non-Chinese artists in TVB, but most of them had worked for a comparatively short term. Therefore, the case of Castro will be explored in detail here for outlining the representation of EMs in the television culture

in 1970s and 1980s. Here, the reason to review Castro's profile and the roles he performed in TV shows entails a cultural imagination of Hong Kong that attributes to its ethnic ambiguity, in which, noticeably, the rectification of notion of "ethnic difference" was manifested in the non-ethnic or quasi-ethnic forms of characters' cultural appeals.



Figure 2.1 The remarking scene of Louie riding bicycle in the opening scene of *Teen*

Louie Castro: The 1970s' teen idol with a cosmopolitan identity

To begin with, Castro started his career as a TV artist due to the experience of growing up in Macau and the singing training offered by his Portuguese family background.

According to the interview that I conducted with Castro for this research, he was born in a family in Macau where he inherited his musical talent from his Portuguese priest, Hector George Castro, who was a bandleader and a singer. His priest played seven kinds of musical instruments and wrote songs. Under the influence of his priest, Louie Castro loved singing, though his priest passed away when Castro was only seven years old. During the time of studying in high school, he spent his childhood and teenage years watching American movies

and listening to western music, so Louie Castro spoke fluent English. In school, he could speak simple Cantonese with his Chinese classmates in Macau. This bilingual competence benefited him a lot in his performance in various television programs. After graduating from high school in 1974, he made a decision to join the singing competition *The Night of Sampo* (聲寶之夜) in Hong Kong, and won by singing the English song “Congratulations”. It was definitely his stepping-stone to the television industry, since the well-known TVB’s producer Kam Kwok-leung spotted his performance, who later offered him a chance to take part in its TV drama *Teens* (少年十五二十時) (1976). In all, Castro successfully created the first local image of “prince charming” that was adopted by local Chinese teenagers. Castro’s appearance and hobby helped create a westernized trend in the local youth culture.

Castro became a teen idol, as *Teens* was popular among young audience, so this section of textual analysis will mainly focus on *Teens*. The reason to review Castro’s TV image in *Teens* is to study how ethnic difference can be performed and understood through its particular popularity in the late 1970s. In *Teens*, Castro played the main role, as well as the narrator, who is known as an obedient, sensitive shy high school boy called “Ka-shu” in Chinese and as “Louie” in English. It is perceived as a boy-next-door image. Remarkably, the rawness in Castro’s unprofessional acting benefits from his own ethnic uncertainty, which was that Kam the producer searched for. To create the role of Louie in *Teens* successfully, Kam took the preference in Castro’s rawness in acting⁴³, especially when it can highlight his cultural difference. Castro confirmed this:

After Mr. Kam talked to me, he picked me and said—I want you to be as you are....Surprisingly, even though I kept making mistake in acting, Mr. Kam put

many effort on editing clips with the support of wonderful sound effects, the clip was not bad at the end. The editing helped a lot in emphasizing my dummy character that could not speak fluent Cantonese, which made the character more unique and attractive. Since there was no one who acted like me in Hong Kong at that time so I was quite proud of my not-too-accurate-pronounced-Cantonese.

(Interviewed with Castro, December 3, 2013; translated by author)

At that time, Castro had no experience in acting and even gave unsatisfied performance in the first recording for the first episode of *Teens*. His unpredictable acting, however, was fine for Kam, who appreciated Castro as an outsider acting the role of Louie with his non-native Cantonese accent. In fact, the image of “outsider” from Louie fit directly into Castro’s own cultural background that Kam wanted to preserve⁴⁴. At the textual level, the matter of Castro’s ethnic identity as a non-Chinese actually became part of the plot. For example, in episode 7, when a Thai-Chinese visitor Sylvia looks at Louie’s face and says, “you do not look like a pure Chinese”, Louie for the first time proclaims his ethnic identity as a Portuguese-Chinese (see *Figure 2.2*). Louie then tries to speak in Portuguese with Sylvia. The unremarkable representation of Louie’s identity as an ethnic other can be understood as a way to transform one’s blurred or mixed ethnicity into one’s cultural capital in the making of TV drama. In the following, the mixed ethnicities will be more obvious in the plot and the setting of other characters.



Figure 2.2 Louie talks to Sylvia by speaking Portuguese

The second textual specificity of *Teen* is that it further demonstrates ethnic ambiguity because of the configuration of a cultural landscape, where people who come from different cultural and ethnic background intersect with one another in Hong Kong as an international city. In each episode, Louie needs to interact with people of various backgrounds who are troubled by various problems. Interestingly, the supporting characters which Louie encountered with are always female in each episode. The differences in their value, lifestyle and taste have been often mentioned⁴⁵. The idea of cultural others was mainly constituted by a range of characters, like visitors coming from different countries, people returning to Hong Kong, and people going abroad. Three plots will be elaborated in order to understand the cultural intersection between Louie and these cultural others. Firstly, in episode 7, during their day trip, one of the characters gets hurt. Louie and friends try to hitch-hike, and thus they get on Sylvia's car. They are surprised by Sylvia's free transportation because local people generally rejected hitch-hiking. During their conversation, Louie guesses Sylvia returns from

the America by checking on her Chinese look, fluent Cantonese and courageous help, yet Sylvia replies, “Return? Hong Kong is not my home, I just visit here”. And then, the scene that she uses Thai to say “Hello” to them renders her Thai-Chinese identity. She calls herself a gypsy who has no home, so she can only travel around world, but she has never been to the Soviet Union and Alaska. All of them admire Sylvia’s ability to speak multiple languages and traveling experience. Nonetheless, in this kind of cultural interaction, Sylvia often judges that boys in Hong Kong are shy than those from other places. More importantly, the way Sylvia speaks Portuguese to Louie offers Louie a chance to show off his hidden Portuguese ethnic identity.

Then, in Episode 13, June, a photographer who has lived in France for six years, returns to Hong Kong to develop her own photography business. During the time when Louie and his friends do their internship work at her studio, Louie finds that June keeps blaming on the stubbornness of her employee and clients. June gets frustrated when she does not want to compromise with the bad working values in the local culture in terms of exhibition of her creativity and talent, she finally returns to France. This case translates the difference in working attitude between France and Hong Kong as the cultural barrier that classifies where one can or cannot live freely and work creatively.

Finally, in Episode 17, Louie and his friends meet a Japanese teen magazine columnist Samata Toyokawa at the Peak. Toyokawa comes to Hong Kong for understanding the difference among the youth from Japan and Hong Kong. She speaks Cantonese because her mother is a Chinese and she learns Chinese as well. She asks Louie and his friends about their point of view on education issues. As their friendship grows, Louie appreciates Toyonaka’s

independence and her wide travel experience. Toyokawa shows her concern at the local social issue to Louie, as well as her political participation in the political party and in the meeting with the local college student. Toyokawa postpones her job in Japan and plans to stay longer in Hong Kong in order to write a book about Hong Kong Youth Culture. It triggers Louie's reflection on his weak social awareness and his shallowness. He finds that the non-Chinese visitors are delightedly interested in local community issues, while the locals are less so. Therefore, their existence functions to bring about an impact on local people during the cross-cultural interaction. This is proven by the reflection shown by Louie after Toyokawa repetition on how Japanese students are highly concerned about politics.

In sum, the configuration of a landscape of ethnic ambiguity in *Teens* is not simply contributed by the setting of ethnic characters (including Castro's mixed race identity, the western educated returner, different racial visitors), but also by the narrative that framed Hong Kong as a port city in 1970s, where people carrying different cultural values flow in and out the city. In *Teens*, the sense of cultural other challenges youth's boredom of Louie and his friends, and their jealousy and appreciation rendered the other a knowledgeable and inspirational presence. It may be further argued that the form to representing youth's openness on other ethnicities can construct a cosmopolitan awareness through connecting with cultural differences. Moreover, the display of cultural otherness does not only offer criticism on the local culture, but to display an adoptable reference for the local youth. It also easily renders Hong Kong society a cross-cultural city when youth can often encounter with people of other cultural origins. After the freshness of his mixed racial identity and his boy-next-door image created by *Teens*, Castro earned a chance to develop his film career in Taiwan from 1977 to 1979. The uniqueness of his mixed racial identity continued to benefit his acting career in

TVB in the 1980s, in which Castro joined the situational drama section *Ha Jai and Daddy* (蝦仔爹哋)⁴⁶ in TVB's long-running variety show *Enjoy Yourself Tonight*⁴⁷. According to Castro, his incompetence in speaking fluent Cantonese became his ethnic uniqueness as a mixed racial figure. "Ha Jai," the boy character that he played, was largely considered a "gwei-jai" (meaning a young male foreigner) rather than a "local". According to Castro:

How can a mixed guy survive in Hong Kong? In fact it isn't easy. How many roles need the contribution from foreigners? It isn't commonly seen. It just happens that Ha Jai hit the point where that particular character needs western factors. I get used to how everyone says I am a gwei-jai (鬼仔) because sometimes I really act like a foreigner a lot. I can get away with grammatical mistakes in Cantonese as I was forgiven by people who think that I never had Cantonese lessons properly. That is an advantage that I can see of being a gwei-jai. At the time no one expects you to know perfect Cantonese, not even grammatically correct Chinese. Then you can get exempt from it. (Interview with Castro, December 3, 2013; translated by author)

Therefore, what challenged Castro was that he needed translation due to his non-fluently spoken Cantonese. It also took him a long time to memorize the script. Back to his performance, the laughter of this show consisted of the comedic exposure of Castro's incompetent use of Cantonese, such as the performance of a slow response, wrong pronunciation and improper expression, and the cultural conflicts in a home place between a traditionally conservative Chinese priest, and a western educated son Ha Jai. This significance of Castro's "gwei-jai" figure marks his tremendous success in his very bright nine years in the 1980s when he was widely recognized in the local community⁴⁸.

In fact, a few mixed racial figures appeared in the cultural industry at that time, like Deborah Moore, Irene Ryder, Rowena Ellen Cortes, Sandra Lang and Teresa Carpio.

Although these young artists are good looking, behave in a western manner and good at singing, they do not share the same “nonlocal” advantage. Castro remembers:

All of them are good at singing. However as for acting, many of them are weak in Cantonese. It is a disadvantage of them because they cannot express themselves well. It is fine if the role is specified to be a Eurasian or no spoken Cantonese is needed. If it is a Cantonese role, it is possible that it will be tough for Teresa or Rowena. (Interview with Castro, December 3, 2013; translated by author)

Here, Castro points out that there are few opportunities of TV drama production offered to EMs artists who cannot handle the Chinese scripts. As a result, when understanding EM’s struggle for visibility, the rare significant case of Castro shows that the particular strategy for EM artists to survive in Hong Kong’s cultural industry from 70s to 80s. Firstly, the “non-local” roles were not often offered by the TV industry that mainly serves the overwhelming majority of Chinese. The “nonlocal-ness” of non-Chinese ethnicities is more or less signified by their imperfect use of Cantonese (and their foreign appearance as well), which became a struggle to develop a potential for representing EM’s localness. Castro was able to manipulate his ethnic ambiguity, while *Teens* represented a rare local program that contained so much interaction between the locals and foreigners in the plot. These accomplishments, however, would be eclipsed by the use of Anglo-Caucasian talents, since, as shown in the next section, the “white face” bears a directly recognizable reference to local colonial history.

The making of the familiar white face in the TV culture from 1980s to 2000s

This section aims to review the representation of Anglo-Caucasian white faces in TV serial dramas for the past 20 years. This period could be said to be the second phase for EMs to emerge in the television culture in Hong Kong. The appearance of the “white face” in Hong Kong television history has been widely noted, mainly centering on the roles of missionaries or priests, senior police officers and international entrepreneurs. There are some artists who are classified as white who have appeared in the local television industry as well as the film industry. Most of them can speak fluent Cantonese either in performances or in daily life. A chronological introduction of the artists under this category is as follows. American actor Bolo Frenes Kei (紀保羅) was the very first white actor who presented as a superintendent speaking Cantonese in ATV’s police-and-bandit series, *101 Citizen Arrest* (101 拘捕令), in 1983. In 1992, the American film scholar, Paul Fonoroff,⁴⁹ once played the historical figure, Reginald Fleming Johnston, who is the tutor of the last Emperor of China, Puyi, in ATV’s historical serial, *The Rise and Fall of Qing Dynasty* (滿清十三皇朝). Joe Junior, the local born Portuguese-Chinese mentioned previously, appeared and acted a judge in *Justice Sung* (狀王宋世傑) in 1997. After that, he frequently played the roles of westerners, such as senior police officer, priest, missionary worker, principal and doctor. Junior also spread his popularity when he played the role of DJ Dr. Dylan⁵⁰, which carries a certain resemblance with DJ Uncle Ray in *When Heaven Burns* (天與地) in 2011. Belinda Hamnett, a Eurasian model, made her debut in *My date with a Vampire Story II* (我和殭屍有個約會 II) as a foreign vampire countess at ATV in 2000, and then she shifted to work for TVB and played the role of a police officer’s secretary, Mary, who is the decedent of Qing’s Manchus (滿族人) in *To Catch The Uncatchable* (棟篤神探) in 2004.

However, the key figure who has taken up a wide variety of roles for many years in the local TV industry is a white actor known as “Ho Kwok-wing,” an Australian Caucasian person speaking fluent Cantonese (see *Figure 2.3*). Gregory Charles Rivers (hereafter, Rivers/Ho) is his real name. This major white figure depicts the change of the cultural history of TV culture on representing various relationships between the white ethnic groups and Hong Kong-Chinese during Hong Kong’s colonial period, post-colonial period and the time of the ancient China.



Figure 2.3 A superintendent portrayal of Rivers in an unknown TV drama

The first white face: “Ho Kwok-wing”

Rivers/Ho was born in 1965, and raised in Australia. He thought about settling his life as a doctor until he was inspired by the repeatedly looped Cantopop songs played by a Hong

Kong schoolmate at the university dormitory. Embracing the Cantopop culture, he spent almost entire of his leisure time on watching Cantonese movies, listening to music with his Hong Konger schoolmate, and engrossed in learning the Cantonese language. All of this equipped him to be an all-time winner at Cantopop singing competitions in campus. As the popularity of Cantopop became influential around the world, some of the top Cantopop stars launched their world tour concerts. In 1987, Rivers/Ho's passion to this tiny city in East Asia was clearly shown as he volunteered to be the local driver for top Cantopop stars like Leslie Cheung Kwok-wing, Alan Tam Wing-lun and Anita Mui Yim-fong when they held concerts in Australia. At the meantime, his Chinese name "Ho Kwok-wing," was given by his Chinese peer who equated the meaning of his surname, Rivers, with the word, Ho (河), and borrow the name of his idol Leslie Cheung Kwok-wing (張國榮). The notation of "Rivers/Ho" that I use here aims to precisely denote his intercultural significance. In 1987, he decided to give up his medical degree at the University of New South Wales, and came to Hong Kong with his attempt to be a Cantopop singer. Rivers/Ho's white identity became a decisive factor to start his career. That is his most attractive feature to the local TV industry. Yet, Rivers/Ho finally found difficulties on the way to be a singer while settling down in Hong Kong. His career as an actor in Hong Kong did not start until he was recommended by a counterpart at the English tutorial center to cast for a Cantonese-speaking Caucasian. His performance in the casting interview was not really satisfying but he was still employed by TVB (interview with Rivers/Ho, 2014).

Rivers/Ho's passion in Hong Kong Cantopop culture motivated him to be a Cantopop singer, but he unexpectedly became an actor who ended up working for TVB for 20 years. According to my interview with Rivers/Ho, TVB recruited him as an actor only because

TVB's production at that time lacked Caucasian artists who could speak Cantonese. TVB had no alternative but to accept Rivers/Ho to play the role of a missionary in *Twilight of a Nation* (太平天國) with Keith Kwan in 1988. Although Rivers/Ho was once recruited as a very minor position which is only required to speak Cantonese, his career suddenly became bright when he was asked to take over all the white roles after Keith Kwan quit⁵¹ from TVB in 1991. This accidental encounter paved his years to come as the major white actor who has represented most of the images of the white figure in Hong Kong society for twenty years.

The physical characteristics of Rivers/Ho are that he has a thin and tall body in a white skin tone with blonde hair; most importantly, he speaks fluent Cantonese. Both aspects make him appropriate to be regarded as a typical Caucasian by the Cantonese-dominated industry. Rivers/Ho said:

It is not a matter of language, but the appearance. It means that I look like a “gwei-lo” with “red hair and green eyes” (紅鬚綠眼) which earns my competitive edge. Such an advantage is limited. The problem is that even one possesses the advantage, most roles that require such ability are casual and minor, meaning unimportant. If the role is vital, then it is good. Yet it is rarely seen since we are in Asia. People usually consider the foreigner role as specially created to add unique elements to the script. (Interview with Rivers/Ho, April 25, 2014; translated by author)

During those years, Rivers/Ho played almost every major character as a white, or a “gwei-lo”⁵² (meaning a white male foreigner, the literal translation being “ghost man”) in TVB's productions. Although being the most commonly appearing Caucasian actor who has

taken part in over 70 TV dramas and 27 movies, Rivers/Ho does not really earn a brilliant career in his participation of TVB dramas, since most of the roles are minor supporting roles, such as an entrepreneur, a manager of some international corporations, a superintendent, a missionary worker or a lawyer. From the limited acting career of Rivers/Ho, it can be deduced that the dramas made by the local TV industry tended to generalize all western characters into a universal white face. The whiteness is therefore both an ethnic marker and a sort of cultural essentialism. Rivers/Ho has long represented most of the aforementioned roles whose various nationalities are unified into one single Caucasian ethnicity. For instance, the president of Russia in *Qing Dynasty in The Duke of the Mount Deer 1998* (鹿鼎記) (1998), a Persian merchant in *Witness To A Prosecution II* (洗冤錄 II) (2001), a French Chief Chef of a cake shop in *The Gateau Affairs* (情迷黑森林) (2004), a British senior police officer in *The Vampire Returns* (大頭綠衣鬥殭屍) (1993) and an American special agent in *The 'W' Files* (衛斯理) (2003).

Exhibiting the respectable white face

During the research, it is found that the white figures that appeared on TV dramas mostly can be classified into three types. According to Rivers/Ho, the reason to decide a white role in a drama is largely related to the taken-for-granted background in historical dramas:

Before 1997, many policemen, especially the senior, were “gwei-los”. There were also foreign missionaries and priests. Such phenomenon is more common among the dramas portraying the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic. (Interview with Rivers, April 25, 2014; translated by author)

For the TV series being broadcast since 1980s, three genres of TV stories can be briefly classified from the dimension of time or according to different historical periods: the first type is the “costume drama” (古裝劇) where the dramas are mainly set in the Qing Dynasty or the time before that. Examples are found when Rivers/Ho acts as a priest in *Twilight of a Nation* (太平天國) (1988) and as a lawyer from the Eight-Nation Alliance in *Qing Dynasty in Justice Sung* (狀王宋世傑) (1997), when the western missionaries arrived China. The second type is known as “the drama of the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic” (清末民初劇), when the period is around the early twenty century. Rivers/Ho acts as a head-teacher of a high school in Guangzhou in the 1920s in *Point of No Return* (西關大少) (2002). The third type is broadly classified as the “modern drama” (時裝劇), which includes the period of Hong Kong as a British colony in the latter half of the twentieth century and the post-colonial period. For instance, Rivers/Ho plays as a senior police officer who wears the green British colonial police uniform in *The Vampire Returns* (大頭綠衣鬥殭屍) (1993) and as the judge in *Untraceable Evidence 2* (鑑證實錄 II) (1999), where both point out that British white officers were in charge in the major governmental institutions in Hong Kong.

Such a simplified classification mainly reveals the figuration of white faces that has long been fixed by the historical cliché or put in historical positions. It functions to transform white face into the specific social imaginary which may in turn foster the historical awareness in local audience⁵³. More precisely, it produces the historical awareness that mainly satisfies the dominant narrative of China’s national history for the local Chinese audience. Therefore, when the rare white actors like Rivers/Ho are highly demanded in TVB’s drama production, this historical cliché hints at the possible, as well as limited, characterization of white faces along a particular cultural and historical path. It is evident that white actors have always been

playing the historical roles as missionaries, senior police officers and judges in the Hong Kong TV culture.

The white face is also identified as the admirable religious figures. In the costume drama *The Ching Emperor* (天之屠龍) (1994), Rivers/Ho plays the Belgian mathematician and astronomer, and also a Jesuit missionary worker Ferdinand Verbiest⁵⁴ named Nan Huairen (南懷仁) in Qing Dynasty. This ethnic figure did exist in the Chinese history. Firstly, the role setting of Rivers/Ho is that he wears the Qing's officer robe to appear as an intellectual teacher, and he speaks in a serious manner to the young Emperor Kangxi, who sometimes needs his advice from the perspective of western science in order to solve emerging crises. The textual meaning given by this white face can connote the cultural and historical interaction between the West and China. More precisely, not only does the admirable white figure show the development of Chinese science under the influence from the western thoughts, like astronomy, but also helps Kangxi's success in developing his empire. It can be understood that the helpful white face always stays positive in the show, because the typecast of missionary and priest has long been set up as good and supporting the protagonist's plotline. With the helpful and generous characterization, this form of white face becomes admirable with their honesty, assistance and kind-heartedness. The form is highlighted when their underlying eagerness on their missionary purpose are well embedded. Remarkably, the reputations of admirable image are repeatedly represented when white faces lie in a certain trajectory that determines the figuration of white ethnic figures since the era of Rivers/Ho, it is evident at both cases of Kei and Rodrigues as their casting is also an affirmation on the respectable reputation of white images⁵⁵.

The emotionless white governor

Apart from the admirable white face, the senior police officer as another cliché of historical figure that can be found in Rivers/Ho's performance. The white figures have long shown up in TVB's modern dramas where they are mainly presented as senior police officers and judges. It somehow represents a colonial historical sense in the drama that Hong Kong society in the script is understood as a British colony. In the modern drama *The Greed of Man* (大時代) (1991), Rivers/Ho⁵⁶ plays the role as a British superintendent who takes charge and gives orders to the Chinese policemen at the office of Criminal Investigation Department in a scene. When he is always called by his Chinese subordinates as a "gwei-tao"(鬼頭), this racialized term liberally indicates that their head is an ethnically white person. Significantly, the white face in British police officer is formed through characterizing Rivers/Ho's performance in a hierarchical relationship with local Chinese. For his costume, firstly, he wears a red uniform in the summer that marks a noteworthy contrast with the Chinese policemen who only wear short-sleeved clothes (see *Figure 2.4*). His costume signifies his distinctive British superiority. Secondly, looking at this scene, the heroic protagonist Fong (Sean Lau) comes to the police station to report to *gwei-tao* that the villain protagonist Ding (Adam Cheng), who is the most-wanted man to the police, stays at the hospital. Though *gwei-tao* does not have any interpersonal encounter with Ding and Fong, the story sets him to be the antagonist against Ding, as well as to be indirectly reciprocal to Fong, in the institutionalized relation between the Britain governors and the Chinese governors. In the plot to follow, *gwei-tao* takes over the hospital by blocking all the entrances, Fong and his cop friends are forcefully rejected to enter the janitorial room, they repeatedly say, "Gwei-tao's order - no one can enter. Please don't cause us any trouble." The incorruptible act of these

Chinese cops under order may render *gwei-tao* a convincing identity that a white figure is a boss who needs to be impartial and efficient in making strict decisions while arresting criminals. Thirdly, such august image can be translated into something of what I call “an emotionless face,” which suggests that the white character is strict, indifference, and even heartless in his encounters with others. Rivers/Ho’s facial expression in this scenario maintains solemnity and seriousness, proven by the lack of smile and loads of rage throughout his whole performance. The rendering of his authority may be benefited by this rational implication in his ability of tackling crimes, and this emotionless face suggests that *gwei-tao* is being detached from any interpersonal connection in the story. Remarkably, this emotionless white face Rivers/Ho performed reappears in *Healing Hands* (妙手仁心) (1998), in which he also plays as a cool cop leader of the protagonists, who can largely exemplify the practice of the white’s authority over the police force, and establish the cultural imagery of police authority in the city as well. Yet, in the drama *Before Dawn* (愛在暴風的日子) (1998) is about the establishment of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in Hong Kong in 1970s, Rivers/Ho as the superintendent leads a large-scale corruption in the Police Force and harms the locals’ lives, but this negative white figure and its corresponding governing policy are finally toppled by the protagonists of ICAC.



Figure 2.4 The British senior police officer Rivers initially played in *The Greed of Man*

The primacy in the professional white figure

It is evident that the white faces appearing in TVB dramas commonly come with higher social positions in power, money and knowledge. Here, Rivers/Ho is not only to fit into the historical landscape, but also to take up the professional occupations, including lawyers, teachers, photographers, entrepreneurs, filming directors, chefs and even painters. This range of social roles suggests that white faces are usually presented at a socially privileged position in the television culture in Hong Kong. In the modern drama *A handful of Love* (一屋兩家三姓人) (2003), Rivers/Ho plays Uncle One, who is the owner of a piano company (see *Figure 2.5*). He is also a painter with long hair. In a scene of the drama, he adjusts the model's gesture and turns her into Greek goddess Adina. However, the model feels lost when Uncle One requests her to show her passion, wisdom and smile with a twinkle. In another modern drama *The Gateau Affairs* (情迷黑森林) (2004), he acts as a French Chef, Sean Paul, who

has worked in a cake shop where the female protagonist works. Sean Paul looks like a temporary sojourner and returns to teach her in the advance level of cake making (see *Figure 2.6*).



Figure 2.5 Uncle One as a painter is adjusting the model's gesture in *A handful of Love*



Figure 2.6 The French chef teaches the female protagonist in *The Gateau Affairs*

Both cases show that Uncle One and Sean Paul come with the similar social register that they are successful through possessing social prestige on their professions. This professional

preference seemingly entails that representing white faces should uphold a specific talent to function in the fictional plot. Again, it is not surprising that Rivers/Ho plays the captain pilot in both *Triumph in the Skies* (衝上雲霄) (2002) and *Always Ready* (隨時候命) (2005) (see *Figure 2.7*). The configuration of white faces has long been registered with atypical talents and in the top rank of occupations. This way to review Rivers/Ho's professional roles mainly highlights the fact that white face can be presented favorably because it is always associated with various occupations in the TV culture since the 1980s.



Figure 2.7 The captain pilot Rivers plays briefs his teammates in *Always Ready*

Institutional limitation on the performance of whiteness

Ironically, despite occupying the respectable position in the dramatic roles, Rivers/Ho's white primacy can only be found with being upper class in the stories while his participation in the narrative progression tends to be minor. According to Rivers/Ho's interview, his long career in TVB gave him limited chance for him to develop his dramaturgical technique. Most

of the roles are about managing and ordering people and this does not have much relationship with the others as seen the typecasting of the “emotionless white face”. No background story like his family or even his health status is described for these roles. Those roles just function to be a kind of background character in the drama story, which Rivers/Ho confirms:

Sometimes, the limitation of the role itself led to some conflicts. For example, I have been longing to try different roles in the drama, like to be a normal local, rather than acting as an officer with authority so often. But sometimes the director and editor would think that if they put a foreigner in a role of local person, why don't they just look for a “real local”? In my point of view, it would be better and more extraordinary if we could put more elements or potentials of a foreigner character in the drama in the place of a local. (Interview with Rivers, April 25, 2014; translated by author)

Rivers/Ho laments that despite the many roles, they present little possibilities for developing his artist career⁵⁷. His success due to his white face earns his fame among the local Chinese audience⁵⁸, but the TV industry only preserves what his white markers can directly tell⁵⁹. Therefore, the cultural primacy of the white face and a certain form of institutional racism mutually drive the representation of white racial figures.

In sum, in the cultural history of television, the white face is always saturated in the privilege social position, as seen in Rivers/Ho's roles. Through accounting Rivers/Ho's roles, it is evident that the portrayal of the white face in TVB's dramas always comes with the higher social positions which the figures are presented at privileging in power, money and knowledge. It is shown that Rivers/Ho does not only fit in the convincing historical characters

registering the police authority or religious assistance, but also takes up an array of professional roles from lawyers, English teachers, photographers, entrepreneurs, filming directors, French chefs, and painters. This distribution of social roles hinders the possibility to argue that local TV is ethnically monotonous. Yet the limited figurations packed with historical clichés puts someone like Rivers/Ho in a perpetually marginal position, eventually reaffirming the centrality of Chineseness in the televisual world. However, it remains the case that both Louis Castro and Rivers/Ho managed to enter into, and sustained a certain level of visibility, because they both speak fluent Cantonese. The linguistic ability, as hinted earlier, continues the mark EM's predicament as both an ethnic outsider and a cultural insider at the same time. The same situation can be applied to the following case in the next section. Yet there would be remarkable cultural and ideological differences displayed in the case of QBoBo, the dark-faced, local-born, Indian actor.

The other local or the local other: the “Chinese” in brown face

From 1980s to 2000s, apart from the white faces, there were also a number of racial characters in the televisual field. Interestingly, those non-Chinese roles were acted by Chinese artists with skin darkening makeup. Different from the white roles which strictly requires the authenticity created by Caucasians, non-Chinese roles with dark complexion are given to Chinese actors. One unforgettable figure is Sean Lau (劉青雲), who is a darker-skinned ethnic Chinese whose deeper eye-sockets and high cheek bone give off a certain a non-Chinese facial character. When he played the character of a Tang emperor in *The Grand Canal* (大運河) produced by TVB in 1981, his appearance has even aroused the audiences' doubt of his ethnic authenticity. Since then, with his unusual facial markers, Lau has been

requested to play the roles of non-Chinese ethnicities for a few times, each of which was very convincing and successful. The roles are as follows: a pretended Vietnamese refugee in *Story of Nam* (難民營風暴) in 1989, a pretended Filipino domestic worker in *Driving Miss Wealthy* (絕世好賓) in 2004, and a pretended Indian after being hypnotized in *Himalaya Interpal* (喜馬拉亞星) in 2005. The Chinese-in-dark-face phenomenon is reminiscent of the minstrel performance in the 1950s TV shows in the U.S.

Besides Sean Lau, some other actors/actresses have shared the similar stage experience. For example, Evergreen Mak (麥長青) plays an Indian role, Mong Che Che, in the English section of “Auntie Wu Jut Jut” (Auntie 烏卒卒), which was a part of the long-running children's television program Flash Fax (閃電傳真機) (1989-1999). In this show, Mak put on dark-colored makeup and wore Indian costumes, and he once attempted to start a curry restaurant. He is a servant and has been judged by his master played by Helen Tam (譚玉瑛). Dickson Li (李家聲) is another example. His veracious Pakistani working in desert shop is the protagonist in the drama, *Life Made Simple* (阿旺新傳) (2005). This role becomes favored by audience because he falls in love with a popular role, Li Siu Ho (李笑好)⁶⁰ in the drama. Also, there are two actresses who are widely known to the local audience for their dark-faced performance. In 1988, Elvina Kong (江欣燕) acted as a Filipino domestic worker in the shortlived drama called *I am Maria* (我係 Maria) in *Enjoy Yourself Tonight* (see *Figure 2.8*). Known as Maria, Kong is dressed in the working uniform, speaking Cantonese with a Filipino accent, and her face is coated with dark-brown color makeup. Moreover, to persuade the comic effect, she acts to be clumsy and makes a fool of herself. With this popular role penetrating into households “Maria” subsequently became a precise ethnic term in Hong Kong popular culture, connoting the proverbial foreign domestic worker from

Southeast Asia. Likewise, Maria Cordero, who is a dark-skinned Portuguese-Chinese singer, acts a greedy Filipino domestic worker, Maria, in the protagonist's home when she gave a guest appearance in the popular TV drama, *The Seasons* (季節), in 1997. Because of this negative role, Cordero has long been misrecognized as a Filipino, which caused her embarrassment⁶¹.



Figure 2.8 Maria's outlook in I am Maria

On the cultural level, unlike the stereotype made on the favorable images of white faces, these pseudo-brown faces have largely been perceived in a discreditable way, like being occupied with low-paid jobs, performing their stupidity, being greedy, and even becoming a threat to the Chinese community. Reviewing the representation of brown faces in the television TV from 1980s to 2000s, I find that TV producers often need to set up the brown face characters, even if there is mostly no such racial artists around to play them. Yet considered culturally, this Chinese-in-dark-face phenomenon reveals that Hong Kong TV

culture has long manipulated a racial project that, in Omi and Winant's (1994) words, mediates the discursive or representational means in which race can be identical and signified. This research intends to argue that its manipulation of a particular racial category that is based on oversimplifying the color spectrum—white, dark-skin or brown, and yellow—creates an impoverished racial awareness in popular culture. Yet this discussion also helps reveal a social context in which the Hong Kong television industry lacks South Asian artists' participation, which eventually benefits the rise of the only South Asian actor, QBoBo, in 2005.

QBoBo: multiple brown faces in Hong Kong TV culture

In this section, I discuss the representation of South Asians in the television culture by focusing on an actor popularly known as QBoBo⁶². With a real name of Gill Mohinderpaul Interpal, QBoBo has performed in 9 Hong Kong movies and 36 TV dramas till 2014. Yet this research will only focus on his performance on TV dramas. QBoBo rose to fame since showing up with a funny and humorous Indian image in a talent show on TVB called *Minute to Fame* (殘酷一叮) in 2005, where he sang Cantonese songs and even shaved his chest hair into the shape of the letters of the abbreviation of the TV cooperation (see *Figure 2.9*). His debut surprisingly received the local audiences' welcome and he was finally employed as a full time actor by TVB. He later starred in a dozen other TV dramas (Erni & Leung, 2014), cast in diverse roles as security guard, chef, doctor, superintendent, lawyer, even terrorist and so on. QBoBo had played the minor roles without a strong character or even a name, before he became a regular face on TV dramas, in which some of them were impressive roles. Generally speaking, his performance in TV serials, films, talk shows, dramas, and even his

press interviews, always impresses the audience with his comedic portrayal and amusing performance⁶³. This comic image can be understood as the survival method for QBoBo as an ethnic actor to struggle for visibility in the Chinese-dominated entertainment industry⁶⁴. According to my interview with him, what QBoBo longs to convert through his comedic icon is the prospect of portraying racial harmony, away from the emphasis on racial inequality. In addition, with his positive screen image, QBoBo has got lots of support from the public voice⁶⁵ when facing the controversial issue⁶⁶ about the rejection for permanent residency of his wife by the Immigration Department of Hong Kong. What follows is a discussion of the characters that QBoBo played, in order to understand the cultural representation of South Asians in TV dramas of Hong Kong.

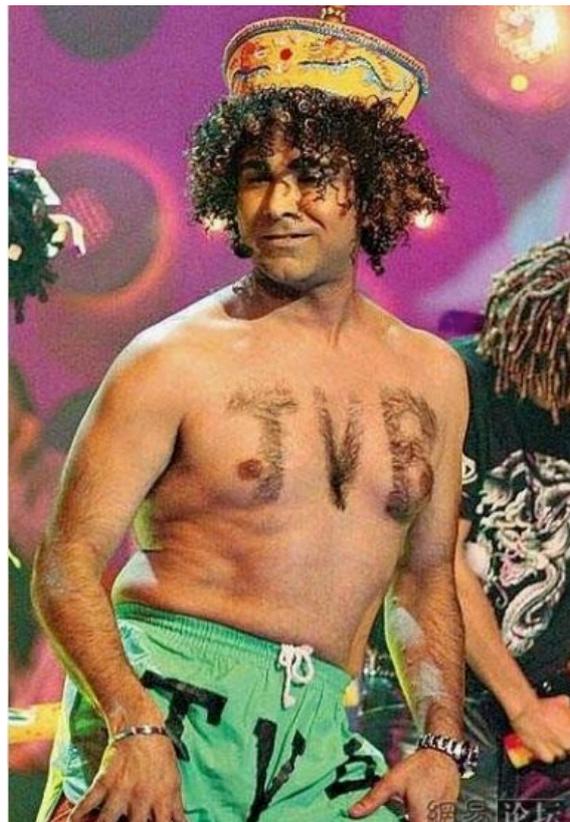


Figure 2.9 QBoBo's exaggerated and comedic performance in *Minute to Fame*

Ethnic markers in brown faces

I begin with the assertion that like the casting advantage of Rivers/Ho's white face, South Asian actors usually need to deliver their unique ethnic signs for normative narrative purposes on TV shows. Usually the ethnic signs an Indian actor deliver strongly register some popular Indian symbols, for example, the boss of a yoga center in *Welcome To The House* (2006), a curry restaurant boss in *Catch Me Now* (2008), an Indian Chef in *Wasabi Mon Amour* (2008) and *Some Day* (2010). More than exhibiting those ethnic markers, the South Asian characters reinforce a particular stereotype, which is similar to the regulated casts for white actors. Yet different from the limited spectrum of roles experienced by Rivers/Ho (and white actors more generally) the cast roles of QBoBo's range is fairly wide, from powerless to powerful ones, from low-skilled to professional ones, and even from heroes to villains. The wide range results from certain reasons. First of all, South Asians with eye-catching brown faces have been used as a multicultural signifier in scripts. Some of them are designed to be as common as Chinese residents in the community, for example, an unknown neighbor in *Ghetto Justice* (2011), a customer in *Priests and Sons* (2007) and a crime reporter in *On the First Beat* (2007). Besides, some of them may serve as the signifier of an international city where people of various ethnicities come cross, like the casual roles of foreign visitors or costumers QBoBo has played in *Dacey Business* (2006), *The Comeback Clan* (2010) and *7 Days in Life* (2011). These roles may not carry any impact on the plot development, but they may connote the existence of a multi-ethnic background in the world of the stories, where the Chinese majority coexists with the racial others. It can also be evident in the perspective to render Hong Kong a multiracial working environment, where EMs may work in either lower or higher positions. QBoBo does not only act as a security guard with few lines in *A Chip Off*

The Old Block (2009) and *Born Rich* (2009), but performance brown faces with outward occupations from 2007 to 2011. For example, a doctor in *Best Bet* (2007), a magazine boss in *The Stew of Life* (2009), a trading businessman in *Only You* (2011), a medical researcher in *Men with No Shadows* (2012), a MV director in *Season of Love* (2013), and an lawyer in *The Other Truth* (2011). With the research on race representation of Hong Kong television culture, the conclusion should not be that South Asian EM groups are mainly represented as the poor underclass. If the portrayal of brown face is not necessarily negative, we do not have to look at the content of EMs images, but question how the racial othering effect is operated on them instead.

Though villains are major roles that QBoBo has been cast, like being an insidiously corrupted superintendent in *Brother's Keeper* (2013), here what will be argued is that a generic criminal marker for representing South Asians can be found in the recent television program, namely the terrorist in brown face in the cop or crime genre. In *Tiger Cubs* (2012), QBoBo, who is in Islamic costume, is going to hijack a plane with machine guns. This scene functions to demonstrate the mission and the power of the Special Duties Unit. This articulation between South Asians and terrorists is made to constitute the “dark threat” in social discourse. What’s more, this negative image of South Asians causes the society’s insecurity and makes people link South Asians to the threat to the city or creators of chaos. For example, in *Ruse of Engagement* (2014), three dark-skinned men (played by QBoBo, two South Asian actors Interpal Bitto and Peter Chan), who are explicitly named as South Asians, come to Hong Kong to cooperate with the Chinese gangsters for wresting password for launching a missile. At the same time the chaos is formed as they massively kill people and also rob the bank in the city. Finally the threat is settled by the protagonists from a police

department—the Anti-Terrorist Force. This threatening image of brown faces in TV culture demonstrates the racial stereotype on South Asian has changed over time in accordance with that group’s changing position in the culture (Grossberg, Wartella & Whitney, 1998). In fact, the dark-faced terrorist once came to be more visualized and significant in Hong Kong television programs and films, as the anti-terrorist policy applied by the government intervened the production of popular culture⁶⁷ after the September 11 incident in 2001. It is slightly different from what has been displayed in the films where South Asians are local gangsters to make trouble in the city itself. Here, the terrorists in both dramas are imported to the city. This kind of othering hidden by this terrorist trend reveals a racialized framing, when South Asians often commit crime in Hong Kong, they must not look like the member of the city.

QBoBo’s intervention

Different from the ethnic ambiguity displayed by Louis Castro and the “distanced” white faces that Rivers/Ho has performed, the brown faces QBoBo has occupied often register a particular “local” image, which attributes to the local identity or his long life experience in Hong Kong. According to QBoBo’s biography, as the third generation⁶⁸ of Indians living in Hong Kong, he was born in Hong Kong in 1969 and has been living in Jordan for over 40 years. Many of his press interviews present him as a “local” by introducing that his familiarity with Temple Street, Cantonese songs and street foods, and by highlighting his memory from his childhood and from his long working experience at Correctional Service Department. However, how the experience can be translated into QBoBo’s performance, or, become the advantage for QBoBo to work in a Chinese dominant TV industry can refer to an institutional

factor on his casting experience and to the producer, Wong Sum-wei⁶⁹ in TVB. During my interview with Wong on February 11, 2015, I found that Wong has been a rare example as an executive producer who would invite QBoBo to participate in different performances and listen to his advice. I found that the recent representation of South Asians has been highly influenced by Wong's realistic approach of storytelling, which makes Wong stand out from many TVB curators⁷⁰. Therefore, the minority culture, racial discrimination and even EMs' Hong Kong-Indian identity are remarkably elaborated and discussed in her production, where QBoBo played a role received sufficient attention of the audience. Representing EMs in a commercial media like TVB, Wong has claimed repeatedly that her production is always oriented by the taste of local audience, and the topic of EMs is rarely exhibited by her production because of the popularity among local audience, but not because of the idea of letting the EMs speak for themselves like the public media RTHK. In order to create a bunch of EM characters in a her script with surprise and freshness, the research Wong has conducted through QBoBo's network is to visit and to interview ethnic minorities for collecting their stories which are unfamiliar to most Hong Kong People. *Only You* is the premier romantic comedy which not only displays a traditional Indian wedding, but also configures an interethnic marriage between Indian and Chinese (see *Figure 2.10*). Notice that QBoBo, his wife and his fellows all play the Indian family in the drama. In the drama, Indian trader Mr. Gill becomes an uncaring father-in-law to the Chinese young woman Yan, who marries his son, Peter (Singh Bitto). However, he rejects this interethnic marriage, and requires Yan to pay a very high dowry as well as to learn to be an Indian wife if Yan insists to consummate the marriage. After interacting with Mr. Gill and his wife, Yan decides to learn how to be an Indian wife, and her wedding company as well as her friends will arrange her wedding party

in an Indian style. Therefore, those Hong Kong women have to learn the schedule, the items and the meanings taking place in Indian wedding from the future grandmother-in-law of Yan. In a gathering between her friends and Mr. Gill, Yan finds that the honor of an Indian man could be decided by his wife's performance and it is an unreasonably privileged for men by playing down the autonomy of married women. For instance, women should walk after a man, cannot eat with men at the same table, are not given the chances to talk about their opinion and discuss with men and so on. In the meantime, her Indian grandmother teaches her how to wear the sari that she deems very beautiful, and how to deal with the Indian husband's machismo. This example shows that the local television industry does not refuse to make use of the non-Chinese culture to enrich the plot of a story.



Figure 2.10 The Indian wedding is performed at a Hong Kong's mosque in *Only You*

As a result, the representation of South Asians might go with her preferred way of realistic storytelling, yet from the discussion of race representation in recent years. As Wong said, “for the Indian wedding, I did interview some of them to understand the Indian wedding ritual and the normal practice of married relationship between husband and wife, and borrow the wedding place from the Indian community,”(Interviewed with Wong, February 11, 2015) her production strategy occasionally makes an elaborative description of South Asian characters possible and thus avoids the liveliness of EM characters being replaced by the over-generalized, monotonous or stereotypical image. In other words, Wong’s realistic storytelling requires strong foundation on historical, societal and cultural aspects in order to portray the background of the EM characters. Wong’s unique way of producing southern Asians’ roles, or brown faces, somehow explains why QBoBo’s acting career goes beyond the limits of usual non-Chinese actors (especially white actors).

Also, it should be noted that QBoBo’s intervention turns out to preserve the ethnic specificity in popular culture. Though QBoBo seems to act like a local person as normal as other artists do, his actor career is somehow determined by his own ethnic and religious identity. According to the interview, unlike the Chinese artists who have freedom on the performance, there were some limitations on roles offered to Interpal. See the detailed description as follows:

We should have all-rounded performances including both negative and comedic ones because we are artist. Since I have my tradition and limitation, my bottom line is I do not accept third-category movie, for instance, any sexual scenes or even kissing. Not only me but also my wife is a very conventional Indian woman, so I

have to respect her wishes. You see, in the early stage I had filmed a drama ‘Welcome To The House’ with Yuen King-tan as a couple, but we barely touched each other’s hand nor kissed on lips. The ultimate bottom line is only to kiss her cheek in the wedding scene. (Interview with QBoBo, January 28, 2013; translated by author)

It has never been found that he involves in the scenes where he is drinking, smoking, or being physically close to female characters. This is not only because those images are regarded as negative and violating his religious identity of a Sikh, but also because the intimate interaction between a married man and other women is definitely inappropriate according to Indian tradition. For instance, it can be seen that QBoBo’s role of Henry Law in *Welcome To The House* (2006) does not hold the hands of the actress his role loves, and there is even no real kissing scene in the wedding party; the one seen is produced by editing, according to QBoBo. Thus, it can argue that this out-of-scene self-protection limits opportunities that QBoBo can share with Chinese artists, but this declaration on his ethnic identity can increase the cultural awareness of the TV series producers when designing the roles that represent the brown faces. As a result, this ethnic singularity is used to determine the represented brown faces, even though the significance seems subtle and invisible to the Chinese audience.

“Made in Hong Kong”

As mentioned above, South Asians in the age of “Chinese in brown face” might have been not only much underrepresented but also stereotyped in TV culture, and this should be criticized. However, QBoBo longs to change some stereotypical images of South Asians member in the television culture which has long allocated the position of outsider to them,

and then he opts for producing more “positive” portrayal of South Asian people in Hong Kong, according to his interview:

In *No Good Either Way*, this drama was really what Indian is thinking nowadays. It told people that how we Indian stay in Hong Kong with the local people peacefully and how we joint venture to try out different job natures. There isn't any discrimination but it is a proper and updated version showing how hard-working and devoted Indian can be. (Interviewed with QBoBo, January 28, 2013; translated by author)

To illustrate how an Indian figure can be localized, or can be translated into an identity of Hong Kong-Indian, I shall focus on the ever-impressive role QBoBo was the first time cast as the leading character in the TV drama *No Good Either Way*⁷¹. In the drama, QBoBo plays Interpal, a local born Indian, who is forced to go to India to finish high school, in the hopes of returning to Hong Kong for work and for getting rich. Here, the racial representation of Hong Kong-Indianness can be extracted from a scene in perceiving racial markers and its hybridized identity. Interpal is introduced to the audience in a reunion with Steve (another leading character), who has been his high school classmate. Meeting in an Indian restaurant, though Interpal shows up in blue Indian tunic and dhoti as a clear ethnic reference, the interaction between them does entrench the racial signs upon the brown face image of Interpal (see *Figure 2.11*).



Figure 2.11 The bearded look of Interpal in No Good Either Way

The formation of Interpal's racial figure is so discursive that there are at least two dimensions on entangling two sites of signifiers of "localness" and "Indianness" into the particular construction of Interpal's racial figure. For one thing, the constructed Indianness is expressed in various ways, like wearing Indian costumes, speaking "Indian languages" (he says "shukriyaa," which means "thank you" in Hindi to waiters), applying his taste on food to well-cooked "curry" chicken and fruit imported from East India, devoting himself to the Indian tradition (i.e. putting weight on value of family and obeying his mother's decision),

and keeping his beard as a sign to his commitment to Sikhism, etc. All these racial signs are encompassed into an ethnic code of Indianness. However, presenting Interpal's humorous usage of Cantonese in native accent and even Cantonese jokes⁷² is not enough to rectify Interpal's local status. Knowing Interpal comes for a job interview, Steve asks him what kind of recruitment is open to "overseas candidate;" then Interpal immediately corrected him by saying, "I, Shing Siu-Lung, have 'three stars,' I was made in Hong Kong." It reveals a race thinking that their local status should be verified by the nationalities registered into a racial group. The identity politics Interpal deploys is to avoid the disassociation of his local significance by the established Indianness. Thus, Interpal's statement anchors his local status as what Steve does in four levels: in legal terms that the symbol of "three stars" verifying who can be the permanent resident is shown on Hong Kong ID card. In cultural terms, his Chinese name—"Shing Siu-lung"—explicitly points to his admiration for Bruce Lee whose Chinese first name is Siu-lung; in social terms, the brand of "Made in Hong Kong" signifies that Interpal was born and grew up in Hong Kong and in the economic terms the line, "there is no racial discrimination from the God of Wealth," indicates that Interpal can share the public resource or wealth as others do by highlighting the equal chance in Mark Six. In this phrase, the codes of "Indianness" and "localness" are not necessarily contesting or opposing to each other; rather, they may be complementary to demonstrate Interpal's Hong Kong-Indianness in such hybridized sense. However, this hybridized form of representing Hong Kong-Indians is problematic and the following plot may be an unobvious form of racial politic: this hybridized brown face can be flexibly adopted by Interpal on the one hand; it may conceal an uneven racial order between these two sites of racial codes on the other.

In the narrative, the act of keeping a beard of Interpal is an example. At the beginning, Steve cannot recognize him once for his beard which is scared to his Sikh identity, but in order to attend his job interview, Interpal shave his sacred beard, which shocks Steve again (see *Figure 2.12*). In spite of the beard as a signifier of his racial identity in religious register, in Interpal's point of view, getting that job is the milestone to maintain his living, and to survive in Hong Kong. Although the shaving scene largely violates Sikhism practice, it could be justified by his survival strategy that he appropriates the dressing style of other Chinese characters through the adoptable visuality of his shaved brown face. Therefore, the textual sign of Interpal's action of shaving his scared beard become a normative sign that marks the local identity discursively out.

All in all, in order to localize this brown face as an acceptable Hong Kong-Indian, this drama now occasionally anchors both racial sites of Indianness and localness upon a contradictive frame. Hence, the "shaved" brown face can only be translated into a Hong Kong identity, when such narrative consequence shows that these textual signs are positioned onto a hierarchical symbolical order: the normative signs of "localness" take priority over other racial markers. Similarly, this hierarchical sense can also be applied to the case of Indian lawyer Mr. Gill, in *The Other Truth* (2011). However, the hierarchical sense is set up in a quite surprising way because that Mr. Gill has published a couple of Chinese novels, and he appears as the representative of certain professional class that white faces have often occupied in TV culture.



Figure 2.12 The shaved face of Interpal

Conclusion: Interrogating racial orders throughout popular culture

In Grossberg's words, reconstructing the intellectual interest in, or demand on, the formation of ethnic identity in popular culture, which local scholars have only recently begun to work on, can be marked as a political-intellectual project. Thus, with this more descriptive strategy what I endeavor to do is to tell an alternative story of the cultural history of local television. Its unfolding can illuminate the different racialization, ethnic multiplicities, or

ethnic existences within Hong Kong culture itself, especially when the production and consumption of Hong Kong popular culture has long been used as a pivotal means for making distinguished social and cultural studies (Chan, 2000; Lui, 2001; Ma, 1999,2001; Siu, 2003). In fact, though many racial signifiers have already been shown in different forms to circulate in various stories, how the idea of ethnic multiplicities can be elaborated in the racial political sense is where the problem lies. Herman S. Gray (2005) in his media study of representation of blackness in American television insists on the freedom of representation by saying, “representation, no matter where they circulate or how they are generated, are more than free-floating signifiers cut lose from the social and historical mooring that makes them intelligible” (85). With this concept, the representations of non-Chinese figures which have been mapped out from TV culture as cultural sites for struggles of meanings in visibility are subject to operating and managing difference for projecting the racial order and offering an imagination on another kind of collective identity. Therefore, it allow us to further discuss of the different modes of racialization surrounding these three figures. As shown in the non-Chinese figures throughout television history, this fact shows that being small in number does not necessarily mean to disappear or to be underrepresented in the formation of Hong Kong culture. Hence, how those differences in racialization anchor questions of the ethnic ambiguity, the privileged white face and the multiple brown faces should be seriously considered.

From the analysis of Castro, the idea of ethnic ambiguity illustrated in *Teens* shows that the ethnic signifiers, such as facial appearance, skin color, languages and nationality performed by Louie and other ethnic characters, are not necessarily unprivileged and excluded from the Cantonese-speaking TV production. Instead, these concrete differences are

explicitly connoted with relevant cultural values that are finally displayed as the textual signs of presenting cultural differences. If such fundamental textual element of ethnic difference can mark the popularity of *Teens*, then can we argue that this ethnic equivalence is largely commonsensical to Hong Kong society in the 1970s? The answer should not easily attribute to the youth's weak local identity, for this cultural openness mainly points to the ethnic differences that can be interrogated within the social context in 1970s when the economy of this port city opened to the global market and the urban daily encounter was made up of people coming through this city from different cultural backgrounds. In this specific time, the local-born generation was eager to access a more cosmopolitan identity. Furthermore, the 1970's popular culture, it is evident the attention on identity politics was largely drawn into a dichotomous identification. There was the imagination of Hong Kong identity, like being a cosmopolitan and civilized person who is the opposite of the mainlander image which is commonly represented as unsophisticated, barbarian (or, uncivilized), and even harmful in films and TV dramas, such as *The Good, the Bad, the Ugly* (1979) and *Bank-Buster* (1978). In fact, these factors may mutually entangle but also open up a cultural demand that it need to articulate other differences into it formation of cultural identity. As a result, what I want to address is that such social imaginary of ethnic ambiguity that *Teens* delivers can respond to the question of cosmopolitan identity marked by ethnic differences. Also, understanding how ethnic differences can display cosmopolitanism in the 1970s, the notion of ethnic ambiguity can render Hong Kong identity to a historical richness which the ethnic differences from the minority once were not necessarily forbidden and underrepresented.

However, the way to represent non-Chinese figures in TV drama has dramatically changed, after a few non-Chinese artists who have a significant facial character due to their

racers joined the casting venture from TVB's drama production, which are the cases of Rivers/Ho and QBoBo. The favorable white face shown in Rivers/Ho's case from 1980 to 2000s illuminates the cultural signification of white representation. In fact, setting white face with police authority seems necessary and convincing that can create another kind of historical, cultural and social awareness among the local audience. When the admirable white face of priests or missionaries is only intelligible to an unreachable existence from pre-history of Hong Kong society, the "emotionless white face," however, continue its social imaginary of white authority or primacy to the contemporary Hong Kong. The colonial Hong Kong with 155-years history is mainly depicted to be occupied by the uneven social hierarchy that the white is situated on the top while Chinese are put at the bottom. Understanding abovementioned configuration of the modern white face, rather than the admirable historical figures, is important, because it still leads to a historical register on privileging the cultural imagination of white's existence nowadays. Via Rivers/Ho's case—his clichéd casting limitation on the one hand and a lot of professional characters he played on the other it is evident that though Caucasian population has long been considered as a small proportion⁷³, this historical framing of white face renders the racial awareness of white people in Hong Kong an idea of "cultural bigness". Erni and Leung insist that the number is not the key point by drawing the example from the British settlers:

[C]onsidered culturally, being small in size does not mean the groups are not powerful and influential...historically, the British colonialists and settlers...have been relatively small in number in Hong Kong, but their presence in public life, especially in administrative and economic arenas, have been significant. (2014:3)

It can be found that not all the roles of white senior officers are represented in a heroic manner in order to deal with this uneven ethnic relation shown in TV dramas, the general personality of the white police leaders are widely perceived as meanness especially when it comes to their attitude to their Chinese subordinates, according to Rivers/Ho's case. The above textual analysis tells a particular cultural racialization on white ethnicity. The consistently mean or solemn image on setting white authority characters can only be maintained by a white racial other that mainly represents whiteness to be "emotionless" or disinterested to the local politics by their isolated existence, or to be harmful to local community by abusing their assigned power.

In search of the "multiple brown faces" on representing South Asian from QBoBo's case study, the brown face of QBoBo can cast a relatively wide range characters. QBoBo's comedic intervention in his TV characters is not the point. What I want to highlight is the integrative approach on how Indian or South Asian with their racial markers live well and normally in the local community. It is no doubt that the stereotypes on brown face of EMs still focus on poverty and social threat to Hong Kong locals. Yet, although some racially stereotypical image played by QBoBo can also found, QBoBo did create some impressive South Asian characters in Hong Kong TV culture, which marks his career distinctive from Rivers/Ho's white clichéd path. It is because his comedic acts do not only earn himself fame, but to significantly intervene the production of his ethnic signifier, in which his ethnic and cultural differences serve as the unfamiliar textual signs that the TV producer Wong treasured. Yet, his comedic fame may be got from the legacy of funny portrayal of "Chinese in brown face." When the role Maria's 'Funny maid' can only get popular, Erni and Leung criticize that "the commercialized logic of media production justifies the ritualistic negative

and comical portrayal of South Asians as serving the voyeuristic gaze of the [Chinese] majority”(2014: 63). Moreover, QBoBo’s intervention leads to a visually discursive change in the cultural representations of South Asian, such as the cultural presence of Hong Kong-Indian figure in the contemporary Hong Kong. However, with my analysis on *No Good Either Way* and *The Other Truth*, by localizing this brown face as an acceptable Hong Kong-Indian, the ethnic characters anchor both racial sites of Indianness and localness upon a symbolically hierarchical order, in which the normative signs of “localness” take priority over other racial markers. In other words, to understand the representation of South Asians in Hong Kong TV culture, the making of a preferable image of Hong Kong-Indian can be figured out from what the shaved brown face has demonstrated. Critically speaking, the racial ordering I found does not totally erase, or underrepresent, Singh’s Indian significance; rather, it seemingly celebrates the ethnic minority status as textual signs to largely exist in the everyday life in the city. In fact, it can only preserve South Asians in an assimilating approach—survive in Hong Kong as the minority South Asians should lift down their cultural difference, if the majority needs.

All in all, Hong Kong TV culture has long manipulated a racial project that mediates the discursive or representational means in which race can be signified (Omi & Winant, 1994). The racial formation is shown by the categorization between white face, brown face and the overwhelming proportion of Chinese faces in TV culture. The way to manage the ethnic difference is found on the problematic racial frame of the ethnically ambiguous, the cold but respectable white faces, and the multiple brown faces. With this discursive spectrum laid out, I will turn to the question of how specific representative TV shows project a particular social imaginary in which (a) race and ethnicity can in fact become visible on TV (even if

marginally) and (b) the question of racial and ethnic multiplicity can be imagined through the cultural analysis itself.

Chapter Three

Sweetened Troubles: Managing Racialized Anxieties in *No Good Either Way*

No Good Either Way (衝呀！瘦薪兵團) (hereafter referred to as NGEW), a situation comedy (sitcom) produced and broadcast by Television Broadcasts Limited (hereafter referred to as TVB) in 2012, displays a cultural landscape—modern urban existence in Hong Kong—by portraying a variety of distress in workspaces. With twenty-one episodes in total, NGEW is a typical sitcom in a continuing series. Jade and HD Jade, two local free channels subject to TVB, broadcast this sitcom during prime time from 11th June to 6th July in 2012. This Cantonese-speaking drama is written by Lau Chi-wah and produced by Wong Sum-wai (Amy Wong)⁷⁴, the Executive Producer of TVB. In order to present the diversity of the struggling faces of workforce in Hong Kong, it is the first time in Hong Kong television history that there is a production that cast an Indian as one of the major protagonists and using the elements derived from the local Indian communities. Its extraordinary way of satire-making seems to be highly accepted by the audience in Hong Kong⁷⁵.

The plotline of NGEW is about the life struggle of “da-gong-zai⁷⁶”(打工仔)—or “sau-san-juk” (瘦薪族), which literally means salarymen with low income—and the whole story displays the distinct uneasiness belonging to this class, which namely is the stress and anxiety interwoven by the lives in and out of the workplace. With the constantly repeated theme—the bitterness of da-gong-zai—“No Good Either Way”, as the title indicates, precisely unfolds how the urban daily life is filled with pressure and the feeling of anxiety. It is implicitly associated to this particular salaried class since people in this class are relatively disadvantaged in financial condition and social status; the disadvantaged status in different

aspects ultimately leads to a kind of anxious and restless states in this capitalistic economy/society, for they “feel uneasy” about the fact that they cannot figure out a way or see a social ladder to climb up on. In other words, the comedic plot is made up of certain undercurrent of fear, which comes from the possibility of becoming “sau-san-juk” for the three major characters. Before getting to the main point of this chapter, what follows is the character list of NGEW, in which only the characters highly involved in the textual analysis is shown (*Table 3.1*).

Table 3.1 The character list of *No Good Either Way*

| The relevant characters in <i>No Good Either Way</i> | Actor or actress | Character name |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Interpal Singh/ Singh Siu-lung (盛小龍) A Hong Kong-born Indian returns to Hong Kong for better jobs. After finding the difficulty of getting a decent job, he turns to start various businesses. Singh is a kind person but always make troubles for Steve and Alex. | QBoBo / Gill Mohindepaul Singh | Interpal |
| Steve Man / Man Ga-wa (閔家華) A senior marketing officer who has worked at Marketing Department in GOALTECH for 10 years. He is sensitive about his reputation and will start different businesses with Singh later. | Louis Yuen | Steve |
| Alex Mo / Mo Nga-lik (巫雅歷) A senior product designer working at the departments of Research and Development (R&D) in GOALTECH. Alex is witty and just to his colleagues. He is also the best friend of Interpal and Steve. | Ruco Chan | Alex |
| Ling Ning / Ning Ling-zing (甯寧靜) Alex's wife and eventually becomes the supervisor of Alex | Kristal Tin | Ling |

| | | |
|--|----------------------|--------|
| and Steve at GOALTECH after Violet steps down. | | |
| Violet Che / Che Wing-han (車詠嫻) The general manager of the Creative and Marketing Department in GOALTECH. This villain role mainly provokes crises in the story. | Florence Kwok | Violet |
| Mr. Diu (刁先生) The tenant shares a house with Steve, becoming anxious after Interpal moves in. | Anthony Ho Yuen Tung | Diu |
| Carrie Man / Man Ka-lai (閔家麗) Steve's sister. She later divorces her husband and turns her restaurant into a popular Indian-and-Indonesian restaurant with Interpal's help. | Meini Cheung | Carrie |
| Raja Interpal's Indian cousin. He forces Interpal to work for him in the name of "relatives' care" and exploits him. | Singh Bitto | Raja |
| Gill Interpal's Indian fellow. As an Indian, he has no opportunity working as a chef at hotels and later helps Interpal to serve Indian cuisine in Carrie's restaurant. | Ricky Chan | Gill |

The two Chinese protagonists, Alex Mo (Ruco Chan) and Steve Man (Louis Yuen), work as senior staff in GOTECH, a creativity tech corporation. When the two consider how their contribution to the company can assist them to be promoted to the position of managers, their rival in the company, Violet Che (Florence Kwok), plans to seize the throne during the absence of their boss, Sam Ko (Stephen Au), later taking over the departments of R&D and Marketing successfully. Besides getting in the way of their promotion, Violet hinders Alex and Steve from any possible development and disrupts their working schedules, which makes

them worry about their future in GOTECH⁷⁷. Right at this moment, their high school friend, Interpal (QBoBo), just come back to Hong Kong from India. Interpal positively thinks his proficiency in the local language, Cantonese⁷⁸, and wit can help him to get the position of the director of community liaison assistants; but little does he expect that he would be turned down due to inability to write Chinese. It suddenly dawns on him that it is difficult for him to find a job, which distresses him a lot. The gloomy situation and the daily worry about their jobs of these three men become the key to develop the plot of NGEW. However, their engagement unavoidably turns their interpersonal dynamics into interracial dynamics, when Interpal starts to depend on his connection to the local Indian communities to look for a job or to make money. For example, being a driver, a salesman in Sham Shui Po, making a business of illegal taxicab operation, running a juice shop and so on. Thus, in order to understand how this daily emotion with uneasy feeling of da-gong-zai in this drama represents the interracial relationship and racial other or otherness, it is necessary to track the particular cultural discourse of displaying the everyday anxiety and its articulation on forming the social imaginary of social relation between Hong Kong Chinese and South Asian, or more precisely, the emerging interracial relations in this research.

Studying race: from stereotypes to narrativity

From both the theme song starting with the repetition of the word “Chung”(衝) for sixteen times and its prelude at the very beginning of the drama—“as an old saying goes, the da-gong-zai today is actually the meat on the cutting board; salaried men are forced to get lower salary⁷⁹,” it is not hard to discover that NGEW is a sitcom portraying the sores of da-gong-zai and the distinctive lifestyle, the shared value and emotions of this class-based

community. All regarded as da-gong-zai, the three protagonists do have different experience when it comes to their careers; for example, at the very beginning, Alex and Steve are the ones who will get promoted soon but Interpal is an Indian returning to Hong Kong only to face joblessness. Therefore, though NGEW seems to take the class issue as the main theme, there is an obvious representation of racial differences. Here, what I am trying is to pave a way so as to open up the discussion for the racial differences represented in NGEW and the importance of its focus on racial representations.

With the overview of South Asian figures in Hong Kong TV culture given in Chapter Two, it is easy to discover that QBoBo plays a big role in NGEW, which has never happened to South Asian actors or characters. At the same time, the ethnically minor characters set in NGEW, especially the so-called Indian or South Asian ones, are unprecedentedly high in number and enormous in complexity⁸⁰. The fact that most of the South Asian characters belong to lower/working classes is bound to arouse criticism on its stereotype of minorities' racial representation⁸¹. However, what Interpal is expected to be is not only a leading character, but the metaphorical intersection of Chinese and Indian or South Asian communities. The complex racial relationships include the interracial relations between Chinese communities and EMs as well as the intra-racial relations in one EM group.

To elaborate the complicated racial relations, the storyline led by Interpal should be offered first. In NGEW, Interpal is a Hong Kong born Indian with a Chinese name "Singh Siu-lung," which the given name comes from the name of the beloved action movie star, Bruce Lee Siu-lung. He met Alex and Steve in high school. More than classmates, they are close friends and basketball teammates when they are young. However, failing one of the

three major subjects—Chinese—in the public examination, Interpal was brought back to India by his mother to arrange his marriage as well as to develop his career. Due to the economic downturn in India after a disastrous flood, he returns Hong Kong to hunt a better job, as Interpal deems Hong Kong a city full of opportunities. What follows is the coded subplots associated with Interpal's engagement in NGEW in chronological order:

1. In order to defend himself against the homosexual harassment from his rich tenant, Dui, Steve invites Interpal to stay at his house temporarily and to pretend to be his gay partner.
2. Interpal gets rejected from his application for the position of Community Assistant Officer since he cannot write Chinese. However, a rich woman hires him as a private driver in order to conduct her secret affairs, and fires him later on because he knows Cantonese. (In this case, life stress and anxiety can be, in fact, correlated with the topic of races or ethnicities. This correlation is further reinforced when the interpersonal dynamics is channeled into interracial dynamics via Interpal's ethnicity in other characters' daily lives. Failing to find a job with the means in hand, Interpal turns to explore the opportunities through his intra-racial network built by local Indian communities; meanwhile, he also brings troubles, hope and fun to Steve and Alex when he has long tried different businesses on the basis of his ethnicity.)
3. Being a scavenger, Interpal collects the unwanted and used electrical appliances from his friends and sells them to Indian merchants and even local Chinese poor residents in Apliu Street⁸², he eventually causes a fire at Steve's house when he is

fixing his “products.”

4. Driving “pak pai⁸³,” literally meaning non-licensed taxi, Interpal and Steve provide illegal transportation service to Indian people, but they finally get arrested by an Indian policewoman who sets him up.
5. With Steve’s funding, Interpal opens a juice shop and promotes mango lassi as the feature drink. Meanwhile, Raja, Interpal’s cousin, forces him to work at his shipping company, so he eventually closes down the shop.
6. Interpal becomes the co-owner of Indian-and-Indonesian restaurant with Carrie; it gets successful through the promotion of fusion menu, Interpal’s skill to entertain costumers, and the Indian chef’s (his fellow) help.
7. In order to help Alex, Interpal incidentally sells Alex’s inventions. The final crises are brewing to Interpal, Alex and Steve during the process of getting them back.

Noticeably, in this framing of NGEW’s plotline centering Interpal, it involves the various forms of configuration and transformation of anxieties as well as the intersection between interpersonal dynamics and interracial dynamics. Here, in order to unfold NGEW’s complexity on unusual forms of racialization and racial othering along with its particular narrativity, these seven subplots will be translated into the events of anxious charges, which will be fully discussed in the textual analysis section below. Before moving on to the further discussion, one thing about the methodology used needs to clarify: the purpose of constructing the approach from stereotype to narrativity is to read the blurred and underrepresented racialized narrative and their derivative meanings in NGEW thoroughly.

Centering Interpal in the story, NGEW shows the cultural stereotypes people in Hong Kong possess and the exclusive racial markers among Indians, such as Indians' habit of having curry for meal, dark complexion, body hair and speaking only Hindi. Moreover, it introduces the differences between Chinese and South Asian communities and the fact that Hong Kong Indians are engaged in the jobs and businesses highly associated with India, especially the ones which are well-connected with local Indian community. These obvious racial signs unavoidably provoke the criticism on the racially stereotyped representation of NGEW.

Generally speaking, stereotype⁸⁴ are a series of images we use to remember somebody/something(Creeber, 2006b). More accurately, we identify the identities and natures of other communities via a set of fixed images (Lippman, 1922)⁸⁵. In other words, stereotypes also can be understood as the expectation some people in the society on other groups and their performativity, such as women, elder, lower classes and minorities. Stereotypes are not necessarily negative (Grossberg, Wartella & Whitney, 1998), for in the modern society, mass media deem these pictures important sources and media studies also share an intimate relationship with stereotypes studies, which have been introduced to media studies from journalism. Teun A. Van Dijk (1984, 1985, 1987, 1991), a renowned Dutch scholar, has authoritative influence on stereotype studies. In the study where he conducts discourse analysis on the news from newspapers and TV, which is especially relevant to racism, he has found that in the west, minorities (e.g. African, Asian, Hispanics and so on) often appear in the stereotypically negative news in news media. For example, they are always presented as criminals and threats which cause moral panics and negative effect on the mainstream society or as abnormal, unimportant and invisible social roles. From this conclusion, it is not hard to

discover that stereotype studies occupy certain position in media studies later on, and even become the ground to analyze the ideology and discourse about race representation.

The approaches of stereotypical representation have emphasized that in the formation of the society, how the minorities in a society are misrepresented and underrepresented for the purpose of rationalizing the governance and authorities of constructing mainstream thinking logic. The abovementioned help us to reason out the idea that circulated through mass media, TV dramas undoubtedly will deploy stereotypes to otherize the images of minorities in order to achieve the triangle relationship: representation-consolidation-mainstream ideology/hegemony re-building. Thus, by studying TV dramas, we will have the intention to recognize stereotypes as an enforcement of “a form of rigid uniformity on whole groups, simplifying individual characteristic into social and ideological clichés” (Greeber, 2006b:48).

Because the strength of stereotype studies lies on discussing the relationships built by minorities, identification and power-relation, stereotype studies occupies the dominant position among the approaches in media studies. Researchers examine the binary oppositional discourse where the otherized people or roles are put because stereotype studies deal with how otherized images are constructed and further naturalized, reinforce the unequal relationships between the majorities and minorities as well as those between “us” and “them” (Fiske, 2014; Grossberg, Wartella & Whitney, 1998). Stereotypes are not necessarily inaccurate and negative, but, portraying stereotypes “naturally” can still result social categorization, like the idea of racialization and its related marginalization (Downing and Husband, 2005).

With this analytical angle, it is easy to discover that though in NGEW South Asian and Chinese da-gong-zai, as the same classification of workforce, the two still have differences in terms of nature, authority and even emotional expression. When it comes to the nature of jobs, South Asian characters, on the one hand, are engaged in the jobs requiring low qualification, such as private cars drivers, security personnel, assistants de chauffeur, coolies, odd job men, and cooks or even are underemployed. On the other, Chinese characters in NGEW mostly are office clerks. However, these observable differences do not serve for making an oppositional relationship between negativity and positivity and a fixed racial hierarchy, for there are some other elements out of this kind of categorization. Take Sham Shui Po as an example; as a representative of one of the lower class communities in Hong Kong, Sham Shui Po is often chosen to be the background setting for the South Asians in NGEW. However, if this choice should be read as a kind of misrepresentation or negative image, what is the reference for the misrepresentation and negativity? Moreover, take two Indian characters for instance; the Indian policewoman who charges Interpal and Steve with an illegal deed and the villain Indian role Raja, who forces Interpal to conceal his work and causes the failure of Steve's juice shop business. They do not fall into the categorization of working division. As for the emotional expressions, besides Interpal, due to his status of being one of the protagonists, his role in the drama grants him more chance to express his emotions, most South Asians are usually emotionless and poker-faced. Nevertheless, the expression of feeling bad is mostly presented by Alex and Steve.

When we follow the stereotypes to analyze the possibilities of social imaginations, we raise the question that if stereotypes can precisely describe a particular group, which not only means that it is inescapable for human beings to group things into types, but implies that the

identification produced by stereotyping is singular, stable and even independent from the cultural codes and media with which the identity displays itself (Grossberg, Wartella & Whitney, 1998). Many scholars who study about how media studies represent minorities still linger on searching those “obviously” reinforced racist images to reveal the ideology and consciousness derived from racism. Thus, John D. H. Downing and Charles Husband reproach those straightforward readings of the researchers under the training of media studies for their laziness in *Representing “Race”* (2005):

[T]hough a bad reason, people only too often assume that making meaning is straightforward and only goes awry occasionally, so that extrapolating from the text backwards to its producers, and/or forward to its users, is pretty well hazard-free. . . [this classic] content analysis normally offers a discussion to make sense of the statistics it has generated, and this discussion frequently draws upon a qualitative grab-bag of theory, other research data and taken-for-granted notions. (26)

In order to study the “unobvious” way of race representation on race othering and inter-racial relation, and to formulate a suitable methodology for studying NGEW, my focus will shift to the specificity of its narrative, or, to what Downing and Husband have called—symptomatic reading, which can produce finely tuned and illuminating results when conducted by a careful and seasoned analyst. What follows is the principal of this sort of methodology: a) the analysis should recognize “the multiple ways in which language is used, including irony, parody, sarcasm, rhetorical-over and under-statement, phrases carrying a particular symbolic charge...laden with historical associations;”(28) b) it is also able to take “the specificities of genre” into account and c) it should not neglect the narrative dimension that is definitely

significant for TV drama series, in which “random sampling of content [which] would often miss a pivotal story, or chop out the beginning or the end or even the middle, so that the important of narrative consequence, build-up, and build-down would risk being entirely lost”(28).

This narrative dimension, for this research, is extended to the problems of racial representation in NGEW. With addressing on the singular structure of NGEW’s narrative, unlike “unadorned obviousness”(Downing and Husband, 2005: 40), a narrative is usually a sort of specific and equivocal language or “framing” form⁸⁶, which tends to make the racialized ideas indirect but at the same time discursive. In the U.S., to study the racial relation, the criticism of “enlightened racism” from Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis (1992) is a classic study on the TV comedy *The Cosby Show* that reminds us of how the popularity of the African American figure in humorous pretrial potentially attributes their performance to pre-given (negative) stereotypes on the Black people and the (positive) assimilations with White middle class lifestyle. Erni and Leung have already argued that when QBoBo is repeatedly to play comical roles, “he assists in a softened stereotyping of EMs as continuing objects of laughter, not subjects to be taken seriously” (2014: 63), but this conclusion can not fully explain that the seemingly hybridized signification of making a racialized subject sounds matching with QBoBo’s comedic performance, which is widely appreciated by the Chinese majority. In addition, some criticism of mass media depicting racial relations points out that the viewers are led to perceive and emotionally respond to the textual meaning delivered by the “racial signifiers” (e.g. “blackness”) in the racist way by re-articulating the fearful, desirous and romantic emotions, through interpreting the camera-narrator, the plots, the images and the sounds (Barbara, 2003; Delgado, 1998; Lagerwey, 2009; Richard, 2003).

Therefore, the emotional meaning constructed by the text is unavoidable to be explored while conducting narrative analysis.

In the vocabulary of television culture studies, NGEW as a long narrative drama is a process of producing meanings, which is constant, complete and corresponding, so its ups and downs can appear in this coherent unity (Syugwa, 2002:108⁸⁷). However, what kind of social connotation this complete meaning system possesses still depends on the comedian narrative and materials of NGEW and relies on how NGEW “frames” the racial relations and Interpal’s comedic role under the approach of sitcom (including the way to understand the conflicts and contradictions produced by the process of racialization and the pace used to compose Interpal and his appearance as well as function in interruptive situations, when NGEW is regarded as sitcom).

Because Interpal connects the everyday life and affects of Alex and Steve directly, the process of racialization does not simply apply to Interpal, but also extend to the scenes of their relationships. In other words, these three plotlines influence one another mutually and the racial differences will get into and further impact the sphere constructed via their interracial relationship along with Interpal’s plotline, which makes the interpersonal dynamics among the three the interracial dynamics. In terms of the methodology, when we discuss the racial issues and media representation, it seems important to focus on the constructed and hidden race thinking by racialization, racial othering and various forms of practicing racism. What can we do while exploring the comedian narrative with strong affect changes like NGEW? The answer to this question will start from the deficiency of stereotype studies in media studies to the narrativity and emotional studies.

Emotions, everyday anxiety, and interracial dynamics

Popular culture, even in various forms, attempts to represent certain kinds of emotion and to connect affective experiences of people in chorus (Grossberg, 1992). Emotions can lead to the works of popular cultures and create their meanings and impact. The role emotions play therefore should be attended to (Pribram, 2011:1). In other words, one of the keys in this about popular culture being “popular” is their effective exertion of the charm of emotions, predominating the social imagination and experiences of audiences. In the previous discussion about stereotype studies, characters with stereotypes and episodic plot transmitted through texts of television series are also considered requiring the dependency of effects of emotionalization to send meanings to audiences. However, E. Deidre Pribram (2011) questions those who engage in and lead media studies of the meanings of emotions to the audience in the past: how emotions are created and sent to the audience is difficult to be understood before a particular conceptualization to deliberately evaluate the representation of emotion in media can be developed (1-2). The attention to the study of television text therefore should return to the uncertain narrativity of text, especially like the disassembly of text in this study whose pivot is composed of emotional meanings. In NGEW, to examine how the emotional meanings of anxiety generate and how these meanings function in the interracial relation presented relatively in them, a particular methodology of textual analysis can be proposed by referring to Pribram’s *Emotion, Genre, Justice in Film and Television: Detecting Feeling* (abbreviated as *Detecting Feeling* hereafter). This methodology is able to delve into the narrativity of television series and its complex and intricate relation in representation of emotions.

In the beginning of her examination on the relation among television, the cinema, and the representation of emotions, the idea of television and films is returned to the principle of moving pictures⁸⁸—“as movement in physical action and as the ability to move us emotionally⁸⁹” (Williams, 2009: 47; quoted by Pribrum, 2011:31)—to re-evaluate narrative techniques in them, for the abilities to generate emotions and construct emotional meanings in television and films are seldom noticed. Even though cultural theorists continuously pay attention to the contagion and sympathy generated by popular culture, the quality of emotions and audience-oriented affection are omitted in the realm of representation study of television and films. Those diverse, changing, and reciprocally competing emotional meanings await to be studied and will make media texts into fertile resources. The specific narrativity of films and television therefore needs to be understood again. By following Raymond Williams’s (2009) notion of structure of feeling—an emotion is not only an individual and inner phenomenon but a collective cultural experience, Pribram then suggests a cultural perspective that emotions are products of social sharing and historical development and they rely on the construction and communication of mass media. To recognize the effect of emotions in a text effectively, Pribram further considers that the question we ask should not be what these emotions are but be what they have done (Ahmed, 2004⁹⁰). Her idea frees us from the past interpretation of emotions in television and films concentrating on the concept that emotions are limited to physical or psychological inner phenomena of individuals and then makes it possible to view emotions as a significant approach to social interaction, with which we are able to organize the meanings among people, stories, and experiences. In this sense, the circulation of emotions is the possibility to build up the inter-individual relations and the relations between individuals and social structures. Applying such perspective to the method

of media studies, as audiences search for the link of their identities in cultural experiences to each other, we have to understand how a text brings about, encourages or represses a certain emotional attachment in order to analyze the characters and story of the text (3). Here, the type of anxiety in NGEW should be determined before its function to construct racial relations is examined further.

In its general definition, anxiety is a feeling of uncomfortableness, including nervousness, fear and worry to the coming events that may happen shortly. What makes us anxious is the things or interests we have expected. Anxiety is a physical reaction derived from the accidental deferral of what we have looked forward to. From the psychological perspective, feeling anxious can even assist us in handling difficulties and danger. Stress is pervasive in NGEW and makes it a depicted cultural landscape that all kinds of anxiety circulate among the characters. The anxieties in NGEW have not reached the level of mental illness; for example, the characters do not have symptoms of excessive anxiety as patients who contract anxiety disorders influencing the functionality of their daily life (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015a). Keeping this in mind, this study does not attempt to understand the represented emotions related to anxieties in the clinical categorization and symptoms of anxiety disorders (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015b⁹¹), for NGEW tends to normalize the anxieties in it in order to make them a part of everyday formation and circulation. It is exactly because such anxieties are recognizable easily that the anxieties develop their mediated functions during social interaction, as a form of symbolic interaction. In other words, the feeling of anxiety is an everyday affect. As the characters of NGEW move back and forth, lingering between the working and non-working time in their everyday life and encountering certain difficulties or crises that are “going to happen” or “being

happening,” they display the emotional reaction such as worry, nervousness and stress. Anxiety is evident in narrative of NGEW as shown in the form of flurry, embarrassment, sighs and dialogues between characters. Under this condition, the textual meanings and generic signs liberated from them may allow audiences to keep up with the “disruption” of sitcom genre and the specific reason and influence of anxieties, which will be discussed in detail later. According to Pribram, the anxieties in NGEW should not only be assumed to be a feeling of discomfort in everyday life; more importantly, its circulation will generate/frame the social relation among characters. Since emotional meanings reframe social relations, the element of anxiety in everyday life should be placed in the racial difference generated from (abovementioned) Interpal’s storyline to identify the complex relation of interaction between them. Will it form a racialized structure of anxiety here? If we ponder this question with the perspective of Downing and Husband, how the framing of racialized anxiety notes something unsaid and out of frame may be considered as (or more) important in representing “ethnicity” or “race” as what is said. To examine the emotions that are possibly racialized, Pribram’s method in her studies on emotion needs to be employed to analyze such racialized structure of anxiety that are able to reconstruct racial relation.

In *Detecting Feeling*, Pribram suggests a methodology of emotional representation to cultural studies. It can carefully evaluate how media like television and films conceptualize emotions represented only by means of certain particularized narratives and cultural contexts (2). To contextualize the representation of emotions or the structure of emotion in individual television series, it is necessary to make cultural emotion studies. The paradigmatic shift of Pribram’s methodology to analyze texts therefore should be elaborated explicitly. In Pribram’s different discussions of justice texts, when she traces an emotion that is capable of

leading narratives to exhibit the social imagination, or the cultural understanding, of justice in a text under its construction (maintenance or change) of social context, the forms of the emotion, such as anger, fear, comfort, anxiety and compassion, and how these forms inevitably involve multiple-discourses in the text. Such shift mainly transfers the content to a multi-discursive narrative task, as Pribram suggests:

Engaging with the representation of emotions in the justice genres is a *multidiscursive narrative task* that requires the analysis of the *social imaginary* of guilt, innocence, and justice at the same time as it accounts for specific *structures of feeling*. The analyses of specific films and television programs in this book are intended to make clear that the claims about the “subjectivity” of emotion, prohibiting its textual analysis, simply are not the case. Evaluating and appreciating the multiple purposes of emotion in popular texts is an eminently viable and valuable endeavor. (71; emphasis added)

From her suggestion, Pribram’s methodology of cultural emotion studies involves a set of concepts that can theorize the specificity of television and film texts - narrativity, social imaginary and structure of feeling. It makes us not only fix on individual character’s way of experiencing and feeling; more significantly, it displays how emotional meanings in the embodiment of a text help people generate social imagination so as to create, fix, or alter their subject position and social identities. Later, the case study of NGEW will focus on the set of three analytical tools and possible questions that they lead us to investigate in text analysis.

Affective narrativity of configuring everyday anxiety

NGWE, as a television series which vividly portrays the daily anxieties of employees, is penetrated by multiple and configured anxieties, it does not have to display the anxieties in a form with high intensity continuously due to its comedic nature. Among its 21 episodes, anxieties of the characters intermittently emerge in a mutative form. As its producer Wong's explanation, NGEW certainly softens the seriousness in the plot in order to make it on the trajectory of "relaxation". To explain the variation of anxieties, the embodied change of anxieties in the text and how it influences the shaping of particular social relations have to be analyzed.

In *Detecting Feeling*, Pribram translates the ability for "moving picture" to generate emotions into an affective narrativity led by emotions. Her perspective recognizes the narrativity of television as an emotional action, emphasizing more the process of narrative than the outcome and more the (accumulative) effect of narrative than the distinction among events, namely the function of affect becomes the pivot in the development of the story:

In this mode of narrativity, affect is a vital component, as pivotal and determining as physical action. Rather than understanding affect as solely a reverberation or rejoinder, the half-life or aftereffect of bodily action, emotions form a significant category of action that, like physical action, shapes and propels a narrative. (25)

According to Pribram, emotions are elements of text that can be acted out; moreover, they no longer generate bodily reactions and follow the inner physical actions of characters in a text. The effect of their circulation becomes a crucial factor in meaning producing of television text. Unlike the Pribram's extensive examination of genres related to females and justice, the following discussion involving sitcom will not focus on its typology, though comedy and

minority-ethnic typecast are considered to have a close relation. For instance, as Erni and Leung argue, “the persistence of die-hard cultural and racial stereotypes of EMs” in Hong Kong’s TV culture are evident in that QBoBo is continually typecasted as a comical role. Cast into such roles, “he assists in a softened stereotyping of [ethnic minorities] as continuing objects of laughter, not subjects to be taken seriously” (2014:63). Instead, my aim is to analyze how the particular language of comedy in NGEW makes anxieties the subjects of affective narrativity through Wong’s sitcom approach⁹² as well as to question that in what form the anxieties appear and how the anxieties develop or shape the interaction between Chinese and South Asian characters in NGEW from an act to another.

Among the definitions of the sitcom genre, I find two generic characteristics that are quite inspiring and can help advance cultural emotion studies forward to configure the specific affective narrativity of race/ethnicity. The two aspects are the capacities for softening social or ideological conflicts⁹³ and returning the interrupted situation to its original status quo.⁹⁴ They can both be applied to Wong’s approach in NGEW’s production. According to Wong, even if NGEW reflects the oppression on employees in a relaxing way, its aim is to underline their difficulty during working, for serious conflicts will be transformed into irony and laughter in comedy. Wong explains how to deal with the seriousness caused by conflicts in reality:

The theme I employ is the extreme hardship of da-gong-zai, which will display the exploitation from different aspects. However, in the form of comedy, the suffering of victims can be exaggerated, which does not mean to get the compassionate tears of the audience, but to generate the laughter coming from a kind of sympathy from

audiences when the workers are forced to meet some unreasonable and ridiculous demands . . . It is interesting that victims may fight back simultaneously when their bosses want to deduct their salary, like playing tricks on their boss outside the office . . . Using the relaxing way to reflect the oppression on employees, I just want to underline their difficulties in workplaces, for a comedy deals with contradictions and conflicts accompanied by irony and laughter. The genres require seriousness will not be like this. The struggle between two parties may fight first, becomes enemies then, and one may be killed in the evening for slight amount of money finally. (Interview with Wong, February 11, 2015; translated by author)

It is not difficult to explain that the way to soften conflicts as emphasized by Wong is actually the process to make a story back to its initial status quo from where it is interrupted.

Meanwhile, as Brett Mills argue, sitcom should be defined as an different kind of discourse, “for it is one which, even when dealing with “serious” subjects, does so through what can be termed a discourse of frivolity,”(2009:7) what the special way to smooth frivolously conflicts, or irony deployed in NGEW in this process actually follows an axiom—transiting the possible seriousness derived from conflicts and confrontations to a comforting and funny foreshadowing, rather than reinforcing the effect of exploitation, oppression, and difficulty from such seriousness. An episode therefore will not be burdened with extra negative emotions such as worry, anxiety, fear, and anger and is going to focus on how to channel the unavoidable seriousness. Here, I attempt to combine Wong’s “channeling” factor with rhetoric approaches with what I have learned from Pribram’s notion of affective narrativity. Wong’s usage of irony does not only “relax” the experience of audiences during watching but also provide an opportunity to fight back in a farcical way through the sympathy of audiences

in the level of manipulating their identity. It is worth mentioning that not every conflict between characters or disruption in the story forms the emotion of anxiety; what is formed may be other negative emotions. Framing the affective narrativity by the feeling of anxiety is to search for its influence on the emerging discourses of racial relation. The process of repeating oppression and fighting back in NGEW then is supported by a system of representation that reinforces and relieves the emotion of anxiety constantly. Wong's sitcom approach skillfully places both of them into a correlation: the softened conflicts reduce the intensity of anxiety and the deepened conflicts increase the intensity of anxiety. In other words, the anxieties in text structure enable us to understand their shift—forming and relieving, letting us depict a varied pattern by following the changes of the intensity. Furthermore, both in the form of conflict and harmony, the varied portrayal of anxieties assist the social relation formation. The shift is significantly related to the Indian role Interpal, his character setting, racialized signs, and his conduction of anxieties when we return to the study of cultural discourse as interracial relation, which is more worth noticing.

As what is developed in NGEW is the life of employees filled with stress and anxieties, the intertwined or inter-personal interaction among the three storylines of Alex, Steve and Interpal becomes the pivot of circulation of their worried emotions. Among the three storylines, the source of stress to Alex and Steve is from the real anxious working experience in GOTECH; Interpal seems to start the business on his own but he solves problems and makes troubles for his friends Alex and Steve at the same time. The role QBoBo plays here is largely modified as the comedic figure “chung-ming-bun-pak”(聰明笨伯), meaning “troublemaker” and termed by Wong that will be discussed in the later section, so Interpal can mainly please the audience, gaining himself a good impression from the audience because he

is kind-hearted and always self-defeating. Interestingly, in many incidents, it can be seen that a good strategy thought of by Interpal usually put himself at the position of a troublemaker; even a strategy which shows his kindness and effort to help his friends will transform Alex and Steve's anxiety to another kind of anxiety without being alleviated.

In other words, the importance of Interpal is to make the narrative of NGEW a cliffhanger because he can trigger the disruption of story and anxieties at the same time. If we place this troublemaker back to the varied pattern of narrative of anxiety in NGEW, Interpal makes good use of his cleverness and Indian network to release Alex and Steve's anxiety while interacting with them; however, every plan is effective in the beginning and becomes the surplus reason to recharge anxieties. I would like to conceptualize the shift of the previous anxiety, especially the shift after Interpal's intervention: in a word, Interpal is a character who plays a very significant role in the text. Being a troublemaker/chung-ming-bun-pak, he is an affective conductor dominating the production of situated troubles and negative emotions. It is inevitable to face the problem of racialization in the sifting process of anxiety. Interpal as a conductor has an ability to release-recharge anxieties of other characters simultaneously, which is the phenomenon that enables a tendency of shift to the circulation of anxieties in the text.

The significance of such conceptualization is that it changes the formation of social relation when emotions function. As Pribram suggests, it posits characters in an interplaying emotional association (to affect and to be affected) rather than observing how characters bear, feel or response to the appearance of anxiety. Finally, we can only stand on "D-S-D-S..." to recognize the social or racial conflicts in a story in the general definition of comedic types.

Whereas, the abovementioned perfectly affective narrativity of anxiety enables us to recognize elements of complex racialization and racial differences in NGEW by means of “discharge-recharge-discharge-recharge....” In the content analysis of the next section, the discussed anxieties of characters are often not triggered by Interpal but by the shift caused by Interpal who remarkably transfers everyday anxieties of characters.

Articulating social relation into/from the social imaginary

Pribram assumes that even though a television series is a fictional text, its analytical productivity can originate from its aesthetic movement—providing audiences with an “affective experience and moral perception” (50). To her, generic signs provided by a text should be considered “cultural signposts” (Glehhull, 2000⁹⁵). It unceasingly redefines the social imagination of the audience on their social belief, behavior and context during the process of representation. Therefore, applying the perspective of social imaginary to read NGEW will achieve the possibility for exalting the individual textual analysis to certain contextualization. To elaborate the social meanings and the purpose of representing racial issues in this television series, we have to ask, “how they [the texts of television series] use their [racially] generic signs to function as cultural signposts” (51)? Further, Pribram attempts to introduce the ideas of affective narrativity and social imaginary in her perspective of cultural emotion study. As Raymond Williams’s (2009) notion of structure of feeling is derived from literary analysis, Pribram endeavors to develop a methodology to study the structure of feeling in the realm of films and television. Here is an example to

elaborate how Pribram combines the three— affective narrativity, social imaginary and cultural emotion:

What we are fearful of is embodied primarily in the figures of Anton and The Joker. They serve as textual signs operating as cultural signposts for a seemingly changing world in which we struggle to redefine our social imaginary of justice . . . While both films describe cultural circumstances through the lens of fear, the structure of feeling each evokes differs: fatalism in *No Country for Old Men*; chaos in *The Dark Knight*. (2011:71)

The sequence—fear, cultural signpost, social imaginary, structure of feeling—explains the purpose of our exploration of structure of feeling, that is, to identify the cultural discourse manipulated by a certain emotional meaning. In Williams’ words, it is the way public ideals are omitted but felt as experiences by people (“the ‘lived’ omission and consequence”⁹⁶). The structuralization and contextualization of emotion is based on how it is practiced, received and represented in the process of performing social relation:

[For Raymond Williams,] the circulation of structure of feeling—of cultural widespread complexes of emotion—is a means by which social relations are negotiated and exchanged. I would add that because social relation never occur beyond or outside of social difference, structure of feeling are also a means by which power circulate, establishing and reestablishing its discrepancies. (2011:41)

On the level of cultural politics, studying structure of feeling helps us not merely to discover that the process for it to function and circulate will organize and re-organize social relations, but to evaluate the power relation derived from social differences, such as the general

difference of gender, class, race, etc. more subtly when deconstructing such hidden relation of feelings.

To sum up, Pribram's methodology helps this study, which makes the triad of interrelated concepts—*affective narrativity*, *social imaginary* and *structure of feeling*—the center of NGEW's textual analysis. In other words, emotion, as an important element in this study, concerns the representation of races and emotions. Emotions are viewed as a sort of textual meanings beyond the recognition of psychological phenomena. The intention to follow the specific structure of feeling sketched by the *affective narrativity* in NGEW is to understand the particular interracial relation and racial othering constructed by the everyday relationship between Chinese and minority-ethnic group (also can be understood as the cultural signpost). In the following part, my textual analysis of NGEW will convert various subplots, or what I call events of anxious charge, into the cultural signposts for racial interaction between Chinese as well as EMs and helping to open up the space for discussing the social imaginary of race/ethnicity in Hong Kong culture. In the following, I chart the dominant textual events in NGEW by tracking the anxious charges and releases, in order to perform an affective narrative analysis for an understanding of how the TV series manages the racial/ethnic other.

1. The operation of sexuality-race complex

To start with, Alex and Steve hope they can regain the snatched chance of their promotion and salary increase from Violet but Steve is unwilling to lower his quality life (with sea view house and his dream car) so he is forced to find a tenant to share the rent. Under this circumstance, he meets Mr. Diu, who seems to be a homosexual. The intimacy Mr.

Diu tries to build with Steve brings out his homophobia (the first signpost of anxiety), which keeps Steve from staying at home alone with Mr. Diu. When Steve accidentally bumps into Interpal, who just gets to Hong Kong from his hometown, the intimate bodily gestures of theirs are mistakenly put into the position of a gay couple by passersby. Getting to know that Interpal currently has not found a place to stay, Steve lets Interpal crash at his apartment temporarily in exchange for his help. From a mistaken one to the pretending one, the two intend to make Mr. Diu recoil from his alleged interest in Steve and build up a kind of cooperative relationship. When they first meet at Steve's flat, Steve introduces Interpal to Mr. Diu with a sexual-racial articulation :

Interpal: "Homosexuality is not popular in our Chinese culture."

Mr. Diu: "But, you are not Chinese..."

Interpal: "That's why it is popular to us!" (He touches Steve's bottom)

Steve: "Oh, I have told you not to do that in front of others!" (He speaks softly)

In fact, the sexual-racial complex can be located at the moment when Interpal misleads Diu to acknowledge Chinese traditional culture against homosexuality while his non-Chinese ethnic background favors homosexuality. Also, the action with sexual implication through Interpal's soft touch of Diu's hand also objectifies this sexual-racial articulation (see *Figure 3.1*). What's more, in order to convince Diu of this misunderstanding created by Interpal's ethnic role, the continuous portrayal of Interpal's racial difference in this house given by NGEW follows a particular sexual replacement. Compared to his homophobia, Steve's intention to get rid of Diu is placed in the priority and thus he can withstand other inconvenience brought in the

house with this “foreigner.” Afterwards, when Interpal consciously or unconsciously shows the behavior associated with his racial markers, Diu’s feeling of disgust (toward another race) parallels the homosexual marker under the same roof. For example, when Interpal shares the same bed with Steve, his fuzzy body hair touches Steve and makes him say “you make me have an itch.” Diu overhears the conversation, thinking that they are engaged in some intimate activities. Moreover, when Interpal gets to know the possibility of selling some used electronic products, and intends to take the worn bathroom scales for sale, Diu will interpret this action of his as an excuse to take a peep at his nude body.



Figure 3.1 Interpal softly touches Diu’s hand

Displaying the particular cultural signpost in this event, NGEW presents Interpal as a gay roommate bringing uncomfortable feelings to channel the experience of living together for Steve, Diu and himself. The racial signifiers Interpal has exaggerated intentionally not only can be displayed as homosexual markers to Diu, but also can become the laughable signs to the audience as they watch Diu feel disgusted. This event should be judged by the means of which NGEW pokes fun at some sexual signifiers generally seen as a way to perceive

homosexuality. Moreover, why Interpal's racial differences can be unveiled by NGEW with the displacement of homosexual signifiers more or less is for the purpose of releasing Steve's homophobia, which is a site of anxiety. Meanwhile, during the releasing process, the displacement between Interpal's racial difference and homosexual signifiers can be managed and used by Steve, becoming the salvation from the anxiety originally caused by failure at work. In other words, this anxiety derived from Steve's failure in his job is first transformed into his homophobia to his new tenant, and then released through Interpal's racial difference in a laughable (to audience) and uncomfortable (to the text) situation, thereby allowing the homosexual portrayal to open up a room for Interpal to "settle" down in the story of NGEW. Anxiety is our central focus here, and in this instance, is activated in the text around the sexual-racial articulation. The incorporation of the racial other is, unfortunately, performed through a displacement of a popular homophobic anxiety.

2. Problematizing localness in Interpal's access to the Chinese language

Interpal insists on returning to Hong Kong due to his "Hong Kong dream"⁹⁷. Besides his knowledge of "the God of Wealth has no racial discrimination," inspired from a (real) news where one Indian has won the Six-Mark, his confidence is also built on the opportunity for a job interview in hand. In order to pave a smooth start for his Hong Kong life, Interpal resolutely shaves his beard which carries sacred connotation in his culture, for he considers that the action can help a non-Chinese to have a look acceptable by people in the local working environment. Facing Steve's shock on his action of violating his belief, Interpal firmly says, "What does it matter? As long as I can get the job and my mother won't find out, everything is fine. What matters is to get the job!" To develop a cultural signpost in an

affective narrative, this “shaved face act” should be considered as an affective investment of Interpal’s hope and interest to the interview through the effort to erase his otherness in local working place, rather than as a “shaved brown face” that can only be understood as Interpal’s strategy of becoming a “local” as mentioned in Chapter Two. This investment and the confidence from his best preparation do not grant Interpal the success in getting the job because of some unexpected weakness.



Figure 3.2 Interpal exudes sweat

In the interview scene, Interpal’s remarkable language ability is affirmed by the director of the community center⁹⁸, who confirms, “I know you are multilingual. You can speak languages like Chinese, Hindi and English, right? I believe you will be a fast learner who can pick up the job easily.” Interpal eventually, however, fails. Interpal exudes sweat and gets anxious when facing the foreseeable failure (see *Figure 3.2*). He is required to take note for a call made by an elderly client whose non-local dialect cannot be fully understood by him. Although the director looks satisfied while listening Interpal’s oral report, she is shocked to

see the “note” made—pictures Interpal drew on his note board—indicates Interpal’s inability to write Chinese:

Director: “What’s that? Oh my god, you don’t know Chinese?”

Interpal: “No, I can do it! I can! I’m good at that!”

Director: “You can do it? How can you do it?”

Interpal: “Er...you can hire an assistant to help me later on.”

Director: “So, what you mean is I can hire another assistant to be the helper of an assistant? Sorry, I do not think this job suits you.”

It is quite clear that this scene exhibits the institutional racism. The director’s requirement for the capability of writing Chinese may be equaled to a racial treatment for unprivileged EM applicants, despite the fact that Interpal correctly reports the client’s inquiry without writing down a Chinese character. Indeed, some audiences might consider such a scene realistic, for this example can generally reflect the racial disadvantage and discrimination against EMs applicants when it comes to the choice of jobs⁹⁹. Furthermore, this exhibition of institutional racism does initiate Interpal’s anxiety in NGEW, in which his incomplete access to the Chinese language becomes the charger of anxiety about job hunting; More significantly, it operates to racialize his anxiety, when Interpal feels frustrated after he has realized the direct but negative linkage between being an EM and getting a decent job offered in world with an overwhelming majority of Chinese. At this moment, the affective narrative is being configured and it inaugurates the way to release such racially conditioned anxiety in the

follow plotline, where Interpal returns to the Indian communities and is benefited from its networking.



Figure 3.3 Interpal gets help from his fellowman

After failing in the interview, Interpal has a reunion with his fellowmen, one of whom¹⁰⁰ perceives his worry, referring him to be the private driver for a rich widow, Mrs. Szema (see *Figure 3.3*). Mrs. Szema, for privacy's sake, wishes to have a driver who cannot understand Chinese/Cantonese so Interpal pretends not to understand Chinese/Cantonese accordingly in order to be qualified. However, when he overhears the conversation between Mrs. Szema's boyfriend, Dickson, and his friends, he discovers that Dickson actually targets nothing but Mrs. Szema's wealth in this relationship. Almost at the same time, finding out that Interpal actually knows Cantonese, Dickson threatens to blow his cover but concurrently bribes him into silence. Trapped in the dilemma (see *Figure 3.4*), Interpal pours out his trouble to Steve. Upon describing his worry and struggle, Interpal uses the words like "doom" or "fierce inner conflict" to make his anxiety concrete. On the one hand, he is reluctant to lose the hard-earned

job; on the other, deception is disobedience to the will of (Sikhism) God. This dilemma shows that NGEW tries to recharge Interpal's anxiety via his ethnic identity, because without this particular consideration, Interpal in fact needs only to think about how to keep his job, instead of dealing with this conflict. At the end of the episode, Interpal is fired, for Mrs. Szema gets to know his liar face (regarding language ability) before he has the chance to uncover Dickson's scheme.



Figure 3.4 Interpal pours out his trouble to Steve

The abovementioned two cultural signposts display the racialized anxiety in different ways, but both appropriate the access to using Chinese/Cantonese and the resulting dilemmas, as how Interpal puts it: “What a ridiculous world! The previous job requires my ability to Chinese/Cantonese but the inability becomes this one's requirement.” This kind of change of anxiety can be attributed to Interpal's ethnic identity and the textual meaning given in the process of recharging his anxiety. This is to problematize both Interpal's local status and ethnicity, putting him in an in-between position, just like the slash between Chinese and

Cantonese. For instance, the reason resulting in his failure at the interview is that he cannot be identified as a completed local, though he has once confidently stated, “I, Shing-Siu-Lung, have ‘three starts.’ I was made in Hong Kong.” He tries hard to be treated equally but still fails to be recognized. Moreover, in the case of being an Indian driver, his role cannot be classified as an (stereotypically) authentic Indian who is normally detached from the local culture. Therefore, the problematizing process does suspend Interpal’s self-identity (by which he seems to be a “part-time” local and a “part-time” Indian), which makes him anxious and let him trapped before the “successful line” twice, leading to the final negation of Interpal’s claim of his local status.

In fact, what these cultural signposts introducing this ethnic character in the early stage (from Episode 3 to 4) implies is not solely the illustration of Interpal’s failure and anxiety in the job market resulting from his own linguistic and religious difficulties but also the discomfort coming from his problematized identity that recharges his anxiety. It suddenly dawns on him that he is not a local and that as a member of so-called EMs he cannot smoothly live and work at the local communities as he previously believed. Nonetheless, it is just the way of NGEW characterizing Interpal in the beginning. The disappointment generated by his anxious experience also functions as a shift for Interpal to turn to work the jobs associated with the local Indian communities in his plotline.

3. Configuring Shum Shui Po as a “racially easy space”

The following part will discuss how the change of anxieties in Interpal’s experience of being a scrap dealer in Shum Shui Po transforms that poor district into a cultural signpost of a racialized local community that allows interracial dynamics to be produced. What is worth

mentioning is that Shum Shui Po is one of the exteriors, which often appears in NGEW (7 out of 21 episodes). Besides the representation of South Asians' street grouping and the carriers as well as odd job men waiting and vying for jobs, the storyline of Interpal mainly happens on this spot, which depicts Shum Shui Po as a particular space for Indian communities. Some examples: in Episode 3, Interpal first meets his countrymen in the area; Interpal works as a scrap dealer in Episodes 5 and 6; he runs a juice shop from Episode 10 to 13 and works in his cousin's trading company from Episode 13 to 18. The depictions of interracial communities at Shum Shui Po not only can reinforce the sense of reality for the EMs working hard in Hong Kong, according to the producer Wong, but also can form a situational location for this sitcom to contextualize the daily interracial encounter. In this section, how the cultural signpost of interracial workspace can be figured out through processing the emotional registers of anxiety will be discussed.

Here, we first need to see how NGEW makes Shum Shui Po to be a specific workplace where embody different kinds of signifiers¹⁰¹ of anxiety. At the beginning of Episode 5, after Alex delightfully narrates "I am more or less put ashore safely but to some people, it is extremely hard to get ashore, for they do not even see their first boat," the camera then shifts to the street of Shum Shui Po with some South Asian carriers working as the background. The coming shot shows that Interpal strives for an odd job among some South Asians and Chinese (as interactional signifier) but fails. With a melancholic face (as bodily signifier) (see *Figure 3.5*), he says, "No job can be gotten and no money can be made. The only thing can be done is to eat curry with rice" (as verbal signifier). Green with envy, he looks at the working South Asians, turning away with disappointment (as signifiers of sense and emotion). By operating the generic signs of anxiety in this scene, NGEW emphasizes the fact that Interpal's anxiety

comes from his constant unemployment but not yet makes Shum Shui Po a site gathering anxiety. At least, there are other South Asians and Chinese employed. However, as the plotline progresses, the change of Interpal's anxiety makes us rediscover that NGEW indeed makes use of Shum Shui Po as a cultural signpost of displaying the interracial working space.



Figure 3.5 Interpal's melancholic and envy face

When Interpal is about to leave Shum Shui Po, he finds some South Asians and Chinese selling second-handed electronic appliances. From one of the Indian dealers, Interpal gets to know that there is a booming market for selling used electronic appliances in Hong Kong to India¹⁰², which inspires him to be a scrap dealer. Luckily, collecting and re-selling the used appliances of Steve and Alex, Interpal can make some money. Also, when finding the fact that reselling the used ones by pounds will lower the value of the high-tech appliances he has collected, he determines to work a stall, selling them on his own on the street. With the earning, Interpal's face is lightened and he is released from the anxiety of unemployment.

Although setting a random stall without license is an illegal action transgressing the law related to Itinerant Hawker License, this activity is really common in this area and the government would rarely take any legal action. The change of Interpal's anxiety does not merely display Shum Shui Po as a place full of opportunities of making money without any racial discrimination (c.f. Interpal's line about the God of Wealth), but also represents how it exhibits the social imaginary of a "possible" interracial relation. In despite of the fact that Interpal does oil his words and exaggerate the functions while promoting the goods, he still succeeds in selling things to local Chinese. For example, with Interpal's words, Alex's weather predictor is turned into something which can be used as a dehumidifier, mosquito repellent and comfortable sleep generator at the same time and is given a fake one-year warranty. The introduction earns him the first income and customer who says, "Your service is profession and the product is wonderful. You Indian sell some extraordinary goods. I want this!" Here this image of a magical and popular Indian should be linked to the formula of the promoting jokes with Indian cultural signifiers:

Interpal: “This heater is really cheap. A hundred. Take a Try. Only for one minute, it gets hotter than the weather in India!”

Interpal: “This cheap toaster only costs forty. Put one piece of toast in it, and it only takes thirty seconds to make it a piece of ‘bok beng’¹⁰³!”

The promoting method combined with racial signs, which range from the mysterious air (novel products), the specific climate (hot) to exotic food (“bok beng”), reifies the salesman’s Indian identity but the reification produces some textual meanings, or “effects” in Pribram’s word. They not only make Interpal’s racial difference prominent but also “comedize” Interpal’s misconduct as a racially easy practice. As a comedian figure in NGEW, Interpal makes the doubtful promoting skill work because as a comedian figure with racialized signs, his exotic air both makes himself entertaining and turns his racial difference beneficially as racialized commodities. These racialized commodities both entertain his customers (and the audience) and give him the room to perform his humorous side. Compared to the scene in the community center and that of being a private driver, promoting sale to him obviously stress-free and thus releases Interpal’s anxiety at working (see *Figure 3.6*). This affective operation under this change of anxiety offers racialization a chance to provide the possible paradox (Interpal cheats his consumers) to be replaced by racialized comedic selling method. The racialized operation at the same time forms a peaceful interracial dynamics which meets the interests of both sides.



Figure 3.6 Interpal sells at Shum Shui Po

Thus, in the process of releasing Interpal's anxiety, displaying Interpal's relaxing body transforms Shum Shui Po, which originally is a place full of underemployed and anxious people, into a "racially easy space" for people of different races to find hopes or working opportunities to survive the urban jungle. If the subplots of Interpal's easy survival at Shum Shui Po can be understood as the social imaginary of "racially easy space," it proves that the interracial trading or business form can only be situated in this particular racial mixed neighborhood full of the lower classes with different occupations, ways of consumption and the variation of anxieties, instead of other institutionalized working locations, such as office, restaurant and so on in NGEW. Only through certain limited location, NGEW can unveil properly the racial difference and allow the reciprocal form of racial interaction.

After Shum Shui Po has been translated into a cultural signpost where EMs' urban survivals is conceivable, the interracial encounter now is imaginable as an inclusive interracial workplace that is friendly to the racial other and can release the tendency of getting anxious. It is evident that Interpal and Steve goes back to Shum Shui Po to set up their juice

shop not only due to the low rent but also the exclusive market there and their feature drink—the Mango lassi made by Interpal—can appeal the South Asians living in and passing through that area. Although the portrayal of Shum Shui Po seems to embrace an attempt to compensate the institutional racism that prevents EMs from getting a decent job, reducing EMs' anxiety of being unemployed can only happen at Shum Shui Po and the related lower ranking occupations. The possibility to form a racially friendly discourse for Shum Shui Po is based on Wong's will to show the vivid images of working South Asians at Shum Shui Po but in order to exhibit the positive image of hardworking people. According to Wong, she intentionally avoids writing the scene of fighting and defending turfs when South Asians set stalls there, even though this finding from her fieldwork of petty crimes in Shum Shui Po seems unexpected but impresses her a lot.

4. Problematizing racial capital through law-and-order as racial “equalizer”

The intra-ethnic encounters among Indians in NGEW mainly come from community, social network, kinship (or family relationship) and so on. However, NGEW does not set a priority when it comes to the interest between Interpal and his same-race relations. On the contrary, the racial solidarity has often been challenged by different events. For example, in the event of pak pai (happening in Episode 8 and 9), it tells a plain moral lesson (in Wong's use of moral figuration): “even though life is hard, no action against the laws should be taken”. In spite of the fact that it is just an understandable moral lesson, the textual signs it grants are far more complex. In NGEW's manifestation of the mode of releasing and recharging anxiety on the configuration of a law-and-order cultural signposts, the racial othering is possible when racial differences are positioned into a judicial discourse, or a moral

discourse as Wong has insisted. Although NGEW cannot be classified as a justice or law-and-order genre, Pribrum's cultural emotion study on justice genres reminds us that the generic configuration in the law-breaking event can invoke contested social identities "in which a range of different agents participate, representing aesthetic, cultural, and ideological factors. These textual elements are generically organized into a fictional version and returned to the social world as affective experience and moral perceptions" (50). This kind of contextualization through a judicial articulation requires a "proper" place in the social background and institution in order to represent the life of South Asians in same community in Hong Kong.

After the failing of his business as a scrap dealer, Interpal figures out another way of moneymaking—illegal taxi (pak pai) by using Steve's beloved car and invites him to be his business partner. To persuade Steve, Interpal not only lets him know pak pai is a profitable business which will free him from the suffering caused by Steve's superior, Violet, but also clears up Steve's misgiving that the business may be found by the police. He promises to Steve by saying, "Don't worry. All passengers I carry are from my country, people of my own! Chill out, it's profitable" [Episode 8: Scene 8.7]. Obviously, Interpal cleverly uses his Indian countrymen as economic resource to develop his business network. Furthermore, carrying his own countrymen is the only approach to protect him from being exposed by non-Indians. In fact, the saying of Interpal is based on the assumption of that the solidarity of Indian communities will guarantee his illegal business not to be under the surveillance of legal system controlled by the Chinese majority. It realistically reflects how the South Asian communities are isolated by the surrounding Chinese communities. Therefore, South Asians have their own intra-racial economic network to make a living, illegally or legally. The

network evolves into a social resource; this kind of social resource can be called as Interpal's racial capital.

After Violet's evil plot is exposed to Sam, the boss of GOTECH, which causes her demotion, Steve is confident of getting the vacancy of marketing manager but he then is informed that Sam is planning to hire another experienced one to be the manager. He feels disappointed with the ingratitude of the company to him and worries that he has no future in GOTECH. In order to have enough income to maintain his quality life and to take care of his sister Carrie and her son, the pak pai business he hesitates before now becomes his only way out: "In a word, the promising index of this company to me is negative. It treats me heartlessly; I treat it with no loyalty. Anyway, I won't work too hard in company henceforth, spending my effort to make money outside and caring nothing but my benefit." [Episode 9: Scene 9.13] This scene shows that the law-breaking event becomes Steve's "way out," in which the business using Interpal's racial capital can release his anxiety getting from GOTECH. The fictional narrative leading to the consequence of legal/illegal working ethic discourse seems to be involved in the process of racialization.

When Steve accomplishes his first deal, singing elatedly with Interpal, the undercover policewoman arrested them red-handed for violating the law. Caught by an Indian, Interpal feels stunned and ashamed:

Interpal: "Being caught by whoever is better than being arrested by my countryman. Indeed, lose my face!"

Indian policewoman: “Making money with illegal method hardly can save your face. There is some citizen who cannot bear your breaking the law and then report you!” [Episode 9: Scene 9.16]

This funny subplot reinforces a kind of struggle between the majority and the ethnic minority over normative rules. Through demonstrating a set of clear and dichotomized value—legality (public interest built on the rules of fair competition) vs. illegality (private interest produced by the reciprocal relations), this cultural signpost of illegal usage of racial capital points out that the life built by the same-race relations is not able to be separated from the local social structure; the life is still connected with some normative mechanisms such as legal system. More importantly, this cultural signpost points out that EMs cannot be saved by the compatriot identity in a conflict. Instead, the same-race interaction should take their social positions and values in a society into consideration. For example, the Indian policewoman thinks it is normal for Interpal to feel ashamed because he violates the law (impair the public interest) for his own interest. More critically, NGEW makes use of the wrong on the judicial aspect to produce certain rechargeable anxieties. Even though the Indian communities can produce an interdependent economic system and none of the characters in NGEW suffers loss because this system, it seems that in NGEW there is a problem accepting the interest guaranteed by Interpal’s racial capital. The laws appearing in NGEW do not forgive those who break the law; whoever makes a mistake only can accept the bad result, including this kind of intra-racial business. Thus, the tendency of releasing anxiety depends on the existing moral standard. The textual anxiety which has been configured out by the Indian policewoman who represents the law-and-order highlights a sort of racial equality in terms of the equal punishment. It is going to racialize the anxiety through which judicial punishment,

or warning can be perceived as the tool for recharging the anxiety for the racial others who once earn money illegally.

5. Displaying the contestation within intra-ethnic solidarity

Maybe some will deem that NGEW only will represent the Indian communities through one stereotype after another, but what is believed is that on the narrative dimension (Downing & Husband, 2005: 28), it is hard for the stereotype relying on certain signs with specific meanings to stand in and out static form. If we read the televisual text subtly, we can find that the construction of Indian communities in Hong Kong in NGEW is an inter-active, negotiating or even a contestable social class, and that it emphasizes the reciprocity and conflicts of these communities with a conscious effort.

Although failing to make money via pak pai, Steve still needs to conquer his anxiety about the faint future in GOTECH. Thus, Steve starts a juice shop business with Interpal (in Episode 10). To make it a business can earn him respect and money, but Ling has her doubt on it:

Steve: "I take care of the funding and Interpal is in charge of the management of the store. Anyway, I will still work for GOTECH."

Ling: "but if you don't work hard, you can't make a fortune."

Steve: "I don't need to work too hard, Interpal is the one keeping the store and replenish the stock. I have no responsibility. Anyway, I will keep working hard, my boss!"[Episode 10: Scene 10.6]

To Steve, Interpal is a good partner in the sense of being the free capital of starting a business: Interpal's Mango lassi becomes the feature drink mixed with the yogurt, which is directly imported from Indian, and the juicy mango, which they bought daily from the local fruit market. As what has been mentioned previously, they choose to set their juice shop in Shum Shui Po, the racially friendly community, where its Chinese communities are familiar with the racialized food or commodities and the South Asian communities can be the target customers Steve and Interpal hope to monopolize. Before going to GOTECH, Steve hands out the leaflets to the EMs in this neighborhood but accidentally meet the villain Indian, Raja.

Steve: "My friend, take a try. Our juice is the genuine Lassi from India"

Raja and his Indian fellow: "You sell Lassi?"

Steve: "Of course. You can chat with people in our store with the language you are familiar with and drink the tasty drink. Shooting two birds with one stone, right?"

Thus, the racial difference Interpal carries can be understood as Steve's interest, but when Raja finds that Interpal is employed by someone, he asks Interpal to work for him in the name of relative's care¹⁰⁴. When Interpal refuses to work under his wings for the harsh salary Raja offers (Raja only pays minimum wage of HKD\$28). Raja threatens him with this particular relative connection, saying, "If you don't agree, I will book the ticket to invite your mother here." After that, Interpal cannot help but agree (see *Figure 3.7*). From this example, the consanguinity added in NGEW shows that even the close relationship between relatives is not necessarily beneficial; instead, it may wrap certain percentage of exploitation in the name of kinship. As what Mathews (2013) points out, many local Indians in Chungking Mansion will provide illicit jobs to exploit those newcomers or illegal immigrants from India. But, this

controversial issue is added as the major part of this event that it drives the reloading of Steve's anxiety in his start-up business. In this cultural signpost of varying anxiety, NGEW then portrays racial difference, Interpal's intra-ethnic relation in particular, "in conflict" that Steve suffers, rather than "in interest" as Steve expected.



Figure 3.7 Interpal tries to reject Raja's harsh offer

NGEW racializes those worried sentiment that are seemingly irrelevant to the racial differences by setting the subplot, in which Interpal cannot manage the juice shop properly due to the threat from his cousin. Lacking the support from Interpal, the business gets slack and recharges Steve's anxiety about the possibility of failure. For instance, Steve works simultaneously at the juice shop and GOTECH. His everyday anxiety is shown on his tiring face and the dilemma of being stuck in the position of being an employer and an employee at the same time (seeing *Figure 3.8*). There are times when he says things on the wrong spot unconsciously. In GOTECH, he says, "Rob my fruit again! You damn da-gong-zai! You

intend to bust my store, don't you? I want to call the police!" and in juice shop he says "Continue working? You boss are bloodsucker! Even a nap is forbidden and we should work ourselves to the bones for you. You give me the bread and I give you my life, right?" Steve's anxiety is here indirectly relayed through the imagined benefit of having an Indian friend. Work anxiety is therefore never far from the various forms of anxiety provoked by racial difference. When Interpal tries many times for getting rid of the control of Raja, Raja will take his mother as his bargaining power. For example, when Raja knows that Steve traps him to fire Interpal, he immediately brings some elders (uncles and aunts) with traditional Indian attire to the juice shop to accuse him of not helping his kin and announces to boycott their store with his kinsmen. Although Interpal complains about Raja's exploitation, Raja still wins the elders' heart with the reason of "caring about the outsiders only" (see *Figure 3.9*). In the end, Interpal is taken away by Raja while being blamed by the elders. In order to recharge Steve's, as well as Interpal's anxieties, NGEW seems to turn the intra-racial relationship (emphasizing the moral submission to the elders¹⁰⁵) into an overbearing and oppressive cultural signpost. In this way, NGEW seems to proactively render the racial solidarity of Indian EM group a conflictive site. However, critically speaking, this narrative largely reproduces the isolation of EM group from within their closed and constrained network, and draws difficulty for the integration of interracial community life.



Figure 3.8 Steve's tired faces from both scenes of his day dreaming



Figure 3.9 Interpal apologies to Raja and the senior fellowmen

6. An ethnic figure of troublemaker

In the discussion among the cultural signposts representing interracial relation, the racial differences Interpal performs are mainly to transform the everyday anxieties into the imaginaries that reconstruct the racial otherness. Now, this section will be an overall review for Interpal, the comedic figure. In fact, the role of Interpal is actually defined as a specific type of comedic figure known as “chung-ming-bun-pak”(聰明笨伯) / troublemaker according to Wong:

I won't make QBoBo a man with achievement and sophistication. Even he needs to be sophisticated, I will still make him a chung-ming-bun-pak, who will always make trouble. This kind of characters is an important element to the form a comedy. Of course, he is a kindhearted but clumsy person caring his friends, which makes him popular to the audience. (Interview with Wong, February 11, 2015; translated by author)

Yet, the conceptual operation of the generic signs can be converted into a cultural signpost that will configure an ethnic troublemaker, which is a special comedic figuration of NGEW to display Interpal's otherness as a troublemaker. In other words, the troublemaker is always already a racialized troublemaker, because his troubles and trouble-making often hinges on his racial identity. In turn, this racialized troublemaker is funny, adding another layer of cultural signpost into his racial specificity. Interpal, as in QBoBo himself, plays well at this “advantage” of creating funny troubles via his racial otherness (e.g. of being part-time Indian and part-time Chinese).

In the last part of NGEW, the considerable weight of anxiety is laid because some characters invest huge expectation on the ongoing project whose significance arouses extreme anxious and nervous feelings. Because the ES invention carries the potential to reverse the adversity of a possible bankruptcy of GOTECH, which has five hundred employees, Alex as the director of this project feels extremely stressful and hardly can think of anything, except worrying if the project can be finished by the deadline or not. The bad temper of Alex distances himself from his subordinates and wife. While everything is against Alex, the three major characters get together drinking. Being drunk, Alex and Steve unwittingly show the attempt to sell unfinished ES invention. Interpal hopes Alex to get the reward of his hardworking, so he sells ES's USB stick to the black market for two million dollars privately in order to release their emotional burden (see *Figure 3.10*). This event is a typical plot with a troublemaker, as Wong has mentioned, for Interpal at this moment destroys the nearly completed project of Alex, pushing the story of NGEW to the climax before the ending. In other words, Interpal's good will does not produce any effect to release Alex's anxiety; instead, the unusual encounter Interpal brings in triggers anxiety throughout three recharging phases in this event.



Figure 3. 10 Interpal feels sad with Alex and Steve's struggle

In the first stage of recharging anxiety, Alex and Steve show their anxiety when knowing the fact that ES has been sold. They explain the seriousness of the situation to Interpal (see *figure 3.11*):



Figure 3. 11 Alex and Steve explain to Interpal in the fearful manners

Alex: “I just need to vent my emotions randomly. Saying some nonsense. Who knows you would take it seriously. It’s done. ES is the property of GOTECH. Selling it privately equals to stealing!”

Steve: “We are done. Now we will be put into prison! My inmates.”

Interpal: “Hey, is ES your invention? You have the absolute right to decide where it goes, right?”

Alex: “Damn it. It is your partial understanding. Only the lyricists have the complete copyright of one’s creation. All our inventions belong to GOTECH. We have nothing, my boss!”[Episode 19: scene 19.13]

From this example, it is obvious that Interpal lacks the common sense regarding the copyright issue, because he has never been given a chance to work in a big cooperation.

In the second stage, the three get to a sauna club, finding the buyer of ES, a gangster head named Keung, who is unwilling to give them the chance to redeem ES. Therefore, the three disguise themselves as massage girls to serve Keung who closes his eyes waiting. While Alex and Steve get the USB stick, Keung sees through their trick because he touches the furry legs of Interpal (see *Figure 3.12*). Caught on the spot, the three worry more about the difficulty of getting ES back and their safety. In the third stage, when clarifying that the one sold to Keung is an unfinished experiment and being willing to redeem it at the doubled price, Alex decides to mortgage his house secretly because he knows that Ling as an honest person who will definitely report what she discovers to GOTECH accordingly. However, when seeing the distress and praying gesture of Interpal who waits Alex outside the mortgage company, Ling forces Interpal to confess by using the reference of his religion: “ Still tell a tall tale? I saw you praying. If you lie in your throat, you will not get the blessing from your God!” (see *Figure 3.13*). Stuck in the dilemma between his loyalty for religion and that for his friends, Interpal’s anxiety which has been released for the seeable solution is suddenly recharged. Although they can get ES back, Ling’s threat will put them in another crisis¹⁰⁶.



Figure 3.12 Interpal's hairy leg is touched by Keung



Figure 3.13 Ling finds Interpal praying outside the mortgage company

According to these incidents and anxieties Interpal as a troublemaker refers to both his ethnic difference and his stupidity. Thus, it is not the case which Wong simply put as a racially irrelevant thinking. When talking about Interpal, Wong says, “Even if Interpal is not an Indian by nationality. Being a Chinese or people with other nationalities will still make it work. The setting of chung-ming-bun-pak is purely for the purpose of comedian effect.” In fact, Wong’s insistence in casting Interpal as the figure chung-ming-bun-pak/ troublemaker is highly racialized, since it is the ethnic existence and practice built on Interpal’s EM background that racially differentiates this role from other Chinese roles, but this thought seems to be more of an undercurrent.

Moreover, the ethnic elements Interpal carries cause visible impact on the plotline. These elements are not necessarily negative or troublesome in NGEW; they were natural or positive once in the previous plotline. For instance, Interpal can still make money with the commonsense of commercial world, he is proud of the hairy body that renders him the quality of “Spartan masculine”¹⁰⁷, and his Sikhism of being honest is highly appreciated when he as a private driver who wants to save his boss from being cheated. However, we can see that the action or interaction Interpal has had with other characters is depicted as the trouble sourcing to lead the unexpected crisis along with the process of recharging anxiety. The ethnic elements, like Interpal’s lack of common sense, racial body and religious identity, embody Interpal’s action that should be critically understood as a source for emotional action in Pribum’s notion of affective narrativity, which “permits the emphasis on process rather than outcome, on effects instead of events”(25). Here, Interpal’s ethnic elements register with a crisis sense that shapes his interaction with other.

Moreover, to the troubles Interpal makes is largely from the outside, like multiethnic workplace, Indian community, ethnic capital and so on. More firmly, the emotional action of Interpal correlates with the troubles and processes to otherizing the ethnic figure itself. The othering “effect” of recharging anxiety turns Wong’s “unintended” configuration of this chung-ming-bun-pak/ troublemaker into a particular cultural signpost—an *ethnic figure of troublemaker*—in which racial differences tend to be performed to produce the favorable but disruptive emotional encounters to the majority under the comedic mask¹⁰⁸. Therefore, representing Interpal’s racial difference generates the social imaginary of racial otherness where the racially different people can encounter in daily life is presented disruptively, performed abnormally, feeling uncomfortably to the story plot ruled by his Chinese leading character, and somehow challenges the norm the world.

What’s more, though QBoBo is the third leading character compared to Louis Yuen (as Steve) and Ruco Chan (as Alex), the ethnic troublemaker QBoBo has been casted in “a soften stereotyping of EMs as continuing the objects of laughter” (Erni and Leung, 2014). However, he becomes the “serious” subject in NGEW to rarely convert others’ everyday affects, like hope, stress, worry and anxiety. Significantly, this figuration of the racial other in turn affect all of the parts of NGEW when most forms of anxieties have been racialized by its various interruptions, either in the shape of help or troubles, and been circulated among three protagonists, Interpal, Steve and Alex. Instead of the foci on portraying racial stereotype, the ethnic figure of this troublemaker does lead the interracial dynamics and shape the cultural understanding of racial otherness NGEW displays.

Conclusion: the sweetened troubles and the sugarcoated other

The myth of racial harmony in Hong Kong stems from the peaceful appearance of the social order by playing down racial conflicts and problems. As Lo (2008) has pinpointed about the ideology of a pseudo-racial harmony:

Keeping a safe distance or making the other “out of sight” while being very wary of their proximate existence seems to be the defense mechanism of local Chinese to guard against any over-proximity to the mysterious desire of the other. In a place where over-crowding can be easily exacerbate racial antagonism, perhaps pretending not to see the existence of ethnic others may create a more peaceful public sphere. (60)

By avoiding the distancing that Lo talks about, NGEW creates a highly affective figure to embody what this TV series intends to present, that is, the varied patterns of anxieties of da-gong-zai. As an ethnic troublemaker, Interpal serves to animate generic signs operated as cultural signposts for the inescapable and “visible” racial encounters in which the programme struggles to redefine the social imaginary of the racial other. NGEW works to reassert the everyday anxieties, with the awareness that the unprivileged condition and troubles related to da-gong-zai as filtered through racial difference, turning the latter into something unavoidable within interracial dynamics in everyday life of this city.

What's more, according to Wong, the ethnic-related components used to build this comedy to some extent are to serve the purpose of “a soft sell” for the social harmony between Chinese and ethnic minorities:

When doing research, I do take RTHK's documentaries as my reference but RTHK's style is a direct and "hard sell" of facts to audience. What I want is to use the comedy to do the "soft sell," because every episode is to bring the audience an impression, an acknowledgement ... or a broadcasting medium. I do not intend to put the feather in my own cap. All I want to do is just dig out the good faces of EM. When the audience see the representation and come to realize that the representation is an actual fact, they will change their attitude and offer more tolerance and understanding. (Interview with Wong, February 11, 2015; translated by author)

When presenting Interpal as a man with troubles is the main strategy to make the racial otherness apparent, what NGEW's "softened" treatment means is still centering at the uncovering of racially unprivileged situations of South Asians EMs. In order to dig out EMs' "positive images," NGEW displays it in a humorous and harmless way, including their diligence and harmless existence. Therefore, in this sense, while NGEW describes cultural circumstances through the lens of affective narrativity of anxiety, the structure of feeling it evokes is therefore a kind of *sweetened troubles*. With the racial difference he possesses, this ethnic troublemaker is the conductor of anxiety in the structure of feeling, controlling anxieties, or more precisely, the direction of the flow of anxiety. The conducting ability of Interpal performs is not only for recharging the anxiety, but also for invalidating, or "disabling", the release of anxiety among other characters. That is to say, Interpal is the recharger of anxiety, as well as the inventor of troubles, by his ethnicity. However, when NGEW re-defines Hong Kong society's imagination in respect of racial relations, which still leans on racial differences, its sweetened troublemaker echoes a reminder of Pribram: this particular structure of feeling is a means by which "power circulates, establishing and

reestablishing its discrepancies” (41). The sweetened troubles, combined with the racialized anxieties, are the dominant structure of feeling represented in NGEW. The racial differences Interpal has performed have been examined and conditioned by the daily scenarios, ranking from exceptional sexualities, localness, religious practices, goods with ethnic meanings, EM’s occupations, illegal business, Hong Kong Indian communities and the “multiethnic” communities, to general racisms (institutional racism and discriminative terms). These conditioned differences as otherness have sometimes appeared as promising solutions or hope to release anxieties, but ultimately they are troublesome encounters recharging anxieties. It may be true that it is easier for the Chinese audience to accept an appealing troublemaker who can turn racial differences to sweetened troublesomeness. Here, the troublesomeness of this racial other does not simply cause anxiety to the audience; rather, it makes audience respect the hardship for EMs to settle in Hong Kong, through acknowledging Interpal’s struggling life and anxiety-filled urban experience for surviving because of his ethnicity.

The imagination of the sweetened troubles in NGEW turns racial antagonism into a manageable encounter. According to the problems of the cultural signposts which have been configured, the figuration of the ethnic troublemaker involves a quantity of racial othering that should be criticized. Through operating the sweetened troubles as a racialized structure of feeling, NGEW presents a softened racism. The various forms of representing the sweetened troublemaker, nonetheless, cannot fully conceal the underlying racialization at play. Let us review how this is so through the specific textual events I have discussed before:

- a. The otherness of racial difference can be expressed by Interpal’s homosexual pretense, like being close with Steve. In this case, the homosexual signs which aroused

uncomfortable feelings serve a different function. The bumpy job-seeking path, including the experience of failing in a job interview and that of being an Indian driver who articulates with his incomplete local identity, tries to naturalize that the disadvantage of EM dai-gong-zai due to their own poor access of Chinese language and religious practice. In doing so, it diffuses the possible racial exclusion EMs may face in the Chinese-dominant workplace.

- b. In the configuration of the “racially easy space,” presenting Shum Shui Po as a place of daily interracial encounters with less anxiety and more amiability to Interpal and South Asian employees informs the social imaginary of EM’s urban survival, may end up building on the lower ranked occupational sphere where their faint hope for integration may take shape.
- c. When Interpal finds his intra-racial network as a profitable business, NGEW portrays it as a kind of troublesome effect of racial difference, for the intra-racial business will threaten the public interest and order once it can only operate in an illegal way. The intra-racial zone may provide refuge on the surface, but it is also a site for disciplining the racial other.
- d. At the same time, another significant troublesome quality of racial difference is that the local Indian community Interpal belongs to has been portrayed as despotic and overbearing, which makes intra-racial solidarity weak, even potentially suppressive and exploitative to other junior members in the name of caring.
- e. Finally, the central ethnic figure as a funny troublemaker is rendered again and again as the site where anxiety is provoked and recharged.

These problems of othering are apparently different from and contest against each other, yet it is quite consistent that racial difference has been problematized by NGEW, reestablishing otherness.

Back to the problem of race representation in Hong Kong media, Erni and Leung (2014) figure out a pattern to depict South Asian: negative stereotypes have long determined the cultural image of EMs, where “the commercial logic of media production justifies the ritualistic negative and comical portrayal of South Asians as voyeuristic gaze of the majority,” from the figure of funny maid of *I am Maria* in 1988 to the recent rise of QBoBo (63). However, the finding of my analysis on the significant character QBoBo plays and the comedy NGEW is not too far away, but indeed with an important difference. What the relaxed troubles evoke is a form of racism that can be called “sugarcoated racism:” the effect of racial othering operates through presenting Interpal as an amicable ethnic troublemaker. The form of racial othering is not taken in the reproduction of stereotypes, but in the positioning of the racial other as a clumsy fool capable of springing light troubles. This is a powerful racial framing, like the figuration of the ethnic troublemaker, racial difference is preformed to produce the favorable but disruptive emotional encounters to the majority under the comedic mask.

For the audience's self-reflection, such racial framing can help us to rethink how audience experience the emotional meaning of anxiety offered by NGEW. It is not doubt that it portrayed da-gong-zai's hardship and anxiety of living in Hong Kong, but the kind of factors that can cause these crises and its related anxieties are the sugarcoated troublemaking of Interpal due to his racial difference, when Steve and Alex seemingly work hard for their

career and living that the capitalist value they carried and have seldom been judged in the story. More questionably, how to soften or to release the racial charged anxieties for the audience also needs Interpal's humorous performance that have made fun with his racial difference. Thus, as an audience, the way I feel good or I am being sympathetic with the process charging and discharging anxiety is crucial for our reflection on such sugarcoated racism.

Chapter Four

The Neighboring Racial Other and the Production of Shame

Introducing Singh Sim Sim

*Singh Sim Sim*¹⁰⁹(星閃閃) (hereafter shortened to SSS), written by Chan Chi-wa and directed by Mak Chi-hang, is the third episode of a TV series, *Rooms to Let*¹¹⁰ (2009) (Chinese name: 《有房出租》, hereafter referred to as RTL). This popular TV series consists of thirteen episodes produced by Cheung Sui-hing and Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), from 2009 to 2010 aired on the free channel *Jade* of Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB). RTL is made up of a set of comedic sequential story in which a communal life of eight housemates who come from different backgrounds is portrayed. From the character overview (see *Table 4.1*), it can be known that the character, Singh, is a Hong Kong-Indian who also comes with working class background, while all his housemates are Hong Kong ethnic Chinese¹¹¹. The reason to choose this episode as the study object is that this interracial casting framed by a close neighborhood space, which is a premier theme in Hong Kong TV culture. Nonetheless, unlike the commercial sitcom NGEW which was analyzed in the previous Chapter, RTL's particular racial framing given by RTHK rarely tries to stir up a debate on problematizing "local identity" by way of an ethnic dimension. Also, it is considered a rare story since it challenges comfortable view of racial relations, since the characters in the series were challenged on their racial view.

Table 4.1 The character list of *Rooms To Let*

| Characters in <i>Rooms To Let</i> | Actor or actress | Character name |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Singh / Mohindepaul / Lau Ching-wan (劉清雲): An Indian man, who can speak fluent Cantonese, works as a construction worker. | Singh Bitto | Singh |
| Lee Lam-lam (李林林) / Sir Lee: Lee, who is an English gentleman-like person, takes over this old flat as its half owner after his return from UK. | Dai-wai Keung 姜大衛 | Lee |
| Kai-si (奚士) / Taoist: This wise elderly is Lee's cousin and is the other owner of the house, and he is a Taoist. | Gordon Liu 劉家輝 | Taoist |
| Doris (多多): Lee's daughter, a young woman returning from UK | Leila Tong 唐寧 | Doris |
| Bee: A young woman who longs to be an artist but turns out to be the sale of beers in a bar | Ella Koon 官恩娜 | Bee |
| Ching-long (程朗) / Long: A young man just graduated with an associate-degree; he is also a street activist, | Pak-ho Chau 周柏豪 | Long |
| Sze Yi-ho (施義豪) / CEO: A middle-aged man who went bankrupt due to the financial crisis in 2008. He is jobless and acts greedily. | Gabriel Harrsion 海俊傑 | CEO |
| Boss Yuen (袁總): A middle-aged man who returns to HK and works as a security guard after his business failure in the Mainland. | Kar-hung Wi 韋家雄 | Yuen |

RTHK's racial pedagogy

SSS is an extraordinary case to study because it offers a racial imagination that renders the racial other, Singh, a highly visible and sensitive presence among a Chinese majority cast. Apart from uncovering racial discrimination and stereotypes, this fictional story reserves a more interracial dynamic that narrates the interpersonal neighborhood into a specific form of racial harmony, through the operation and management of the textual significance of shame. Here, I would like to elaborate more on some of its textual specificities that are the anchoring points of this textual and theoretical exploration on affect, race and TV drama.

The appealing interracial casting of RTL is influenced by the change of RTHK's programming setting and pedagogic intention. Unlike the commercial television TVB that produced QBoBo's comedic figure which assists in either a softened version of stereotyping South Asians, as Erni and Leung argued, or in a preferable brown face which is discussed in Chapter Two, RTHK as the single public broadcaster in Hong Kong¹¹² plays another significant role in supplying cultural representation of EM figures, through programing EM issues, in order to fulfill its media missions since 2007. Yet, it may be questioned that the introduction of EM's theme can only be traced back to 2007, while RTHK was developed in 1920s. The first RTHK's program about EMs was a docudrama called *A Mission for Equal Opportunities* that was funded by and coordinated with the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), which promotes racial equality, through classifying what is racial discrimination in daily scenarios. Consequently, RTHK acknowledges non-Chinese ethnic groups as minorities, which are as inferior as other minorities in Hong Kong in terms of class, gender, sexuality, and age. RTHK has long served to speak for these minorities, in the name of promoting

“cultural diversity” and serving “the needs of minority interest groups”¹¹³ (*Charter of Radio Television Hong Kong*: 3). Therefore, the topic of EM gradually becomes resourceful to RTHK’s programming agenda as it has frequently been addressed by its annual public consultation from 2011 to 2013¹¹⁴. Here, according to the programme list from Table 1.1 from Chapter One, my review shows that RTHK’s pedagogical approach exhibits EMs figures in two programming forms: the commentary and documentary form with “serious” tone in order to raise the public’s concern about EM’s unprivileged social position in the legislative and policy level¹¹⁵, while a dramaturgical form with a “light” tone creating the social imagination on racial equality, in working place and domestic place, through dramatizing daily scenarios¹¹⁶. Although the former is worth studying, this research mainly focuses on the latter, because the complex interpersonal dynamics works more beneficially to configure the cultural discourse centering on the governmental version of racial equality.

When Franklin Wong¹¹⁷ led and intervened RTHK’s programming since the year of 2008, the format of sitcom was initiated and RTL became the first RTHK’s program in this format¹¹⁸. From RTL’s approach on current issues, Wong’s emotion-oriented storytelling¹¹⁹ significantly intervenes into the drama programming of RTL, in which the form of drama narrative has been taken as a powerful means to motivate audience by converting the “serious” topics of social and political issues into an emotive discourse that the textual meaning so as to effectively resonate with audience’s everyday experience¹²⁰. Therefore, to narrate the negotiation of racial relationship in the episodic story of SSS, we should turn to take an account of the meaning from its particular emotive configuration, rather than to discern the ideologically propagandistic function.

Therefore, the central theme of programming RTL—“talking about social harmony it starts from this house,” (和諧社會 由呢間屋開始) (see *Figure 4.1*)—is to refine or construct a proactive version of social harmony; its episodic themes discuss over current issues, such as, patriotism, urban redevelopment, aging population, cross boundary marriage, “a city of protest,” loan and urban living pressure and racial discrimination. While most issues aim at the governmental failure¹²¹, filming ethnic issues is much less controversial and sensitive on criticizing the racial discrimination enacted by the mainstream; SSS’s main theme—“this incident [Singh’s absence] which has broken the myth of Hong Kong people that they respect multicultural society”¹²²—lies at the exploration of Chinese neighbors’ reflection on racial issues and how they can neighbor South Asians as well.



Figure 4.1 The front page of the official website of *Rooms to Let*

In the 30-minute episode, SSS follows the sitcom narrative structure of “order-disorder-order restored” (Creeber, 2006). The ordinary neighborly life shared by these

characters is suddenly disrupted by Singh's disappearance, it then results in the disorder that affects everyone in the house. Its order is later restored after the Chinese characters undergo their self-reflection at the night on their relationship with this racial other. Here, the key point this narrating structure indicates is that a social relation among housemates may be racially ordered, since the disorder unveils the vulnerability of their interpersonal relationship with Singh. The interrupted social order, which reveals the Chinese members' discomfort, works discursively in navigating these interracial members' mindsets and bodies through disrupting the assumed "racial harmony" in the flat. This narrative characteristic on restoring the order, or harmony-oriented end is the first textual specificity of SSS that may affect the configuration of social imaginary of interracial neighborly relationship.

To detect race thinking and any kind of racism that may underline this pedagogic program, it firstly is noted that the way to reduplicating Singh's ethnic identity with racial markers undergoes a particular racial framing, or racialization, either positively or negatively. Here, racialization is understood as a process of connoting racial markers that the narrative or subplot in that SSS tends to put racial meanings onto the non-race-based event and situation, or to put fixed racial meanings to specific race. Thus, the "splitting figuration" I will formulate in the following textual analysis will show that the racial marker may overwhelm to signify Singh's identity as a racial other. It may happen through which the Chinese housemates extracts unfavorable meanings from the ensemble of the generic signs in terms of language, event, policy, figure, and the stereotype of South Asians, such as a news of "A Nepalese Man Shot Dead by Police" in 2009, and the discriminative terms of "migrant-worker-nation" and "Ar-cha." Its result is not only to classify Singh as a stranger, threatening other members in Hong Kong society, but also to render his housemates the

“ethnic majority” that has long been inconspicuous. For that reason, racialization is the second textual specificity of SSS I anchor to study how the text racialize and operate things in a subtle and daily form of racism through the interpersonal dynamic in neighborhood life.

The feelings of the Chinese housemate are depicted at the junction of two forms: one is bodily withdrawal which interrupts one’s habit and the other is the debased feelings, which are intense or light, like disappointment, guilt, shame, self-pity and so on. Even, in search of the way out of dealing with the racial indifference, the producer use the likely nostalgic narrative on “passersby” as a felt-easy conclusion in SSS’s final scene to soften the former hard feelings. Thus, we should not ignore that the emotive discourse of SSS that utilizes dramatic elements of emotion, feeling and mood to make the drama a crucial counterpart to form the social imaginary on thinking interracial relations. As a result, the third textual specificity anchors is SSS’s shaming strategy. It may trickily produce the joyful meanings, when it works to channel the Chinese housemates’ evaluation on Singh, and to create the joyful notion of racial harmony, in order to approach the harmonic ending. To sketch the textual meaning in the entanglement of shaming narrative and joyful consequence, I would like to borrow Elspeth Probyn’s (2005) theory of the polarity of shame and interest as a theoretical tool to investigate the operation of shame and its affective effect to the emotional meaning in the text, because, for Probyn, shame is self-evaluative in transforming social relation since it can catch the undercurrent interest for individuals to link them to the everyday dependence on the proximities of the other.

Animated shame: The affective signification of repairing shame and interest

In general, shame has long been understood as a painful feeling wallowing in self-pity or resentment that accompanies guilt. Rather than erasing shame at any cost, and regarding it as a negative emotion¹²³, the affective turn¹²⁴ Probyn made in her book—*Blush: faces of shame*—turns to reevaluate shame in terms of its transformative and self-evaluative force. Even though there are some scholars who have had some written works about the feeling of shame, Probyn develops her understanding on shame in a book-length study. In order to develop a new cultural shaming theory, Probyn attends on a counterintuitive view from Silvan Tomkins's¹²⁵ physiological understanding on the relational affectation of shame, in which the polarity of shame-interest has taken as her theoretical basis to exhibit the affective capacity of shame by gripping the deeply corporeal work of our body. Probyn (2005) elaborates in this way:

Shame “only operates after interest and enjoyment have been activated, and inhabits one or the other or both. The innate activator of shame is the incomplete reduction of interest or joy.”[Tomkins,1995:134] This frames shame in a different light. The pairing of shame with interest or, even more extraordinary, with joy prompts all sorts of questions. Shame illuminates our intense attachment to the world, our desire to be connected with others, and the knowledge that, as merely human, we will sometimes fail in our attempts to maintain those connections. (14)

It is clearly shown that in the affective relationship shame can only be triggered by the incomplete reduction of interest. Considering shame as the “innate torment,” the embodied reminder physiologically and psychologically, indicates the promised, mostly unaware connection to someone or something is interrupted. Indeed, when our interest invested to

others is interrupted and when the care as well as the connection is not reciprocated, the disappointment we feel can be amplified into shame. In other words, interest constitutes lines of connection between people and ideas, and “shame marks the break in connection” (13). More importantly, Probyn underscores that shame promises the return of interest and joy. In this sense, undergoing the interruptive experience of being shameful, our body is affected and the shame-activated body can either move forward into more interest or fall back into humiliation.

What’s more, with the different pictures of embodiment and of sociality in the epistemological notion of “affective habitus,”¹²⁶ which is theorized by Probyn as an understanding of everyday interaction, for the body perceiving feelings can “animates the social,” instead of reproducing the social. In the light of Probyn’s theory, the animatedness of shame taken here is the disruption of one’s habitus that perhaps reveals what one has taken for granted to engage in for pure joy, not for certain significance. Probyn elaborates the notion with the example of “White shame,”¹²⁷ while this study will appropriate this racial shame to understand the shaming narrative and Chinese’s shame in SSS. Therefore, I would like to conceptualize shame’s affective significance which lies in the register of interest and to use the analytical tool called “animated-shame” to understand the display of Chinese character’s shame and its affective and bodily neighboring with Singh.

The application of Probyn’s shaming theory in this research will help to construct the understanding of how shame with its particular signification “animates” the characters and inhabits them with the affective meaning¹²⁸. Apart from Probyn’s theoretical framework, Sianne Ngai’s method for studying the suspended feelings and its particular racialized

characteristics also assists to develop the idea of animation or animatedness of the feeling body further. In SSS, the animated Chinese characters coincide with what Ngai calls a depth-model account of racialized subjectivity—“a disturbing notion of the self as a receptacle or container not only for the emotions that ‘fill’ it, but for an extra unidentified ‘something’ as well” (194).

Yet, “race” as a troubling term may inevitably cause essentialized connotation to a subject with any racial assumption, when I investigate the interracial relation in a TV text with the heavy interpretation on its signs and significations. Therefore, the likely essentialized terms of racial shame or racial feeling (a certain ethnic group has been fixed in certain feeling) will not be used. As my stand, the process of registering emotional attachments to certain ethnic character can be racialized, but not essentialized and it arouses the attempt to conceptualize the operation of shame with racial meanings as a process of racialization. In this sense, an analytical term of “animated shame,” generating a racialized effect in shaping the interpersonal relations between Singh and Chinese housemates, during the moment of reproaching the particular interest, can offer a new understanding on the emerging discourse of racial relation SSS evokes.

Nonetheless, this chapter is not about the search for the momentary rendering of shame in SSS in the form of the highly obvious and visible symbols, such as blushing or hands covering face. Rather, understanding shame as an affect, not an emotion, is the purpose. Probyn insists on the polarity of shame-interest which centers on one’s feeling of shame or one’s status of feeling ashamed and use it to formulate a narrative “relational” form. On the one hand, it is noticeable that shame situates itself in the scenarios and requires bodies to

further react to its uncomfortable effects. On the other, shame can animate someone to estimate their interest in relations with others. With this basic theoretical, the following parts will analyze how the shaming narrative animates the Chinese characters as a “shamed subject,” and how the effect of defamiliarization and reidentification can be driven by the shame. And the related discussion in terms of racial other, racial relation, reflection on racism, favorable habitus, bodily disposition and so on will be carried out.

The affective habitus in SSS

Before going into a detailed textual analysis, the polysemic title *Singh Sim Sim* should be paraphrased first, for the title configures a paradoxical shift to open up a cultural emotion study on shame. With this reason, intertextual interpretation acted on this title is not only to mark the consistence of the whole narrative of SSS from the beginning to the end (Fiske, 2011:116), but also to uncover a suspenseful situation for inhibiting all characters into the affective habitus in the house. The literal meanings of “Sim,” in Chinese, may contradictorily vibrate between “shining” and “hiding,” which unfolds the identification movement on the missing subject Singh and the differentiation of his multiple images. If we first refer the meaning of “Sim” to “hidden” or “disappearing,” Singh’s mystic absence will be the direct reference. It offers a proactive subject position to the Chinese housemates while placing Singh in the position of an object, in which his image can only be narrated and formed by their further perceptual and bodily portrayals. The process reidentifies Singh, and it expressively relies on the relation of their habitus and self-interest. In Probyn’s words, their biology and biography are fairly important for possibilities of evaluating one’s self, which is understood as relational. Besides, one’s shame sensed in SSS is predicted based on one’s interest; for

example, the housemates' interest may lie in preserving such friendship with Singh, as Probyn says, "this type of interest that's hard to come by unless it's deep within your habitus" (2004a: 244). Thus, one's habitus located in the structured social order in that house may be challenged, or transformed as his or her interest is interrupted, it can be tracked though the agent's affective change of feeling ashamed.

However, if "Sim" is read as "shining brightly," Singh becomes the subject whose image is positioned under the spotlight of the house, and generates further conversation as well as bodily change (always un-pleasant) among their differences and similarities to draw cognitive attention and affective awareness. Here, I focus on the codified figuration of shame rather than that of fear, anger, worry Singh also causes. It set off Singh's characterization that may relate to the ethnic figures of Q Bobo and Sean Lau in the Hong Kong popular art. Thus, rendering Singh a subject position can simultaneously provide another sense of interpretation where the assemblage of Singh's images governs Chinese housemates.

All in all, the former sense of interpretation parallels with the later one. The entanglement does grant us an analytical perspective to understand the identity formation through the interdependence of Singh and his Chinese housemates by the interplaying positions between the passive and the active, as well as the objective and the subjective. Therefore, this interplaying relation between the subject positions of Singh and his housemates largely resonates with affect's relationality in which one can affect and be affected by others (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010; Probyn, 2005; Pruchnic, 2008), when they are framed by this interplaying format.

Splitting figuration of Singh as the racial other

Before going to capture feeling of shame from Chinese housemates' bodies, it is necessary to map out a preface of certain habitus sharing in the house where a given and embodied "racial relation" shows a connection between a South Asian and his Chinese neighbors. Thus, it avails to unfold what sorts of interests Singh's neighbor have long enjoyed but are not aware of. Moreover, this way to unfolding also tends to uncover a splitting configuration of Singh's identity into three dimensions (namely the neighborly, the racial and the cultural one) by problematizing the ever-encompassed notion of the racial other. With the theoretical shift on studying shame Probyn lays on affective habitus that the body animate the social, I can question how the portrayal of bodies carries and animate the racial relation. The defamiliarization can be found from the Chinese housemates and push them to re-identify their friend Singh's identity, which is no longer a private event within this house, but link the bodies to public issues on encountering with the racial other.

To most Chinese in the house, Singh appeared with a different racial outlook, namely a South Asian portrayal, and interacted with them peacefully in a way that his ethnic differences do not cause any ethnic conflict or tension while his ethnic differences seem to be silently accepted or, conversely, slighted. This ignorance echoes with the previously mentioned criticism of Lo on the fact that Hong Kong society has long used the "pseudo-racial harmony" to cover the cultural indifference and racist treatment (Chan, Ku & Sandhu; 2008). Nevertheless, this uncomfortable situation will be challenged once the text works to defamiliarize Singh's identity from his mystical disappearance in SSS, so Singh's identity became fragmented and contestable, but sensible.

Singh's Neighborly Image: A helpful neighbor

In the opening shots of SSS, all housemates come onto the screen one by one with a single long shot, and all of them are looking for Singh's help with discomposured manner. Moreover, their discomposure directly indicates the habitus of this house on which they have long had the privilege. It directly points out the uneven neighbor relation from the Chinese housemates' calls with blame, regardless whether Singh has a say or not:



Figure 4.2 Taoist tells them that the bad luck comes soon

CEO shouts, "Singh, the toilet paper has been used up!"

Long cries, "Help! Singh, my computer is not working."

Doris screams, "Singh, where is my breakfast? You promised me buying M's for me!"

Yuen yells, "Singh, do you see my quotation form?"

Lee blames them for making the hubbub of the house at the early morning, but after Lee finds his lucky golden fish dead, he also clamors, "Singh, have you changed the water for me?"

Looking at the dead golden fish, Taoist divines that the bad luck will come soon with a short tremble. (See *Figure 4.2*)

Then, the Detective Cheung rings the doorbell. Yuen opens the door but rejects his visit when Detective asks to search for someone called “Mohindepaul”.

The title of the episode “Singh Sim Sim” fades in.

This bantering scene highlights that all housemates are seeking the negligible help from Singh. Without Singh’s presence, Singh is allotted to a neighborly image that is a helpful and good housemate who is afraid of trouble and bearing a loss. The scene also aims at meekly criticizing the Chinese housemates’ unfair treatment to Singh and their unconcern for Singh, who has been absent for two days. Moreover, it shows that they have no idea about Singh’s ethnic identity in which they totally cannot acknowledge what ethnicity Singh can be classified with. This scene does help me to figure out that in SSS, there is an ever-challengeable past in this house where Singh has played the role of a domestic helper on a daily basis. Yet, if we understand this relationship with the existing racial order, this ordinarily constituted past can be translated into Bourdieusian notion of habitus that “ensures the active presence of the past experience” (Bourdieu, 1990: 54; quoted by Probyn, 2004a: 229). The uneven order with which they exploit Singh’s free labor has long been covered up by the nostalgic neighborhood discourse of “Neighborly Watch” whose major theme is that in a friendly community people should look after each other. Without Singh’s presence, their daily life cannot go smoothly and the interruption unfolds a racial order where Chinese housemates have long inhabited in a privileged ordinariness. Therefore, their habitus, which namely includes the smoothness of their life in the neighborhood, has been already disruptive

and chaotic. Yet, the following plotline will introduce the split of Singh's identity under interrogating his mystical disappearance especially when the detective suddenly comes to this house and searches for Singh's real identity. It also sets off a project of uncovering Singh's unknown identity where how Singh can be identical to his Chinese housemates as a South Asian neighbor.

Splitting figuration

It should be noted that the identity of Singh should not be considered as an image only; it is in fact split into three intertwining images which are further waiting for its multiple configurations by the Chinese housemates to undergo de-familiarization and re-identification. Thus, little attention is paid for the character setting of Singh in this section. Singh's Indian name—Mohindepaul Singh—and Chinese name—Lau-ching-wan—both are set to copy with two figures related to South Asians in Hong Kong media industry. The former is the Indian artist QBoBo's original name Gill Mohindepaul Singh whose popular "brown face" has been introduced in Chapter Two. Its textual function can signify Singh a racial marker¹²⁹ with his facial significance. Singh's Indian nationality or origin comes into the light later; even his housemates showed interest to his Indian name in the end of SSS. The later refers to the famous Chinese film actor Lau Ching-wang, or, known as Sean Lau, who has long acted South Asian characters, such as Vietnamese, Filipino and Indian, and is also mentioned in Chapter Two. It is a crucial element that Singh's Chinese name comes from his appreciation of Sean Lau. "Lau-ching-wan" as a name can render Singh a cultural marker with the popular culture of his local life. In that sense, drawing a deduction of Singh's splitting identities from the title of "Singh Sim Sim" is extremely beneficial to unfold Singh's ambiguous identity

when Singh as a familiar neighbor is no longer enough for the Chinese housemates to encounter his multiple otherness that has seldom been thought and felt.¹³⁰

More significantly, by theorizing the split of Singh's identity, I argue that the seemingly encompassed term "ethnic identity" cannot allow us to understand the discursive struggling among Singh's neighborly marker (namely, Singh that they used to call), racial marker (namely, Mohindepaul that is totally strange to the housemate as well as general audience) and cultural marker (namely, Lau-ching-wan that can be understood as a familiar cultural reference), which SSS has demonstrated. Thus, it is crucial to produce a multi-discursive and productive reading of SSS, since the appearance (or occurrence) of these three markers are extremely ambiguous that often contest with, or even emerge with one another in constancy.

The Racial Image: the "unfavorable other"

In SSS, after the Chinese housemates realize how little they know about Singh, they undergo a process of de-familiarizing Singh's identity by highlighting the image of his otherness and his racial markers. Singh's racial image as a part of the ethnic minority is realized by means of re-articulating racially discriminative and stereotyping signs from Hong Kong society. Most significantly, it reveals a special form of racial order in Hong Kong society through re-recognizing Singh's racial identity. Following that, people in the house begin to discuss Singh's disappearance on which most of them throw out their opinions. The first one is a debate scene among CEO, Yuen and Long who share the same room with Singh. CEO suspects that Singh might be a thief, who probably steals their belongings and then disappears: "The first moment I saw him I knew that Singh is not a good person. Those "Ar-cha" (阿差) are unreliable and crafty. You should check your

belongings quickly.” After checking, CEO looks relieved after finding his expensive watch, and Yuen felt lucky after finding the jade given by his mother. Looking these their behavior in the eye, Long blames CEO and defend Singh by saying “It is totally unreasonable! Nowadays, calling people “Ar-cha” can be charged. You are over. Singh always treats us very well. He sometimes helps us to clean the toilet and to buy breakfast for us.” In order to defend themselves, Yuen shares his own experience in the mainland and points out the language barrier (Chinese can be understood but they cannot understand the languages employed by South Asians) as the reason why the factory in mainland does not hire people from India and Pakistan. CEO also adds his opinion on this “other,” by saying “Singh is a wolf in a sheep’s disguise; you will be hurt without notice. Don’t be foolish. Caution is necessary in protecting us from others’ possible attack.” Long is confuted, only being able to point out that Singh does not have his personal belongings with him.

To re-identify Singh’s racial image, Singh’s ethnic identity shifts from a desirable neighbor to the suspected and even greedy subject. During the fearful process of de-familiarization of the neighbor they have known, they adapt the threatening label from the stereotyped representation “Ar-cha” and one’s bad personal experience. Singh’s racial image has once been constructed that is no longer unknown with the uncertain craftiness imposed by CEO, who feel anxious and worried about his own belongings. Thus, the racial order has been changed by the stigmatization of Singh’s racial image once, from a sense of good neighboring to a sense of threat. What’s more, the stigma of “Ar-cha” is racially accounted an unfavorable and trouble-marker in Hong Kong society. That the producer chooses this cultural discrimination to be the reason of Singh’s disappearance demonstrates the racial hatred on

South Asian minorities. As what Singh says in the episode, before he falls down, he hears a random guy shouting, “Ar-cha, I treat you a bottle of beer,” and then he is hit by a beer bottle, which causes the hospitalization.

The similar insensitiveness of the Chinese housemates is also presented when they make discriminatory comments. Apart from CEO naming the racial minorities and Singh with the disparaging term “Ar-cha,” Lee also tries to extend the racial imagination to a national level. In the scene where the housemates are making sarcastic comments on Singh, the news about a South Asian being accidentally killed by a policeman because the South Asian fails to obey the policeman’s command is reported on TV. From the clip of the news report, Bee finds that the shot man looks like Singh according to the shirt that man wears. Then others were confused and nervous about Bee’s comment. Lee comforted them by saying, “These ‘Ar-chas’ all look similar. The killed person may not be Singh. We should believe in the governance of Hong Kong Police, they will make the suitable decision, especially for the people from ‘migrant workers’ country.’ Don’t worry if Singh is innocent.” The term of “migrant workers’ country” arouses Long’s dissatisfaction; he warns Lee for his racially discriminative term but gets the peacemaker-like response:

I don’t mean that. I mean, those foreign workers earning money for their countries should be the heroes for their countries. But, most of them misbehave after they come to Hong Kong. So the police ought to check them to avoid their disturbance to the local society. This case is about a person who is not clear to....(Lee)

Long interrupted Lee's justification because to him the case is all about the police's stereotype about South Asian people causing an abuse of violence.

Regarding the point that dark-skinned people all come from "migrant workers' country," two levels of the Chinese majority's perception of the racial minorities who live locally are revealed. At the national level, using the term of "migrant workers' country" is to degrade the humanity and cultures in terms of the nationality or ethnicity of foreign workers, so it does not only imply the racial minorities who are in desperately need of resources, but also proves that in the public discourse people believe that these "poor" countries are subordinate to the so-called "developed and civilized" region like Hong Kong. At the local level, naming the local non-Chinese people as "foreign workers" excludes them from being a part of the members in Hong Kong society, and assumes that Hong Kong is a Chinese community. As a result, this perception on local racial minorities neglects the difference among various EM groups, and even the ignore the difference within the so-called-Chinese community itself. Similarly, Ku, Chan, and Sandhu (2008) have argued that EMs are ignored and discriminated with the imagination of Hong Kong people who deem themselves "a western civilized and developed group." Positioning the racial minorities under such a racial order constitutes a "demanding" (always requesting welfare from a society) feature which resonates with Erni and Leung's criticism on the negative label of "unfavorable strangers." From the overview of the related local researches, it can be seen that "some of dark-skinned Asians have been in relatively "favorable" positions as traders, interpreters, judges, and teachers, while others have been largely abandoned strangers trapped in socially isolated, sub-economic existence" (2014:35). Thus, this problematic racial order has imposed a kind of underrepresented and discriminative treatment on multiple racial members of the local

community when Hong Kong claims itself as a multicultural society. Correspondently, the aim of this episode in RTL is to situate this problematic racial relation with neighbor relationship.

To conclude, the analysis of these two scenes via the production's interplaying the social stereotyping language and an individual's troublous experience displays that the face of Singh's racial image is objectified and even can be felt by his Chinese housemates. Moreover, with the insensitiveness to the other ethnic groups in Hong Kong, the Chinese community tends to consider South Asians living in Hong Kong as demanding and threatening others who should be offensive. In addition, the rigidly cultural impression on South Asians, like strangers or outsiders, give the general Hong Kong society the assumption that EMs has no participation in local culture, or share no assimilated local life. In the case of SSS, Singh's cultural image has never been taken as an account for people to understand his ethnic identity. That explains why the housemates are shocked and felt hard to accept when realizing that Singh has a Chinese name.

Racializing shame

This section presents an analysis on examining how shame, presenting itself in a bodily withdrawal, produces an actual transformative force among the Chinese housemates, in order to understand and evaluate themselves and their relations with others. Notably, RTL as a sitcom, it mainly provides relaxations and joy, so it is not easy to spot the scenes directly visualizing shame. For example, although blushing is a facial expression indicating one's being ashamed, there are never close up shots illustrating blushing of the characters while According to Probyn's notion of the affective polarity of shame-interest, one's shame will be

triggered at the moment when the interest, or the connection registered with the interest, is being interrupted so displaying shame in different ways of disrupting one's habitus can be examined in my interpretation. In this televisual text, shame is understood as a form of bodily withdrawal; therefore, we can capture how shame links one to others (2005:35) and put its repairing¹³¹ function to "register in feeling another feelings" (2004a:224). To grasp the change of a body is to find out the concrete disposition, as well as the decomposition of one's familiar habitus, and how shame performs its analogical effect to the shamed one, like the paring with other feelings like humiliation, fear, enjoyment and so on. When shame is the bodily way to cover up the unaware interests which is interrupted, the textual code of shame, like bodily signifiers, verbal signifiers, signifiers of emotional and sense, interactional signifiers, will be studied.

The favorably normative habitus for the above-mentioned Chinese housemates will be put on the table again to illustrate their interests that register in such ambiguous interracial friendship, since its function is to set trajectories for the journey of self-reflection that they go alone during the midnight plot. It is very practical, in Probyn's words, to show how the set-up of their self-reevaluation can be initiated by the analogical effect of shame and the concrete interest they can approach or repair to.

The very first image of "Singh" is a generous helpful neighbor who can perform multitasks on request of his housemates. During Detective Cheung's interrogation, the Singh's depictions are composed of all the Chinese housemates' responses. They repeatedly describe their impressions on Singh based on their personal experience, which is not only for objectifying a positive neighborly image, but also for defending their friendship with Singh

through this hollow reiteration. For instance, Doris is shocked and then laughs ceaselessly after knowing Singh's Chinese name. No one could tell what exactly his real name is, let alone whether he is an Indian or a Pakistani and other background information about him. Yet, they consistently emphasize the fact that Singh is a kind as well as good person and seems as well-behaved as them. Except for selfish CEO acting nervously to reject to be interrogated and disavowed their friendship, Bee, Yuen, Long and Taoist later insist that they live in a good friendship with Singh. For instance, Bee appreciates the curry chicken cooked by Singh, Yuen affirms that Singh is his friend though he knows nothing about his family name, which doesn't seem to be a bother to him, Long admits that even Singh has been exploited but he is still hard working so he does not deserve any form of discrimination, and Taoist identifies Singh's good moral with his well-behaved working manner. These individual answers cannot be understood separately because, on the textual level, the text attempts to set up not only a full image of the neighborly Singh, but also its imperfection of recognizing Singh's identity that infects all bodies in this house.

What's more, this harvestless interrogation makes them realize the imperfection of their cognition on Singh's identity, when the Chinese housemates believe that Singh's neighborly image equals to the Singh they have known. However, the anchoring points of "criticism" and "judgment" both left by the sudden interrogation are so implicative and productive that they show how the text racialize the ways their shame pops up, and the ways they are set to rescue from being ashamed.

When the detective says, "You claim to be his friend but why you know nothing about his background?" the appearance of "criticism," denies Chinese housemate's self-claimed

friendship with Singh. Immediately, it causes a little physical or bodily reaction -- a second of silence from Yuen, who turns to look aside and rejects to have eye contact with the interrogator, as shown in Figure 2*. This instinctive reaction of disappointment can be read as Yuen's preliminary status of being ashamed. This seemingly shameful reaction could also be found in other bodies later. In Probyn's (2005) words, seeing this disappointment as feeling ashamed does tell that there are something in them more than solely feeling sad because of the affective logic of shame linked to non-reciprocating investment:

When, for different reasons, that investment is questioned and interest is interrupted, we feel deprived. Crucially, that's when we feel shame. That little moment of disappointment—"oh, but I was interested"—is amplified into shame or a deep disappointment in ourselves. Shame marks the break in connection. We have to care about something or someone to feel ashamed when that care and connection --our interest-- is not reciprocated. (13)

Therefore, this momentary marker of disappointment shows that the connection between Yuen and Singh becomes broken, when he challenges Singh's good neighbor image and his ethnic identity. Although his distrust in Singh's unfavorable racial image has already been showed in some scenes, such interest would not be erased once registered in the friendship, due to the fact that all of them get used to living with Singh in the favorably normative habitus in the house. Physiologically speaking, if one does not deal with this shaming dis-connection, this little disappointment can be amplified into a torturing sense of shame. After the direct criticism, the detective offers "judgment" by saying, "All of you are unwilling to say anything, and look tricky. It is suspicious!" This judgmental line seems to discredit

their honor (or honesty), and results in the action that (see *Figure 4.3*), the Chinese housemates strongly glare at him after they are united to defend their honor as a member of this house.



Figure 4.3 The Chinese housemates stare at the detective

Therefore, this interrogating scene should be thought twice and more, whether knowing Singh less firstly than they actually thought, whether being overestimated or underestimated when their honor was evaluated, and whether acting silently or defensively for their moments were interplaying to insult their honor and the friendship they have long. Theoretically speaking, their feeling of shame is going to be triggered continually while little insulting moments are going to break or interrupt their persevering connection with Singh. So to speak, this interrogating scene is to project the further questioning of Chinese housemates on Singh's fragmented identity. However, the effect of the interest-invested form of shame will enact on most of the housemates, and, most importantly, this shaming set-up leads to the possibilities that their interest can be found after reidentifying Singh as their housemate.

Shame in close range: the racial other in proximity

Now it moves to the subjective dispositions of Singh's Chinese housemates inhabits, where the plot of returning the promising interest to individuals probably links to the one's everyday dependence on "the proximities of others, of place, of routine, of biography and history" (2004b: 329). In this text, the signifiers of shame can be proven by the reappearance of the racialized shame at Chinese bodies as an "impassioned witness" which compels them to re-establish the promised interest during the analogical effect of shame, or, textually, the repairing effect of shame. In other words, my analysis lies on how they re-articulate Singh's multifaceted images during the following scenes of various forms of self-evaluation, where the characters have to re-encounter the unsolved and interruptive events—at least, the uncertain identification of Singh and the disconnection of their friendship—overnight. The ensemble of these subplots at the midnight, on the other way, crucially becomes the juncture of SSS's sitcom narrative in order to ensure the return of the daily routine in the next day. As Probyn (2005) has said, when shame pops up to a body, it is going to excavate more stories from one's habitus when it hints the unaware interest to oneself:

That interest, made unavoidable in our shame, speaks of the intricacy with which our bodies operate in the world. In shame, our habitus becomes reordered, shaken up, it admits other possibilities and in turn allows for more interests to be registered....It's not that the effects of shame can be harnessed by stories; it's that shame demands that we tell other stories. (72)

Therefore, the necessary elaboration of their relationship with Singh in SSS is a very crucial hint of racial discourses this study search for. Thus, the cases of Doris, Yuen and Long will be

focused, because their character setting does offer more stories in the plots of “doing shame,” while the other characters set to react the ghost-like Singh are also interesting materials to read.

The scene Doris tosses about after knowing the possible death of Singh clearly shows that Doris does care about Singh’s misfortune and Singh’s accidental death claimed by her made her feel sad and worried. This affective change in the low-intensity of Doris can be well elaborated with Ngai’s (2005) term “racially dis-eased corpus”¹³², in which one’s interruptive bodily status is hard to track back the related object affecting it, its results that one cannot easily figure out (116). Yet, this bodily signifier of Doris’ sleeplessness can be understood as the physical and visceral acting affect that records, and even shakes up, her normative habit, though it may not hint any visual pain to her (see *Figure 4.4*). Her “dis-eased” body is well described by Probyn’s depiction of shaming body—“when you feel like a fish out of water, your body reacts in shame” (2005:xvi). Then, Doris’s uneasy body once activated by shame tends to move her to reconnect with Singh, according to the following plotline:



Figure 4.4 Doris becomes sleepless and whispers

In the shared room, Bee cannot sleep and tells Doris that she worries about Singh. Doris whispers to Bee what she is thinking, “It is really sad that a person dies somewhere he’s not born. I want to help Singh by telling his death to his family, but...I don’t know anyone from his family, how can I help him? In fact, we are the same...” She stops while noticing Bee, the one who has claimed to suffer from insomnia due to her worry about Singh falls into sleep. Thus, she goes to the balcony, surprised by Yuen’s sitting there. Yuen asks her, “Do you feel at ease to live here? I heard that the moon viewed from a foreign place is bigger and more beautiful.” She embarrassingly answers, “That’s okay to live here. I had once thought I will be different, but when I got the experience of living abroad for a long time, I find that the moon is the same everywhere.”

Some may consider what Doris feels a feeling of guilt because of her incapability to help Singh. However, Probyn clearly remarks, “shame has many shades than guilt does” (2005:46). Such scene entail that shame not only revisits to Doris long after the shaming moment of Doris has been passed from the interrogation scene, while “guilt prompts recompense and then is done”(46); but also, “shame is deeply related not only to how other think of us [like guilt] but also *how we think about ourselves*”(45; my emphasis). Thus, this uneasy form of shame unfolds Doris’s biography, in order to repair the particular interest as a textual meaning of rescuing, or un-ashamed in SSS. From Doris’ words, her frustration shows that her care and interest which are not going to be fulfilled by her ignorance of Singh’s racial background, as a preconceived assumption that Singh’s own nationality has nothing to do with Hong Kong. Then Singh becomes a “foreigner” (異鄉人) who is lonely in a foreign country under Doris’ reidentification. The idea of this “foreigner” connects to the relationship

between shame and interest again. The affective signification of shame comes from its effect on repairing interest; as Probyn says, “shame promises a return of interest, joy, and connection. This is why shame matters to individual” (2005: xiii). Thus, the prompt to re-establish interest in Singh is shown when Doris acknowledges, “we are the same.” This appeal to the similarity does need to unfold one’s story. The above scene points out that Doris has just returned to Hong Kong from England after she graduated, and she has to lead the life without her mother being around. Though Lee is her father, she does not treat him as a part of her family. It offers a more intimate form to re-identify Singh who is no longer prelimited by his different ethnicity; the integrative notion of “we” admits the similarity, shared by “foreigners,” between Singh and Doris—a young adult living alone without family in Hong Kong. In fact, this shared identification of living alone can also apply to most tenants in this house, such as, ECO, Bee, Yuen and Long. However, this narrative of identifying foreigner status reveals a racial way of thinking which assumes Hong Kong society only consists of the Chinese residents and largely covers up the history of local South Asians. Then identification of EMs in Hong Kong becomes rootless in this narrative, which results in a racialization rendering the internal ethnic other a deeply detached identity—“rootless stranger.”

In addition, the conversation between Yuen and Long at the balcony also shows that they follow the way to reidentify Singh in the particular similarity (see *figure 4.5*). The repairing effect of shaming can produce marks articulation between Singh and the two, as well as Singh and his identity. Yuen and Long, who originally share a room with Singh, cannot sleep, and look heavy. Their alcohol consumption is not only to relax their uneasy corpus, but also to promise an intimate and personal conversion in order to reevaluate themselves and their relationship with Singh. In the balcony scene, Yuen confesses that his mother is living in the

nursing home and he wants to have her live with him. Long feels surprised, saying he never knows that. Yuen sighs and continues, “It is not easy to earn a living. In order to rebuild my old business, I have been busy and packed all the time. When I pursued my degree in mainland and then set up the business there, I felt like a foreign worker. I came back to Hong Kong after the failure of business in mainland. Sometimes I feel so strange that I can’t distinguish whether I am a mainlander or a Hongkonger. In fact I am just similar to Singh.” In order to echo Yuen’s words, Long shares some experience of his old classmate who work in the mainland and he thinks, “they are foreign workers who are not different from Singh. We are all the same.” Long’s sharing make Yuen draw a conclusion that “there is only a type of discrimination in the world. That is, the rich discriminate the poor; the powerful suppress the powerless. Hearing Yuen says so, Long becomes passionate and determines to do something for Singh before he leaves.



Figure 4.5 Yuen shares his worry with Long on the balcony

This scene mainly explores how the two identify themselves with Singh. In fact, this way of self-revaluation can convert Singh's identity to the familiarized foreign workers who are not different from each other and even intimate to Long and Yuen. Here, the repairing effect indeed anchors at the combination of the inherent and the lived experience of social structure, or "the biology and biography of a person" (149). In Yuen, this way of revaluating Singh's identity also parallels the process of evaluating himself, such as his concern and his desire about the struggle with his poor living status. As we know, Yuen has been downgraded to a person who is no longer capable of upholding the favorable social position such as a manager and a university graduate. Firstly, he grew up in Hong Kong but has moved to Mainland China to work and live for a long time; therefore, he deems himself a "foreign labor" who is exported or migrates to a place. Then, Yuen shifts his sympathy for his imagery migrant status of Singh, so he affirms Singh as a person, like himself, who goes to a strange place and works hard for job and money only. Likewise, the experience of working abroad becomes more common among Hong Kong youth nowadays, when the inter-regional jobs between Hong Kong and Mainland can be easily found to the youth, as Long's example of his graduated friends. This working abroad status not only turns people into "foreign labor" that may result in an experience in a crush to one's local identification. Secondly, the self-evaluation roots on Yuen's past and present. Yuen returns and wants to re-settle down in Hong Kong after the failure of his business in Mainland, wherein he is assimilated to behave like other mainlanders whose corny dressing and specking style that is stereotyped by Hong Kong people. This is proven by the moment of that Yuen is embarrassed by Doris. She associates Yuen's behavior to other mainlanders whose corny dressing and specking style that is stereotyped by Hong Kong

people. So to speak, this doubtful local status, neither Hong Kong Chinese nor a Mainland Chinese, is referred to how Yuen concerns Singh's deprived living experience in Hong Kong. Thirdly, Yuen's unwilling turn works with unskilled jobs in order to take care of his mother and to get some achievement in career. Showing his economically unprivileged position, he proclaims that the discrimination only exists in the relationship between the rich and the poor.

As a social activist, Long also follows this way to re-affirm Singh's discriminated status that is referred to how Yuen concerns Singh's class identity in a suppressed and powerless condition. Accordingly, Yuen and Long have affirmed is also to recognize Singh, as a South Asian in Hong Kong, who is as powerless as other working class people discriminated and exploited by the capitalists. Notice that the identification on class difference somehow replaces, or blinds, the racial difference where EM groups may be racially excluded within the community of the same class, as the housemates have taken advantage of Singh at the opening scene.

As I have said, to theorize the shaming portrayal in SSS is crucial to detect the emerging race politics that may be no longer pose racial sameness and difference as opposing and static blocks, the purpose to propose the theoretic apparatus of "animated shame" is to rethink the varying degree of similarity and difference when feeling of shame informs a more complicated interest of connecting with the racial other. As Probyn repeatedly addresses, "We must use shame to re-evaluate how we are positioned in relation to the past and to rethink how we wish to live in proximity to others" (2005:xiv). Among these examples of reidentifying the racial other, how the body in shame can be described in the text reveals the

specific interest for individuals to link themselves to the everyday dependence on the proximities of others. With revisiting the specific scenes concerning Doris, Yuen, as well as Long and their biography or, their past and present experience, it can be seen that they undergo an self-evaluation that shame animates the social that re-registers with the interest in a strongly reunified sense of living together. Additionally, doing a better narrative analysis as Downing and Husband (2005) have insisted, we cannot miss the pivotal story in this text where the proximity governed by the repaired interests may transform Singh's negative racial images that have shown. Thus, the proximity created via Yuen's case makes it worth revisiting.

Yuen's self-evaluation where Singh's identity is found similar to his own one includes three notions: "doubtable local identity", the "foreign labor" and the "unprivileged class". These notions are distant from seeing the racial other as the threatening outsider as what has been displayed in the early plot, and thus, Yuen narration entangles to reidentify Singh from whom he perceives the sorrow conditions he may once be in. As a result, this self-evaluation of Yuen is set to replace the un-favorability of Singh's racial image with the proximity between Singh and him. In other terms, this racialized shame could animate, or remind Yuen of what he concerns and cares about; also, by acknowledging the textual significance on this cognitive and bodily effect in shaming portrayal in Yuen's case, Singh's cultural image is also transformed and Yuen's relationship with Singh is being animated.

Besides Yuen's evaluation on his relationship with Singh, Singh's disappearance also makes Yuen evaluate the neighbor relation with other people in the house. Distancing the image of an unknown neighbor like Singh, he begins to share his most intimate and personal

background with his neighbors, such as that his worry over his mother living in the nursing home. Therefore, in the narrative of SSS, the animatedness of shame also is going to transform the problematized neighborhood habitus shown before in this house with more interesting way to approaching others' stories. This transformation may provoke the idea that if we recognize the same conditions that both Chinese people and EM people may encounter or suffer in, we can make a change on the racial stereotype of “unfavorable” or “threatening” images in Hong Kong, while “we”, the local people, are also positioned under those similar disadvantages shown in Doris, Yuen and Long’s cases. This implication will be widely evaluated later.

Restoring inter-racial harmony

The comedic narrative of SSS follows the sitcom narrative structure of “order-disorder-order restored” that it is bound to end up with a restore of the normal order and to return to a happy ending (Creeber, 2006). Yet, how this structure constitutes a sharable, but interesting atmosphere in this house for all characters, Singh and all his housemates, is still an appealing topic to study. So to speak, the happy ending is no longer incompatible with hard feeling, like disappointment, frustration, and worry, but the shameful rhetoric of SSS is going to be driven by the “interested,” and proximate articulation shame unfolds, as what is argued above.

After the struggling night for the Chinese housemates, Singh presents in the house again, and prepares the breakfast for his housemates. All the Chinese housemates become released with Singh’s return, and asked Singh what has happened to him (see *Figure 4.6*).



Figure 4.6 The housemates ask Singh the reason he disappeared

The mysterious disappearance of Singh suggests two classical types of racial discrimination in Hong Kong. One is shown by the racist attack against Singh he recalled that his head got hit by a guy who threw a bottle to him and shout—"Ar-cha, I treat you a bottle of beer", when he went to work in the morning two days ago (see *Figure 4.7*); the other is the racial insensitiveness of intuitions. For example, the hospital only offers beef congee to all patients, but as a Sikh, Singh cannot eat beef and his protest is not taken seriously by the nurse. Against such racial hatred, Lee tries to give an inspiring speech which falls into the pattern of a governmental propaganda promoting racial harmony:

There has really been a misunderstanding between different ethnics these days. But now the truth is out. Singh, please relax. We [Hong Kong society] would never connive at the ethnic discrimination that people hold and the violent act of throwing objects from a height.

This claim of “truth” Lee spoke out marks a leaf-over: it not only simply undermines the racial misunderstanding about Singh, including his honesty, his local identity and his racial identity, turning it into more avoidable as less-paid effort to the Chinese housemate, but also reduces the potential racial conflicts at everyday life level into a judicial and policing phase where such conflict and tension is definable and solvable. However, apart from Singh who thanks Lee for his speech, Lee’s judicial discourse is satirically presented in an unconvincing way which can be inferred by the reaction from other housemates. To realize the racial harmony between the Chinese majority and the non-Chinese minorities, HKSAR government’s only seemingly satisfying establishment would be the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) on protecting EMs from the “acknowledgeable” racist acts. Instead of preserving the passive right for EM people, Hong Kong society always denies its failure in treating EMs equally, which is proven by various social scientific researches mentioned in Chapter One. Thus, the final scene of SSS long to re-connect with the interest in racial harmony because of its return of a nostalgic discourse of passerby by intertwisting the warm feeling and the racial harmony.



Figure 4.7 Singh is racially attacked on a street

When the Chinese housemates are also interested in the less-paid-effort racial relation, Singh still offers his generous help to them. The last scene is composed of Singh's help with their daily chores and their sincere responses, the notion of "passersby," which functions as the line "we are the same," is formed by Taoist's narration with the warm and touching rhythm from its theme song—*Last Dinner*. The narration Taoist gives is to promote the mutual respect to each other:

Although all people quickly get back to their usual life and living behavior, asking for favors from Singh as they always do, they know more about one another after Singh's missing. Each person living in this house is just a passerby to one another. They grasp their time and space for relaxation, and then they move on in life. They would be grateful to be respected and being treated as a friend, which is never easy.

To make sense of the mutual respect in an interracial neighborhood, the narration used to close this episode with the inclusive idea of "passersby" aims to reconcile the difference between individuals. It proclaims that everyone is equal and respectable. Yet, if we require more details from this inclusive idea, it can be found to be an empty signifier, or an empty identity.

It should be noted that the notion of "passersby" has once been popular in Hong Kong in 1970s when Hong Kong was still considered to be a migrant society. It connotes the past moment of "refugee society" when people viewed Hong Kong as a lifeboat—in the period called "borrowed time, borrowed place," (the detailed discussion can be found in Chapter One). The reason why Taoist becomes the person to hold this nostalgic narrative is not only

because he is in an elderly of his 65 years old, but also because the colonial Hong Kong had not defined the overwhelming population of ethnic Chinese who were simply understood as a crowd of people coming from different places with different dialects. For Taoist, the operation of nostalgic narrative is to get recognition and respect for the people dedicated to making living only, instead of marking the conflicts from being different. Indeed, this belief has seldom been problematized, and has long been promoted in Hong Kong, especially the comedic genre with the theme of “neighborhood watch” (守望相助) between the tenants who live together in a house, for instance, *House of 72 Tenants* (72 家房客) given by Shaw Brother’s production¹³³ in 1973, *72 Tenants of Prosperity* (72 家租客) produced by TVB in 2010.

One may criticize that this warm ending only tends to approve and to reinforce the conclusion that the Chinese housemates only want to maintain the less-paid-effort racial relation they are interested in but what will be argued is that the warm moment constitutes a sharable atmosphere in this house for all characters’ “racially eased bodies ” (see *Figure 4.8*). If the attempt of this TV sitcom is to render a racialized structure of shame and interest, this scene of passersby does not simply restore the previous unreflecting racial order. Rather, the interest-invested notion of “passersby” as an inclusive identity should be considered an affective configuration which aims at maintaining the connection with each other in terms of the lively similarity. Thus, the version of “passersby” embedded into the ideology of “neighborhood watch” has already been problematized and doubted when shame makes the Chinese neighbors witness the dis-connection during splitting Singh’s multiple identity. In this narrative of “we are passerby,” Singh’s racial difference intends to be ignored, for it is subject to produce the complex interest by the way which is “too” inclusive to rub off the

coarsely-grained difference, among the individuals in this house, and to deliver to the audience. Now, the signifier of “passersby” situated in the racialized structure of shame and interest is no longer empty, even though it becomes an act of releasing or undoing the shame.

Conclusion: an inclusive appearance of racism

To be fair to the effort of the producer, the plot of *SSS* can be seen as a comical satire on the racial relation between Chinese and South Asians in Hong Kong, as well as other issues (Pang, 2009). Through the use of shaming or guilt strategy, its satirical effect is shown in navigating audience’s reflection on racial issues evoked by the narrative. Its plot mainly delivers the criticism about Chinese majority’s racial indifference, racial discrimination, and unequal treatment for their South Asian neighbors in a Chinese-dominant community, though the way to rendering of South Asian’s local status and the way of restoring the racial harmony both look too simple and propagandistic. Nevertheless, the story of *SSS* at least offers South Asians a sensitive portrayal to query Chinese majority in the cultural representation, rather than to reproduce the racial underrepresentation making them the “invisible neighbor,” in Lo’s words ¹³⁴. Although its underlying claim—we should feel ashamed and guilty for our ignorance of the racial minority neighbors—is clear, *SSS* as a fictional narrative I find is more productive, as well as problematic, in illuminating an racial discourse of shaming that manipulates an interest-registered way, to “neighboring” (as a verb) the racial other in term of operating an affective articulation. However, my analysis is going far beyond the way *SSS* aims at—questioning how the ethnic figure can be represented.

As what this textual analysis has elaborated, to examine shame’s textual meaning to undo and redo racial relation among the interracial casting in *SSS*, Probyn’s insistence on the

polarity of shame-interest I have translated into a is a promisingly theoretical apparatus—the animated shame—for me to rethink that the race politics SSS, or RTHK, proposes. In order to meet this end, this study explicitly explains an affective reconfiguration of racial relation that mainly detects the slightly “unaware” change of the habitual interaction between Singh and the Chinese housemates. Throughout the whole narrative of SSS, it is evident that the array signifiers of shame are not sole and individual phenomena but, equally cultural experience (Pribram, 2011: 2). Shame’s transformative function situates Chinese housemates with the emotional meaning, which pushes the shamed neighbors to repair their shame with a particular interest in connecting with the racial other. As Probyn says the affect of shame can animate the body to reposition the social relation, when we acknowledge that feeling shame “set off a nearly involuntary reevaluation of one’s self and one’s action.” (2005: 55)

This self-reevaluating capacity promised by shame, with its textual meaning, has driven the core research question of my theoretical engagement in SSS’ textual analysis—how Chinese’s feeling of shame undergoes the process of defamiliarization and reidentification with the racial neighbor. This question wonderingly problematizes the ambiguity of Singh’s identity of racial other. Shame’s transformative feature leads a revisit that splitting Singh into three images is to see what Chinese characters differently encounter with while their bodies are being situated in different affective statuses, shown in sequence of SSS’ narrative, as well as of my argumentative development. Firstly, the neighborly image of Singh is depicted as good and helpful to his Chinese housemates who are of interest in effortlessly maintaining their neighborly friendship. Secondly Singh’s racial image becomes an unfavorable and poor other via the connotation of the uncertain racial difference with the racially discriminative signs, a fearful suspicion built to keep distance from this strange racial other. Last but not

least, they originally pay less attention to Singh's cultural image, but it turns out to be the major source for them to re-identify their neighborly relationship with the idea of similarity, when they suffer from the bodily withdrawal triggered by shame in a racialized structure. As the analysis section shown, the emotive discourse of racial harmony I have formulated finally shifts in this reidentification of Singh's cultural image that grounds on the particular lively similarity between interracial casts SSS constructed. To apply Probyn's shaming politics into this media representation study, the textual meaning from the emotional code of shame in SSS ultimately processes to reevaluate, or rearticulate Chinese neighbors' proximity into connecting with Singh as the racial other. Therefore, my analysis shows that the text channels itself to repair the racialized shame with the particular interest of the Chinese neighbors, in connecting with Singh in the cultural similarity or proximity, like the cultural figurations, or narratives, of "rootless stranger," "doubtable local identity," the "foreign labor," the "unprivileged class" and the "nostalgic passerby". To understand the affective politics SSS manipulates through codifying shame needs to discuss on this specific social imaginary of the interracial proximity.

Critically speaking, the project of rescuing, or undoing the racialized shame by displaying Chinese neighbors' interest in re-connecting Singh, the textual construction of the interracial proximity SSS manifested still tends to center the perspective of Chinese's living experience, more than to pay more effort to show multiple local experiences of racial otherness, either different or similar to the Chinese ones. Satirically, it has been proved by the ending scene of SSS that all Chinese neighbors are truly happy with Singh's return but they show no interest in listening his story which can demonstrate Singh's identity as a Hong Kong Indian, (see *Figure 4.9*). In other words, I concern that the cultural image of Singh can only

be activated through copying from, or referring to, their feelings, perspectives and personal history; thus, my criticism on this interest-oriented transition is not solely an underrepresentation of racial difference, but what I call an “inclusive form of racism”. I find that Philomena Essed’s (1991) notion of everyday racism is valid to pinpoint it:

Everyday racism can be defined as a *process* in which (a) socialized racist notions are integrated into meanings that make practices immediately definable and manageable, (b) practices with racist implications become in themselves familiar and repetitive, and (c) underlying racial and ethnic relations are actualized and reinforced through these routine or familiar practices in everyday situations. (52)

In other words, the marginality of everyday racism Essed has defined is illustrated in sustaining the unequal relations of power, whereby the powered party can gain and maintain the capacity for imposing “its will” repeatedly upon another, through the “unintended” racist practice. Here, it can be applied to the race representation in this media study. When the affective meaning of SSS is to operate and manage the social imagination and the cultural image of South Asian and interracial neighborhood in Hong Kong society, it will examine how the display of Chinese-interested proximity can be understood as a form of racial marginalization in the process of representing EMs and racial relation.

For instance, firstly, the empathic account of “rootless stranger” in turn deprives South Asians of their local status. They can only be represented as the strangers who are out-of-place without their root as well as family and the different perspectives and experience of local EMs cannot be concerned by the cultural identification of the stranger who would not see Hong Kong as his or her home. Highlighting EM’s incomplete, or alienated, local status is

also reproduced by both narrative of “doubtable local identity” and “foreign labor” that people like the characters in SSS deal with the contested identity, may be socially misrecognized in discrediting their Hong Kong identity. Secondly, the narrative considering EMs an economically unprivileged class acknowledges EM’s contribution to the society on the one hand, but conceals the racial disadvantage EMs suffer by the replacement of class conflict between rich class and working class on the other. Thirdly, the “nostalgic code of passerby” is warmly narrated to create a sharable justified stand for all who come to this house with different reasons. It proves SSS’ intention to dig out the undisputable recognition of whom are the ethnic Chinese settler and to pay respect to both EMs and Chinese working hard to settle themselves in the city. However, the racial marginalization under the operation of this sort of narrative is found at not solely its cultural codification that is largely attributed to the familiar Chinese’s migration story, but its inclusive notification that aims at making a short-circuit to repair the joyful interracial reunion and unconsciously skip to talk about the different version of settling history for EMs. For instance, there is a cut made to stop Singh’s narration of his own personal history.

With that reason, in order to offer a social imaginary that in the interracial neighborhood, Chinese residents can be benefited to neighbor with EMs, the text trickily displays an “inclusive appearance of racism.” This racialized social imaginary does not totally conceal the unavoidable encounter for both Chinese and EMs in reality. Instead, it highly visualizes the neighborly existence of EMs, and then can neighbor them as the respectful others who can co-exist positively with the Chinese people. The race thinking laying at this social imaginary, however, informs a symbolic marginalization that tends to misrecognize, or, “disappear” (in Abbas’s word), the representation of EMs through underrepresenting their multiple or

different existence, like different settling history, living experience, neighborly habitus as well as feelings. In other words, the problem is clearly shown that SSS' racialized representation includes the appearance of EMs but excludes EMs' racial difference or racial otherness.

What's more, trickily, all these problematic racialized and racist narratives are joyfully but at the same time shamefully, to be embedded into the pedagogical text like SSS. Through the textual analysis of this particular text, it is known that shame's animated effect blurs such problematic on figuring out its affective operation on the polarity of shame-interest. Also, it is clear that RTHK programming mainly targets at the Chinese audience to promote a quick and adoptable version of racial equality and racial harmony; so the inclusive appearance of racism SSS has brought in only weakly echo the race-unrelated discourse—the alienated local status, the unprivileged class, the nostalgic story of passerby—that the Chinese community may suffer from the similar misfortune. Hence, they can share this inclusive identity with EMs.

Here, I briefly discuss about my self-reflection from the audience's point of view.

The light shame as the major emotional meaning SSS delivered did embarrass me once I watched it during my undergraduate period, even though I had been concerning race issue at that time. More correctly, what really embarrassed me is the seemingly shameless reaction of Chinese housemates. They have exploited Singh's domestically in the everyday neighborhood, but, at the same time, they have never paid effort to understand him as a friend or a neighbor that they should literally treasured. Although SSS never elaborated more on Singh's Indian background that helps the audience to understand more about the ethnic neighbor, the way or the outlet I felt released is mainly attributed to the fact that SSS predominantly channelled audience to such particular interest by mentioning the sharable identities. Yet, the affective discourse of "assimilative othering" have been discussed in this

chapter, the problem behind RTHK's policy mandate on promoting racial harmony I realized may mainly be grounded on a less-effort racial assimilation approach that the Chinese audience are easy to take up and enjoy.

All in all, I believe that the RTHK's program RTL, especially the episode of SSS, did pay effort to help the society develop social imaginary in order to foster the racial equality. It is because the context shifts that EMs community have historically been objects of the city's pervasive indifference have changed from being a silent and invisible minority to more demanding, more vocal, and less acquiescing party, as what Erni and Leung (2014) insist in their profound study on Hong Kong South Asians. To suggest a change for RTHK's inclusive term of racism in the cultural representation, I find Erni and Leung's critical multicultural approach more inspiring to rethink race representation of TV programs, especially how it addresses the problems of EMs in Hong Kong should be a representational problem by saying "we believe it is time that our society developed a more comprehensive paradigm through which to address EMs' needs for 'recognition justice' without sacrificing 'distributive justice' " (215). With this approach kept in mind and the detailed analysis of the television text, the conclusion I would like to draw in this chapter is that RTHK's drama programing, with recognition of racial difference, should update its inclusive approach through exhibiting more EMs' history and experience in order to fill up its arbitrarily inclusive narrative. They should also target their audience not only at Chinese, but also at EMs.

Chapter Five

Conclusion: Becoming EMs?

Throughout this study, the cultural research on exploring the racial others through the lens of racial affects tends to take a roundabout route to tackle the major issue on the cultural representation of South Asians on Hong Kong television. The thesis has been structured by a theoretical background review, the inspection of three major popular non-Chinese figures and their particular cultural visibilities in TV culture, the configurations of “sweetened trouble” and “assimilated neighboring” as demonstrated in the narrative affective reading of NGEW (TVB) and RTL (RTHK) respectively. This structure is largely guided by the research method gleaned from Grossberg’s conjunctural analysis. As a project on contextualizing EM issue within Hong Kong studies, I opt for a conjunctural understanding of who EMs in Hong Kong are in order to undo the seemingly unified story of Hong Kong identity to produce something beyond the marginalized and victimized EMs.

I have argued that the demand of the present conjuncture is to respond to the necessity of generating an “EM-context” suitable for reinstalling a proper local identity politics for EMs. Therefore, the notion of “unfinished migrant milieu” is something I have proposed as a particular mode of remapping the EM-context, where the ethnic multiplicity, the ethnic migrants inside the location of Hong Kong as an immigrant society as the residual, can be discovered. Here, I will suggest that in order to do further EM studies in Hong Kong, the notion of an unfinished migrant milieu is a resourceful site which awaits further debate. Also, as a tool for contextualization, this milieu aims to construct a “practical and

practice-able reality” of the process of destabilizing and restabilizing the social-material (trans)formation of Hong Kong identity (Grossberg, 2010: 37). What this means is to intervene into the popular sites, such as TV series, where racial stereotyping must be reconfigured in affective terms as an engine to narrate the unfinished migrant milieu of Hong Kong society. I have taken this path in order to introduce into Hong Kong’s emerging study of race and ethnicity the conjunctural and affective perspectives developed in cultural studies of recent times. At any rate, race/ethnicity is an under-studied area in local scholarship in cultural studies. I hope to make a small contribution by opening what I consider to be a viable theoretical practice.

The EM-context I mapped through revisiting the important popular non-Chinese figures in Hong Kong’s TV culture since the 1970s, is an attempt to configure specific forms of visibility of EMs in the public popular arena. Those forms of visibility, in turn, demonstrate the varied unfinished quality of EM’s presence. The examination of how these ethnic figures struggle for their particular mode of cultural visibility in Hong Kong’s popular entertainment industry¹³⁵ wraps up several key points. Firstly, the ethnic ambiguity during 1970s and 1980s presents Hong Kong identity with a renewed sense of historical richness. Ethnic differences possessed by the minorities were once not necessarily forbidden and underrepresented in TV culture, which is evident from the case of Castro whose mixed racial identity shows that ethnic differences can be displayed as a westernized as well as cosmopolitan marker of cultural abundance. Secondly, the privileged white faces Rivers/Ho has performed for 20 years have been evident of a certain historical conditioning. This conditioning is a repetitive discursive machine, since Rivers/Ho’s career amply demonstrates the overwhelmingly fixed imagination of the white figure. The contradiction between the powerful figures that he

played and the “cultural fatigue” of endless repetition reveals the stubbornly narrow imagination of the foreign other in local TV culture. Thirdly, in mapping the multiple brown faces, what marks QBoBo’s career distinctive from Rivers/Ho’s clichéd path is his comedic intervention, which largely leads to a visual change for South Asians and to produce a cultural figure called “Hong Kong-Indian.” The ethnic characters that QBoBo has been able to play anchor the racial sites of Indianness and localness at the same time, but only upon a symbolic hierarchical order, in which the privileged signs of “localness” (e.g. Cantonese-speaking, the capitalist drive in life, the urge to assimilate into the dominant culture, etc.) take priority over the racial dimensions of this “brown face.”

In the review of Castro, Rivers/Ho, and QBoBo as representative signs of the EM-context, one defect of the analysis is that it did not take gender difference into consideration. It is no doubt that the problem of race/ethnicity usually entangles with gender issues. In fact, the increasing attention to EM politics in Hong Kong carries a strong gender demand, especially around the exploitation of domestic helpers, religious suppression of EM girls in schools, double cultural invisibility of EM female figure in popular culture, and different forms of EM masculinity in the formation of local neighborhoods, etc. Admittedly, my attention to reveal the shifting symbolic order between Chinese and other ethnicities is limited. A more complex analysis of the shifting racial-gendered formation, or cultural milieu, is definitely in order. I hope future research would tackle it.

An important outcome of my analysis points to the way in which the ethnic figures on TV serves a renewed interest in the TV industry, in a conjuncture in which the social concern for EM affairs has been on the rise. It is found from my analysis of NGEW and RTL that

apart from the struggle for cultural visibility, the ethnic figure is achieving a stronger sense of “localness” in the narrative affective construction. To put it more directly, with ethnic uniqueness as different forms of “localness,” the ethnic figures, which can only be performed by EM actors, recently have become a type of cultural resource for TV producers to enrich the offering of the entertainment business. The problem is once this wonderful otherness has been exhausted by producers, or are effective no more to satisfy the voyeuristic gaze of Chinese audience, what kinds of advantage will non-Chinese artists be able to hold on to? Let us not forget that the reason for Rivers/Ho to quit despite having acted for over twenty years in the local entertainment business is indeed the problem of cultural exhaustion due to endless repetition. QBoBo’s repetitive comedic acts are also poised to become the same kind of exhaustion; an exhausted cultural icon will not only work to dilute the specificity of ethnicity by presenting itself again and again as the “local,” it will also become a cultural cliché. The “funny brown face,” just like the “cold and authoritative white face,” is very much in our TV diet nowadays.

The cost of becoming EMs

My analysis did point to specific forms of popular racialization that breathe life into the becoming-visible of EMs. I have tried to hint that the visibilities come with a certain cost. One of the major components of this thesis is two different textual analyses configuring the “sweetened trouble” in NGEW and the “assimilated neighbor” in RTL. Centering on the affective configuration of anxiety and shame respectively, these two analyses in fact are responses to the conjunctural demand of studying the particular ways in which “becoming EMs” is made possible in Hong Kong.

First of all, my finding shows that recent emergence of ethnic characters with detailed figurations in the popular culture can mainly be attributed to the significant events that firstly lead a contingent shift, even slightly, firstly on the TV production and then on the cultural figuration of racial relation. The formation of the discourse about racial harmony between TVB's "soft approach" and RTHK's "hard approach" is noteworthy. On the one hand, RTHK's official policy-level acknowledgement of minority in the ethnic term since the introduction of the anti-racism law in 2008 has since then accompanied its production shift to the use of the sitcom genre to give birth to the role of the ethnic neighbor. In this way, Singh in RTL appears as a tool for public pedagogy in public broadcasting. This can be considered as a kind of "hard sell," as in pushing to the audience a certain mainstream education on the importance of racial harmony achieved through a recognition of one's ethnic neighbors. On the other hand, the popularity of QBoBo's comedic performance in TVB and the TV producer Wong's good intention to make positive portrayals for EMs roll out the figuration of the comedic ethnic troublemaker. In this way, Interpal in NGEW offers to the commercial broadcasting arena a "soft" appeal to appreciating the struggles and hardship experienced by EMs. When these discourses from TVB and RTHK on racial harmony were codified into concrete cultural signposts that become the felt, experienced reality, at least from a speculative point of view of the receiving audience, then a certain social identification with EMs holds out the prospect of making sense of their largely unacknowledged existence. Therefore, to map out the particular affective reality, my analysis is not merely a content analysis, but a contextual analysis that I attempt in order to locate these historical and social discourses of racial harmony at the EM-context demanding recognition.

Instead of once again relegating EMs as invisible neighbors, both texts strive to redefine racial relations on a basis of the close racial dynamics of the friendship between EMs and their Chinese friends and neighbors. In NGEW, it is shown how EMs strain to survive the working place full of troublesome and hardship in the city, while in RTL, the programme illustrates how Chinese neighbors re-identify their similarities with their EM neighbor. In this sense, NGEW and RTL both insist that racism or racial othering involves more than the mobilization of stereotypes and what is mobilized in fact extends far beyond matters of visual representation. Notice that the reason to take two narrative analytical methods is mainly because studying the operations of anxiety and shame needs specific theoretical engagement.

In NGEW, the sweetened trouble as a structure of feeling insists that the troubles caused by Interpal's racial difference does not simply look negative, even if it always conduces his own and his friends' anxieties. The narrative works as a reminder asking for audience's sympathy for EMs who face the hardship to settle in Hong Kong by acknowledging Interpol's troublous life and urban experience for surviving because of his ethnicity. Thus, the affective reality structured by the sweetened trouble can also be understood as the way for Chinese audience to feel and to be connected with a kind of ethnic diversity that they seldom encounter on TV, or in local popular culture at large. Yet, the problem behind the sweetened trouble is the "sugarcoated racism:" the form of racial othering is not taken in the reproduction of stereotypes, but is a racial framing that positions the racial other in the status of a troublemaker and a fool along with lightened anxieties. In the sugarcoated frame, when QBoBo and the producer repeatedly make the sweetened trouble a "soft sell", this comedic mode may limit South Asians' endeavor for cultural visibility.

As for, RTL, it renders its episode SSS a pedagogical deployment of shame and guilt. I translate Probyn's insistence on the polarity of shame-interest into the theoretical apparatus—"animated shame" in order to map the "assimilated neighboring" as an affective mechanism on approaching EMs as neighbors. I mainly question how the feeling of shame undergoes the process of defamiliarization and reidentification with the existence of the ethnic neighbor. My analysis shows that the text channels itself to repair the racialized shame with the particular interest of the Chinese neighbors, in reconnecting Singh with the cultural similarities among all of them. It tends to center the perspective of the Chinese members' living experience, more than to show multiple local experiences, whether as the Chinese-local or as the ethnic local. The "inclusive appearance of racism" I have indicated from reading SSS stems from echoes of life experience that is not necessarily race-related—the alienated local status, the underprivileged class, the nostalgic story of the passersby. RTL places these misfortunes among the Chinese members of the household in order to enable a sympathetic understanding of the EM's plight. It seems clear that when RTHK's programming promotes the ideal of racial equality and racial harmony to the majority audience, what the discourse the "assimilated neighboring" dedicates to is an affective mechanism in connecting EMs with the local identity, like the identity of the passersby, that can be shared with the Chinese majority.

In other words, the major components of this thesis are two different textual analyses configuring the "sweetened trouble" in NGEW and the "assimilated neighbor" in RTL. Both ideas ground on the affective configuration of anxiety and shame respectively and respond to the conjunctural demand of studying the particular ways under which "becoming a visible EM" is made possible but comes with a certain cost in Hong Kong. So, the main argument of this thesis is this—*The significance of televisual emotions serves as a valuable endeavor to*

understanding particular forms of popular racialization that “sugarcoats” different racisms either in the cover of sympathy toward EM’s anxieties, or through shaming in order to elevate public awareness of EM’s difficulties in assimilating to the dominant culture.

Ultimately, the analytical tools with which I attempt to map the affective realities for the particular texts points out the inadequacy of media studies on the study of cultural identity. What NGEW and RTL both insist is that racism or racial othering involves more than the mobilization of stereotypes, because the politics of race extends far beyond matters of visual representation. As has been mentioned, the method of stereotype analysis dominates the conversation about race presentation in media studies for a long time; the criticism on racism often gets inadvertently reduced to the problem of negative representation. This kind of anti-racism politics on representation may limit the critical intervention to the analysis of content of peculiar image within a specific narrative form; or, more importantly, to the assessment of the extent to which contemporary image of EMs, in detailed figuration, conform to the minor and typecast image. Thus, I humbly suggest that media studies of film and television can endeavor to move narrative analysis more toward an articulation of the contingent and unpredictable affective configurations of ethnicity.

NOTE TO CHAPTER ONE

¹According to the *2011 Population Census*, about 6% population of Hong Kong are ethnic minorities that include: Indonesians (29.6%), Filipinos (29.5%), White (12.3%), Mixed (6.4%), Indians (6.3%), Pakistanis (4.0%), Nepalese (3.7%), Japanese (3.1%), Thais (3.1%), Other Asians (3.1%), and Others (6.2%).

² Ibid.

³In this research, both terms of “ethnicity” or “race” are interchangeably used since they are used to describe the identity or identification of a particular group which is constructed socially and culturally, even though Lo Kwai-cheung (2008) mentions that some critiques hold an analytical distinction between these two terms because of the reason that “race is socially defined but on the basis of physical criteria whereas ethnically is socially constructed through cultural characteristics.”(60)

⁴The way to becoming the “linguistic minority” under the bilingual education system mentioned by Carmichael (2009) helps us understand how the racial minorities’ people who live, study and work in Hong Kong suffer from the incapability of the use of Chinese.

⁵It should be noted that being small in size doesn’t mean the groups are not powerful and influent. With the examination of Hong Kong history, Erni and Leung (2014) mention that the British colonialists as well as settlers and the Indian merchant class have been small in number in Hong Kong, but they get the significant, and even honorable presence in public life, especially administrative and economic arenas.

⁶ CKM is a strong referent for local Chinese to imagine the darker skinned EMs because CKM is the first place to represent EMs as the fearful and mystery other in local history, according to Matthews’s (2011) study.

⁷ These narratives have become dominant since they appeared around the transitional period of handover, and offer different perspectives on the formation of Hong Kong society and its identity.

⁸ The terms of “problematic” and “a problem-space” are interchangeable while used by Grossberg; both mean the initiative in proposing a question that can produce a conjuncture.

⁹ For example, the idea of “utilitarian familism” was published in 1978 by Lau, it mainly provides an explanation of political apathy that locates the causes in the wider culture as well as in weak state-society relations. In fact, in Lui’s market mentality, he always throws these notions into his market mentality, when Lui traced the emergence and the influence of the market mentality that attempts to produce the instrumentalist characteristic and has been embedded into Hong Kong identities, and how this mentality can absorb the impacts from the unpredictable political and economic changes.

¹⁰ Some events have influentially shaped the way of forming Hong Kong society. Take the huge refugee movement from China since 1950s for example; two-thirds of the populations was made up of two millions newcomers. Other important events include Sino-British Joint

Declaration which was signed in 1984, Tiananmen Square massacre happening in 1989 and resulting in a million people joined the rallies in Hong Kong and the handover of Hong Kong's sovereignty in 1997, and so on.

¹¹ It is worth mentioning that Lui's context was developed to respond the handover of 1997. Lui gave two semi-academic writings with a highly circulating rate. *Check, Please: a note of a sociologist on Hong Kong Society* (in Chinese, “唔該，埋單！一個社會學家的香港筆記”) was published in June 1997 when Hong Kong would be returned to China a month later and its second edition was launched ten years later. Meanwhile, Lui turned his analysis of Hong Kong society's formation into a more personal biography and published a small volume Chinese book titled, *Hongkongers in Four Generations* (in Chinese, “四代香港人”), which became well-known and raised much debates on its seeming generation conflict approach.

¹² This second generation who were born in Hong Kong are the post-war baby boomers. They witness Hong Kong's transformation into a colonial administration that could bring bureaucratic corruption under control, facilitate economic development and boost opportunities for social mobility, running the government and the local community with efficiency. Lui claims that this social context reinforces many Hong Kong people's sense of local identity and serves to shape a new identification with Hong Kong as home.

¹³ The term of hegemony originates to Antonio Gramsci, hegemony involves “a specific kind of consensus, a consensus in which a social group presents its own particular interests as the general interests of the society as a whole; it turns the particular into the general.”(Storey, 2010: 113) It should be noted that the term, hegemony, does not appear in Lui's text but the fact that the local Chinese people largely agree with this sense of market mentality to defend their “home” remains. This hegemonic value afterward becomes the major resource forming local identity and exposes their xenophobia on the ethnic issues later.

¹⁴ The amount of this influx is about 400 thousand people coming from Mainland China.

¹⁵ The term of “semi-ethnocracy” created by Sautman, means that one ethnic group rules at the expense of others by setting up the ethnic hierarchy. In Hong Kong's context, Sautman found that “[r]acial inferiorization in Hong Kong is not merely varying degree of disdain for Others. It is the product of a system of differential exclusion of resident peoples from political power. Particularly at the base of the ethnic hierarchy—the space in which migrant SE Asian Women labor—this system imposes legal liabilities and welfare deficiencies at odds with democratic notions of citizenship.” (116)

¹⁶ The effect of reinforcement means that “identity categorizations and category-bound emotions are imposed to the public from that television simply draws towards itself the publicly felt sentiments of in-group pride and out-group contempt, objectifying can consolidate them into the television texts as membership categories.” (Ma, 1999:17)

¹⁷ The eighty-episode dramatic serial, *The Good, the Bad, the Ugly*, was produced by TVB in 1979. A character nicknamed “Ah Chan,” who came from China to rejoin his family, quickly became a popular figure, and Hong Kong people used to name mainland migrants “Ah Chan” then.

¹⁸ Apart from the television discourse, Mainlanders usually appeared as negative, comic or villainous roles in Hong Kong films, such as *Bank-Buster* (1978), *The Long Arm of the Law* (1984), and so forth.

¹⁹ Ma (1999, 2009) also found this ambiguous, or polysemic boundary between Hong Kong-Chinese and mainlanders that happened in the popular films in 1990s.

²⁰ *Hong Kong Legend* is an infotainment series produced by TVB in 1996-97.

²¹ A long-running situation comedy entitled *True Love* which has successfully created this popular character “Auntie Nice,” who came from the mainland in the story but became one of the most beloved television characters in the late 1990s. In the second half of 1990s, this program was broadcast every weeknight for more than five years on TVB. In 2005, moreover, it was re-broadcast every weekday at 6 pm. (Ma, 1999:73)

²² It is titled as *TV, Film and Hong Kong Identity* (影視香港：身份認同的時代變奏).

²³ Ma termed this “sweetened” version of Chinese national anthem that had been featured prominently on television every night. (1999:75)

²⁴ Ma argues that the stigmatization of “Ah Chan” showed some common features with other kinds of insider/outsider configuration across the globe: immigrants and ethnic minorities in many societies were seen as “undisciplined”, “lawless”, “lacking self-restraint”, and “uncivilized”, as compared to established native residents, who were “disciplined” and “law-abiding” and civilized”. (2008:64)

²⁵ On the one hand, spectacularization means that the media tends to use certain ethnic groups, together with their cultural myths or legends as creative elements. On the other hand, stigmatization means that the creators always assign EM people as the criminals, immoral and trouble-making characters in their works. (Tang, 2013:90)

²⁶ Mathews concludes that “this dodgy reputation of Chungking Mansions continues today, largely because of the massive presence of South Asians and Africans in the buildings, as seen through the quasi-racist lenses of Hong Kong Chinese and other rich-world people who don’t quite know how to interact with their poor-world brethren.” (2011:15)

²⁷ The event of Thai Water Festival Parade aims to celebrate Songkran (meaning Thailand New Year) and it is launched in Kowloon City, which has a local Thai community and a number of Thai restaurants.

²⁸ Grossberg explains the term of problem-space in this way, “it is problem-space that constitutes the context or conjuncture, both in terms of boundaries and in terms of the pertinence of various possible elements and lines of determination” (2010:49)

²⁹ The project of “All About Us” is organized under Hong Kong Art Centre’s flagship programme ifva since 2009. Its website (<http://allaboutus.hk>) shows more detail with the project’s background, videos, essays and teaching kit. The author was the student mentor of *All About Us 2014*, and wrote a series of essays in its blog, like EM’s cultural participation, commentary on the short films made by EM students and so on.

³⁰ In Grossberg's terms, the lived-experiential reality can corresponds to the social-material reality in EM-context, when the mapping of lived reality portrays "a complex set of affective articulation and registers that constitute different ways of living in already socially determined locations, different possibilities of the forms of configurations of investment, emplacement and orientation, change and security, attention and mattering, pleasure desire and emotion." (2010:34)

NOTE TO CHAPTER TWO

³¹ To make real the predicament of racism in Hong Kong, since the 1990s these local literatures, I mentioned in Chapter One, highlight that EMs groups face different kinds of discriminations and social exclusions concerning employment, education and social interaction, and on the aspect of obtaining societal provisions, like additional linguistic education, public housing, and so on.

³² Edwyn Tam's intensive and incredible article—"Hong Kong 60s Re-capture"—on the web magazine *Trans World'60s PUNK*, mainly focuses on describing the rise and decline of the band scene from 1964 to 1969.

³³ Cordeiro firstly hosted the very first program in Rediffusion called "Progressive Jazz" which aims to introduce foreign English music from 1949 to 1960. And then he has joined RTHK as a DJ in 1960 and created a world record for 61 years in radio broadcasting. And, remarkably, Cordeiro interviewed with Beatles for three times *Uncle Ray's Official Homepage* (website) highlights. Furthermore, Cordeiro's programs are credited with being one of the reasons for a high standard of spoken English, and they also mainly promoted and nurtured Hong Kong's English-language pop scene in the 60s and 70s in Hong Kong, according to the study on the Hong Kong Pop in English style conducted by Chick and Benson (2014).

³⁴ There is a compilation termed as "classic local songs" with over a hundred non-Chinese songs mostly from 1960s and 1970s that selected by Cordeiro. This compilation implies that the music scene at that time seemed somehow multicultural because of that, apart from most of songs collected are English, there are also Italian (Pepite Cha Cha), Spanish (Historia di un amor), and even Hebrew (Hava Nagila)("Uncle Ray 101: Hong Kong All Time Favorites," *SCMP*, June 20, 2010, R06).

³⁵ In 1961, Nelsson influenced by Beatles formed a guiltier band named The Kontinentals, in which Nelsson sang, played the bass, and wrote songs, eventually issuing two singles while cooperating with Orbit Records. His career in the music business was well on its way. It was disbanded when Nelsson was drafted into the Swedish military. ("Anders Nelsson: A Swedish That Does Not Want To Leave Hong Kong", *Ming Pao*, August 22, 2011)

³⁶ Joe Junior presented as Zoundcrackers in 1966 and as Joe Junior & The side Effects in 1967.

³⁷ "ROCKN'ROLL BURN WEEKLY,"(ROCKN'ROLL BURN 週記) *Milk Magazine*, December 6, 2012, S168.

³⁸ Tszyeung, “Joseph Koo, Tony Carpio, Dickens Bar,” (顧家輝、Tony Carpio、Dickens Bar) *Hong Kong Economic Journal*. January 5, 2012, C07.

³⁹ "Marilyn Palmer Kiss Me Honey Honey Kiss Me". 29 June 2006. *Muzikland* (blog), accessed February 20, 2015. <http://blog.roodo.com/muzikland/archives/1828974.html>

⁴⁰ The Chocksticks was widely recognized when it published the song of “Kowloon Hong Kong” (“The Chopsticks: the first generation of Twins”(筷子姊妹花 第一代 Twins)”, *Apple Daily*, June 14, 2011)

⁴¹ “The Funny Queen of Song—Sandra Leung,”(鬼馬歌后 仙杜拉)” *Headline*, accessed April 12, 2014. <http://news.stheadline.com/figure/?id=396>

⁴² Some of their first appearance in film and TV dramas are as follows, Anders Nelsson in the film *Way of the Dragon* (猛龍過江) in 1972 and the TV drama *Divine Retribution* (世紀之戰) in 2000, Ray Cordeio in the film *The Private Eyes* (半斤八兩) in 1976, Joe Junior in *The Last Message* (天才與白痴) in 1975 and the TV drama *Justice Sung* (狀王宋世傑) in 1997, Teresa Carpio in the film *Happy Ghost* (開心鬼) in 1984 and *The Final Combat* (蓋世豪俠) in 1989, and Sandra Lang in TV drama *The Seasons* (季節) in 1987.

⁴³ The producer Kam singled out Castro because of his greenness and rawness on acting and showed no interest in other Chinese artists who are well trained. Castro further explains in my interview, “Since Mr. Kam Kwong-leung was finding a raw and green boy who fit in the character at that time, many students from the acting class had attempted to contact Mr. Kam and tried to grab that character. After many years, Mr. Kam once told me the reason behind why he denied all those students from acting class was that they were all too well-trained.” (Interviewed with Castro, December 3, 2013; translated by author)

⁴⁴ As a producer, Kam mainly focused on creating a new attractive image for Castro, in order to transform his fame into a teen idol to the local Chinese teenagers. Consequently, the charming image of Castro was the most remarkable to teenagers. His style in the scene once became a trend that is followed by many teenagers in that era; this ethnic ambiguous teen icon was widely received as he offered the similarity in taste of youth, it was proved by that they fancied wearing the flared trousers and platform shoes, having a long hairstyle, and even learning to ride a bicycle.

⁴⁵ Yet, this drama was once criticized as a moral education program for teenagers in the late 1970s. (“Summer Has Gone, So Has Commercial Television, So Has Kam Kwok-leung”(夏天過去了，佳視也是，甘國亮也是), *City Magazine*, September 1978)

⁴⁶ The drama aims at entertaining the audience through intensive impromptu acting among the artists that involved a considerable amount of slapsticks. This drama held the Guinness Record as the longest run short drama. This drama was described as a recall for the collective memory of Hong Kong people in the 1980s especially when it drew tremendous attention for an opera version later on. In 2011, he called for his counterpart at the short drama *Ha Jai's Daddy* (蝦仔爹哋) of the variety show *Enjoy Yourself Tonight* (歡樂今宵) to star in a two-hour musical which received very positive reviews and public attention. According to the

interview for this project, Louie said he spent more than seven years on the preparation of the whole performance for his opera as the role as Ha Jai is the most memorable part throughout his career. Even after thirty years, some people still call him 'Ha Jai'.

⁴⁷ *Enjoy Yourself Tonight* was a popular variety show in Hong Kong. It made its first broadcast on TVB Jade on 20 November 1967. The show lasted 27 years with its last broadcast on Friday 7 October 1994. During the 1980s, it was compared with the American Saturday Night Live to become one of the world's longest running live-shows.

⁴⁸ "Ha Jai's Daddy and its whole family," (蝦仔爹地，全家福) *East Touch*, August 9, 2011, Feature.

⁴⁹ Fonoroff plays a more active part in film acting and being a film critic in Hong Kong, compared to his status in Television industry.

⁵⁰ It is much convincing for Joe Junior to play a role of a durable singer whose famous line, "this city is dying, you know?" has been widely quoted and means to criticize Hong Kong for its lack of diversity for music and culture ("Only Happiness And No Anger" (只有樂沒有怒 Joe Junior), *Ming Pao Weekly*, December 10, 2011).

⁵¹ Keith quitted because he needed a long-term hospitalized treatment for HIV. He died of AIDS in 1995.

⁵² In Hong Kong, it is common that Chinese people used to call Caucasian or white people with a racialized term—"gwei-lo"(鬼佬). Yet, Paul O'Connor argues that many people find the term offensive, when its meaning was understood as ghosts or devils, like "foreign evil." (2012: 156). However, Rivers/Ho understands the term "gwei-lo" more natural as "ghost" rather than "devil" in the Cantonese phrase.

⁵³ Lui, Wei-gyun. "Came to Hong Kong alone: Ho-Kwok Wing's dream came true"(單槍匹馬來港 老外河國榮圓星夢), *Want-Daily*, November 29, 2012, B8.

⁵⁴ Priest Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-1688), who was a Flemish Jesuit missionary in China during Qing dynasty, was born in Flanders that is later part of the modern state of Belgium. In the Chinese history, Verbiest is known as Nan Huai ren. He was an accomplished mathematician and astronomer and proved to the court of the Kangxi Emperor that European astronomy was more accurate than Chinese astronomy. He then corrected the Chinese calendar and was later asked to rebuild and re-equip the Beijing Ancient Observatory, being given the role of Head of the Mathematical Board and Director of the Observatory.

⁵⁵ Remarkably, this admirable trajectory has recently been applied on another Caucasian actor Kei, who has been finally spotted out by audience since his played as Dr. Brown who is a western doctor as well as a missionary worker who saves the protagonists for serial times in the costume drama *Rosy Business* (巾幗梟雄) (2009). The necessity of the ethnic character of Dr. Brown can unfold the historical significance when the period of Western missionaries enters Mainland China. It is evident at the scenes where the church can be isolated from the war because of Kei's foreign position. What's more, this admirable determination is probably applied on another white actor Rodrigues, but he has been unsatisfied with the fact that all the roles he took can only be the good men, such as a priest, the head of Police Force, and a

principal, and longs for the chance on acting villain roles, like a gangster or one who can shot people with guns. However, apart from the white determination on Rodrigues's casting, it should be remarked that the celebrity image of Rodrigues is recognized as supple and sympathetic. On one hand, it may sharp the typecasted roles Rodrigues can play. On the other, it believes that the repetition of the admirable white face can render Rodrigues a beneficial celebrity image. (Interviewed with Rodrigues, March 18, 2014)

⁵⁶ Rivers/Ho was 25 years old in 1991, but he acted as the superintendent with his young face. At that time, he only could speak satisfactory Cantonese with heavy Australian accent.

⁵⁷ According to Rivers/Ho's experience from his interview, it is found that Rivers/Ho did not really earn a brilliant career in most TVB dramas. It is because the majority of the roles he took are minor where he could only play as various supporting roles. Finally, wishing to make a breakthrough on his career, he was no longer satisfied with this given "white face" and decided to leave TVB in 2008 and focused on singing that has long been where his interest lies. Rivers/Ho explained the reason in his personal blog *Rivers/Ho Dare to Dream*, on January 19, 2008, "two year ago, as I had frequently done before, I once again seriously considered my future. Even with eighteen years of loyal service to TVB, I was still seemingly insignificant in their eyes, or at least no significant enough to be given heavier roles. I do not grudge TVB for this because Hong Kong is after all a Chinese Region and as such, major Caucasian roles are almost always unnecessary."(Rivers/Ho, 2008)

⁵⁸ "Who can replace your position?,"(誰能代替你地位) *am703*. December 5, 2013, COVER STORY, B08.

⁵⁹ "Ho Kwok Wing is found being sad,"(鬼見愁河國榮) *3 Weekly*, April 29, 2006.

⁶⁰ "The Bun's principle: Li Ka-shing." (阿賓定理李家聲) *Express Weekly*, 384, December 29, 2005.

⁶¹ Mok, Ka-Chung, "Maria is not a Filipino." (肥媽澄清不是菲律賓人) *Headline*, December 21, 2007. D10.

⁶² For the reason that he wanted people to remember his name easily, he created a stage name—QBoBo. "Q" is derived from his given name Gill, and "Bobo" means cute and harmless connecting to the meaning of "cute baby" in Mandarin. According to his interview, via the name QBoBo aims to create an adorable and harmless image to local people, regardless of how his Indian fellows disagree with it. ("Made in Hong Kong: QBoBo,"(香港製造 喬寶寶) *Sky Post*, October 18, 2012. P38.)

⁶³ There are a few newspaper articles have been written on the topic of QBoBo's impressive performance and his local practice, for instance, Nga-ting's article of "QBoBo: The Indian 'Wai-siu-bo' in Hong Kong"(*Isunaffairs*, issue 32. November 22, 2012), Chow's article "I am Hongkongese: QBoBo"(*East Week*, July 11, 2012. B088-094), Wong's article "Made in Hong Kong: QBoBo"(*Sky Post*, October 18, 2012. P38), and Chow's article "Legal Alien's comedic leave." (*Apple Daily*, September 24, 2012. E16).

⁶⁴ Erni, John, Leung, Yuk-ming, Ho, Kin-chung and Cheung Pui-mei. “QBoBo: A way to live in Hong Kong,”(喬寶寶——一種所謂的香港生存之道) *Ming Pao*, December 9, 2012. E16.

⁶⁵ Two local columnist Wong Siu-zi (“The definition of Hongkongese.”(香港人的定義) *Apple Daily*, December 15, 2012. E06) and Lo Sze-dai (“What is ‘Chinese’?”(甚麼是「中國人」?) *Apple Daily*, December 19, 2012. E10) wrote to make a help on reclaiming QBoBo the local identity through redefining the identity of “Hongkongese”.

⁶⁶ Unfortunately, QBoBo’s actor successful career has temporarily ceased in Hong Kong in July 2012, due to his decision to accompany his Indian wife who must return to the UK to await the official granting of permanent residency status by the Immigration Department of Hong Kong, despite she has lived in Hong Kong for twenty-two years (Erni & Leung, 2014).

⁶⁷ In Western film industry, it is obvious that the dark-skinned ethnicities have been cast as terrorists on screen, such as in two American films *United 93* (2006) and *Zero Dark Thirty* (2012) in, after the terrifying event of September 11 Attack happened in 2001.

⁶⁸ QBoBo’s grandfather went to Shanghai in 1938 working for a British businessman; later on, his priest was born in Shanghai. In 1949, the whole family came to Hong Kong due to the establishment of the Communist Party in China and the fact that his family’s properties were confiscated by the government. After they arrived in Hong Kong, they found out that 90% people speaking Cantonese, which would be the barrier for their lives and business in Hong Kong. Hence, his grandfather sent his grandmother and priest back to India, and he alone stayed in Hong Kong for a small business. After several years, his priest came back to Hong Kong taking over his grandfather’s business and developed his family since then. Apart from QBoBo’s eldest sister, his other siblings were born in Hong Kong. (Interview with QBoBo, 2013)

⁶⁹ Wong works as a producer at TVB for 16 years that she produced more than 30 TV dramas until 2015.

⁷⁰ “The trumped director of TVB: Wong sum-wei.” (TVB 王牌監制王心慰; 真實人性細膩剖析), *Sina Dailynews*, December 2, 2012.

⁷¹ Notice that this TV drama will be studied totally different in Chapter Three, where the annalistic dimension will entangle with the topics of race, affect and TV representation.

⁷² For instance, he is able to use the analogy of “Xi-si”(西施) (meaning a beauty), a Cantonese term representing an image of a pretty Indian woman, and “Goeng-si,”(殭屍, meaning a type of Chinese vampire), to make the comparison between young and old women.

⁷³ The postcolonial Hong Kong has still a considerable number of Caucasians which accounted for 0.8 % of the whole population with over 700 million people according to the *2011 Population Census*. The amount of Caucasians is counted as 55,236, which is over the whole population with 7,071,576 (including foreign domestic helpers).

NOTE TO CHAPTER THREE

⁷⁴To have a better understanding about what her production deals with, I have interviewed Wong for the details, such as sitcom techniques, racial perception, media vision and so on.

⁷⁵ In the premiere week, the rating of NGEW reached 28. As for other dramas broadcast at the same time, *Come Home Love* (愛回家) got 26 in rating and *Master of Play* (心戰) got 24. According to the previous TV reviews published on newspapers, one comment points out that “NGEW is successful because the plot is very realistic and close to audience’s stressful working life, specifically when it talks about the conflicts between the employers and the employees” (Lam, Pui. “When Heaven Burns” Will Win Its Way” (台慶頒獎禮專輯：《天與地》冇得輸). *Apple Daily*, November 24, 2012. C22); another comment suggests that the tone of this TV show is so lively and relaxing that audience can enjoy the pain with pleasure (Lam, Dan-dan. “Familiar Popular Faces In No Good Either Way”(《沖呀！瘦薪兵團》：都是熟面孔，人氣看漲！), *Nanfung Daily*. July 2, 2012. B03). However, Lee Chi-kwong, a TV columnist and also one of the DJs hosting *Made in Hong Kong*, criticizes the script for being too weak as well as simple and lack of novelty. He also argues that the setting of the social relationships among the characters and their office life is unrealistic but he deems the two charming comedians, Louis Yuen and QBoBo, the vital reason for NGEW to reach its popularity (Lee Chi-kwong, “How To Distinguish Between Drama Series At Two Prime Time Slot?”(熟口熟面 兩線劇點分辨?), *Oriental Sunday*. July 3, 2012. P088).

⁷⁶ The term “da-gong-zai” refers to a group of employees who work at various positions in an office; the meaning of this term is different from the historical term of working class given by factories. In NGEW, da-gong-zai shares a similar condition of being a particular class. The Chinese title of NGEW –“Chung Ar! Sau San Bin Tun”(衝呀！瘦薪兵團)—literally means “Go! Low Salary Group” The term “low salary group” directly point out the class condition of da-gong-zai in the world of NGEW—a group of people getting low pay, no matter what positions they are situated in workplaces and being together to fight for their benefits. And the first word, “Go,” indeed generates a feeling of motivation for this subordinate group. In addition, the theme song, “sau-san-juk”, sung by Ruco Chan, Louis Yuen and QBoBo, also creates a kind of solidarity among that “shared community.”

⁷⁷ In the end of the first episode, Alex loses his confidence, and beginning to worry about his prospect and the future in GOTECH. Feeling a vague alarm, he says, “A paradise will be turned into a living hell because of the disturbance of a wicked dog.” Being aware of Violet’s interruption to his career, Steve appears worried and anxious. Simultaneously, the beforehand announcement of his promotion becomes a great brag, whose reveal in front of his sister brings him mockery and humiliation.

⁷⁸ Here, the language of Chinese is equal to Cantonese, which is the major type of Chinese used in Hong Kong.

⁷⁹ This is the first sentence to introduce the story of NGEW in TVB official website (accessed on June 17, 2015: <http://programme.tvb.com/drama/nogoodeitherway>)

⁸⁰Although this drama also displays characters with other ethnicities and nationalities, such as a Thai Chinese who cannot speak decent Cantonese, a termagant mistress coming Hong Kong

from Mainland China, a white German caring only about teamwork, an affectionate Japanese businessman emphasizing credit and so on, to make this research more concentrated, only Hong Kong Chinese and Indian communities will be looked closely in this chapter. Compared to other dramas which QBoBo has taken part in and which sometimes will have some minor characters with South Asian background, NGEW presents a rather complete landscape of daily life for Indian Communities.

⁸¹As a member of culture industry, QBoBo in the interview agrees with the diligent image constructed by NGEW, which grant South Asians a progressive and positive representation, compared with the negative and long-lived one with dependence and menace.

⁸² There is a huge flea market containing electronics, electrical components, and related items in Apliu Street. A shopper can find both new and used merchandise in the area. Apliu Street is well known for geek shopping, and in the past, it had an unsavory reputation for thieves' market.

⁸³“The term ‘pak pai’ first appears in Hong Kong. It is a common usage for Hong Kong people to call the vehicles which should not use for commercial purposes but are used to make profits because this sort of vehicles are equipped with the license plate in black numbers and white background. In the most authoritative and largest dictionary in the English-speaking world—*The Oxford English Dictionary*, pak pai is included as an official entry. In this entry, it is introduced that the term coming from Hong Kong and used in other countries to name the unlicensed cab because private cars are with the white license plate.” (Hugo Tseng, “English term for ‘Cars with White License Plate,’” *Apple Daily Taiwan*, 9 Jul 2014)

⁸⁴ The word stereotype was originally a printing term, derived from the process where rows of type were literally fixed on a plate (called the “stereotype”) which then makes an impression on paper (Creeber, 2006b).

⁸⁵ Walter Lippman (1922) refers to stereotypes as “pictures in our heads” of other people or more accurately, of the identity and nature of other group of people.

⁸⁶ The concept of “framing,” for Downing and Husband (2005), can note “how something unsaid, out of frame, may be as (or more) important in representing ethnicity or ‘race’ as what is said”(36). For example, lots of evidence shows that “restricting African Americans in TV entertainment largely frame them in a buffoon role” (37). What’s more, it is an evaluative perspective for us to focus on this study precisely because of the centrality of the visuality in “race” and inter-ethnic relation.

⁸⁷ Syugwa(舒寡) is a researcher on soup opera genre in Hong Kong.

⁸⁸ In order to discover the textual specificity of TV series, Pribram returns to Linda Williams’s (2009) notion of “moving pictures” in two senses: “as movement in physical action and as the ability to move us emotionally” (47). It allows her to grasp the significance of the coupling of emotional and bodily action, and such coupling enables the impulse of justice to be represented.

⁸⁹ In general, moving pictures can be recognized as a set of moving “physical action”—we therefore can view actions acted by characters and the development of story; moving pictures are even more emotional actions—there is an ability to move us in them. (Pribram, 2011)

⁹⁰ Pribram employs Sara Ahmed’s understanding of politics of affect to point out that we should notice the work of emotions. Pribram emphasizes that we should not ask what emotions do when we examine the function of emotions. Emotions free us from inner individuality and privacy and make us focus on them to be a significant approach to interact with the society. By doing so, we are able to identify the meaning among people, stories, and experiences. Therefore, the circulation of emotions (namely what emotions do) is the possibility to build up the inter-individual relation and the relation between individual and social structure. Sara Ahmed (2004) suggests in her book, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, that emotions cannot be occupied independently and substantially. Instead, emotions attach to people, things, thought, and events, placing them into emotional meanings. Thus, when we attempt to change or challenge the social norm, it means that we have to handle these relations with different scales. In their working process, emotions create, fix and change the position of a subject and the identity in a society. As a cultural structure, emotions can connect unique history and various meanings to build up a particular identity.

⁹¹ There are several recognized types of anxiety disorders, including panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, specific phobias, and generalized anxiety disorder. (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015b)

⁹² TVB’s TV series which involve QBoBo are mainly produced by producer Amy Wong (please refer to Chapter Two). Through Wong’s understanding of the South Asian characters in television series, I attempt to suggest that there is a significant relation between Wong’s attitude to EMs and her style of producing comedy.

⁹³ The narrative of sitcom genre tends to “soften the social conflicts and tension with gags, one-liners, warm moments, physical comedy and ideological conflicts” (Feuer, 2008).

⁹⁴ If NGEW is classified as a continual series, it follows a general structure of storytelling that informs that an episode may feature a disruption in usual situations and interactions among characters. However, this is usually settled in the end of an episode and the situation returned to how it is prior to the disruption. These episodes are then linked by the overarching storyline, driving the show forward. That is what “Order-disorder-order-disorder” structure Creeber called implicitly suggests that things should and will always remain as they are. (2006b:47)

⁹⁵ Following Glehill’s original concept of “cultural signpost,” Pribram outlines the relationship between genres and cultures by defining it as a process of negotiation in which “media fictions circulate in society, supplying generic signs as cultural signposts.” It thus enables genres to articulate in societies as aesthetic questions. This process is described as formulating of a social imaginary, whereby “reality is discursively shaped and a resulting ‘social imaginary’ becomes materially and aesthetically concrete in the form of a specific film, television, or other text” (50).

⁹⁶ “In Williams’ estimation, what is disregarded has to do largely with the ways public ideals are experienced or felt by people, how they are “lived” . . . the development of the notion of

structure of feeling makes possible the identification of such lived omissions and consequences, which are myriad, complex, and dispersed across the social landscape” (Pribrum, 2011:93).

⁹⁷ Interpal believes that with brilliant performance and quick wit, it is still possible to find chances for rising in Hong Kong according to the following conversation:

Steve: “Now, the working environment in Hong Kong is really tough.”

Interpal: “Hey, it doesn’t matter! I am smart! This time I decided to concentrate on Mark-Six! Remember the Indian who have scooped forty million in a lottery? He has inspired me!”

Steve: “You must be kidding me! Getting a fever is much easier!” (teasing him)

Interpal: “ I just saw you at the lottery station. Not only did I want to win the Mark-Six, but you also have the same wish!”

Steve: “It’s different!”

Interpal: “It is just the same and the God of Wealth has no racial discrimination!”

Steve: “You are right!” [Episode 3: scene 3.6]

⁹⁸ The position Interpal applies for is a community assistant officer who works at the community center and is required to organize events, to apply funding and to handle the residents’ enquiries.

⁹⁹ “Local Born QBoBo On His Way To Be A Star” (土生土長喬寶寶，踏星之旅), *PressTeen*, 2012-08-16 / “No Good Either Way reflect the reality”(《瘦薪兵團》反映現實), *Macao Daily*. June 19, 2012. D03 / “QBoBo’s Leaving Hong Kong TV Industry As His Wife Failed In The Application of HKSAR Passport” (喬寶寶老婆申請特區護照不成 被迫移民退出娛圈). *HeadLine*, July 9, 2012. P18.

¹⁰⁰ This countryman also named Interpal is a security guard of a hotel, which Mrs. Szema often patronizes. Arranging Mrs. Szema’s car via walkie-talkie, he is asked if he can introduce any of his fellowmen who cannot speak Mandarin by Mrs. Szema, who has just fired her driver. Accidentally, this countryman refers Interpal to Mrs. Szema, for he does not know that Interpal knows Mandarin. Thus, Interpal pretends that he does not understand Mandarin, speaking only English.

¹⁰¹ In order to make this research method possible and systematic, I turn different ways of displaying anxieties into four types of signifiers of anxieties in this TV drama: the bodily signifiers (e.g. eyesight directions, sweating, visible bodily gestures, and so on), the verbal signifiers (e.g. dialogues, tone of voice, specific language phrases, and so on), the signifiers of sense and emotion (e.g. portrayals of anger, nervousness, worry, disappointment, fear and so on), and the interactional signifiers (e.g. the distance between bodies and so on).

¹⁰² Interpal asks the dealer if it makes profit. He gets the response as follow: “It is a big fortune! After these electronic appliances to be transported to India, they can be sold by pieces. We have such a huge market in India; of course we have customers.”

¹⁰³ The choice of transliterating this word is to explain the effect of double meanings brought by this specific character. Bok beng (薄餅) generally means pizza in Cantonese but here when employed by Interpal, it is given the possible reference to chapati or roti.

¹⁰⁴ Raja and Interpal talk to Interpal's mother who lives in India via video communication. At that time, Raja promise to be Interpal's caretaker and keeper.

¹⁰⁵ What is noteworthy it that according to the narrative two subplots constitute, we can know that Interpal's mother believes in Raja more than her own son to whom she has more worry about the possibility for him to go astray; the elders in Indian communities care the unity of the kinsmen more than justice.

¹⁰⁶ Afterward, Alex honestly tells Sam the theft of ES and receives his forgiveness. His honesty restores his relationship with Ling. He finally completes ES and saves GOTECH from being bankrupt.

¹⁰⁷ In Episode 14, Interpal attributes his hairy body as much as muscular to the male figures of Spartan warriors in the film *300* (2006).

¹⁰⁸ However, for Wong, this comedic mask is an exact outcome that QBoBo can bring about, as casting this ethnic troublemaker can offer something "new" to entertain the audience. According to Wong, the rare role QBoBo casted can refresh the old formula of making a troublemaker. There is a set of formula in it: I am a weak person; when you oppress me, the audience will sympathize me. But the problem is that who am I and why am I oppressed? Trying to answer this question can form some new elements." (Interviewed with Wong, February 11, 2015)

NOTE TO CHAPTER FOUR

¹⁰⁹ The clip of SSS has already been uploaded on YouTube (Accessed May 15, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxwK944hovo>)

¹¹⁰ The stories of eight major characters from different social backgrounds are weaved to be the main plot. With the flow of the plot, each character will encounter different adversities among which the rootless and unexpected diversity are the two main problems chosen to represent what HK society face. In this house, Lee and Taoist are the co-owner while the rest are tenants. In their neighborhood, they interact with one another in terms of kinship, love, and brotherhood; more crucially, as a "current sitcom" they are set up to come across various social issues in each episode.

¹¹¹ Here I take Eric Ma's cultural figuration on Hong Kong Chinese mentioned in Chapter Two to indicate that Hong Kong Chinese is constructed differently from Mainland Chinese especially in cultural aspect.

¹¹² Institutionally, although the government funds RTHK as a public sector, it is operated as an independent government department under the Communications Authority. Thus, its editorial autonomy has long been under controversy, when HKSAR government can appoint the head of RTHK.

¹¹³ According to RTHK's instruction, *Charter of Radio Television Hong Kong*, in order to offer the radio and television service to the general public of Hong Kong, RTHK needs to concern EM groups when it has to achieve its public purpose and mission according to the

written claim; for instance, Point 5(c) indicates that RTHK should deliver “programming which contributes to the openness and cultural diversity of Hong Kong,” and Point 5(e) pinpoints that RTHK “serve[s] a broad spectrum of audiences and cater on needs of minorities interest groups.”

¹¹⁴ In RTHK’s website, the minutes of official consultations are only offered from 2011 to 2013. It proves, what I will argue, RTHK’s particular interest in ethnic minorities. For example, in the report of *Reviewing Pilot Project For Community Involvement Broadcasting (CIB) service* in 2011, the public agrees the project CIB as being helpful and effective to transmit EMs’ culture, and also empower EMs’ cultural engagement in the air. In *RTHK Program Advisory Panel* (2012), instead of enhancing English channels to EM people suggested by legislative councilor Mok, the founder of Unison Hong Kong, Fermi Wong, suggested that RTHK’s programming should help EMs express themselves as well as receive the update information from the mainstream (5). In *RTHK Program Advisory Panel* (2013), the evaluation shifted to the multicultural participation in media production, the local scholar Leung Yuk-ming argued that the offer of broadcasting skills, television production occupation and broadcasting channels is compulsory and crucial to encourage EMs to express their creativity (12). And, Fermi Wong also advocated that RTHK should foster the concern from the local society by exploring EMs’ daily life that may include the new EM immigrant and foreign residents (6).

¹¹⁵ There are few examples, *This Week* (視點 31) in issue of EM pupil learning Chinese Language and its policy (RTHK, 2014-03-04), *Hong Kong Connection* (鏗鏘集) in issues of EM’s local identity (RTHK, 2012-05-13) and of EM’s frustration on application of HKSAR passport (RTHK, 2012-10-15), *Hong Kong story* (香港故事) in issues of EM’s integration (RTHK, 2014-10-27) and so on. Very significantly, the EM’s theme documentary *Hong Kong, My Home* (我家在香港) shows over than 8 ethnic groups though demonstrating their integration into HK society with their efforts and creativities, and by introducing their particular histories and particular cultural livings, with 10 episodes in 2015. In addition, the docudrama *A Mission for Equal Opportunities* with four units from 2007 to 2013 that illustrates racial issue in a legal term. This program has been produced by the coordination between RTHK and EOC each two years. It must include at least one serial on the topic of race to illustrate different forms of racial discrimination against EMs, mainly South Asian residents, such as “Hong Kong’s colored life” (港色生活) and “My given name, my family name” (我的名字, 我的姓氏) in 2007, “Assalamu Alaikum, Hello” part A and part B in 2009, “Inherent ethnic differences” (天生有種) in 2011, “minority in number” (少數) in 2013. Notice that the casted EM actors or actress mostly are not professional artists.

¹¹⁶ Uptil 2015, there have been four TV dramas that have an interracial cast, apart from *RTL*(2009) and its second season *Rooms to Let 2010* (2010), two other programs are *Dreams Come True* (總有出頭天, 2013) and *Dreams Come True 2014* (2014) that both are funded by and cooperated with the Construction Industry Council. Their interracial casts are found that EM role is set as one of protagonists with a complex interpersonal dynamic with other characters, for instance, in terms of friendship, working partnership and even love relationship.

¹¹⁷ Wong was appointed to take the leading position of RTHK as the director of broadcasting from 2008 to 2011.

¹¹⁸ Fong, Ching. “The new lead of RTHK’s Television Department”(張文新笑迎數碼新階段 港台電視部舵手), *Hong Kong economic times*, September 24, 2009. C02.

¹¹⁹ It is about his well-known production on the famous docudrama *Below the Loin Rock*. (“The intermediary: Franklin Wong”(中間人 黃華麒), *East Touch*, September 22, 2010)

¹²⁰ Lam, Ching-man, “Situation Comedy’s culture and sociality”(處境喜劇的文化和社會性), *HKEJ*, December 2, 2009. P42.

¹²¹ The art critic Pang Chi-ming (“Rooms To Let?” (有房出租?)). *HKEJ*, October 12, 2009) comments that RTL as a satiric comedy can well execute sitcom skills, like the virtual, exaggerate and humorous manner, in terms of satirizing and exposing the malady of the society and of HKSAR government, at the moment when public criticism suspected that RTHK’s editorial independence was intervened by the political censorship.

¹²² This sentence is quoted from the introduction of SSS on its official website. (Accessed May15, 2014. <http://www.rthk.org.hk/rthk/tv/roomstolet/20091025.html>)

¹²³ Shame is actually a painful and nagging feeling to human and the society but it is at the same time dismissed and ignored. Probyn (2005) insists that, on the one hand, unlike other negative feelings such as anger, rage, guilt, hatred and sadness, shame is seldom discussed in popular and academic realms. On the other hand, comparing with different kinds of entitled pride, such as national pride, black pride, gay pride and even fat pride, all the political projects promise the eradication of shame.

¹²⁴ An affective turn within the humanities and social sciences has been problematizing our traditional notion of social construction of cultural causality (Pruchnic, 2008). Gregg and Seigworth (2010) have concluded that affect theorists have given substantial shapes to the two dominant vectors of affect study in the humanities: one is Silvan Tomkins’s psychobiology of differential affects and the other is Gilles Deleuze’s Spinozaist ethology of bodily capacities (6). While there is no pretending that these two vectors of affect theory could ever be easily and fully reconciled, they can be made to interpenetrate at a particular point and to resonate. Probyn’s shaming theory remarks this interpenetration that “the perspective of body, as truly corporeal, that will lead us into a new understanding of how we inhabit society and what it means to embody the social” (27).

¹²⁵ After Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank in 1995 introduced American psychologist Silvan Tomkins in *Shame and it Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, the modality of affect and its corporeal nature has been broadly applied and discussed in academic fields of literary and cultural criticism, and in critical humanities (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010; Ngai, 2005; Probyn, 2005; Pruchnic, 2008).

¹²⁶ This term should be traced back to Probyn’s use of such productive nature of shame more applicably on studying habitus and everyday life. She modified Pierre Bourdieu’s (1990) notion of habitus in lacuna with what Tomkins’ affect theory and the anthropologist Marcel Mauss’ work (1979) to pinpoint the physiological understanding of producing knowledge of body. Critically speaking, the ways of regarding shame as an emotion by privileging its

cognitive existence within the wide epistemology of engaged sociology, it has disparaged what the body goes when it is feeling shame. The ways to using affect to describe shame are more critical or open to considerations of what have happened in the body, and its components, such as the bodily reactions, the brain and the nervous system. This affective perspective of body gives us a new understanding of embodiment on how the feeling body animates the social (in Mauss's sense) rather than how the social inhabits the body (in Bourdieu's sense).

¹²⁷ In Probyn's account on "White shame," Kim Mohood's (2000) literature displays that her physiological shame was experienced while being a part of the aboriginal community in Australia that remarks physiologically her inherited habitus that has changed and differ to her father, Probyn finds that, when shame is activated by interest, white shame can only be found in the habitus that Mohood's body express such interest, and then registers that the interest cannot be fully follow through on (2005:70)

¹²⁸ Here, the approach I use shame's animatedness is different from Pribram's account of emotion which tends to see emotions as "attachment" to people, objective, ideas, and events in order to offer them emotional meanings.

¹²⁹ Here, I want to make a distinction between "ethnic" and "racial." On one hand, the term "ethnic" refers to Singh's cultural and social experience in his local life. On the other hand, the term "racial" refers to his bodily and habitual signatures that can indicate the Indian layer of Singh. In order to avoid confusion between these two similar terms, I will use "cultural" to replace "ethnic" in this chapter.

¹³⁰ Indeed, seeing Singh as the reference of a racial other shows that the racial minorities are situated in a status of "dis-appearance" which they do not completely disappear or are not absent but are neglected because of the cultural indifference in the local community. On the one hand, the bodily markers of the racial difference are highly visible to Chinese eyes, so the existence of racial minorities is absolutely recognizable for their Chinese neighbors. On the other hand, the Chinese community only notices racial minorities' presence when the community senses the threats of racial minorities reported by the news coverage.

¹³¹ While as a way to investigate the self-evaluation capacity of shame, Sedgwick and Frank's understanding on the affect system as an analogy inevitably opens up the question on "finite and concrete multiplication of different possibilities" (Probyn, 2005:21) of shame. So the differentiation of experience of can be initiated by being shame. It will show us how things differentiate through shame. Here, I translate this analogical or differentiated significance into the model of "repairing" that is seen more valid in doing a textual analysis.

¹³² "Racially dis-eased corpus" is a term Ngai uses to describe the black female protagonist in *Quicksand* easily affected by different kinds of light-intensity irritation once her body is situated into various interracial (White and Black) public space (2005).

¹³³ This remarkable film was produced by Shaw Brother (Hong Kong) Limited that is a long last film company in Hong Kong.

¹³⁴ Lo's (2008) notion on the racial others who are invisible in political participation and Hong Kong's subject formation in the postcolonial condition. Lo has claimed that Chinese

were re-positioned into the center of power as a substitution of British colonizer, and underwent “making threatening differences unseen is a strategy of colonial control. It is not only the everyday exercise of control that is invisible. Those who are colonized have also been made indiscernible.”(62) Indeed, regarding the failure of Hong Kong, which proclaims itself as a place with multiculturalism but makes the racial minorities unseen, Lo theorizes this condition of underrepresented racial minorities that leads to my understanding about the cultural status of them, which looks as invisible as the ghostliness in the Chinese community. Yet, when this research shows that the cultural representation of South Asian in various texts of TV culture, either from TVB or RTHK, has been found recently, the Lo’s criticism on the racial underrepresentation can be questioned.

¹³⁵ Notice that the giant commercial broadcasting company TVB, which has hired almost of the non-Chinese artists than ATV, produces all these non-Chinese characters I accounted.

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Directed by Shan-Hsi Ting (丁善璽). Written by Shan-Hsi Ting (丁善璽). Film.

Tiger Cubs (飛虎), TVB. June 24, 2012. Produced by Chi-Wah Lam (林志華). Written by
Anna Yee-Wa Lee (李綺華). Television.

To Catch The Uncatchable (棟篤神探), TVB. July 19, 2004. Produced by Steven
Ching-Hong Tsui (徐正康). Written by Ting-Ting Choi (蔡婷婷) and Siu-Chi Lam
(林少枝). Television.

Triumph in the Skies (衝上雲霄), TVB. October 27, 2003. Produced by Ka-Tak Poon (潘嘉德). Written by Sharon Koon-Ying Au (歐冠英) and Man-Wa Leung (梁敏華).
Television.

Twilight of a Nation (太平天國), TVB. November 28, 1988. Produced by Sang Siu (蕭笙).
Written by Wing-Hong Tang (鄧永康). Television.

“Unidentified” (身份不明), Hong Kong Connection (鏗鏘集), RTHK. October 15 2012.
Produced by Kwan-ping Lee (李君萍). Television.

United 93, United International Pictures and Universal Pictures. 2006. Produced by T. Bevan, E. Fellner, P. Greengrass, and L. Levin. Directed by P. Greengrass. Written by P. Greengrass. Film.

Untraceable Evidence 2 (鑑證實錄 II), TVB. January 4, 1999. Produced by Ka-Tak Poon (潘嘉德). Written by Wai-Nam Ku (賈偉南). Television.

Wasabi Mon Amour (和味濃情), TVB. January 28, 2008. Produced by Wai-Kin Chong (莊偉建). Written by Kam-Ling Chan (陳金鈴) and Mei-Wun Lo (盧美雲). Television.

Way of the Dragon (猛龍過江), Concord Production Inc. and Golden Harvest Productions. 1972. Produced by Raymond Man-Wai Chow (鄒文懷). Directed by Bruce Lee (李小龍). Written by Bruce Lee (李小龍). Film.

Welcome To The House (高朋滿座), TVB. 10 April, 2006. Produced by Marco Wing-Yin Law (羅永賢). Written by Ting-Ting Choi (蔡婷婷) and Chung-Ling Kwan (關頌玲).
Television.

When Heaven Burns (天與地), TVB. November 21, 2011. Produced by Jonathan Gei-Yee Chik (戚其義). Written by Yuk-Ming Chow (周旭明). Television.

Witness To A Prosecution II (洗冤錄 II), TVB. 24 February, 2003. Produced by Hin-Fai Siu (蕭顯輝). Written by Veronica Ching-Yee Chan (陳靜儀). Television.

Zero Dark Thirty, Columbia Pictures and Universal Pictures. 2012. Produced by K. Bigelow, M. Boal and M. Ellison. Directed by K. Bigelow. Written by M. Boal. Film.

101 Citizen Arrest (101 拘捕令), ATV. 1983. Produced by Kar-Ho Lau (劉家豪). Television.

7 Days in Life (隔離七日情), TVB. January 24, 2011. Produced by Choi-Yuen Leung (梁材遠). Written by Siu-Tung Ng (吳肇銅). Television.

72 Tenants of Prosperity (72 家租客), TVB and Shaw Brother. 2010. Produced by Chi-wai Tsang (曾志偉). Directed by Chi-wai Tsang and Nim-sum Ip (葉念琛) and Su-gai Chung (鍾澍佳). Film.

Appendix

Personal Interviews

Amy Sum-wei Wong. Hong Kong. 11 February 2015

TV producer of TVB

Anders Nelson. Hong Kong. 29 March 2014

Singer, Actor

Joe Junior (Jose Maria Rodriguez Júnior). Hong Kong. 3 December 2013

Singer, Actor

Kwok-wing Ho (Gregory Charles Rivers). Hong Kong. 25 April 2014

Actor

Louie Castro. Hong Kong. 3 December 2013

Singer, Actor, MC

Peter Chan. Hong Kong. 21 October 2013

Actor

QBoBo (Gill Mohinderpaul Singh). Hong Kong. 28 January 2013

Actor

Ricky Chan. Hong Kong. 21 October 2013

Actor, Hairstylist

Singh Hartihan Bitto. Hong Kong. 28 February 2013

Actor, Model

CURRICULUM VITAE

Academic qualifications of the thesis author, Mr. LEUNG Shi Chi:

- Received the degree of Bachelor of Cultural Studies (Honours) from Lingnan University, August 2013.
- Received the association degree of Associate in Applied Social Sciences (Sociology and Culture) from Hong Kong Polytechnic University Hong Kong Community College, August, 2010.

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