Chinese Television as a Medium of National Interpellation: Diasporic Responses to the CCTV Production of the Spring Festival Gala

by

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This dissertation considers how the party-state of the People’s Republic of China has been mobilizing various forms of interpellation in an attempt to sustain a continuous imagination of a particular community defined on the terms of a shared “Chinese” national identity. As well, the research considers how these forms of interpellation have been challenged by a range of complex diasporic viewer responses. Taking media productions of the Mainland China television industry as my point of reference, I have studied in detail, multiple productions of the widely popular, complex program, the Spring Festival Gala (SFG) produced by China Central Television. Though not without its contradictions, this show has employed various interpellative strategies, persistently and continuously hailing viewers into the subject position of loyal members of an enduring “Chinese Nationality.”

However, interpellation is one thing, subjectification within it is another. To better grapple with the cultural citizenship of transnationalized Chinese, this dissertation also considers observations regarding the receptions of the SFG by diasporic “Chinese subjects” who now live in Canada. While their continuous imagining of the “Chinese Nationality” helps to better understand the complex mechanisms which contribute to the retaining power of interpellation, their
moments of “de-imagining” also shed light on the problems and difficulties of such interpellation. These moments are considered as possible openings to the formation of fluid, multiple Chinese subjectivities that lay the groundwork for a “flexible citizenship” (Ong, 1993; 1999) for all “Chinese,” furthering the endeavor to go beyond certain nationalist and/or statist visions of identity, subjectivity, and citizenship.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am greatly beholden to all who have helped me during this journey and have acquired many debts to these individuals over the past few years.

As a teacher to his disciples, Confucius was always patient. This certainly makes Dr. Roger I. Simon a Confucian – subject position he might not be willing to assume, but one that he nonetheless occupies in my assessment. His consistent patience, amongst his many virtues, has saved me from foolishness over and over again. Thanks to Roger, I finally understand the meaning of intellectual rigor, ethical groundedness and encyclopedic vision. This dissertation would not have been possible without his care and carrying.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Jo-Anne Dillabough, my MA supervisor and dissertation committee member. Since my MA program, Jo-Anne has remained a mentor and sister figure to me. However busy or far away, she is always there for me, pushing me to think harder while giving me peace of mind.

My gratitude towards Dr. Ruth Hayhoe is equally profound. Not only has Ruth been readily available to me, as she so generously is for all of her students, but she has always responded to my writing in an incredibly prompt manner. I also truly appreciate her guidance and amazingly meticulous reading of my work.

I would also like to thank Dr. Ruoyun Bai and Dr. Ying Zhu for coming on board at the last stage of this journey. Their scholarship on Chinese society in general and Chinese media in particular has truly rounded out my understanding of the subject matter of this dissertation.
My appreciation goes out to my beloved editor, Carol Lynne D’arcangelis. Carol Lynne’s work has made reading this dissertation a much less painful process. Knowing someone is out there who has succeeded in making my thoughts more accessible to like minds will always bring forth fond feelings and memories for me.

I owe special thanks to my friend Paritosh Mehta. Our first serious talk happened on the 509 Streetcar while on the way to work. Since then, his stories, especially those about Indian diasporas, have remained a wonderful source of inspiration to me throughout this journey. I also thank him for his trust and his help in my professional advancement.

Three friends who now live in China deserve my gratitude as well. During every phone conversation and in every email or instant message, Hua Huang, Dr. Hong Zhu and Hui Jiang never forgot to ask me about this project and to give me all the support and encouragement I could have asked for and more. From the bottom of my heart, I thank them for their loyal friendship and their generous confidence in me.

My sincere appreciation also goes to those who kindly agreed to participate in this project. I chose not to disclose their names and keep them anonymous so as to save them from any possible inconvenience. Nevertheless, for what they have given to me, I am forever grateful.

Last but not the least, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to my family, my wife Bo Liu and our son Bophilias Liu Cui. Even though from time to time, Bo would understandably lose her temper as I kept writing and revising
without appearing to make much progress, she has been there for me all along. She has not only provided sustenance in the form of beautiful food on the table on a daily basis, but also a sense of home and a beautiful boy after enduring a serious illness. Since coming into the world two and a half years ago, Bophy has been diverting me from writing in many wonderful ways. A boy funny and jovial by nature, Bophy has taught me that true joy is found in playing with him! Having now learned to speak both Mandarin and English, perhaps one of those days he will be able to philosophize more thoroughly my deepest love for him and his mother, and share this love to the world.
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DEDICATION

For
My lovely wife Bo
My rambunctious son Bophy
And my second baby who is due on Bophy’s Birthday
INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of Problems

1.1 Central Concern: What Sustains the “Chinese Nation”? 

Though couched in diverse terms and represented in multiple ways, “Chinese Nationality,” as the claimed common marker for all “Chinese subjects,” has survived an extremely turbulent history of over five thousand years.¹ In academic discourses, this concept, together with other related terms such as “China,” “Chinese,” “Chineseness,” and/or “Chinese Nation,”² have largely been treated as non-issues. In popular discourses, they are also thriving, creating an image that all “Chinese subjects,” whether Mainlanders,³ non-Mainlanders,⁴ or diasporic Chinese subjects,⁵ have unquestionably lived out or represent “the image of their communion” (Anderson, 1983:6).

¹ Certainly, this is not to say that “Chinese Nationality” has never been challenged from either within or outside of China. As a matter of fact, the continuity of “Chinese history,” the consistency of “Chinese territory,” and the constitution of the “Chinese people” have frequently been interrupted and interrogated, and therefore repeatedly reconfigured and restructured, throughout history.
² I must clarify at the outset my uses of several closely interrelated terms that are central to this thesis. While Chinese Nation or Chinese Nationality refers to a more historically and culturally defined collective which encompasses all self-claimed, other-identified and/or state-prescribed Chinese subjects, Chinese nation-state is used to denote the political entity which claims to represent the interests of the Chinese nation. In addition, whereas Chinese state is largely used as a synonym for various Chinese governments which have been the central governing bodies of “China” at different times, Chinese party-state is used to signify the post-1949 Chinese state when The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) became the supreme political party of the Chinese state.
³ By Mainlanders, I am referring to those who still live in Mainland China as opposed to Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and other countries. People in this large group are mainly composed of the Han majority and other minority nationalities.
⁴ By non-Mainlanders, I am referring to those who still live in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan as opposed to Mainland China and other countries.
⁵ By diasporic Chinese subjects or Chinese diaspora, I am referring to those self-declared “Chinese” who now live outside of various Chinese-speaking societies, whether Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, or Taiwan.
Given the extensive dispersion of global Chinese and increasingly significant complexity of Chineseness, one cannot, however, help but wonder what elements have been playing a constitutive role in sustaining the comfortable existence of these conglomerate concepts. If we take the lead of Benedict Anderson and view the modern “Chinese nation” primarily as an anthropological, rather than a political, category, then we might also marvel at what material and cultural practices have made the idea of Chinese Nationality as an “imagined community” (Anderson, 1983) a possibility whose putative subjects maintain “deep attachments” (ibid, 4) to each other in the absence of face-to-face contact.

To varying extents, two different lines of study have addressed the aforementioned questions in compatible ways. As will be reviewed later, on the one hand, a group of scholars in the fields of Chinese history and Chinese nationalism have demonstrated that various concepts in relation to “China” and “Chinese” have been rationally maintained as state projects since the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) when “China” began to see itself as a modern nation-state (Callahan, 2004, 2006; Dikötter, 1997; Duara, 1997; Fitzgerald, 1972; Gries, 2004; Pieke, 1987; Zhao, 2004; Zhuang, 2000). More specifically, different Chinese regimes, from the Imperial Qing to the People’s Republic of China (PRC), have been constantly redefining what constitutes the “people” of the nation, thereby making politics of citizenship a crucial project in China’s nation-state formation. To put it another way, by appropriating Louis Althusser’s

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6 To clarify, “formation” as in “state formation” and/or “nation-state formation” refers not merely to the particular founding moment of a certain state or nation-state. It should instead be seen as a dynamically continuing process which includes not only the preparatory stage and the very
famous concept of “interpellation” (1971:174), this line of study has established that various Chinese governments at different historical moments have been interpellating, through various means, those “subjects” whom they hope to include in the nation and as citizens. Though this line of study focuses mainly on government policies without taking cultural aspects of interpellation into serious consideration, it has nonetheless brought to the fore the powerful role of interpellation in the production of the nation and citizen, which is of great use in helping us understand the dialectical relationship between the state, nation, culture, and identity.

On the other hand, with today’s unprecedented level of globalization and the increasingly transnational presence of “Chinese subjects,” a number of diasporic cultural theorists address the issue from a cultural practice point of view with the moment that the nation-state was founded but also, perhaps more importantly in this case, the maintenance of the established nation-state through various means.

According to Althusser, interpellation or hailing, “can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: ‘Hey, you there!’” (1971:174). He explains further, “assuming that the theoretical scene I have imagined takes place in the street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject” (ibid). As far as this project is concerned, the interpellator is the Chinese state at different times, especially the party-state in the reform era. Being interpellated means being hailed into a subject position or being addressed and called to respond. In responding, the interpellated subjects take up a position in relation to the nation-state, one way or the other. I will further develop this idea later.

The adoption and popularity of “diaspora” as a social, cultural and political term has been a slow process (Tölölyan, 1991; 1996; Vertovec, 1997; Stratton, 1997). It has taken decades to move from its original Jewish usage signifying a unique Jewish experience of exile and dispersion (Safran, 1991:83) to its much broader contemporary usage indicating various forms of large scale displacement or mass migration. To account for this transformation, Khachig Tölölyan, the initiator of Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies (1991-2009) has a rather complete list: “We use ‘diaspora’ provisionally to indicate our belief that the term that once described Jewish, Greek and Armenian dispersion now shares meanings with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, overseas community, ethnic community. This is the vocabulary of transnationalism, and any of its terms can usefully be considered under more than one of its rubrics” (1991:4). Conforming to this broad definition, a contemporary diaspora in Safran’s eyes also includes “expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities tout court” (1991:83). Though Tölölyan and Safran both express concerns over the inherent dangers in such expanding definitions, they nonetheless point out that the distinctions between diaspora and various forms of migrants are now rendered virtually superficial.
help of certain diasporic and/or transnational theories (Ang, 2001, 2003, 2004; Chow, 1993, 1997; Chun, 1996, 2001; Ong, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2003). Together, they have highlighted both the complexity and the controversial nature of the concept of “Chinese” and other associated terms. Some have even studied how diasporic subjects negotiate their cultural citizenship, by which I mean the affective investments or subjective dimensions of collective identities, in particular nation-states such as Australia (Ang, 2004) and the United States (Ong, 1996). However, few have explored the Chinese party-state’s increasingly sophisticated interpellative strategies that seek to establish the criteria of “belonging” beyond its national territory. Little attention has therefore been paid to the subjectification processes of the diasporic subjects in negotiating their cultural citizenship with the Chinese party-state, a process that is, more often than not, deeply ambivalent and complex. Moreover, there is still a shortage of studies that seek to account for the complex constitutions of these diasporic subjects who tend to be referred to as a conglomerate and essential whole, such as “Chinese” in this case.

Adding urgency to a need to further develop these two lines of study is the fact that over the last two decades, Western mainstream media and academia have offered a plethora of attention to China’s economic success while

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9 Traditional writings on citizenship tended to circumscribe the role of identity or cultural belonging, focusing instead on legal rules or political rights (Stevenson, 2001, 2003). Many critics, however, consider citizenship “a social process ‘in which the emphasis is less on legal rules and more on norms, practices, meanings and identities’” (Isin and Turner, 2002:4), or “a cultural process of ‘subject-ification’” (Ong, 1996:737). The advantage of seeing citizenship as cultural citizenship is that “it shifts the focus of citizenship onto common experiences, learning processes and discourses of empowerment. The power to name, create meaning, construct personal biographies and narratives by gaining control over the flow of information, goods and cultural processes is an important dimension of citizenship as an active process” (Delanty, 2002:64). This dissertation draws upon the idea of cultural citizenship and will develop it further at later points.
downplaying, if not neglecting, many darker aspects of the social conditions in China except for, perhaps, the issues of environment, human rights (Van Ness, 1999; Svensson, 2002), and product safety. In the field of Chinese media studies, for instance, it remains under-explored as to how and why media production is still rigorously and pervasively used as an instrumental apparatus in the formation of the Chinese nation-state. The more nuanced forms of state investments made in media productions demand analysis so as to account for the ways in which the Chinese party-state has drawn upon media as a vehicle to acquire and to maintain nation status in an effort to secure its own legitimacy.

1.2 A Cultural Approach to China’s Nation-State Formation

Drawing upon the aforementioned works and those of others, this dissertation makes an effort to reorient the general field of China Studies through a study of a particular cultural practice, which has two main objectives: to explore, on the one hand, how the Chinese party-state has been and continues to mobilize various forms of interpellation in order to sustain a continuous national imaginary of a particular community that is called the “Chinese Nation” or “Chinese Nationality”;¹⁰ and, on the other hand, to assess how these forms of interpellation have been challenged by a wide ranging set of complex and contradictory

¹⁰ To clarify, this project does not intend to provide yet another extensive study on nationalism, patriotism, or identity politics themselves, but rather focuses on critiquing certain forms of nationalist treatments and expressions of these “big” problems. In addition, as a theoretical problematic, nationalism has been treated most extensively from innumerable perspectives by a myriad of scholars from different streams of social science. To study some important works on nationalism, see Anderson, 1983; Arendt, 1973; Balibar, 1991; Bhabha, 1990a; Breuilly, 1994; Calhoun, 1997; Connor, 1994; 2002; Conversi, 2006; Gellner, 1981; Grosby, 2005; Hearn, 2006; Hutchinson, 2004; Leoussi & Grosby, 2006; Smith, 2001; Spencer, 2002; 2005; The Journal of Nations and Nationalism, 1995-now.
responses which operate either to maintain or to undercut the imagined idea of a “Chinese Nationality.”

More specifically, given that television has become one of the major “technical means for ‘re-presenting’” (Anderson, 1983:25) the nation, and that the circulation and reception of Chinese television productions are seen as increasingly influential in the cultural practices of diasporic Chinese everywhere around the globe (Sun, 2001a, 2001b, 2002; 2005; 2006; Shi, 2005; Zhu, 2005; 2008), I draw my key points of reference, in large part, from the media productions of the Mainland Chinese television industry. To this end, I have identified for detailed study an extremely popular, complex and extensive program, namely the Spring Festival Gala (SFG) produced in Beijing by China Central Television (CCTV), the largest state-owned media network responsible for various forms of official media productions. I stress that interpellation is an especially pertinent concept for understanding the power of the SFG as the show has been employing various incessant interpellative strategies, hailing, persistently and continuously, the viewers into the subject position of loyal members of the “Chinese Nationality.”

11 Studying 18th century European nations, Anderson suggests that the novel and the newspaper are two forms of imagining that make possible the birth of the imagined community of the nation, for “these forms provided the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the kind of imagined community that is the nation” (1983:25). In other words, it is through novels and newspapers that people first develop that strong affective bond and feeling of membership in a community where they can not actually see other community members.

12 Pinyin, also known as the scheme of the Chinese phonetic alphabet, is used as the primary Romanization system for most of the Chinese characters throughout the dissertation, hence the term Beijing instead of Peking. However, a few names, Sun Yat-Sen as opposed to Sun Zhongshan for instance, remain unchanged since they have been long familiar in the world. In these cases, the Wade-Giles system of Romanization, which is still in use in Taiwan, is adopted. For those who are from Hong Kong, English names are used unless unavailable.
However, interpellation is one thing, and subjection to it is another. As I see television audiences as active social actors rather than passive recipients (Ang, 1985, 1990, 1996; Fiske, 1987; Hall, 1980; Livingstone, 1998; Morley, 1992, 2004; Schroder, 2000), I also offer observations from the transnational receptions of the diasporic “Chinese subjects” who now live in Canada. My hypothesis is that to better grapple with notions of the national imaginary of transnationalized Chinese, we need more concrete knowledge and a more tangible understanding of the diasporic audiences who no longer live under the roof of the “motherland,” in the geographical and legal senses at least. While their continuous imagining of “Chinese Nationality” might help us better understand the complex mechanisms

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13 As much as I hope to highlight the great value of Althusser’s idea of interpellation as a conceptual tool for facilitating the understanding of the research questions and the associated analyses, I challenge him nonetheless. I hope to stress that his idealistic view of subjection is far too deterministic because in his eyes human subjects are pre-determined by “the very structure of all ideology” (1971:177) and there is therefore no way out of this “mise en scène of interpellation” (ibid). In his words, “individuals are always-already subjects” (176, italics in original).

14 The acceptance and popularity of the “Chinese diaspora” is also a gradual process. Given the long history of Chinese going abroad and resettling wherever they go, terms such as huaqiao (sojourners), huaren (overseas Chinese) and huayi (people of Chinese descent) have been widely used in related studies, sometimes interchangeably but mostly in different contexts at different times bearing different political implications (See Ang 2001:77-92 and Wang, 1998 for thorough descriptions of the terms). This particular group of people did not achieve their “serious diaspora status” until Robin Cohen included them in his extensive project about “global diasporas” (1997). In Cohen’s project, the Chinese overseas are juxtaposed with Lebanese overseas as the so-called “trade diasporas,” as opposed to “Jewish” (classical notion of diaspora), Africans and Armenians (victim diasporas), Indians and British (labour and imperial diasporas), Sikh and Zionist (no special title), and the Caribbean (cultural diasporas). Since then, the term “Chinese diaspora” has gained popularity over time. Its meaning, however, remains a source of debate. The contribution of Cohen’s 1997 study notwithstanding, it failed to account for the complexity of another wave of mass exodus of residents who started to depart from several major Chinese speaking societies roughly at the same time as Cohen’s study finished. Since the late 1990s, the visibility of ethnic Chinese immigrants has made a huge leap forward in Western multicultural countries, including Canada. Reasons and drives behind their movements have gone far beyond what “trade” could encompass. One could even argue that in the contemporary moment, “trade diaspora” has largely outlived its usefulness in accounting for the mass migration of people who used to live in major Chinese-speaking societies. Therefore, I emphasize that this project follows the lead of Tölölyan and Safran rather closely as far as the terminological orientation is concerned because their inclusiveness can better account for the complexity, multiplicity, and ubiquity of the Chinese-speaking people going overseas. This is in no way to claim that the Chinese diaspora matches that of the Jewish or Armenian ones.

15 I will explain at a later point the rationale as well as the unique advantage of selecting Toronto, Ontario as the research site for this particular project.
which contribute to ensuring the retaining power of interpellation, hence the inclusion of the putative subjects, their de-imagining, be it through interrogation or indifference, could nevertheless shed light upon the problems and difficulties of such interpellation and therefore the possibilities and potential for going beyond the very attempt of inclusion. Central to this project, therefore, are 1) the idea of “nation as imagined community;” 2) the issues of “interpellation” and “inclusion;” and 3) the conceptualization of participants’ cultural citizenship expressed through their responses to a particular interpellative practice.

To summarize, my goal is to ascertain, first of all, how cultural practices are implicated in the larger project of nation-state formation in “China” and how they have been mobilized as vehicles through which to interpellate ethno-national subjects, wherever they are, into an essentialist identification that might be called “Chinese.” Secondly, based on a selected location outside of Mainland China, this project investigates how Mainland China’s politics of subject inclusion\(^\text{16}\) represented by its media productions impacts upon the shaping of a worldwide Chinese diaspora, how various strata of Chinese diaspora respond to these productions, and how their responses contribute to the deconstruction or the maintenance of the nationalist constructs of “China” and “Chinese.”

Ultimately, what I attempt to do is not only to give recognition to flexible, fluid and multiple Chinese subjectivities, thus laying the groundwork for constructing a “flexible citizenship” (Ong, 1993; 1999) for all “Chinese” in political, cultural, economic, and practical senses, but also to further the collective endeavor to go

\(^{16}\) By “politics of subject inclusion,” I mean various Chinese governments’ attempts to include their putative subjects into the so-called “Chinese Nationality” through different forms of interpellation.
beyond certain nationalist and/or statist visions of identity, subjectivity, and citizenship. In so doing, I hope to contribute a unique educational perspective to the growing body of work on media, culture, identity, citizenship, diaspora, and nationalism in general, and contemporary Chinese studies in particular.

2. An Outline

Subsequent to this introduction, this dissertation consists of five chapters. To locate my own endeavor not only within a much broader and more contemporary theoretical enterprise, but also, perhaps more importantly, within a historical context, the opening chapter presents a historical account of the development of various Chinese governments’ policies on identity and legitimate citizenship, particularly the diasporic subjects. I hope to underscore the importance of a historical account because we have seen that in the post-Tiananmen period, the Chinese party-state has actively returned to old forms of nationalism initiated in the Imperial Qing and shortly after so as to regain its credibility. Only with a view to history can we understand why this atavistic harkening back to the past is actually a systematic and rational choice of the Chinese party-state in interpellating cultural subjects into the nation.18

17 In the past few decades, the flexibility, fluidity and multiplicity of human subjectivity has been discussed in various ways by a great number of scholars from different fields, such as philosophy (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986; Haraway, 1991); post-colonial studies (Bhabha, 1994); post-race theories (Gilroy, 1998; 2000); cultural studies (Hall, 1996a; 1996b; Ang, 2001); cultural anthropology (Ong, 1993; 1996; 1999); and diaspora and transnational studies (Geertz, 1973; 1994; Brah, 1996; Gupta, 1992; Vertovec, 1997; 2001), to list just a few.

18 To emphasize the significance of the historical review, it is helpful to quote Anderson again: “My point of departure is that nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word’s multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy” (1983:4).
In addition to a brief genealogical survey of the Chinese television industry, in which my chosen case has been playing a constitutive part, other interpellative practices in relation to the politics of subject inclusion and related literature are also reviewed in this chapter. What I argue is that the nation-state formation project of China has been carried out in numerous ways; cultural practices, however important, are not the whole story. As well, a brief review of relevant theoretical engagements in Chinese television and Chinese diaspora is provided to demonstrate the necessity of this study.

In Chapter 2, I describe the methodological treatment of two major components of the project. First, I offer a brief introduction to the program of the Spring Festival Gala (SFG) as it sits at the heart of the considerations of this thesis. Then, I move forward to explain how I have collected, categorized, coded and analyzed the text of the SFG as a particular and exemplary practice of state interpellation. As well, I explain how I made a synopsis of the SFG as a necessary preparation for the audience studies. Then, I move on to discuss the second major component of the project: a study of 12 diasporic Chinese subjects as a selected group of the show’s audience. After clarifying issues in regard to target population, participant recruitment, and interview processes, I also elaborate on the sampling, categorization, coding, and analysis of this particular data set.

Chapter 3 focuses on the SFG as an exemplary practice of interpellation. Specifically, I provide a critical study of almost three decades of the SFG as a particular discourse to demonstrate how television production has been used as
a vehicle to interpellate different subjects into the demographic constitution of the “Chinese Nationality,” thereby contributing to the larger project of China’s nation-state formation. The ideological structure of the substance of this program is discussed in great detail, as are the various means that the SFG has been employing in its interpellative acts. Inasmuch as the notion of securing identity or subject inclusion expressed by the SFG involves a number of specific strategies, I discuss them one by one.

Chapter 4, the field research of the project, leads us to a constellation of subjective constructions of cultural citizenship in response to the interpellation of the Chinese party-state. I look critically at the research data gathered from both in-depth interviews and observations to capture the contested and contradictory nature of identity formations. While I acknowledge the great affective power, and hence the partial success, of the interpellation, I highlight the tremendous futility of the interpellation, given that a large number of voices have questioned, challenged and even ridiculed such an attempt.

Finally, in the concluding Chapter 5, I call for a move that goes beyond the nationalist hold on “identity,” “diaspora,” “subjectivity” and “citizenship” and signal prospective concerns for future research. Before I start the historical/literature review, I would venture to stress the obvious, that nationalism has been utilized to such a great extent in implementing China’s politics of subject inclusion that an apposite review and analysis of this politics would inevitably hinge on nationalism’s various representations at different historical moments.
CHAPTER ONE

China's Citizenship Politics & Television: A Review

As I outlined in the introduction, this thesis seeks to challenge nationalist views of state formation and politics of subject inclusion as they are expressed in one of the most influential television programs produced in Mainland China. To locate my own endeavor not only within a much broader and more contemporary theoretical enterprise but also within a historical context, I first review China’s politics of subject inclusion, to make apparent its constantly evolving yet persistently nationalist nature. Juxtaposed with other practices, Chinese television is also discussed to demonstrate how it has been used as an “Ideological State Apparatus” (Althusser, 1971) in promoting the politics of subject inclusion of the state from the inception of the regime to this globalizing moment. In addition, I briefly review relevant theoretical engagements with Chinese television and the concept of the Chinese diaspora as a way to explain why it is of great potential to go beyond the critique of state regulation and to study Chinese television from the perspective of state-formation and the associated issues of interpellation and cultural citizenship.

Next I will delineate the evolution of China’s nation-building process from the perspectives of both “territory” and “population”\(^\text{19}\) to exhibit how the nation-state

\(^{19}\) Writing about the origin of Chinese nationalism, renowned historian Zhao Suisheng states: “This sovereignty-centered nationalism created a mythology in which the makings of a national territory were embodied in the making of the Chinese nation-state. Even though the nation-state as a territorial specificity was a recent phenomenon and there had never been a territorially sovereign nation-state in China, many Chinese nationalists claimed a glorious past as the unique achievement of the so-called Chinese nation-state …… They emphasized the unity of history and
of China has been making progress toward territorial integrity and, more importantly, to demonstrate how the country at different times has been mobilizing, adjusting, and complicating their repertoire of interpellative strategies to ensure the continual execution of the nation-state formation. Given this thesis seeks to address the issue from a diasporic perspective, particular attention will be paid to the toolkit that various Chinese governments have been using to inform their policies and practices toward their diasporic subjects. As for time period, the historicization will start from the Qing Dynasty because, as will be shown later, this period was the starting point of a historical continuum as far as Chinese modern politics of subject inclusion is concerned. It was in this period that China started to see itself as a modern nation-state and to stipulate official policies toward its diasporic subjects. Having said this, the account will focus more on the Reform Era (1978-2009), in which Chinese television is thriving.

1. From the Imperial Qing to the Republican Time

As the last feudal dynasty before the Republican Revolution, the Qing Dynasty was also one of the two dynasties ruled by minority nationalities. Before the Opium Wars, the territory of the nation was kept largely intact.
Therefore, in terms of two pillars of the nation-state formation, the politics of subject inclusion was of primary importance for the Manchu rulers who first initiated “racial nationalism” (Dikötter, 1997)\(^2\) in an effort to maintain their ethnic distinctiveness\(^2\) and later adopted “cultural nationalism” as an attempt to maintain a multi-ethnic yet unitary population (Fitzgerald, 1972). As far as their diaspora policy\(^3\) is concerned, diasporic subjects, most of them being Han and sympathizers of the Ming Dynasty – the one that the Qing replaced, were regarded as potential enemies (Duara, 1997). Before the Opium Wars, emigration was forbidden to the Qing citizens and a capital sentence was given to those who took the risk of returning (Fitzgerald, 1972). In short, the treason model (Pieke, 1987)\(^4\) prevailed in this period.

Since Qing Dynasty’s defeat in the hands of Western powers during the Opium Wars of the mid-19\(^{th}\) century, the “Middle Kingdom” has been forced to embark on “a century of humiliation” (Gries, 2004; Zhao, 2004). In this period, partial colonization has again and again torn apart the territorial integrity of the

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\(^2\) Though the issue of China’s population politics has rarely been addressed from the perspective of Chinese nationalism, Chinese nationalism has been extensively discussed in the past. There is a group of scholars whose works focus on the historical development of Chinese nationalism. Authors such as Maria Hsia Chang (2001), Frank Dikötter (1992, 1994, 1997), Prasenjit Duara (1995, 1998), Peter Hays Gries (2004), Christopher Hughes (2006), James Townsend (1992) and Zhao Suisheng (1998, 2000, 2004) have powerfully demonstrated the strong historical root, the long pedigree as well as the tremendous contemporary complications of Chinese nationalism. Other schools will be discussed later.

\(^3\) By “diasporic policies,” I mean the policies of the Chinese state toward the incorporation of a dispersed population available to be hailed into an incorporative Chinese nationalism on terms that will be outlined in Chapter 3. Such policies do not speak to the fluid, ephemeral nature of mobility or migration and are not meant to say anything particular about the actualities of the diasporic experience, but rather refer to a deliberate state “address” in regards to both the production and distribution of the SFG.

\(^4\) When studying China’s policies toward its diasporic subjects from Qing Dynasty to mid-1980s, Pieke (1987) identifies four models which he calls 1) “the treason model” (diaspora as betrayers of the motherland); 2) “the jus sanguinis model” (diaspora as Chinese citizen due to consanguinity); 3) “the fifth column model” (diaspora as export of the Chinese revolution) and 4) “the decolonisation model” (diaspora as a foreign policy liability).
country, most famous being Hong Kong’s cession to the British Empire under the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, forcing the elite thinkers who used to take great pride in the nation’s claimed civilizational superiority to look at “China” in more political and territorial terms. Both the constitutional monarchists and reformers led by Kang Youwei and the republican revolutionaries led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and others challenged the legitimacy of the Manchu rulers who were held accountable for the nation’s decline. To maintain themselves in power, the imperial Qing state started to promote what Duara (1997) labels “Confucian nationalism,” equipping its established culturalist repertoire with Confucian principles in order to interpellate as many as possible into the subject position of members of the Chinese Nation. This practice greatly affected the state policies toward diasporic subjects. Specifically, for the purpose of competing for the diaspora’s financial and political support, the ban on emigration was lifted; commercial privileges were given to the diaspora members; dynastic honors and titles were sold to the diaspora members; and consulates were established in Southeast Asia and America (Duara, 1997). Even a cultural campaign was launched to instill Confucian virtues among the diaspora in Southeast Asia, as Duara describes:

“The ceremonies, temple-building, literary contests, and public lectures activated a latent narrative of civilization associated with the gentry and the imperial establishment with which upwardly mobile traders were already familiar” (Duara, 1997:46).

In addition, using what Pieke calls the jus sanguinis model (1987), the Qing government wrote in the Nationality Law of 1909, formally recognizing diasporic subjects as members of the Chinese community.
The revolutionaries who contested the Qing regime created different narratives. On the one hand, to challenge Western imperialists who broke China’s territorial integrity, they racialized the situation as “a struggle for survival of the yellow against the white race” (Chow, 2001:54). On the other hand, they realized that their racial nationalism could offer no help in challenging Manchu rulers since the “yellow race” was too broad a category to make Han people distinct from the Manchus, given there is not much physical difference between them (Dikötter, 1997). Therefore, they took on Han nationalism to distinguish the Han from the Qing Manchus. Zhang Binglin thus re-created a narrative of Han people as the descendants of the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi) (Dikötter, 1997) which dates back to the late Warring States period (475 BC to 221 BC). As far as the Chinese diaspora was concerned, the revolutionaries portrayed them as the victims of Qing abandonment as well as the triumphant colonizers in their own places of residence:

The image of Chineseness that the revolutionaries offered the huaqiao was one associated not with high cultural traditions but with newly discovered Enlightenment values of adventurousness, enterprise, expansionism. Yet the price of breaking with the gentry culturalist model was to accentuate the racist element: the element of Han greatness versus all primitive peoples” (Duara, 1997:54).

Besides, Sun Yat-sen's successful use of diasporic Chinese to raise money for his revolution seemed to suggest that this group of people could have great potential to serve the national cause.

On the part of the reformers, such as Kang Youwei and his followers, anti-Manchuism was important but not vital. Therefore, they found themselves a golden mean, advocating “Confucian nationalism” of the Qing state on the one
hand and nodding heads to the “Han nationalism” of the revolutionaries on the other. In practice, they endorsed the narrative of Chinese being the descendants of the Yellow Emperor (Dikötter, 1997) but at the same time established a number of *Baoguanghui* (Protect the Emperor Societies) in Southeast Asia and America, promoting constitutional monarchy and competing with Sun's *Xingzhonghui* and *Tongmenghui* for funds and followers. As well, reformers made every effort to control both diaspora’s media (newspapers, pamphlets, magazines) and educational practice in order to “install their representation of a Chinese citizen who was to be distinguished not only from the Malay, Thai, European, or American national, but also from the representation of Chineseness cultivated by revolutionaries and the imperial state” (Duara, 1997:49).

Once the Manchus were ousted by revolutionaries and the Republic of China (ROC) was established in 1912, anti-imperialism took precedence. Sun realized that a sense of Han superiority held dear by himself and his fellow revolutionaries could do no good to the mission of rewriting China as a nation-state with a heterogeneous population. He knew that “only by defining the Chinese nation as one that transcended Han identity could the state legitimately lay claim to the frontier regions inhabited by non-Han peoples” (Zhao, 2004:67), thus laying the ground for building a stronger nation. Therefore, he gave up his ethno-nationalist narrative and began emphasizing racial uniformity and powerful concepts of nationalism, regardless of the multi-ethnic and multi-racial reality of the country.

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25 *Xingzhonghui* (Revive China Society) was founded by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen in 1894 and was later merged into the *Tongmenghui* (Revolutionary Alliance). *Tongmenghui* was founded by Sun Yat-sen and Song Jiaoren in Tokyo in 1905. It formed the nucleus of Sun’s *Kuomintang* (KMT, the Nationalist Party) which was founded in 1912.
(Townsend, 1992). As far as diaspora policy was concerned, the newly formed Kuomintang (KMT) or the Nationalist Party did not display much ingenuity. The *jus sanguinis* model was carried over, and the *Nationality Law of 1929* was almost a copy of the imperial Qing’s *Nationality Law of 1909*. Even though the KMT expanded its involvement in diaspora’s education to retain the loyalty and support of the diasporic subjects, they followed the model established by the reformer Kang Youwei. Having said this, the KMT did make much effort in protecting diaspora’s interest. According to Fitzgerald, the KMT’s diaspora policy consisted of three objectives:

- to devise ways in which the Overseas Chinese would have equal treatment in the countries of residence, to facilitate the return to China to study of the children of Overseas Chinese, and to give special guarantees to Overseas Chinese who wished to establish industries in China (1972:7).

Interestingly, while the ethno-nationalist narrative was suspended to maintain a unified nation domestically, when it came to diasporic subjects, the ethno-nationalist narrative still held sway.

After Sun’s death, the nation was overwhelmed by decades of power struggles between the KMT led by Chiang Kai-shek and the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) headed by Mao Zedong. Anti-imperialism largely receded in the beginning, as testified by Chiang’s notorious policy “*rangwai bi xian annei* (if you want to repel foreign aggression, then you must first pacify the interior)” (Wakeman Jr., 1997). Even though the KMT and the CCP cooperated on temporary basis during the anti-Japanese War (1937-1945) (Sheng, 1992; Coogan, 1994), their rivalry never ended until the CCP finally drove the KMT to
Taiwan and Mao declared the foundation of the PRC in 1949. Since then, Taiwan, after Hong Kong and Macau, became another roadblock to territorial integrity for the PRC government which has claimed to be the only authentic representative of all Chinese people since it has brought the vast territory of the Mainland under control. On the surface, the territorial component of the nation-building project took precedence over the population side of the story in this period as both the KMT and the CCP were so preoccupied by the quest to trump each other, the politics of subject inclusion was carried on, never the less, as neither sides had given up the assumption that they were fighting for the whole “Zhonghua Minzu” (Chinese Nationality).

2. The Communist Epoch under Mao Zedong

After Mao became the paramount leader of the nation, the unique socio-political conditions of that time made it necessary for the PRC to bring the politics of subject inclusion as the key component of the nation-state formation project back to the fore. Domestically, a unified and unitary “renmin” (national people) must be secured after the country had been plagued by decades of wars and significant regional divisions. Besides, resistance and ethnic nationalism were quite prevalent in ethnic areas such as the Southwest and the Northwest, making the situation even harder for the PRC to manage. Internationally, the formation of a unified “renmin” was of vital importance for the new country in fighting against

26 The ROC had been actively claiming to be the sole legitimate government of all China until the lifting of martial law in 1987. Though United Nations General Assembly has replaced the ROC with the PRC as the sole representative of China at the UN (Resolution 2758, October 25, 1971), the national boundaries of the ROC have not been redrawn. The claimed ROC territory continues to include Mainland China, Taiwan, and, as opposed to the claimed PRC territory, several offshore islands, Outer Mongolia, northern Burma, and Tuva.
imperialists – American from the early 1950s on and Soviets from the early 1960s. It was exactly this practical quandary that set up the perfect condition for Mao to foreground a nationally-oriented politics of subject inclusion toward both domestic populations and those who lived in diaspora. To this end, a common communist ideology of class struggle was utilized to transcend differences, whether in terms of race, ethnicity or nationality, so as to interpellate all putative subjects into the subject position of being Chinese.

As far as domestic politics of subject inclusion was concerned, a number of specific measures have been taken to make patriotic nationalism and anti-imperialism a common goal for a unified subject of the nation, and these have been carried out in a very straightforward manner. First of all, the CCP maintained extremely tight control over all media, be it mass media, such as print press (newspapers, magazines, and journals etc.) and radio, or the then “elite” media, such as the newly emergent television. They were all used as propaganda tools to promote communist ideology to all Chinese (Huang & Yu, 1997). The first television station, *Beijing Television*, began broadcasting on May 1st, 1958. Dozens of stations were set up in major cities within two years. However, as a direct result of the breakdown of Sino-Soviet relations in the early 1960s (Li, Z., 1996), the inchoate Chinese television industry was getting halted. Shortly after the Soviet Union withdrew its economic aid from China, the number of stations was reduced from 23 to 5 and only those elite members of the CCP could have access to television. In contrast, print press and radio were made far more accessible to the masses.
Television remained a restricted elite media during the period of the Cultural Revolution. As far as the program content was concerned, non-political programs were strictly controlled, if not totally exorcized (Hong, 1998). Instead, the “houshe”, literally meaning tongue and throat, or the “sounding board” status of television was utilized to the utmost, rendering television nothing but a propaganda tool working for the totalitarian machine. As Huang & Yu argued (1997), Mainland Chinese television production under Mao, whether before or during the Cultural Revolution, was technologically backward and virtually driven by politics. In short, given the dire paucity of television sets available to the masses, and the extremely limited access to television messages, a reasonable evaluation of the Chinese television industry would not consider it a powerful mass medium before the mid 1980s. I provide a brief historical account here in order to make clear that, 1) various forms of media have all been part and parcel of the general project of state formation of the PRC; and that 2) television played a constitutive role in the nation-state formation project, no matter how insignificant it was at its early stage of development.

Moreover, the PRC also kept a firm grip on the public education system. Mass education campaigns were mobilized to deliver the CCP’s teachings in general and Mao’s writings in particular to the nation’s population, not only in schools but also in workplaces, both in the coastal areas and in the hinterland. It should also be noted that the state-run media under the control of the propaganda department, especially the print press and radio, also played an
indispensable role in the smooth implementation of the mass education campaigns.

In addition, the CCP was fully aware of the multi-ethnic nature of the country, and that a constructed common history or civilization did not necessarily translate into the unreserved loyalty of all putative subjects of the state, especially that of the minority nationalities. Therefore, the CCP took a few special measures to interpellate minority nationalities into the subject position of “national people.” A Nationality Identification Program, for instance, was enacted in 1950 to classify the various minorities within the country. Following four criteria laid down by Stalin, that is, “a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture” (Stalin, 1913), the ethnographers dispatched by Mao identified 56 official nationalities, including the Han, a category which is still in effect at the present time. As Mullaney has it: “An intriguing demographic equation resides at the heart of the People’s Republic of China. The equation reads: 55 minorities + the Han = the PRC or, in shorthand format, 55+1=1” (2004a:197).

At the same time, the CCP also formed five partially autonomous regions to incorporate all ethnic regions into the political structure of the nation-state, allowing them a certain degree of regional autonomy and providing them with certain economic privileges, so as to continue to include them in the newly founded PRC. As a symbolic effort to realize the promised “autonomy,” the CCP kept traditional leaders in some powerful positions, but placed some officials of Han nationality within those regions. Moreover, the state systematically
organized large-scale migration of Han to various minority areas in the name of “zhībiàn” (supporting the frontier regions) (Hansen, 1999). In addition, the CCP provided the minority groups with certain benefits from the government, such as the exemption from the One-Child Policy, while discouraging any action toward ethnic group’s self-determination (Zhao, 2004). After all, in the eyes of Mao, many minority nationalities in China would someday be all assimilated into one nationality that is Han.

In confronting the issues associated with diasporic dispersion, PRC policy seemed to be much more capricious than that of the KMT. In the earliest stage, the PRC largely followed the lead of the KMT. Both the *jus sanguinis* principle and the institution of dual nationality were adopted. As Hsia & Haun observes, the PRC also styled itself as the protector of the overseas Chinese, encouraged their return to the motherland, solicited their remittances, gave favored treatment to overseas Chinese traveling in the PRC, encouraged them to send their children to the PRC for education, and carried out other activities among overseas Chinese communities (1976:19).

According to Fitzgerald, the reasons that the newly founded PRC did not make new policies but mostly followed its predecessor are twofold. One, they still had to compete with the KMT government in Taiwan for diaspora’s financial and political support. Two, to maintain the newly acquired power, more attention had to be paid to domestic politics of subject inclusion instead of diasporic issues (1972).

During the 1950s and 1960s, the PRC felt hostilities from all sides. The US support for the KMT government in Taiwan and the Sino-Soviet split in 1959-
1960 isolated China to such a great degree that the country had to adjust its foreign policy as well as the diaspora policy. In terms of foreign policy, the PRC sought actively to cooperate with other “third world countries.” In order to build relationships with Southeast Asian countries where a large number of Chinese diaspora resided, the PRC altered its diaspora policy and started to follow what Pieke (1987) calls “the decolonisation model,” that is, treating the diaspora as a foreign policy liability, as Pieke explains:

Their large number and often strained relations with the local populations and regimes burden Beijing with responsibilities it no longer wants to assume, because they hinder the establishment of friendly relations with these countries (11).

Specifically, in 1955 Premier Zhou Enlai signed on to the article in the Bandung declaration, explicitly stating that overseas Chinese owed primary loyalty to their host countries rather than to China. For a decade after Bandung, the PRC government kept a relative distance from its diaspora.

In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution period (1966-76), the communist ideology played a predominant role. The conception of national people changed accordingly. Fitzgerald captures this change well:

Confucian reformers associated the collective self with a distinctive civilization, liberal republicans conceived of the nation as a body of citizens, Nationalist (Kuomintang) revolutionaries thought of a Chinese race, and China’s Marxist-Leninists have qualified citizen and race by reference to social class (1995:76).

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27 Bandung Conference, which took place on April 18-24, 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia, was the first large-scale Asian-African summit attended by leaders of different Asian and African states. Top two agendas of the conference were to promote economic and cultural cooperation among African and Asian countries, and to oppose colonialism or neocolonialism by the United States, the Soviet Union, or any other imperial nations.
On such terms, the PRC’s diaspora policy shifted to viewing its diasporic communities as capitalists, warning “their influence could be nothing but counter-revolutionary” (Pieke, 1987:9). However, as Pieke points out, in actuality this model was only applied to domestic Chinese people with diasporic connections. For actual diasporas, “hardly any coherent policies were formulated at all, except for when the fifth column model was used” (1987:11). Fitzgerald (1972) and Chang (1980) confirm Pieke’s finding and point out that “the fifth column model” (the diaspora as the exporters of the Chinese revolution) was more often adopted by the PRC’s enemies to attack China than by the PRC itself because relying on diaspora to disseminate communist ideology was simply too unrealistic a vision.

3. The Reform Era since Deng Xiaoping

When the pragmatic Deng Xiaoping ascended to power after the downfall of the Gang of Four in 1978, the modernization project\textsuperscript{28} became the primary concern of the PRC government (Zhao, 2004). Deng knew just too well that it would take the effort of the whole Zhonghua Minzu to throw away “a century of humiliation” and to become a major player in the world. To this end, he retroactively placed in his nationalist agenda a significant emphasis on racial and cultural nationalism as well as the anti-imperialist component. As far as the racial and cultural nationalism is concerned, Sautman observes, the dragon was made the primal ancestor, the Yellow Emperor the racial founder, Peking Man the

\textsuperscript{28} The Four Modernizations, which formally marked the beginning of the Reform Era, was announced as a state project by Deng Xiaoping in December 1978 at the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee. The project aimed at modernizing four fields, i.e. agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense that are of great significance to China’s overall development. The ultimate goal of this project is to make China a great economic power by the early 21st century (Hsü, 2000).
Chinese everyman, and the Great Wall the ethnic minority project\(^{29}\) (Dikötter, 1997). The CCP even directed academics, especially historians or archeologists, to create a myth about the cradle of Chinese civilization (Sautman, 2001). The Yellow River basin, which has accommodated various nationalities over the past thousands of years, was thus described as the geographical origin of the so-called Chinese civilization (ibid). In addition, the politics of population also involved a revision of China’s ancient history. The conglomerate concept of Zhonghua Minzu was thus made the central, if not the sole, subject of Chinese history, which gave the government a powerful interpellative tool to downplay the differences among different Chinese, all for the purpose of creating a unified “subject of the nation” who held unified views on the origin of the Chinese nation and shared the same determination with the Party.

Where the anti-imperialist component of Deng’s nationalist agenda is concerned, in putting his theory of “One Country, Two Systems” into practice, he actively engaged in negotiations with his British and Portuguese counterparts and had the agreements signed to return both Hong Kong and Macau to China’s sovereignty. As for Taiwan, Deng even argued that “the desire for the reunification of the mainland and Taiwan is innately ‘rooted in the hearts of all descendants of the Yellow Emperor’” (Sautman, 1997a:81). Interestingly, here we see not only a pragmatic conflation of racial/cultural nationalism and anti-imperialist nationalism, but also the overlapping of the search for territorial integrity and the creation of a national people that is purportedly transnational in

\(^{29}\) I will challenge this idea of the Great Wall being the ethnic minority project in chapter 3, arguing that it is a nationalist project aiming at all putative Chinese.
scope. Though Deng passed away a few months before Hong Kong’s return, his influence has lived on.

The third generation of Chinese leadership headed by Jiang Zemin, who came to power in the wake of the Tiananmen Square Protest of 1989, has largely maintained Deng’s policies. The protest has made the general public’s cry for liberalization and democracy heard in every corner of the world. To rebuild the unchallengeable legitimacy of nationhood and to bolster the power of the Party, Jiang launched a large scale patriotic education campaign, making patriotic nationalism or “state-led nationalism” (Zhao, 1998) a powerful voice in communications with the subjects of the state (Zhao, 1998, 2004; Hughes, 2006). During Jiang’s tenure, Hong Kong and Macau were officially handed over to

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30 As far as the study of Chinese nationalism is concerned, a group of authors choose to take a more reflexive stance by incorporating the state issue into their exploration. Other than Zhao, David Yang (2004) warns that when dealing with China studies, paying too much attention to civil society might contribute to a negligence over the state issue. With a profound concern about Chinese popular culture and its impact on the meaning of “China” and “Chinese,” Wang Jing (2001a) also warns that we should never forget that the party-state has never given up its propaganda tool even though the old mechanics of the relationships between culture and politics have been challenged. Not only does she bring back to the fore the importance of the state question in China studies in a rather nuanced fashion, she paints us a picture of how cultural discourses are intermingled with state policy through “common sense,” thereby completing the “naturalization of ruling technologies” which exerts tremendous impact upon the formation of Chinese subjectivity and public spheres in the post-1992 era. In the same vein, Goodman (2001) argues that it is important to see that the reductionist view of cultural control is far from sufficient to account for the practice of the party-state in the reform era, but it is equally important to realize that “Chinese party-state has by no means surrendered completely its role as a creator of culture of all kinds” (248). Rather, “new cultural activities tend to have even closer relationships with the party-state. The party-state has not disappeared from economic interaction with society; it has simply adjusted the level at which those interactions take place” (249). As a matter of fact, in the process of “contending the popular,” “the party-state’s influence is also far from absent, in a number of ways, in the formation of those new agents of cultural transmission to emerge in the 1990s ….. Few of the new agents of cultural change have had no connection with the party-state” (Goodman, 2001:248). Taking this group which looks more inwardly at the inseparable ties between nationalism and statism with the aforementioned cohort which attaches great importance to contemporary Chinese nationalism’s international orientation, we are thus reminded that in dealing with the general issue of Chinese nationalism and its particular representations in the form of media production at this time, we should always bear in mind the symbolic influence of the party-state of the PRC and its nationalist agenda, no matter how international or transnational of the circulations of Chinese-language media productions have become.
China in 1997 and 1999 respectively, two events that Jiang spared no effort to promote as great leaps forward toward the nation’s territorial integrity. Left in his hand, though, is still another “lofty duty,” that is, “the great task of reunifying the motherland” as “Taiwan is part of the sacred territory of the People’s Republic of China” (Constitution of the PRC).

Besides patriotic nationalism, Jiang carried on Deng’s pragmatic nationalism as well. Even though a series of “accidents” that have badly hurt the pride of the nation, giving rise to a tidal wave of anti-Western nationalism, particularly anti-American and anti-Japanese sentiments, Jiang managed them rather

31 Most notably being the 1999 NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, and the 2001 mid-air collision between a U.S. Navy surveillance plane and a Chinese fighter jet over the South China Sea.

32 Amongst diverse approaches to contemporary Chinese nationalism, some observers believe that the nationalist wave in 1990s is a spontaneous public reaction to a series of international events instead of a form of government propaganda (Zhao, 2004). Concurring with the authors who dichotomize nationalist sentiments and government propaganda, some even equate Chinese nationalism in this decade with anti-American sentiment (Song et al., 1996; Li, H., 1997). Partially true as it may be, this stream of study on Chinese nationalism is very problematic and simplistic in multiple senses. In the first place, it tends to treat the very complex phenomenon of Chinese nationalism as merely a form of civic defense or public retaliation against Western world, particularly the United States and Japan (Zhao, 2004; He, 2007). This sentimentalization or psychologization of post-Tiananmen Chinese nationalism is actually politically dangerous as it not only conceals the role that Chinese party-state has been playing in the promotion of nationalism as a practical way of governance, but also turns a blind eye to the fact that official propaganda itself is one of the major causes of anti-Western nationalism (Xu, 2001:155; Callahan, 2006). Secondly, though the party-state is not acquitted in this discourse, this stream of study reads too literally into the anti-American and anti-Japanese practices of Chinese nationalism, which even gains sympathy to a certain extent from renowned scholars such as Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro (1997). Understood in this perspective, Chinese nationalism is relegated as a natural extension of post-Cold War foreign policy (Chen, 2005; Whiting, 1995), not even to say that in the eyes of the majority of the writers from this camp, Chinese nationalism in the global contexts should be studied in tandem with the Sino-US relationship and its ramifications. Cultural theorist Jinhua Dai, for instance, concludes that the so-called “surge of nationalistic sentiments was linked to China’s ongoing complex with the ‘world/West/America’” (2001:169) when she explains the significance of Chinese nationalism manifested in Chinese popular culture, especially commercials, in the 1990s. Again, partially true as it may be, this outlook is relatively narrow in vision, since the promotion and performance of Chinese nationalism in general and the circulation and consumption of Chinese cultural products in particular have gone far beyond the bilateral flow between China and the West or the US. Given the porousness of transnational networks of global Chinese and the fact that nationalism can easily defy any national borders in this globalizing world, this camp is liable to overlook the pervasiveness of Chinese nationalism, thus leaving unaccounted its significant transnational reach and the related implications (Callahan, 2004). In
strategically. Specifically, he employed “controlled expression of the anti-American nationalism” (Zhao, 2004:265) for the US and “calculated reactions to anti-Japanese sentiments” (ibid, 273) for Japan in order not to disrupt the economic development of the country that has been depending so much on Sino-US and Sino-Japanese trades. Having said this, these “accidents” have indeed provided more than enough fuel to ensure the smooth drive of the emergence of anti-Western nationalism in Jiang's era, much like the anti-imperialist nationalism's role in providing a strong source for the legitimacy of the CCP throughout Mao’s rule and Deng’s time in office.

Succeeding Jiang on a gradual basis from 2002, Hu Jintao finally became the center of the fourth generation leadership of the PRC. For Hu, the chief social, political and economic objective is to establish what he calls “hexie shehui” (Harmonious Society) domestically and to accomplish China’s peaceful rise internationally. As far as the pursuit of territorial integrity is concerned, though Hu has been proactive in seeking ties with Taiwan, especially with the pro-unification KMT, Hu's government remains absolutely firm that the Mainland will not tolerate any attempt by Taiwan to declare _de jure_ independence from China, as clearly stated in the _Anti-Secession Law_ passed by the National People's Congress in March 2005. Most recently, the KMT led by Ma Ying-jeou has finally regained office after 8 years in opposition to the pro-independence Democratic

addition, this position is still deeply entrenched in a dichotomy which views “China” as the absolute “other” or the conceptual opposite of the West (Zhang, L., 1998). Therefore, it is at risk of insulating the issue of Chinese nationalism as a unique problem of that “significant other,” thus not only failing to account for, again, the transnational sway of contemporary Chinese nationalism, but also lending a hand in furthering the essentialization of “China” and “Chinese.” Having said above, I must emphasize that this line of thought does in a way remind us of the very strong international orientation of post-Tiananmen Chinese nationalism.
Progressive Party (DPP). A few months later, on July 4th, 2008, Weekend Chartered Flights between the Mainland and Taiwan were finally brought into reality after extensive negotiations. Exchanges between both sides of the Strait have suddenly gone far beyond the commonly seen “Taiwanese-businessman-investing-in-the-Mainland.” Encouraged are not only the financial investments of the Mainland capital into the island market but also all kinds of tourist explorations and other reciprocal practices. One might argue that all these incidents have signaled the thawing of the relationship between the Mainland and Taiwan; we have to remember, though, that the “One China Policy” remains an inviolable policy for the PRC.

As far as the development of television in the Reform Era is concerned, it has been transformed from a type of elite media into a major form of mass media in a

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33 As a matter of fact, any sensitive topic, handled without great care, could bring the Mainland-Taiwan relationship back to a deadlock. In late July, 2008, just a few weeks after the realization of the Weekend Chartered Flights, another dispute over Taiwan’s Olympic name was sparked, thanks to a Chinese official’s remark that “Zhonghua Taipei” and “Zhongguo Taipei” have equal validity. For the Chinese official, both “Zhonghua” and “Zhongguo” refer to “China,” hence the argument. For the Taiwanese side, however, the difference between these two terms is much more important than their claimed common referent. “Zhonghua” does mean “China” but is not used to refer to the nation-state of the PRC. “Zhongguo” means exactly the nation-state of the PRC. Therefore, by claiming “Zhonghua” Taipei and Zhongguo Taipei are of equal validity, China has virtually turned Taiwan into part of China. On such terms, several Taiwanese legislators threatened to boycott the games if China insisted on calling the island “Zhongguo Taipei.” The dispute was not resolved until an official Chinese news agency dropped the controversial reference to the team. This semantic war, however trivial, has not only illustrated the contradictions between the Mainland and Taiwan when it comes to the issue of Chinese identity, but has also offered another caveat against any rosy expectation about the Mainland-Taiwan relationship.

34 Besides, much like his successors, Hu has never forgotten the construction of infrastructure as another “peaceful means” to ensure the success of the country’s domestic population politics. To connect the hinterlands (generally referred to as the West) to the center, the party-state has invested heavily in infrastructure, which has been carried out throughout the history of the PRC, especially during Hu’s time. Before Hu, the third generation of Chinese leadership started the “West China Development Program” at the turn of the new millennium to, as the program’s name tells, develop the west part of the country where a large number of minority nationalities reside. After Hu assumed the reins of government, the program has been carried on. Moreover, the accomplishment of the Qingzang Railway (Qinghai–Tibet Railway) on October 15th, 2005, which has incited numerous controversies around the world, has once again further promoted the idea of a multi-ethnic yet highly unified nation-state of China.
rather swift manner. The Chinese television industry in general and CCTV\textsuperscript{35} in particular have started to experience rapid progress. On the one hand, Beijing Television was officially turned into China’s only national network and was rechristened as China Central Television (CCTV) on May 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1978 (Chang, 1989; Bishop, 1989). On the other hand, we have witnessed an extensive proliferation of local (provincial, municipal, and district etc.) stations from 1978 to mid-1990s (Bai, 2005). Specifically, after a decade of development, China had about 700 local stations by mid-1990s, and television had gained entry into most households, especially in urban areas (Hong, 1998). According to Hong (ibid), by the 1990’s television had surpassed more traditional forms of mass media, particularly newspaper and radio, and had become the most important medium in people’s daily life.\textsuperscript{36}

The tremendous technological improvement and the substantial expansion of Chinese television industry from the 1990s on, including the growth in the number of the television stations, the number of the people who own television sets, and the diversification of television programming, have provided more than enough reasons for the government to reconsider the impact of television

\textsuperscript{35} Rather than comprehensively accounting for Chinese television industry, I focus on CCTV instead. The reasons are threefold. Firstly, as will be demonstrated later, the history of CCTV well reflects that of the Mainland Chinese television industry as a whole. Secondly, after an extended period of development, CCTV has been officially established as the predominant producer of the mainland Chinese television productions and broadcasts. Lastly, it is because of the inevitable limited scope of the project. Unless identified, therefore, Chinese television industry and CCTV are used as interchangeable terms in most of the cases.

\textsuperscript{36} As well, the content or programming has been considerably diversified in this period. For instance, entertainment programs, such as TV drama series, soap operas, and imported foreign feature films, have been routinized in contrast to their predecessors whose political nature was self-contained and exclusive (Bai, 2005). Meanwhile, dire needs of educational achievement and the insufficient availability of higher education institutions demand the development of education programs. TV universities as a perfect tool for continuing education have thus become quite a phenomenon. Besides, this period also witnessed a significant rise in service programs and advertisement (Hong, 1994).
productions and to refine their ruling techniques in terms of ideological interpellation. More specifically, with the unprecedented openness and the exchange in the form of program importing and exporting between Chinese productions and those of the West, the Mainland Chinese party-state became increasingly concerned about the impact of Western ideologies (Hong, 1998). Therefore, to defend the Mainland Chinese television industry from “getting hurt” by the transnational media corporations, as well as to facilitate regulating mechanisms, The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) made up its mind to launch a rationalization movement in early 2000. This included centralizing local stations in order to form relatively bigger television groups. Interestingly, this movement was carried out in the name of enhancing the competitiveness of the Chinese television industry in the global market.

With China’s accession to the WTO on December 11th, 2001, CCTV started to assume a more “internationalized” posture and to adopt more “consumer-friendly” images in the hope of achieving better international reception and global visibility. As far as the structure is concerned, CCTV has turned itself into a complicated giant network, though as centralized as ever. Today’s CCTV has dozens of subsidiaries and eighteen channels which openly intend to “cover” the world in the most comprehensive way.

Some of the subsidiaries are rather powerful, such as 1) CCTV.com; 2) China International Television Corporation (CITC, the exclusive global sales agent for both CCTV and Chinese TV Program Export Association; also the largest publisher of audio-video productions in China); 3) China Teleplay Production Center (CTPC, major source of the global circulation of Chinese teleplays); 4) TV Guide (newspaper, average circulation per issue over 3 million, largest in the industry); 5) TV Research (first television studies periodical in China); 6) Central Newsreels and Documentary Film Studio; 7) Beijing Science & Education Film Studio; 8) China Television Media, Ltd. (a public company listed in Shanghai Stock Exchange, 600088; operating investment and
To better understand the role that television plays in the general project of nation-state formation in the PRC, it is of vital importance to emphasize a simple fact, that is, rather than being owned or controlled by corporate giants or members of the originating family who retain large blocks of stock (Herman & Chomsky, 1988), which is quite common in Europe and North America (Ang, 1991), both CCTV and local stations are owned by the state\(^{39}\) and are run and

\(^{38}\) Overlaps aside, each and every channel of CCTV has a different focus in terms of content and specific political agendas. CCTV-News is a 24-hour news channel specializing in news report; CCTV-1, the oldest and the so-called comprehensive channel, has a rather wide focus. It features not only the official version of both domestic and international news, but also different types of programs, such as TV plays, documentaries and TV galas etc.; CCTV-2 specializes in economic and financial programs; CCTV-3 is a channel dedicated to the arts. It features popular entertainment, and combines music, literature, the arts and information services as supplements. CCTV-4, the so-called international channel launched on the National Day in 1992, aims at serving diasporic audiences and residents in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. This channel virtually covers the world via eight satellites. Bearing in mind the goal of deepening mutual understanding and promoting friendship as the station rhetoric, the channel offers comprehensive introductions to various aspects of life in China to the rest of the world. CCTV hopes it would act as a window on China for diasporic audiences and a bridge between China and the rest of the world. It's now accessible to viewers in many countries around the world; CCTV-5, the sports channel, features live broadcasts of domestic and foreign sports events and various sports-related programs; CCTV-6 is reserved for movies, both Chinese and foreign; CCTV-7's programs concern military affairs, agriculture and children; CCTV-8 is a channel specifically for TV drama series; CCTV-9, officially launched on September 25, 2000, is basically an English version of different programs selected from other CCTV channels. It is dedicated to CCTV’s global audience, with a special focus on China-related issues; CCTV-10, the science and education channel, aims to popularize modern science and technology, to promote modern education theories, and to exhibit cultural heritage in China and the world; CCTV-11 aims to promote China's traditional opera arts. It showcases more than 200 types of local operas from around the country; the former West China Channel that exclusively covered issues of "the Great West" – the developing hinterland of the country, was later replaced by CCTV-12, a channel featuring law-related programs, such as legal case studies and talk shows. Four relatively new members of CCTV are CCTV-Children, CCTV-Music, and CCTV-E (Spanish Channel) and CCTV-F (French Channel) that were launched in late 2003 to late 2004 (Note that all are after the WTO entry day). Major focuses of CCTV-Children and CCTV-Music are self-evident in their names. CCTV-E and CCTV-F are CCTV's another two international channel (following CCTV-4 and CCTV-9). It broadcasts programs in Spanish and French respectively. The newest member of the CCTV network is CCTV-HD which started in 2008.

\(^{39}\) It is important to note that Chinese television stations still remain off-limits to foreign and/or private ownership no matter how tremendously transnational capitalism and the market economy have been affecting the Chinese society. Though limited forms of foreign and private investment are allowed, the state has always been the principal proprietor of the right to television production and circulation. For example, to fulfill the obligation of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) which comes with the WTO accession, certain joint production ventures with
administered by the central government and its local counterparts respectively.\footnote{As far as CCTV is concerned, it has been directly run and administered by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television and The Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee. It is beyond the scope of this project to elaborate on the complex relationship between these two regulatory bodies and their roles in administering CCTV. The unique nature of CCTV as a government agency responsible for media production and state propaganda is highlighted nonetheless. In addition, the relationship between CCTV and local stations might not be identical with that between central government and local governments as CCTV has no direct administration over local stations, but CCTV’s advantages in terms of state-sanctioned central status, available funds, revenues, human resources, technical capabilities, coverage and equipment etc. have ensured its predominant role in the Chinese television industry without major interruptions. New channels at local levels are still required to transmit certain CCTV shows, such as Xinwen Lianbo (The paramount newscast of the central government), and it is still deemed the greatest honor for local stations if particular shows they produce could be selected by CCTV and used as a part of its inter/national broadcasting. In a nutshell, the institutional structure or the organizational system of the Mainland Chinese television industry, which has become increasingly complex over time, seems to be no less centralized than the political system of the PRC. No wonder many have argued that the center (CCTV) vis-à-vis the periphery (local stations) in the Chinese television industry is far from being as contradictory and contentious as they may appear to be (Hong, 1998; Wang, 2001a; Keane, 2001, 2001a, 2002). To better understand the role of “local television stations” in the Chinese television industry, see an interesting case study conducted by Xin Zhang (2006).}

In other words, television stations in China have been \textit{de jure} government agencies rather than “independent” media outlets from the outset. The Mainland Chinese television industry as an “Ideological State Apparatus” has not only served Mao’s totalitarian regime, but has also played an increasingly important role in the country’s modernization project.

If we are to leave Chinese television aside for a moment, we can clearly see that throughout the Reform Era three generations of Chinese leadership have been taking a rather consistent approach to China’s nation-state formation project in order to build the country into a modern power. The pragmatic spirit encapsulated in Deng’s “good cat theory”\footnote{According to Deng, “It doesn’t matter if it is a black cat or a white cat. As long as it can catch mice, it’s a good cat.”} still holds sway.\footnote{As far as CCTV is concerned, it has been directly run and administered by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television and The Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee. It is beyond the scope of this project to elaborate on the complex relationship between these two regulatory bodies and their roles in administering CCTV. The unique nature of CCTV as a government agency responsible for media production and state propaganda is highlighted nonetheless. In addition, the relationship between CCTV and local stations might not be identical with that between central government and local governments as CCTV has no direct administration over local stations, but CCTV’s advantages in terms of state-sanctioned central status, available funds, revenues, human resources, technical capabilities, coverage and equipment etc. have ensured its predominant role in the Chinese television industry without major interruptions. New channels at local levels are still required to transmit certain CCTV shows, such as Xinwen Lianbo (The paramount newscast of the central government), and it is still deemed the greatest honor for local stations if particular shows they produce could be selected by CCTV and used as a part of its inter/national broadcasting. In a nutshell, the institutional structure or the organizational system of the Mainland Chinese television industry, which has become increasingly complex over time, seems to be no less centralized than the political system of the PRC. No wonder many have argued that the center (CCTV) vis-à-vis the periphery (local stations) in the Chinese television industry is far from being as contradictory and contentious as they may appear to be (Hong, 1998; Wang, 2001a; Keane, 2001, 2001a, 2002). To better understand the role of “local television stations” in the Chinese television industry, see an interesting case study conducted by Xin Zhang (2006).} When it comes to

foreign companies have been carried out, most notably with STAR TV and Phoenix, but all these ventures are controlled by the Chinese state, even though the services offered by these joint ventures are built upon transnational capitalism. As Curtin observes, they “can just as easily incite nationalist passions as they can stimulate reasoned deliberation on important social issues” (2005:172).
the country’s policy toward its diasporic subjects, therefore, it comes as no surprise to see a diametrical shift away from its Maoist past, particularly the “treason model” adopted in the Cultural Revolution period. Diasporic subjects, especially elites, have not only been re-legitimized and welcomed to be part of the modernization project through various means, but have also been elevated to a more respected status, though the practice of dual nationality based upon “the jus sanguinis model” has not been resumed. Drawing upon the most recent scholarship about the China-diaspora relationship (Zhuang, 2000; Nyíri, 2001; Gao, 2004; Thunø, 2001, 2005), I would argue that China’s diaspora policy in the Reform Era has moved away from Pieke’s four models. Adopted instead is what I would call “the patriot model” by which I mean that diasporic subjects have now largely been “imagined” and promoted as transnational patriots (Nyíri, 2001) whose cultural, if not political, citizenship remain unquestionably “Chinese.” Certainly, like all other previous adopted models, this model has also been implemented though multiple means, both governmental and beyond (Rose, 1999).

First of all, we have seen a gradual yet extensive bureaucratization and institutionalization of the government agencies responsible for diaspora issues. Specifically, to incorporate the diasporic subjects into the nation-state formation project of modernization, five major diaspora-related agencies of the central

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42 Deng Xiaoping gave his strategic “Southern Excursion Talk” in 1992. Market economy was then officially sanctioned and substantiated, indicating the willingness of communist China to give up the overt ideological control as the primary ruling technique and to embrace instead the transnational capitalism as long as the old social orders could be kept somewhat intact. Chinese economy has been experiencing dramatic changes since then, which gives rise to various social problems simultaneously, unemployment on a gigantic scale for instance.
government a.k.a. “five bridges” were built one after another. After a series of conferences with the purpose of reviewing diaspora policies, Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council (OCAO) or the qiaoban was established in 1978 as the first national diaspora managing mechanism of the PRC,\(^\text{43}\) indicating the official inclusion of the diasporic subjects into China’s national interests. All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese (ACFROC) or the qiaolian, initially set up in 1956 but suspended in the Cultural Revolution, was reinstated in 1978 “to unite and rally returned overseas Chinese, their family members, and compatriots residing abroad to the cause of defending world peace, rejuvenating China, unifying the fatherland and building a prosperous, democratic, civilized and modern socialist China.”\(^\text{44}\) Much like the qiaoban, the qiaolian is equally hierarchical and extensively networked.\(^\text{45}\)

In 1983, the National People’s Congress (NPC) or renda set up the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee of the National People’s Congress or the renda qiaoweihui, a special commission responsible for implementing government policies toward returnees and their relatives. Yet again, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) created the Committee for Liaison with Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Overseas Chinese (the zhengxie gang ao tai qiao weiyuanhui). Further complicating the structure of the central government’s diaspora-related agencies, the zhigongdang, first established in

\(^{43}\) Since then, local qiaoban have been set up in all provinces, autonomous regions (except for Tibet), and four municipalities directly under the central government (Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Chongqing).

\(^{44}\) http://www.chinaql.org/content_2.shtml

\(^{45}\) By 1989, according to Thunø, “more than 2,000 organs of the ACFROC were established in 29 provinces, cities and autonomous districts, and a total of 8,000 affiliated organizations were set up at the lower administrative level of the county and village” (2001:916).
1925, was regenerated as a political party representing “returnees, middle to upper class of the relatives of the diaspora and other representatives who have diasporic relatives” (sic). Similar to the OCAO and the ACFROC, the *renda qiaoweihi*, the *zhengxie ao gang tai qiao weiyuanhui* as well as the *zhigongdang* also have their provincial, regional and even municipal branches.

Apparently, a primary objective of such agencies is to include diasporic subjects in the country’s political platform, thus securing their potential contributions to the modernization project. To do this, these agencies have been actively playing various “identity cards.” In the early stage of the Reform Era, for instance, the state began to organize activities for diasporic youngsters. The *qiaoban* began sponsoring a youth festival for young Chinese diaspora in 1982 (Louie, 2000). These activities were later expanded and then crystallized into the so-called “Root-seeking Summer Camps” in the hope of “re-territorializing” (ibid) the young diasporic subjects. More importantly, by aiming at this particular cohort of putative subjects, the state’s investment in diaspora has taken on a future-orientated character, aiming not only at the financial support of the future generation but also their cultural and emotional attachment. In addition, these agencies and their local offices have been organizing various kinds of festivals or conferences for diasporic subjects as a symbolic way of subject re-rooting (Barabantseva, 2005, Nyiri, 2001). The state even calls up other government agencies and institutions to supplement this subject interpellation campaign. The

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46 [http://www.zg.org.cn/zgjy/zgdj.htm](http://www.zg.org.cn/zgjy/zgdj.htm)

47 Such kinds of camps are normally organized on annual basis by local government agencies responsible for diaspora issues. Camp members from all over the world are usually invited to visit different parts of the PRC.
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, for example, took on the Cultural Project of Chinese Link (Huaxia Wenhua Niudai Gongcheng) which was to create a map of China for diasporic Chinese, presenting them with actual samples of soil and precious stones from each of the provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities, and special administrative regions that constitute the PRC. Interestingly, this project was showcased in the 2003 broadcast of the Spring Festival Gala.

In addition to official programs, government policies and other institutional measures, the PRC has continued the legacy of nationalist politics of subject inclusion in more discursive ways. Take the 2008 Beijing Olympic torch relay as an example. The PRC has used the relay as another opportunity to include all Chinese into the event sponsored by the Chinese party-state. According to the original plan of the Organizing Committee for the Beijing Olympic Games (BOCOG), the 2008 Olympic torch relay would pass through 135 cities all over the world, including a stop at Taipei before the torch arrived in Hong Kong, Macao, and a number of Mainland cities. Even though the plan was rejected by the Chinese Taipei Olympic Committee who accused the Mainland of politicizing the Olympics, the torch was successfully brought to Mt. Everest. While we saw from “Western” media that large-scale Tibetan protests were staged in quite a few torch relay cities outside of China, Paris, London and San Francisco for

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48 The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) is the highest academic research organization in the fields of philosophy and social sciences as well as a national center for comprehensive studies in the People’s Republic of China (http://bic.cass.cn/English/).

49 The objective of this project is: “Academically and artistically, making in-depth investigations; conducting careful research; vigorously promoting the ‘link’ nature and function of Chinese culture; and contributing to ethnic solidarity, social stability, reunification of the motherland and world peace” (http://www.chinaqw.com.cn/node2/node116/node1486/node1494/node1568/, translation mine).
instance, on CCTV newscasts which followed the whole relay, all these relays went on peacefully and were cheerfully welcomed by local diasporic subjects. Though there was no way to tell the “true identity” of these people, they were later recognized by CCTV as diasporic patriots nevertheless. Furthermore, after changing the originally scheduled time, the highly guarded Lhasa relay went on without major interruptions.

Other than setting up institutional, academic and discursive conditions for the promotion of the “patriot model,” the PRC has adjusted the content of their target audience. In the early stage of the Reform Era, main targets were returnees and the relatives of the diasporic subjects since they were seen as either the donors or the recipients of foreign remittances. Consequently, a number of qiaoxiang, or the native places of the diasporic subjects, were officially named based on the ratio of the diasporic population and the amount of diasporic remittances and investments (Thunø, 2001). By the mid-1980s, the remittances and donations alone could no longer be sufficient to feed the booming economy; the main target was thus shifted to the actual diasporic communities. As a result, we saw a proliferation of qiaoxiang and a few Special Economic Zones were created to attract foreign investments, including that of the diaspora’s. By the mid-1990s, when the economic development has started to demand more skills and capital, the PRC made another shift. This time the composition of the diaspora was substantially enlarged, as the State Council explained in 1996:

Since the beginning of the reforms and opening, the number of people who have left Mainland China to reside abroad is currently becoming an important rising force within overseas Chinese and ethnic Chinese communities. In the future, they will become a backbone force friendly to us in the United States and some other developed Western
countries, especially all kinds of overseas students who have settled locally (Quoted in Thunø, 2001:922, italics mine).

Note that in this formulation, ethnic origin was mobilized to expand and to unite all Chinese, which not only signaled a virtual acquiescence with the *jus sanguinis* model when it comes to subject interpellation, but also highlighted the growing appetite of the PRC for transnational investment capital. This need has made it a must to take into consideration new forms of diaspora loosely dubbed as *xin yimin* or “new migrants”⁵⁰ – those who left, for lack of a better term, the “Greater China” (Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau) for other countries since late 1970s. By extending their political work to the "new migrants" who only have to be ethnic Chinese,⁵¹ the PRC has put itself in a better position to include more potential contributors to the country’s modernization project. As the newest trend, the PRC has tried to encompass those newest of the new migrants – those who made their way out after the Tiananmen Incident of 1989. Most of the people in this cohort left China as educated adults and have received additional Western education or training in their host countries. Their “internationalized” skills and/or transnational capital are exactly what China has been pursuing.⁵² Those who

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⁵⁰ According to Zhuang (2000), new migrants constitute 70-80% of all Chinese in Canada, 40-50% in the USA, 80% in Japan, 70% in Australia, and 80% in Western Europe.

⁵¹ Again, even though acquiescence with the “*jus sanguinis* model” has not translated into the official recognition of dual or multiple citizenships, nevertheless, such an enlarged definition has made apparent that for the sake of the nation-state formation project of modernization the PRC has virtually been exercising a more flexible form of citizenship for ethnic Chinese.

⁵² Some local governments have even sent recruiters abroad to entice “internationalized” talents. Besides, to attract *haigui* (returnees), the PRC has formulated preferential policies for returnees to start up businesses in China. Also promised are material incentives and a stable legal environment to protect returnees and their investments. This practice is by no means novel. In fact, from the imperial Qing state to contemporary PRC, every Chinese government has, most of the time, encouraged investments and made special provisions for diasporic subjects. Specific motives behind this practice might vary, but the overarching drive has remained the same, that is, to make a strong nation-state of China.
have extended their helping hands in the country’s modernization project through whatever means have been described in both media and everyday narratives as patriots (Nyíri, 2001).

This re-appropriation of diasporic subjects goes a little further as the PRC realized that they must play a bigger role in those “foreign habitats” where diasporic subjects actually dwell. Under such circumstances, we have seen that the PRC has increased through multiple avenues its involvement in diasporic affairs and has tried every means to improve its presence in the everyday life of the diaspora. According to Nyíri (1999, 2001), the PRC government has been playing a progressively active role in approving and sponsoring diasporic organizations and their activities. Consequently, the newly emerged diasporic organizations have been increasingly oriented toward the PRC. Using Chinese communities in Hungary as a case in point, Nyíri points out that more and more diasporic organizations have been set up with the direct involvement and endorsement of the PRC (1999). After a broader study which covers both Europe and North America, including Canada, Nyíri adds that:

Most countries have one or several organizations purporting to represent all Chinese, which liaise with the embassy and with national overseas Chinese bodies in the PRC, and also professional, commercial, sports or even religious associations that also have their particular counterparts in China (2001:646).

Concurring with and supplementing Nyíri, Barabantseva also observes that:

since the 1990s there has been a tendency of bringing the regional organizations together under one unifying body and systematization and coordination of their activities through the organization of regional gatherings ……Centralization of the activities of the overseas Chinese organizations has taken place at different levels and across all the continents (2005:21).
The proliferation and centralization of the activities of the Chinese diasporic organizations have been paralleled by the establishment of educational institutions around the world. Compared with late Qing Reformers and Revolutionaries, the PRC might have been less aggressive in this regard, but this practice has regained momentum in the new century as a result of the overall rise of China. In 1987, the "China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language" (NOCFL) was established. One of the major projects undertaken by the NOCFL has been setting up overseas Chinese Language Centers. Since the first Confucius Institute or *Kongzi Xueyuan* was established in Seoul, South Korea on November 21st, 2004, 328 institutes have been set up in 82 countries by May, 2009. Though this project aims first and foremost at business people and ordinary citizens in countries around the world, it has been effective in involving various Chinese diasporic communities in those countries. According to NOCFL, “Confucius Institute can be built with direct investment from the Headquarter, partnership between the Headquarter and a local institute, or franchise authorized by the Headquarter” (sic). Given it is claimed that Confucius Institutes are non-profit public organizations, we can safely argue that

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53 Interestingly, a lot of “international schools” have been set up in China for the children of the returnees. On the one hand, the practice is a practical accommodation for those returnees who tend to enjoy their hard-won international or transnational identity. On the other hand, making such an accommodation itself also demonstrates PRC’s willingness to develop a class of Chinese that is transnational or international in nature.

54 [http://english.hanban.edu.cn/](http://english.hanban.edu.cn/)

55 [http://www.confuciusinstitute.net/college/globalColleges.htm](http://www.confuciusinstitute.net/college/globalColleges.htm)

56 [http://english.hanban.edu.cn/market/HanBanE/412360.htm](http://english.hanban.edu.cn/market/HanBanE/412360.htm)
monetary interests is not the top concern of such an ample investment, at least for now.\textsuperscript{57}

Exported are not only teaching materials in Chinese language, but also various forms of Chinese-language media productions, which have been made extremely accessible to diasporic populations thanks to the technological advancements of our time. Specifically, television productions have been sent out to the world via satellite direct-to-home (DTH) service or cable service. Other than the first international channel (CCTV-4) that was launched in 1992, three more international channels, English Channel (CCTV-9), Spanish Channel (CCTV-E) and French Channel (CCTV-F), have been added into the muster roll after 2000. So far, all four international channels of CCTV are available at no or low cost in most places around the globe. In other words, the Mainland Chinese television industry in general and the gigantic CCTV machine in particular have worried little about gaining monetary revenues from international markets.\textsuperscript{58} It is only until recently that CCTV has started to cooperate with a number of foreign media service providers, Rogers Communications Inc. and CTVglobemedia Inc. here in Canada for example, by adding CCTV-4’s programs into their local cable

\textsuperscript{57} According to the official website, the Confucius Institute “is a non-profit institute with the purpose of enhancing intercultural understanding in the world by sponsoring courses of Chinese language and culture, so as to promote a better understanding of the Chinese language and culture among the people of the world; develop friendly relationships between China and other countries; accelerate the development of multiculturalism at the international level; and help bring about global peace and harmony. The Confucius Institutes shall provide the following services: a. Developing Chinese language courses for various social sectors; b. Training Chinese language instructors for local institutions and providing them with Chinese language teaching resources; c. Establishing local facilities for the holding of the HSK Examination (Chinese Proficiency Test) and for the administration of procedures for the Certification of the Chinese Language Teachers; d. Providing information and consultative services concerning Chinese education, culture, economy and society; e. Promoting research about Contemporary China.” (http://www.confuciusinstitute.net/blogs/po/hq/posts/229).

\textsuperscript{58} This also helps to confirm my argument that we should not resort solely to market economy as a totalizing explanation when it comes to Chinese cultural studies.
and satellite lineups, thus becoming part of the pay TV system. Starting from 2004, China International Television Corp. (CITC), a subsidiary of CCTV, presented the first Great Wall Television Platform (GWTV), which enrolls different channels from CCTV and local Mainland stations, to the US market. In a very short period of time, GWTV-Asia, GWTV-Europe, GWTV-Canada and GWTV-Latin America were launched one after another.\(^{59}\) The major target of GWTV, to quote, “is to serve all the overseas Chinese, as well as audiences who speak English, Spanish and French with a complete portrait of the culture, tradition and modernization of China.”\(^{60}\)

A casual glance at GWTV’s schedule could confirm that CITC, the exclusive global sales agent for both CCTV and Chinese TV Program Export Association and the largest publisher of audio-video productions in China, is indeed targeting at the whole “Chinese Nationality” as it overtly claims.\(^{61}\) It might not be necessary to list all shows here to prove my point. As far as this project is concerned, however, it would be highly suggestive to have a brief look at some of the shows produced by CCTV-4 which is not only, again, the first international channel of CCTV but also ranks number one in all five GWTV platforms. Other than numerous shows that are claimed to serve all viewers without discrimination, such as *Zhongguo Xinwen* (China News), *Xinwen Liushi Fen* (News 60’) and

\(^{59}\) At present, GWTV has 23 member stations. Though the composition of each platform is somewhat different from the other, all of them are composed either mainly or exclusively of channels from CCTV and local Chinese TV stations. For instance, GWTV-U.S., the largest platform so far, assembles 19 channels, in which 6 are CCTV channels, 9 are local stations based in China, 3 are stations based in Hong Kong, and 1 is from Los Angeles. In contrast, GWTV-Canada, the smallest platform so far, has only 9 channels, in which 2 are CCTV channels and other 7 are all local stations from Mainland China.

\(^{60}\) http://www.gw-tv.cn/aboutus/

\(^{61}\) http://www.gw-tv.cn/
Zoubian Zhongguo (Across China), CCTV has been producing many special programs to speak to those “other” Chinese, which co-ordinates perfectly with the politics of subject inclusion or the interpellation of putative subjects as a key component of the state formation process. For instance, one fifth (8 out of 40) of CCTV-4’s programs can be classified as Taiwan-related shows which include Tianya Gong Cishi (Time Together Across the Strait), Haixia Liang’an (Across the Strait), Taiwan Wanxiang (Encyclopedia Taiwan), Yuanfen (Fate Sky or Predestined Relationship), Guobao Dang’an (National Treasure Archive), Hudong Xingqitian (Interactive Sunday), Haixia Liang’an Zhishi Dasai (Cross-Strait Knowledge Contest, co-produced with CtiTV, Taiwan and Xiamen Star TV, China), and the latest entry Taishang Gushi (Stories about Taiwanese Businessmen in China). In fact, these shows have even been dubbed as the “CCTV-Taiwan Channel” in the official website of CCTV. The target audiences of these shows are not only those who live in Taiwan but also those diasporic Taiwanese subjects who live outside of it. As far as other “inclusion” or “interpellation” shows are concerned, Huaren Shijie (Chinese World) is fully dedicated to the global Chinese diaspora.\footnote{Compared with its pre-1997 productions, CCTV is now putting much less effort into Hong Kong and Macau which have already been included into China’s sovereignty for over 11 and 9 years respectively. Zhitong Xianggang (Direct Link to Hong Kong) is CCTV-4’s only show about Hong Kong at present.} Amongst many sections of the program, the success stories of exemplary diasporic subjects, also dubbed as diasporic patriots, and their contributions to the modernization project of the
‘motherland’ in general and to the development of *qiaoxiang* in particular are most often showcased.\(^{63}\)

By the hand of CITC, a large amount of Chinese television productions have been made into pre-packaged videos for both national and global markets. For instance, all 27 years of the Spring Festival Gala (SFG), which is the case study of this project, have been put into the market as VCD or DVD box sets. A number of authors have presented some empirical studies documenting the massive circulation of Chinese-language media in global markets. Sinclair et al (1998), for example, discuss the large-scale export of pre-packaged Chinese-language videos (TV drama series and films) to diasporic communities. Focusing on people of Chinese origin in Australia, authors note that the Chinese diaspora has created a widely dispersed global market for cultural products of all kinds from the Mainland, making it increasingly easy for diasporic subjects to maintain a sense of “imagined community”:

we can think of the world-wide diasporic communities of Chinese as an 1998 Communications Research Forum extension of ‘Greater China’, a virtual ‘imagined community’ or common cultural region united either through the ‘time-space compression’ of satellite broadcasting, or where not, then instead by the portability and reproducibility of video (Sinclair et al, 1998).

In the same vein, Ying Zhu also finds out that dynasty drama serials have created a viewing frenzy among Chinese audiences around the world since the 1990s. According to Zhu, this type of drama serials had saturated what she calls

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\(^{63}\) This practice of setting exemplars is not original either as the PRC has been widely using it to facilitate the moral regulation of the state over its putative citizens. Lei Feng, the model citizen of Mao’s era is a good example in this respect. Besides, the transformation of China’s model citizens from Lei to diasporic patriots has in a way illustrated the societal change that China has gone through in the Reform Era.
“a pan-Chinese media market” (2008:59) or, in Sinclair et al’s words, “global narrowcast market” (1998:505). In short, all “Chinese,” regardless of their backgrounds and status of residence, have been incorporated into the target audience list of China’s export of television productions.

As for how and to what extent the Chinese diaspora has been interpellated through downloadable Chinese-language media products in cyberspace, almost all reports remain anecdotal as we have so far not seen much in-depth research on this phenomenon.64 However, it remains true that a huge number of media productions in Chinese have been made easily available to anyone in the world who has access to internet. For instance, again, all 27 years of the SFG have been made available for free in various formats in many websites based in Mainland China.65 Downloading through file sharing websites, albeit deemed illegal in a large number of cases, has been an unspoken practice many diasporic Chinese engage on regular basis.

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64 Keeping a close eye on China’s new media, Johan Lagerkvist’s most recent article Internet Ideotainment in the PRC: National Responses to Cultural Globalization (2008) breathes a fresh air into the study of contemporary Chinese nationalism. In this article, he cleverly coined a term “ideotainment” to denote “the juxtaposition of images, symbolic representations, and sounds of popular Web and mobile phone culture together with both subtle and overt ideological constructs and nationalistic propaganda” (2008:121). To him, this is another form of official response to the globalized world that is increasingly saturated with, if not inundated by, web-transmitted information because official discourses maintain that challenges from the Internet have been posing significant threats to traditional culture, values and ideology. To reckon with this challenge, traditional ways of nationalistic interpellation have to be reworked. Ideotainment is thus coined to account for this response. Lagerkvist argued that strategies of ideotainment are envisioned as an effective means to engage perceived enemies in China’s cyberspace, win battles of public opinion, and not least to shore up legitimacy for the CCP in the information age. What I hope to add is that “ideotainment,” like television or other more traditional forms of mass media, could be used to interpellate diasporic subjects as well, given the borderlessness of cyber space. When it comes to including diasporic subjects into China’s political platform, ideotainment has started to play an increasingly important role. Relevant research is thus needed.

Whether through satellite or cable services, prepackaged videos or downloadable files, technological improvement at the contemporary moment has set up unprecedented favorable conditions for the extensive circulation of Chinese-language media productions. In fact, these productions have been made so prevalent and accessible that many diasporic subjects report that they “do not feel that they have stopped being part of China” (Nyíri, 1999: 67). On such terms, we might say that media production has indeed been playing a crucial role in contemporary China’s politics of subject inclusion which has been trying hard to interpellate all ethnic Chinese, including diasporic subjects, into the subject position that is “Chinese.” Barabantseva’s general comment puts this practice in a bigger context, thus making apparent the patriotic as well as transnational orientation of China’s politics of subject inclusion at this globalizing moment:

The Chinese government has made a considerable effort to bring together Chinese of all walks of life and origins under the banner of patriotism toward the motherland and the unity of all Chinese. It seems that an intensification of global mobility, trade, communication, technological advancements, and other qualifications of globalization benefit and advance the modernizing agenda of the Chinese nation-state. The authorities in Beijing seize onto global trends to serve their cause. In other words, adapting to the new realities of a global age, the Chinese nation-state remains strongly in place. The format of this existence remains essentially trans-national (2005:23).

To summarize, once China imagined itself as a modern nation-state, the quest for resurgence has dominated the nation-state formation projects of various Chinese governments, which, in turn, has guided the ways in which different Chinese governments dealt with their diasporic subjects at different historical moments. Specific approaches might have varied, but when it comes to the interpellation of the putative subjects, the overarching principle has remained
unchanged, that is, all Chinese governments, from the Imperial Qing to the current PRC, have consistently taken a nationalist and pragmatic, if not utilitarian, attitude toward their diasporic subjects.

4. Television and Diaspora: Issues to Address

The historical review provided above has made apparent the systematicity as well as the discursiveness of the nation-state formation project of the PRC, in which television plays but a constitutive role and diasporic subjects are only part of the target population. Given this project seeks to investigate how Chinese television has been used as an important operator of the country’s politics of subject inclusion toward its putative diasporic subjects and how the diasporic subjects respond to such interpellation through their identity formations and transformations, two questions must be answered. First, has scholarship on Chinese television taken enough heed of the operational and interpellative role of Chinese television in the country’s state-formation process in general and the politics of subject inclusion toward diasporic subjects in particular?

The answer to this question is a resounding no. As a matter of fact, the vast majority of the existing scholarships on Chinese television has been focusing on the issue of state control. In other words, when it comes to the identification of the central problematic of Chinese television that has weathered all the historical transformations, whether domestic or global, most of the authors stop at various forms of “state control,” be it as crude as “television as Party’s loyal eyes, ears,
and tongue” (Huang & Yu, 1997)\textsuperscript{66} and “television as mouthpiece” (Zhao, 1999)\textsuperscript{67} or as nuanced as “state regulation as internalized practice” (Li, 2002)\textsuperscript{68} and “television as agenda-setting” (Chan, 2002).\textsuperscript{69} Indeed, due to the contributions of these authors and that of many others,\textsuperscript{70} the state issue has been brought to the

\textsuperscript{66} Yu Huang and Xu Yu (1997) contend that when television was still young before the 1990s, the notorious Maoist formulation of “television as the Party’s loyal eyes, ears, and tongue” has been acting as the sole theoretical guidance as well as criteria against which the media is judged.

\textsuperscript{67} In characterizing the nature of pre-1990 Chinese television, Zhao Bin (1999) argues that Chinese television has been operating as the “mouthpiece” of the party-state instead of a “money-spinner” on its own right.

\textsuperscript{68} Li Xiaoping, a CCTV veteran producer/director, complicates the issue a little further by disclosing that state regulations from top down have not only been the practical and theoretical given, they have been internalized by people in the industry as well (2002). According to her, the self-imposed censorship has long been the “habitus” (Bourdieu, 1990) of Chinese television professionals. Besides, she points out that the control mechanism has never lost its niche in Chinese television industry no matter how dramatic the structural changes have been (2002). Therefore, she warns that one should not assume that the freewheeling offerings of sex and violence, as well as disingenuous game shows on Chinese TV are indicative of a sea-change in the politics of the Chinese mass media. In fact, in terms of censorship and self-censorship, my professional experience of being an executive producer at a local station in Southwest China in the late 1990s concurred with Li’s observation.

\textsuperscript{69} Along this line of thought, Alex Chan also conducted an intensive piece of research on \textit{Jiaodian Fangtan} (Focus), one of the most influential shows produced by CCTV (this show attracts a daily audience of 300 million, according to Chan). He first calls “agenda-setting” the overriding media policy in the post-Tiananmen decade. He then argues that the conventional propaganda model has been reworked toward a model of hegemony, meaning that the primary role of media as agenda-setting has been redefined to a much more sophisticated level. As a result, he argues, “priority is still given to the party’s voice” (2002:35) though the expression of the people’s voice is allowed. Chan’s argument, simplistic as it may seem, could be confirmed by various media practices, including my case study. It thus not only signals the potential of a fruitful marriage between media policy studies and cultural studies, but also works as a clear-headed reminder of the regulatory nature of contemporary Chinese media practice which has taken on a much more “liberal” appearance yet is, perhaps, no less oppressive.

\textsuperscript{70} Through three case studies into the operational practice of CCTV, Yong Zhong (2001) also concludes that counter-commercialization enhances CCTV’s ability to propagandize. In addition, a series of binaries, such as “party-state and culture” (Goodman, 2001), “the party line or the bottom Line” (Zhao, Y. 1998), “mouthpiece or money spinner” (Zhao, B. 1999), “profit or ideology” (Liu, H. 1998), and as plainly put as “market or party control” (Winfield & Peng, 2005), have been presented as another way to illustrate the state’s supreme role in media practices. Authors like Zhao, Y. (1998, 2000), Zhao, B. (1999), Liu (1998), Goodman (2001) and Wang (2001a, 2001b, 2003) assert that even though post-Tiananmen Chinese media are far more complex than that of the Maoist past (Huang & Yu, 1997), and lots of emergent social forces such as commercialization and consumerism (Lewis, 2003; Ferry, 2003; Hong and Hsu, 1999) have further complicated the old propaganda model by blurring the line between ideological interpellation and common sense enculturation, and the line between culture and consumption, yet it is the party-state that still runs the show. With a rather sophisticated repository of Chinese media studies, a group of scholars, from various perspectives, have launched a collective and powerful challenge to Chinese media productions. Chin-Chuan Lee’s work is particularly important in this regard. In \textit{China’s Media, Media’s China} (1994) edited by Lee, scholars and
fore in the general field of Chinese media studies, and it is now almost common knowledge that in China mass media in general and television in particular have always been used as an “Ideological State Apparatus.” We are thus reminded that even though state control has been taking far more nuanced and complex forms, thus appearing less oppressive in its expression, we cannot afford to ignore the power of historical continuum in the totalitarian force that is so institutionally entrenched, which in turn might help us to be always alert to the over-reliance on the reductionist economic, or overly politicized, analyses at the expense of disregarding various culturally “friendly” forms of oppression forged in the new market economy. Regrettably, however, there remains a general dearth of scholarship going beyond the now obvious issue of state control and exploring Chinese media production through the larger angle of nation-state formation, and we have seldom seen quality works that attempt to understand Chinese journalists join together to explore the rapidly evolving conditions of political communication in China. Issues considered include the bureaucratization of media control; how ideology and professional roles affect both scholarly and journalistic thought in China; and how the media has been used in the service of the regime. In regards to the refined forms of state regulation, Power, Money, and Media: Communication Patterns and Bureaucratic Control in Cultural China (2000), also edited by Lee, makes a laudable contribution. This work goes beyond past literature about Chinese media by not only demonstrating solid substance and providing meticulous analyses about increasingly complex forms of media regulation in China, but also by offering thought-provoking reflections on conceptual and theoretical orientations. Along the line of state regulation, Television, Regulation and Civil Society in Asia, a book edited by Philip Kitley (2002), makes an attempt to expose the tensions between state policies of broadcasting regulation and practices of civil society in the Asian region. However, while mapping the regulatory space of the cultural authority in China’s television industry, contributor Michael Keane asserts that state regulation still holds sway however complex it has become. Presenting a rigorous case study of the television system of Shanghai from 1995 to 1999, another contributor Ian Weber (2002) tells us a story about how economic reform and its relevance have engendered a reconfiguration of Chinese propaganda and control modalities, suggesting, again, the necessity of holding accountable the nuanced forms of state control and propaganda. In Media in China: Consumption, Content and Crisis edited by Stephanie Donald et al. (2002), the contradiction between a rapidly commercializing media industry and a slow-changing, if not intact, power structure is once again highlighted. Jonathan Noble (2000), focusing exclusively on China’s film industry though, also points out the irrefutable conspiracy between market and ideology, and the interpenetration of culture and politics in this contemporary moment. He observes that Chinese popular culture remains an ideological tool for the party-state, even though commercial enterprise and economic growth have played an unprecedented role in reshaping the central maxim of the party-state.
television from the perspective of the politics of subject inclusion which, as I have demonstrated, has been so central to the general nation-state formation project of the PRC. For these reasons, it would be potentially fruitful to illuminate how television has been used, together with other systems of signification, in operationalizing China’s politics of subject inclusion. Chapter 3, a study on the Spring Festival Gala, a selected program produced by CCTV, is one effort undertaken to meet this need.

As for the second question, we need to ask: has the literature on the Chinese diaspora, other than those items mentioned above, taken sufficient issue with the politics of subject inclusion and paid appropriate attention to the complex identity formations or cultural citizenship of the Chinese diaspora in response to China’s practices of subject interpellation? There is no short answer to this question. On the one hand, the most classical stream of Chinese diaspora studies, which has attracted a large amount of scholarly engagement over the past decades, concerns neither China’s politics of subject inclusion toward its diasporic subjects nor diasporic Chinese as an active media audience. Rather, taking what I would call the “documentary approach,” a host of authors have made every effort to document the historical development of global Chinese at different particular sites of resettlement. All of the works in this camp are of great value in terms of

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71 The history of Chinese people going overseas is by no means short. Documentation about their transnational flows and resettlement also abounds. In fact, numerous works have tried to map the complex processes and dynamics of the development of the diasporic Chinese population around the globe. In this regard, the *Journal of Chinese Overseas* (2005 to now), however short its history is, has made a significant contribution. In this journal, which aims at “providing an interdisciplinary forum for the promotion of research and writing on Chinese overseas” (Ng & Tan, 2005:v), authors have documented numerous footprints left by globe-trotting Chinese, be it Chinese in Southeast Asia (Lim & Gosling, 1983; Reid, 1996; Cushman & Wang, 1988; Wang, 1988; Wang, 1998; Suryadinata, 1985; 1997; 2002; Ang, 2001; Wah, 2005), Europe (Christiansen,
providing narratives of the global footprints of diasporic Chinese. However, a majority of authors have chosen to emphasize descriptive local details in regard to diasporic subjects’ actual experiences of resettlement rather than theoretical engagement about their cultural formation. Besides, in a large number of cases, “China” and "Chinese" are sitting comfortably in the center of the discourses and remain taken-for-granted terms.

On the other hand, other than those mentioned in the historical account, quite a few influential works in relation to Chinese diaspora have indeed taken issue with China’s politics of subject inclusion in general or the interpellation in particular, albeit more obliquely than directly.

The first group in this camp focuses on the theoretical investigation of the complexity of the meaning of Chineseness. Let us take Wang Ling-chi’s much-cited work (1991) as an example. Retracing the Chinese experience in America, he combs out five types of diasporic Chinese identities, all of which have much to do with a Chinese word “根” (phonetically pronounced as “gen”), meaning “root”:

1996; 2003: Benton & Piekke, 1998; Pina-Guerassimoff, 2006), Oceania (Huck, 1968; 1971; Ip, 1990; 1996; 2003; Goh & Wong, 2004; Gao, 2006), the US (Cassel, 2002; Anderson & Lee, 2005; Li, 2006; Yin, 2007), and Canada (Con & Wickberg, 1982; Zong, 2004; Guo et al., 2005; Lindsay, 2007; Wickberg, 2007). Reviews collected in this journal also go deep into those works which trace diasporic Chinese subjects at multiple sites, Germany (Thunø, 2005), Silicon Valley (Bosco, 2007), and Pacific Rim countries (Merritt, 2007) for instance.

The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place, Mobility, and Identity, a geographically wide-ranging volume edited by Laurence Ma and Carolyn Cartier (2003) also makes apparent the significant global settlements of Chinese populations. In this book, Carolyn Cartier looks at the Chinese in post-colonial Malaysia, whereas Jonathan Rigg on Thailand and Vietnam. Robert Kent tells us stories about the small communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. Lily Kong and Brenda Yeoh focus instead on Chinese in Singapore. Maggi Leung explores the notions of home among the dispersed frontier population in Germany, while Cindy Fan, Sen-dou Chang and David Lai pay attention to diasporic Chinese in North America. Chung-Tong Wu and Manying Ip lead us to the world of diasporic Chinese who now live in New Zealand and Australia respectively. Studies on diasporic Chinese in Canada will be discussed later.
1) *Yeluo Guigen* (fallen leaves return to the root); 2) *Zancao Cugen*\(^{72}\) (pulling out the root to eliminate the grass); 3) *Luodi Shenggen* (fall on the earth and take root); 4) *Xungen Wenzu* (searching for root and ancestor); 5) *Shigen Qunzu*\(^{73}\) (losing contact with root and ancestor). Extending Wang, and based on diasporic Hong Konger experience, especially that of the “astronaut families” (1997:203), Chan also presents “Chinese cosmopolitanism” as a sixth emergent diasporic Chinese identity which he calls *zhonggen*\(^{74}\) (1997:207) “or multiple rootedness or consciousness.” According to these authors, as we can see, “gen” always lingers at the heart of diasporic identity no matter how multi-stranded it could have become. However, if we follow Chan and see “gen” as a form of “physical, materialist anchorage” (1997:207), we might run into big trouble in answering to those who resist seeing this anchorage as necessary, or those who have never experienced this anchorage in any real sense. The problem here is that “gen” always invokes a kind of arboreal (therefore natural) sense of attachment. Withering away would be the only destiny for those who remove themselves from it. Needless to say, those who hold on to this “root” offer a very good chance for the PRC government to carry out various interpellative strategies to include them into the nation, as will be demonstrated in chapter 4, no matter how complicated this “root” has been made.\(^{75}\)

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\(^{72}\) This should be spelled as “*Zhancao Chugen*” according to Romanticized phonetic symbol or standardized Chinese “pin-yin” that Wang intended to follow in this piece.

\(^{73}\) This should be spelled as “*Shigen Quzu*” instead for the same reason stated above.

\(^{74}\) This should be spelled as “*Chonggen*” instead.

\(^{75}\) For more studies, see two special issues of *Daedalus* (1991 Spring Issue and 1993 Spring Issue) which gather together a number of diasporic scholars to engage in theoretical discussions about Chineseness or Chinese identity.
A second group, consisting of quite a few renowned diasporic scholars, has indirectly touched upon the issue of China’s subject interpellation project by focusing on the fluidity and contestedness of “China” and “Chinese” and has therefore declined, in different ways and to a varying extent, to be incorporated into the political platform of the PRC. In “Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center” (1991), neo-Confucian philosopher Tu Wei-ming refuses to accept that the meaning of “being Chinese” must be understood in relation to China as a geopolitical concept. In other words, he challenges the Sino-centric view of being Chinese. Meanwhile, by promoting “the periphery” to “the center,” he calls for a fundamentalist version of “cultural China” or Chinese identity that is no longer necessarily based in Mainland China. In a similar vein, Yen-ho Wu examines not only the modern concept of Chinese identity in the context of China’s recent political history, but also the diasporic Chinese identity in frontier China and the process of becoming Chinese or non-Chinese. Helen Siu (1993), in a parallel fashion, articulates “Chineseness” as not an immutable set of beliefs and practices, but a process that captures a wide range of emotions and states of being. By highlighting the crucial moments in the construction of cultural identities in a region loosely termed south China, Siu offers a view of Chineseness that is not necessarily a derivative of the PRC (1993).

Their denial of the PRC’s inclusion in socio-political sense notwithstanding, when it comes to a cultural or ethnic sense of Chineseness, these theorists are still firmly entrenched in the larger space loosely termed as “Chinese culture” or “Chinese Nationality,” which continues to provide the PRC government the best
chance to deterritorialize itself, to promote its centrality, and offer a representative Chineseness on cultural and ethnic, if not political, terms.

Cultural theorist Rey Chow moves forward along this line of thought. In answering the question “What does it mean to be Chinese” (1993:93), Chow distances herself from either self-interestedly “gazing” upon China from the West, or self-righteously espousing a politic of lack, subalternity, and victimization in China (ibid: 13). Rather, she overtly argues that the notion of a monolithic Chineseness territorially bound to the Mainland is not only empirically unaccountable but also ethically problematic, because it recognizes neither the material realities of ethnic minorities within China, nor those diasporic populations in every corner of the world:

From the perspectives of those in Tibet, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, the predominant question is therefore not how and why China can say no to the West. Rather, it is: Can one say no to China? The significance of this question, which would require interested scholars to confront the contradictions of Chineseness as a constructed ethnicity, is yet to be recognized in the “cultural studies” relating to “China.” (1997:151)

Albeit in accordance with Tu in terms of challenging the Sino-centric view of Chineseness, Chow’s work on Chinese diaspora has moved one step further as she neither calls for foregrounding another vision of Chineseness nor defensively/offensively building another center of Chineseness, nor does she retentively appeal to any form of the “gen” concept. What she attempts to achieve is an enlarged vision of Chineseness that is not only cultural but also multi-referential, which poses a downright challenge to the interpellation made by the Mainland.
Anthropologist Aihwa Ong also engages in the search for the meaning of Chineseness by focusing on the issue of transnational cultural citizenship. Based on her own work (1993, 1997 with Nonini), Ong (1999) keeps problematizing the issue of “flexible citizenship” which she sees standing at the center of the cultural logics of transnationality. While maintaining that intensified travel, border-crossing, communications, and mass media have created a transnational Chinese public, Ong questions the triumphalist view of globalization which asserts that nation-states are being transformed by globalization into a single globalized economy. Combining ethnography with structural analysis, Ong describes how political upheavals and global markets have produced a group of Asian people who know how to take advantage of their “flexible citizenship” to achieve capital accumulation. She concludes that transnationality is not necessarily detrimental to the nation-state because of ineffaceable individual agency and extraordinary human action. Ong does not discuss the issue of interpellation or inclusion directly, yet she powerfully highlights the “difficulty” of such an attempt by making apparent the transnational condition while sober-mindedly reminding us not to translate this condition into an automatic dissolution of the nation-state.

This collection of challenges, however significant, tends to take for granted the a priori “Chineseness” of the diasporic subjects. In other words, while serving to decenter the Sino-centric version of Chineseness, I would argue that their acquiescence to the boundedness of Chinese identity has done themselves a disservice. As a result, the state’s will to interpellate and to include can always
come to terms with the diaspora’s readiness to be subjected to, or their willingness to be included in, the subject position that is offered by the state one way or the other – perhaps culturally, ethnically or economically, if not politically or demographically.

A third group takes the anti-inclusion stance to a higher level. A few scholars, leading cultural theorist Ien Ang for instance, have tried to “de-imagine” (Huang, Y, 1999) this diasporic or transnational Chinese imagination by questioning “the Obvious and the given” (Hitchens, 2001:52) and by challenging the very use of “Chinese” and its normative agency in not only a political sense but also cultural and ethnic senses, thus making the subject interpellation project of the PRC a highly debatable issue.

Unlike Chow who tries to answer the question “can one say no to China,” Ang (1998) pushes the limits of the diasporic paradigm even further:

There is no necessary advantage in a Chinese identification here; indeed, depending on context and necessity, it may be politically mandatory to refuse the primordial interpellation of belonging to the largest race of the world, the “family” of “the Chinese people.” In such situations, the significant question is not only, Can one say no to China? but also, Can one, when called for, say no to Chineseness? (1998:242)

In her later works, Ang engages systematically in an “undoing” of Chineseness in multiple senses (2001), and calls for going beyond an essentialist vision of “diaspora” (2003) and transnational nationalism (2004). Indeed, when it comes to giving the fundamental concepts of “China” and “Chinese” a good shake, Ang pioneers in “thinking without a banister” (Arendt, 1979:336). In the same camp, Chun also highlights the diasporic resistance to the Sino-centric version of Chineseness in Southeast Asia, and the increasing indigenization trend of

Though the three groups discussed above have made it obvious that the issue of subject interpellation is no stranger to scholars who contribute to the general field of Chinese diaspora studies, they have, by and large, not yet studied diasporic subjects as the targets (audience) of the interpellation and the complex formation process of their cultural citizenship, just as Chinese media scholars lack a study of Chinese television as one of the systems of signification continuously contributing to the PRC’s general project of nation-state formation. We must understand that in terms of contributing to the nation-state formation process through constituting social realities, the subject formations of the target audience play no less important role than the systems of signification themselves. Therefore, to see in what ways, and to what extent, China’s politics of subject inclusion has operated to affect diasporic subjects’ sense of being Chinese, we must study diasporic subjects not only as a media audience but also, perhaps more importantly, as active social and cultural actors. Chapter 4, a cultural study of a group of diasporic subjects from three major Chinese-speaking societies who now live in Canada,76 is designed to engage in this kind of a study.

76 As far as Canada is concerned, diasporic Chinese audience studies is still an academic lacuna. Most of the authors who study diasporic Chinese in Canada have also taken the aforementioned “documentary approach” from different sites of study. Chen Zhongping, for instance, explores the construction of Chinese diaspora across Canada with a particular focus on the case of
Having said this, I must acknowledge that a small number of authors have started to study the formation of transnational Chinese subjectivities through the production, circulation and consumption of Chinese media products within diasporic contexts. Wanning Sun, for instance, explores how translocal and transnational Chinese subjectivities are constructed through what she refers to as the “transnational mediasphere” (2001a, 2001b, 2002). Later on, she extends her concern with the formation of a global diasporic Chinese mediasphere (2005, 2006) and delineates the imbricative relationships between community, commerce, and cultural consumption of the Chinese media (2006). Sun’s works are of great significance mainly for two reasons. One the one hand, she makes apparent the crucial role that Chinese-language media plays in the formation of a Chinese transnational imagination. On the other hand, she underscores throughout her works that the formation of Chinese transnational consciousness is punctuated by the centrifugal power of a strong Chinese nation-state.

The heuristic value of Sun’s works notwithstanding, she seems not take the interpellation and the associated cultural citizenship as a debatable issue because Chinese diasporic subjects, according to her, always “operate largely within a template of national space and time” (2002:16) no matter how transnational their Chinese imaginations have become. In other words, to be included into the Chinese Nationality, or to be subjected to this subject position of “being Chinese,” seems to be the destiny of the diasporic subjects. I would argue
that while she duly notes the construction of diasporic subjects’ Chinese imagination, her Althusserian stance on interpellation has made her neglect to a large extent their ambivalences and contestations to this imagination. Besides, her works focus primarily on former Chinese nationals who now live in Australia without given due consideration to the tremendous complexity of the very concept of “Chinese diaspora.”

In my opinion, understanding the complexity of the composition of the Chinese diaspora in general and differences in terms of diasporic subject’s social origins could offer a great point of entry to capture diasporic subjects’ ambivalences, contestations, and/or indifferences to the so-called Chinese imagination. Therefore, in adopting the term “Chinese diaspora” as an analytical apparatus, I refuse to accept the homogeneity accorded to it by those who tend to treat “China” as a conglomerate whole. In the meanwhile, I deny the centrality of Mainland China as a predominant reference point for all diasporic Chinese subjects. I hope to stress that either Chinese or Chinese diaspora, seen as umbrella terms, signify multiple communities whose interest in “Chinese” well transcends national boundaries of the originating societies. If there is such a thing as “origin” or “home” of the diaspora, it is by no means monolithic.

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77 As will be explained in the next chapter, my focus will be simultaneously narrower in light of geographical coverage (the Greater Toronto Area of Canada as opposed to the country of Australia) and broader as per demographic constitution (not only former PRC nationals but also those who are from Taiwan and Hong Kong).
CHAPTER TWO

Content Analysis as Methodology

The previous chapter has made clear the necessity of studying China’s nation-state formation process from a cultural perspective. To this end, I have proposed to engage in two separate, yet highly interrelated studies. The first study seeks to explore how the subject position of “loyal member of the nation” has been offered to those alleged “Chinese” through a particular television program entitled the Spring Festival Gala; and, the second delves into the identification processes of the program’s target audiences to see how the offer has been variously taken up in extremely complex ways. In short, I first explore the issue of interpellation and then subjectification.

In this chapter I provide some methodological notes. General speaking, I employ content analysis, a research technique that has been extensively used for over a century in communication and media studies (Casey et al, 2002), in both studies, because many have attested to its effectiveness in analyzing a sufficient quantity of media materials (Fiske, 1990; Bignell et al, 2005). As for the technique’s specific research scheme, most media analysts also concede that before conclusions can be drawn, four steps need to be taken, that is, selecting the sample, defining the categories for analysis, coding the data, and analyzing the data (Bignell, 2004). In this order, therefore, I will explain how I have taken these steps in both components of the project. First and foremost, let me provide
a brief introduction to the SFG since the program sits at the center of both studies.

1. Why Is the Spring Festival Gala a Case in Point?

As I have stated before, the SFG is an extremely popular, complex and extensive program produced in Beijing by CCTV, the largest state-owned media network in China that is responsible for various forms of official media productions. As the most influential variety show ever produced in Mainland China (Geng, 2002; Gao, 2004) by a state agency, the SFG brings together on an annual basis different types of performances, such as singing, dancing, xiangsheng (cross-talk), mini-drama, folk opera, magic shows, and acrobatic performances, all in the name of celebrating chunjie, the “Spring Festival” or Chinese New Year, as a unified “Chinese people.” In other words, one of the claimed intentions of the SFG is to convene, on behalf of the state, all putative Chinese subjects around the globe to celebrate together the most important folkloric festival of the whole “Chinese Nationality.” On such terms, it has been operating, continuously and consistently, in the service of the state to call various Chinese subjects into a loosely defined community dubbed the “Chinese Nationality.” To put it differently, the SFG has been playing a contributing role in

78 Xiangsheng is a traditional form of Chinese comic dialogue in which two (in a few cases, one or more than two) actors (interlocutors) hurl rapid-fire verbal or expresional jabs at each other. In the way of “attacking” each other with puns, witty retorts, innuendoes, and satirical jokes, this art form has been utilized to entertain people, to comment on social and political events, to describe cultural trends, and, more than commonly acknowledged, to educate and to offer moral advice to the general public. As a well-established and highly-revered art form, xiangsheng has occupied an important niche in Chinese popular culture. Stand-up comedy, though mostly performed by one comedian, might be seen as a close equivalent as the comic effects of both of these art forms rely heavily upon language-based and culture-specific humor and satire.

79 I put the term Chinese Nationality in quotation marks here also to highlight its contradictory and contested nature.
promoting the politics of subjects’ inclusion of the contemporary Chinese party-state. It is therefore, as Bennett would have it, “constitutively governmental” (1999). 

However, one might argue, and rightly so, that being a component of the state narrative alone might not be a significant enough criterion for the SFG to serve as a case study for a project that examines narrative itself as well as its effects. Besides, given that every broadcast of the SFG lasts only a few hours each year – it customarily runs from 8:00 p.m. Beijing Time on Chinese New Year’s Eve to around 12:30 a.m. the next morning – one might also legitimately wonder why a program of such modest length should be imbued with such high stakes.

First of all, according to CCTV’s statistics, the program has been enjoying an extremely high audience rate in China since its first broadcast on Chinese New Year’s Eve of 1983 (Geng, 2002). Though many critics are not convinced that the symbols and narratives of the SFG have resonated at the level claimed by CCTV, none have a problem saying that the show has generated tremendous attention inside China over the past 27 years with its assertive, repeated and punctual presence. Gladney even contends that watching the SFG or watching it together has become a personal habit and a family tradition (2005). In fact, this observation comes as not much of a surprise. On the one hand, CCTV has found a perfect time to make the SFG a “cultural part of the New Year dinner” (Liu, 

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80 Allow me to be clear, I am neither assuming that all state-owned television stations can only produce uniform narratives of the state, nor claiming that the sole function of the SFG is merely to work as the “mouthpiece” of the Chinese party-state.

81 According to CCTV, the average audience rate of the show in China has never fallen under 90 percent: 94.3% in 2000, 94% in 2006, and 96% in 2008, for instance (http://www.cctv.com/).

82 In his several years of field research, Gladney noted that “most families from Beijing to Xinjiang on New Year’s Eve preferred to stay at home and watch this program surrounded by relatives and a few close friends” (2005:245-246).
2003) because it has consistently presented the SFG during the prime time of the Chinese New Year Eve, which, I stress, is not only a public holiday but also an emotionally charged time of family reunion. On the other hand, thanks to state ownership of all mass media, the SFG is practically the only available show on TV at that moment, since all other stations, besides CCTV channels, have been made to put their own programs on hold and to relay instead the SFG from beginning to end. No wonder Zhao (1998) argues that the SFG has been institutionalized and legitimized as a culturally and aesthetically indispensable part of Chinese New Year celebrations.

Secondly, with its virtual global coverage and its increasingly convenient accessibility as mentioned in Chapter 1, the SFG has also gradually gained significant popularity among diasporic communities (Zhao, 1998; Gao, 2004). Specifically, for diasporic audiences who might not be able to catch the live broadcast for various reasons (lack of access to cable/satellite service, work commitments, and the inconvenient difference between their local time and Beijing Time, for instance), new technologies of distribution and relevant

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83 When it comes to the audience rate of the SFG in various countries, most of the evidence remains anecdotal. For example, no academic research or journalistic surveys have been conducted in regards to the audience rate of the SFG in Canada or the quantity of sales or rentals of the SFG (in video tape or VCD/DVD) in the GTA. To validate my claim that a great number of Chinese diaspora in Canada still watch the SFG, I surveyed 522 Chinese-speaking people in downtown Toronto’s Chinatown and the Pacific Mall in Scarborough on May 14, 2005 and May 15, 2005 respectively. It turned out that 435 out of 522 (83%) do watch the SFG. Among those who watch it, 95% said they would watch the live broadcast if possible (note there is a 13-hour time difference between Beijing Time and Eastern Time and Chinese New Year has not been made a public holiday here in Toronto), 66% said they have watched it either on tape or VCD/DVD, and 72% admitted that they have downloaded the show and have watched it on a computer. In Australia, however, there is one study that does address this issue. As part of his longitudinal study about Mainland Chinese migrants in Australia, Jia Gao (2004) surveyed 132 diasporic Chinese about their efforts to keep themselves relevant to China, and he states that more than 85 percent of his interviewees have watched the live broadcast of the SFG every year since 1995. He even adds that the audience rate would be close to 100 percent if those watching the video of the show within a few weeks after the live broadcast are included.
transnational business operations have rendered all of these barriers and physical limitations of the 4.5-hour airing time inconsequential, as one can record the show on tape, DVD or TiVo for later consumption. This is not to mention that CCTV and Phoenix TV, which is also available in North America, will replay the whole show a few times in a row. Besides, given the pervasive online availability of the SFG since the late-1990s, one can download the whole show, or almost any particular episode of it, through the web, or simply watch it online. In addition, all broadcasts of the SFG are available in either DVD or VCD box sets for both domestic and international circulation. As far as the local television service in Canada is concerned, CCTV is available through both cable service and satellite service. Rogers Communications Inc., for example, has even been offering free access to the Great Wall Television Platform, a pay package that enrolls different channels from CCTV and local Mainland stations, to its customers during the Chinese New Year. Even OMNI-TV in Toronto has recorded and televised the SFG during prime time two times consecutively after the Chinese New Year’s Eve. In short, access to the program has been significantly increased over time and its potential outreach has been multiplied accordingly. Instead of 8 pm to 12:30 am on Spring Festival Eve, the symbolic synchronicity that the SFG hopes to create for the whole Chinese Nationality can actually be experienced anytime. In other words, the interpellation will not expire with the live broadcast coming to an end. Therefore, at the risk of generalization, I assert that it is impossible as well as mistaken to “measure” the overall significance of a cultural production purely by the actual number of hours of its live presentation, not to mention that
the SFG is not a one-off event, but has been consistently presented at every year-turning moment for almost three decades.

To highlight the representativeness of the SFG as a prototype of similar productions, it should also be noted that a great number of shows have taken the lead of the SFG in terms of both format (form) and constitution (content) in numerous variety gala shows produced by different levels of television stations for different special events and/or festivals, such as New Year’s Day (January 1st on the Gregorian calendar), the Lantern Festival (January 15th on the lunar calendar), the Birthday of the Communist Party (July 1st), the Chinese People’s Liberation Army Day (August 1st), the Mid-Autumn Festival (15th day of the 8th lunar month), the National Day of China (October 1st), and so on and so forth. Indeed, certain elements of the SFG and that of the aforementioned shows do not really change that much, making them appear anachronistic to a certain degree. We should know, however, that the SFG has been engaged in a process of fine-tuning, in the words of the SFG itself, “to catch up the tide of our time,” as will be demonstrated in Chapter 3. Besides, even those “anachronistic” elements can still resonate with new audiences, as will be made apparent in Chapter 4.

While I have introduced other CCTV programs that are of a similar ideological nature in Chapter 1, I hope to add here that a range of other media practices have also furthered the symbolic presence of the SFG. On the one hand, mass media in Mainland China – especially those popular tabloids, magazines, and websites that are transnational in nature and a great number of Chinese language media based in different host societies, including Canada – in various
ways stir up viewer attention to the show well before its actual presentation. More often than not, the relevant media coverage would report on the intensity of the competition in regards to who gets picked to host and/or to perform. On the other hand, reviews of the show would circulate for a period of time after each presentation. This “circle” has been going on year after year since 1983, and getting more and more transnational since the late-1990s with the unprecedented popularization of the World Wide Web. To understand the symbolic power of the SFG, perhaps we should remember Bignell’s general observation that “representations in television do not exist in isolation but in relation to other television representations and other representations in other media” (2004:226). On such terms, it is safe to say that the SFG, together with its promotion and evaluation, “takes up” much more than several hours of a viewer’s life on an annual basis.

Moreover, massive emigration in the post-Mao era, particularly from the 1990s on, has also been working as a kind of bridge, consigning the “fan base” of the program from the “homeland” to different “hostlands,” including Canada. Based on his research in Australia, Gao even argues that watching it or watching it together has become a transnational event (2004). In short, the SFG, however taken, has become one of the most far-reaching television programs that has ever been produced in Mainland China and therefore a good way for the producers to get in touch with their most distanced audiences around the world.84

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84 The SFG was transmitted as a pre-taped show before 1994. From 1994 on, it has been aired live nationwide through CCTV-1 and CCTV-4. Meanwhile, CCTV-4 and CCTV-9 sends the program’s signal to international telecommunication satellites so that the show is transmitted to every corner of the world in multiple languages.
Considering the “constitutively governmental” nature of the show and its tremendous outreach in both China and the world, we now have enough reasons to ask: if to evoke “Chinese Nationality” through celebrating Chinese New Year as a super-family is the openly claimed imperative of the show, then, what does Chinese Nationality really mean? Who are the members of the family? Why is it important to celebrate together as a family? If Chinese Nationality is simply a collective noun consisting of all individual “Chinese,” then, what does it mean to be a “Chinese”? Who are included and by what standard? Why does the state engage in various forms of interpellation so as to include various Chinese into the super-family? What kinds of inclusion strategies have been mobilized in the interpellation of those who are targeted? In a nutshell, given that the inclusion and/or exclusion of the putative subjects are important dimensions of state ideology, such a program should not be taken merely as a folkloric or aesthetic phenomenon, as Geng claims in her *Carnival in China* (2002), but rather as a state narrative with high political stakes.

2. Sample 1: 27 Years of the Spring Festival Gala

2.1 Sampling and Categorizing

I have stated that each SFG broadcast lasts about 4.5 hours, and that the show has been going on for 27 years. Therefore, the data of the particular study of the SFG consisted in about 120 hours of audiovisual materials, which contained about 1070 episodes of various forms of performance. No doubt, there was a sufficient quantity of materials available to be analyzed. To turn these raw materials into texts for subsequent analysis, I first categorized them into different
sets. As I have explained, I am most interested in looking at how the various episodes might be understood as exemplary moments in which the state interpellates viewers in different ways in the subject position of loyal members of the nation, or of a member of the nation that has some kind of an affective bond with the notion of a national collective. Therefore, I devised a system of categorization that would allow me to look at variations in content across episodes as related to the research question.

Assuming that the most frequently mentioned words, phrases, themes and topics of any communication reflect its most important concerns, I did a quick number count to identify several major themes engaged in by the SFG on a continuous and consistent basis. As a result, I teased out five major inclusion strategies that have been extensively and repeatedly used to realize interpellation, that is, 1) the construction of the Chinese primordial identity, both genetic and genealogical); 2) the manufacturing of cultural identity, by way of both cultural essentialism and cultural symbolism; 3) familial nationalism; 4) confident nationalism; and, 5) the conflation of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese Nation, and the Chinese state. Methodologically speaking, I then defined these major strategies as categories for later analysis.

2.2 Coding

After giving explicit definitions for each category, I then coded the materials I deemed relevant. Given this text’s spatial limitations, let me provide two examples to illustrate the coding agenda. For instance, I defined the category, “the construction of the Chinese primordial identity” as “practices which promote
ethnic and/or racial commonality based on certain forms of genetic or biological
traits, or genealogical lineage to achieve a sense of kinship and, ultimately, group
solidarity;” whereas I defined “confident nationalism” as “practices which seek to
secure a sense of belonging in the putative subjects by consistently putting on
display the ‘greatness’ of the alleged motherland with great confidence.” With
these definitions, I coded these two episodes as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ni Wo Shi Zhongguo</em> (You and I are China, Wan Shanhong, Vocal solo</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accompanied by group dance, 1991)</td>
<td>Strategy 1:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children singing in chorus are the Yellow River.</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents wonder every day when we return to the village.</td>
<td>Primordial Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The yellow skin</em> tells me two sides of the Strait are one family.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The black hair</em> tells me you and I are China.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The yellow skin</em> tells me you and I are China.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The black hair</em> tells me you and I are China.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zuo Tian, Jintian, Mingtian</em> (Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow, Zhao Benshan</td>
<td>Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et al., Mini-drama, 1999)</td>
<td>Strategy 4:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello all. Ninety-eight, ninety-eight, what a great ninety-eight! Bumper</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crops everywhere, but flood plagues nowhere. People live and work in</td>
<td>Nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peace and contentment, and they praise the leadership of the Party.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Especially our People’s Army, they are unparalleled in the world!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign countries turn things upside down, their people intrigue against</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>each other. If their cabinet is disbanded today, their Prime Ministers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>will be fired the next. Financial crisis is just over, and they now are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>going to impeach their leaders. Looking around the world, only here the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scene is good! Thank you!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I coded all episode in this way, cross-coding those cases that met the coding
rules of more than one category.

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85 I will analyze this episode in chapter 3.
2.3 Analysis

Given the sheer amount of episodes, it was not realistic to analyze each and every one of them in great detail. So, in the chapter where I provide a report of my study of the program, I picked some episodes from each category as cases in point for analytical purposes. As for ensuring that my chosen cases were representative of the whole, in fact, I would like to stress that the selection was not nearly as difficult as would be expected because most of the sketches or units of the program have been recycled, parsed out, and replayed numerous times, though certain elements have been somewhat revised over time. On such terms, I most needed to pay special attention to diversifying the genres to reflect the actual composition of the program on the one hand, and to covering as many years as possible as a way to ensure that the analyses could be historically accountable, on the other.

When it came to the actual process of textual analysis, I made every effort to analyze the words, images, and technical treatments occurring within the SFG text in order to understand the various means by which those inclusion strategies were realized. Following Bignell, who regards textual analysis as “a critical approach which seeks to understand a television text’s meanings by undertaking detailed analysis of its image and sound components, and the relationships between those components” (2004:211), I focused my analyses on both linguistic and televisual means of realization. However, to clarify, I did not differentiate “linguistic” from “televisual” means of realization to say that they are fundamentally different nor to create a dichotomy, but to better capture the
complex and multilayered aspects of television interpellations and their potential force in appealing to multiple aspects of human subjectivity. After all, evoking both "sound and image" to win viewer affective attachment could be realized not only by linguistic means, but also by televisual means.

As far as the linguistic means of realization were concerned, the analyses looked closely at semantic meanings of the text. Explored were not only various lexical units, including song or folk opera lyrics, hosts’ scripts, scripts of any episode that involved language use, words or sentences on banners or flags, subtitles, captions, and taglines, but also different rhetorical or metaphorical devices or tropes used to “realize” those aforementioned strategies, such as the trope of prosopopoeia (personification), the trope of synecdoche (pars pro toto or a part for the whole). The ordering of the episodes was also studied as different arrangements of different episodes could form different semantic units.

As for the televisual means of realization, the list was even longer. Considered were lighting, camerawork, cutaway shots during the performances, shots of the studio audience during or between various episodes, facial expressions and body language of the studio audiences, shot switches and arrangements, uses of the jib crane, file footages and/or pre-made videos played during the performances, editing techniques used in pre-made videos, audio & video quality, choreography, accompanying dances, performer popularity (the issues of stardom and fandom), audiences’ prior familiarity with songs or any

86 Synecdoche is “a figure of speech by which a part is put for the whole (as fifty sail for fifty ships), the whole for a part (as the smiling year for spring), the species for the genus (as cutthroat for assassin), the genus for the species (as a creature for a man), or the name of the material for the thing made (as willow for bat)” (Merriam-Webster, 1993).
musical pieces performed in the show, locations of the show, size of the studios, stage scenes, stage properties, stage layout, performer and host costumes, musical features of any musical pieces, background chorus, diegetic music, shooting location of the pre-made videos, facial expressions of the performers, artistic quality of the performance, and host narrating. To reemphasize, different means of realization usually operated as a whole and in a majority of cases, worked on multiple registers.

Last but not least, as many have suggested (Altheide, 1987; 1996; Krippendorff, 2004; Mayring, 2000), a well-balanced content analysis takes into account not only the manifest content of the materials that might be easily quantified, but also the latent content which “may or may not invite frequency counts” (Kracauer, 1952:638). Therefore, while I have treated those major categories and their relevant episodes as primary content, I have kept in mind contextual information as latent content all the way through. This includes a consideration of the general social, political, cultural, economic, and even literary contexts which set the basic conditions for, and give rise to, the production of the discourse.

3. A Synopsis of the Spring Festival Gala

Diegetic music, also called “source music,” refers to the music produced by people or devices that are part of the narrative of the show. It can be heard by the performers, studio audiences as well as the television viewers, but the sound source normally remains invisible. Generally speaking, diegetic music is used principally to add affective power to the narrative, thereby evoking the emotions of the audiences or cueing them to various feelings, as will be shown in different cases in this chapter. It is important to note that performers, studio audiences as well as television viewers could all become participants in the narrative with the diegetic music being played.
As I have mentioned earlier, to fully explore the role of representation in nation-state formation, we should not only look at a particular practice of interpellation, but also learn about the identity formations of the recipients in responding to such an interpellation. With this in mind, I conducted an audience study. However, it would have been practically impossible to watch all broadcasts together with the participants or to ask them to re-watch them all. Therefore, I prepared a synoptic version of the SFG to refresh participants’ memories of their past viewing of the program and to facilitate the interviews to be conducted later.

As I mentioned, because most of the program units were recycled and replayed over and over again, it was relatively easy to select cases in point for my own analysis. Here I would like to emphasize that this applied to the making of the synopsis as well. Due precisely to the highly recycled character of the SFG, not much effort was needed to avoid self-serving selection or lack of representativeness in making a synopsis. Given such terms, I drew substantially from the cases used in my previous analyses. Such a practice also enabled me to explore audience responses in a more pointed manner because those specific cases of interpellation that I used to provoke their responses were already analyzed. While making the synopsis, I planned to reveal neither the results from the analyses nor my own responses to the program to the study participants in order not to compromise their judgment.

Specifically, the synopsis was composed of 22 episodes which not only covered all major analytical categories (different senses of being Chinese), but also featured a complete array of linguistic and televisual means of realization.
mobilized by the average SFG broadcast. If applicable, the hosts’ lead-in and/or lead-out were kept intact with every episode so as not to undermine the semantic unit (interpellative act) they formed as a whole. It is of great practical importance to note that to make the synopsis less of a burden for the participants to watch and to leave more time for inquiry, I tried to avoid repeating episodes coded over three times in the same category. Consequently, the synopsis lasted only one hour and thirty-eight minutes. Finally, samples collected in the synopsis were selected from different years of the SFG to reflect both the consistencies as well as the minor changes of the SFG over time as a particular practice of representation. Below is a list of the episodes included in the synopsis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episodes</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Analytical Categories/ Senses of being Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Opening Presentation</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Opening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What Do You Like to See</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Primordial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Descendants of the Dragon</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Primordial &amp; Cultural symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Book of Hundred Surnames</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Cultural essence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Take a Look at Our Mother River</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Cultural symbols – natural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My Chinese Heart</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Cultural symbols – various</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Singing in Sequence by Various Nationalities</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Familial – Minorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Big China (2nd appearance)</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Familial – Non-Mainland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Panda Name Selection Part 1</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Familial – Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Nostalgia</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Familial – Diaspora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. The Zero-Hour Ceremony</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Familial – Diaspora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. On Ma’s Army</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Better and Better</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Party, My Dear Mother</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Conflation of party-nation-state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Mama Taught Me a Song</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Conflation of party-nation-state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Jiang Zemin &amp; Li Peng</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Conflation of party-nation-state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Sample 2: A Selected Group of Diasporic Audiences

4.1 Target Population and Recruitment

Generally speaking, this project sets as its target population a large group of diasporic Chinese subjects who now live in a particular location outside of their originating Chinese-speaking societies. More specifically, it enrolls a group of diasporic Chinese who were originally from three major Chinese speaking societies, namely, Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, but who now live in Toronto, Ontario, Canada – a global city best known for its multicultural character. The reasons for this choice are twofold. One, Toronto has a long established, highly advanced media network, which offers great accessibility to media productions from all over the world, including that of the PRC. Two, the city is home to a large number of Chinese-speaking immigrants\(^8^8\) from different Chinese-speaking societies.\(^9^9\) Three major “Chinese” communities based on

\(^8^8\) See http://www.toronto.ca/toronto_facts/diversity.htm for reference.

\(^9^9\) Some details about diasporic Chinese and Chinese languages in relation to this research must be clarified as they impact specific methodological considerations. Among various Chinese languages spoken by over one billion people, Mandarin, or “guoyu (national speech)” as used in Taiwan, or “putonghua (common language)” as used in Mainland China, is, generally speaking, the most widely used form of spoken Chinese, though people in Hong Kong and most of the older generations of the diasporic subjects do speak Cantonese. Mandarin is not only the official language of Mainland China, Taiwan and one of the official languages of Singapore, but also the common language used by most Chinese speaking people, especially those whose dialects are not mutually intelligible. In addition, despite obvious differences between “putonghua,” “guoyu,” and other variants of Mandarin in terms of deviations in grammar, vocabulary, stylistic aspects, slang and loan words, people speaking these various forms of Mandarin can communicate with each other without much difficulty. My case study, the SFG, uses mostly so-called standard Chinese Mandarin and, to a much lesser degree, Mandarin variants such as Northeastern dialects, and can therefore reach out to most of Chinese speaking people.
social backgrounds, namely the Mainland Chinese community, the Hong Kong Chinese community, and the Taiwanese community, have long been established. Under such circumstances, Toronto offers an unparalleled opportunity for the selection and recruitment of participants for a project which seeks to explore how different “Chinese” from different social backgrounds respond to a process of interpellation that openly aims to make them one.

Considering the manageability of the project, I decided to select four participants from each one of the three Chinese-speaking communities. I would like to emphasize that the numbers of participants from each group neither mathematically reflect the actual demographic constitution of diasporic Chinese in Toronto, nor provide a comprehensively representative sample. Instead, the aim was to get a possible range of uses of the program by talking to people with different backgrounds. The assumption was, as I have said, that differences in social background could affect diasporic subjects’ Chinese imagination in a significantly profound way, considering the particular history of modern China touched upon rather briefly in the previous chapter. Therefore, by interviewing people from a diversity of backgrounds, I might be exposed to a range of

More generally, we should realize the importance of the making of an official language in the state-formation process. In addition to rewriting history, the CCP also adopted standardized Mandarin as the only official spoken language of the nation, irrespective of the considerable differences among many “dialects” and “languages” widely spoken in different regions of the country (Mair, 1991). In terms of writing, “hanzi” (sinographs) or “fangkuaizi” (tetragraphs) were sanctioned as the only official written scripts, despite the fact that some minority nationalities, Hui (Muslim), Zang (Tibetan) and Yi for instance, have their own writing systems. Importantly, on top of this official language policy, basic education was made mandatory and was required to be delivered in the official language throughout the country, though certain special courses might be added to the curriculum in certain minority regions. As far as mass media is concerned, hanzi dominates the print press and websites whereas Mandarin dictates the radio and television, though certain special newspaper and television or radio programs might be produced in languages or dialects other than Mandarin in certain minority regions or during some special airtimes.
responses to the program that I did not expect and could learn from. Therefore, I employed the method of snowball sampling in soliciting potential participants. Specifically, I started searching by approaching people known to me from my work at OMNI-TV Ontario, a multilingual television station based in Toronto. The station provided me with a great opportunity to acquaint myself with various media professionals who were originally from different Chinese-speaking societies. These people have extensive experiences with their respective communities, and their informal social networks allowed me to diversify the constitution of my participants instead of just picking up interviewees at random.

To ensure that all participants met the inclusion criteria mentioned above, screening interviews were carried out. I established the following minimum inclusion criteria:

1. Participants must claim themselves as “Chinese” in whatever sense.
2. Participants must be over 18 years of age to ensure the maturity of the reflection on research issues, and the ability to analyze and articulate their thoughts and ideas.
3. Participants must have lived in one of the three major Chinese-speaking societies at least in the first eighteen years of their lives, and also must have lived outside of their societies of origin as Canadian landed immigrants or Canadian citizens for, ideally, no less than about three years to have developed a practical, psychological, and socio-cultural basis for their “diasporic status.”

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90 I would like to conduct a follow-up study which uses a more representative sample to better account for the internal complexities of the so-called “Haiwai Huaren” (diasporic Chinese) in Toronto, a population that is, in fact, composed of people who differ to varying degrees in terms of society of origin, family background, previous and current social and economic status, length of diasporic status, language use, accent, social networks, and political beliefs, etc.
4. Participants must be familiar with the SFG to a certain degree. Some minimum and quantifiable requirements to ensure methodological accountability are: 1) participants must have watched more than three broadcasts in the past; 2) they must know which station produces the show; and 3) they must be able to name at least three major formats of the performance, three famous episodes, and three performers who have frequented the SFG.

5. Participants should indicate their willingness to engage in active self-reflection about their viewing experiences, about their sense of being Chinese, and about their envisioning of the concept of “Chinese Nationality.”

6. Participants must be able to understand Mandarin since the show is aired in Mandarin.

In summary, I selected 12 Chinese-speaking people who were originally from three major Chinese-speaking societies as participants.

Meanwhile, I also made every effort to balance other variables such as gender, age and length of “diasporic status.” In terms of gender, all three groups were equally balanced, consisting of two male and two female participants each. The age of the participants ranged from 33 to 61 years, but most were in their thirties and forties when the research was conducted. The length of their “diasporic status” varied from 5 years to 21 years. They held a wide range of occupations, including mobile phone repairman, freelance writer, assistant

91 Generally speaking, diasporic Chinese from Mainland China are usually more familiar with the show than those who are from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Therefore, I do not expect that all participants from different Chinese societies should be equally familiar with the show.

92 Though Mandarin has been gaining force as a major variant of the Chinese language used in diaspora-concentrated locations, including Canada, I must point out the important role that Cantonese has been playing in the communications of the non-Mandarin speaking diasporic subjects, especially those who left Hong Kong well before the PRC’s takeover of Hong Kong. Accordingly, I do not assume that this research has comprehensively represented all “Chinese-speaking” communities, even though the data gathered from the audience studies might well reflect the views of those diasporic subjects who do not use Mandarin as a form of communication. As well, though I did not intentionally exclude Cantonese speakers from this study, I must acknowledge that the identity formations of those who only understand Cantonese are not well accounted for given the “mandarin” nature of the SFG.
professor, television news anchor, doctoral student majoring in political science, actor, office administrator, opera singer, vice principal of a local school, cameraman, commercial producer and retired civil servant. Notably, all interviewees possess Canadian citizenship by naturalization.

As for the naming convention, all individual interviewees and groups were named intuitively. Individual participants were named by combining their social background (MC for Mainland China, HK for Hong Kong, and TW for Taiwan), gender (F for female and M for male) and interview number to keep them anonymous. For instance, the first male interviewee whose background was Mainland China was named MCM1. By the same token, the second female interviewee whose background was Taiwan was called TWF2. The three groups were named Group MC, Group HK, and Group TW respectively. As the researcher, I coded my name simply as YC.

4.2 Interviews

Before the interviews, an open-ended questionnaire containing generic working questions was sent to all participants. Given that the central concern of the study was to learn about participants' cultural citizenship in regard to “Chinese Nationality,” all questions were designed in a very straightforward manner to provoke participant reflection about being “Chinese” in the cognitive, emotional, or subjective sense, rather than reflection about citizenship in the political, legal, or economic sense. Below is the questionnaire:

93 I must admit that the chosen samples were mostly "professionals." For a more representative sample, the future project should include more non-professionals.
1. To facilitate a collective celebration of the Chinese New Year among Chinese Nationality is at least one of the explicit themes of the SFG. How does the show define or describe Chinese Nationality?

2. Do you identify with SFG’s definition or description of Chinese Nationality? If you do, do you feel you belong? If you somewhat or totally dis-identify with it, why?

3. A possible follow up: Why do you believe that you are a Chinese? In your eyes, what does “being Chinese” entail? Or, what does it take to be a Chinese?

4. Generally, how has Chinese culture been represented in the SFG? Do you identify with it?

5. Specifically, how have the national symbols been represented? Do you identify with them?

6. Chinese Nationality has been portrayed as a super-family. Do you feel you belong?

7. How do you feel about the ways in which minority groups get represented?

8. How do you feel about pop stars from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau performing in the show?

9. For Group HK: How does your personal history in Hong Kong affect your sense of being Chinese? How did the return of Hong Kong to China affect your sense of being Chinese?

10. For Group TW: How does your personal history in Taiwan affect your sense of being Chinese? How does the proposed unification of Taiwan and China affect your sense of being Chinese?

11. How do you feel about the fact that diasporic Chinese perform, or simply appear, on the show?

12. The “living tree” is used metaphorically to refer to all Chinese, with Mainland China being the root, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan being the major stems, and diasporic communities being the leaves. What is your take on this metaphor?

13. The power of China has always been showcased in the SFG. How does the representation of that “power” make you feel?

14. How do you feel about those episodes which eulogize the CCP, the state of the PRC and the Chinese nation on equal terms?

15. How do you feel about state/party leaders appearing on the show?

16. In summary: Should there be a “place” or “places” in this world where you feel at home? If so, which one/ones would it/they be: “China,” “Chinese Nation,” your society of origin, and/or Canada?
Participants were encouraged to recall their past viewing experiences while preparing to answer the questionnaire. I must emphasize, however, that these questions were mainly intended to encourage the participants to use the SFG as a way to reflect upon their cultural citizenship. Therefore, they were used only as a guideline in the actual interviews and were asked as such only when my inquiries failed to produce sufficient data in the actual screening and, if applicable, in subsequent interviews.

To implement the strategy of comparative-contrasting, all interviews were conducted by following the same procedure: 1) watching the synopsis with the participants, observing them and making notes about their responses; 2) asking questions based on their telling responses, whether verbal or not; 3) pausing any particular episode when inquiries were necessary, or pausing at the end of each section; and, 4) if necessary, probing further at the end. To explain further, I attended to both their spontaneous commentaries and their non-verbal responses during the screening to capture the complex articulation of meanings and the centrality of affect that are entailed in responses to media (Willis, 2000). More often than not, I used participants’ non-verbal or bodily responses as cues to design questions spontaneously, which would in turn prompt participant responses to the screened episodes and their thoughts on related issues about identity formations. Again, I asked questions from the questionnaire only when my spontaneous questions did not produce sufficient data to gain a clear idea of participants’ identity formation in relation to different ways of interpellation or different senses of being Chinese. Even when asked, the questions were revised
according to participants’ responses during the screening. My field notes focused on flashes of insight that might otherwise be easily forgotten, moments of inspiration and clarity, and a range of cues any voice recorder could hardly capture. As the researcher, I also gave particular attention to provoking responses, probing for additional information, and seeking ad-lib clarification instead of sharing my views with the participants.

Finally, the group screenings and any individual interviews with the 12 participants were conducted over a course of about four months. The transcripts of their commentaries and my inquiries during and/or after the screening of the synopsis together with my field notes thus formed the data from the audience study.

### 4.3 Categories, Coding, and Analysis

The categorization system that I devised in the study of the SFG has made apparent that in interpellating various people to the subject position of loyal members of the nation, “Chinese Nationality” has been constructed in multiple senses: primordial, cultural, “familial” (Chinese Nationality as a super-family), “confident” (Chinese Nationality as a superpower) and “tripartite” (Chinese Nationality as the CCP + the PRC + Chinese Nation). As I have just mentioned, in order to explore the variance in participants’ subjectivities as members of the Chinese Nationality, my questions were designed to elicit information about the participants’ identitarian positionings in relation to the different senses of Chinese Nationality, not an undifferentiated idea of Chinese Nationality. When it came to categorizing their responses for later analysis, therefore, the main task was to
classify and conceptualize the variations and complexities expressed in the participants’ responses to the process of interpellation in each and every sense.

Upon reading the text gathered from the audience studies, I categorized the participants’ positions in relation to each sense of Chinese Nationality as follows: 1) statement of subjection; 2) statement of objection; and 3) statement of ambivalence. The statement of subjection was formulated when the audience members understood the interpellation and accepted the offered subject position of being “Chinese” in any particular sense or senses. The statement of objection, on the contrary, was expressed when the audience members understood the interpellation but rejected the offered subject position of being “Chinese” in any particular sense or senses. The statement of ambivalence was articulated when the audience members understood the interpellation, but responded with ambivalence or uncertainty in relation to the offered subject position of being “Chinese” in any particular sense or senses.

Taking into consideration both the specific senses of being Chinese and the categories of the participants’ positions, I then coded the texts of the audience studies. Again, due to spatial constraints, I provide two examples to illustrate the coding agenda:

Participant: TWF2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We do share so much in common. We do come from same people ... We do have black eyes, black hair and yellow skin, right? ... I mean, if they invite me to sing a song like this, I’ll be happy to ‘cos this kind of song ... transcends the differences between the PRC and the ROC, right?</td>
<td>Genealogical</td>
<td>Statement of Subjection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genetic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Participant: HKM2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If Macau had died and now returning from the dead. Salvation and resurrection! This idea of motherland and the need to be accepted back by mother is mind-boggling. The abandoned child is begging to be taken back and to be loved. The fact that the child has prospered and succeeded over the years on its own! Does not count for anything? Without mother, you are hopeless! I can’t take this corny, mushy cheesy crap anymore. Enough with the lonely child syndrome! ……</td>
<td>Familial</td>
<td>Statement of Objection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for analysis, I focused primarily on exploring the construction of different statements by looking for how various interpellative strategies, discussed in the textual analysis of the SFG, operated to affect the participants’ affective attachment to different senses of being Chinese. Bearing in mind that when it came to affecting people’s identity formation, both the interpellation made by a particular television production and the interpellative strategies it employed could at best play a partial role in most of the cases, I also looked at other factors to account for the complexity of the participants’ identification process. Therefore, in many cases, especially in those instances where the participants’ subject positions were at odds with their responses to relevant interpellative strategies, I took into consideration other extra-linguistic variables, such as their pre-established conceptions of being Chinese, events significant enough to affect their sense of being Chinese, their educational backgrounds, work experiences, political beliefs, and the length of their “diasporic status.” These variables, which variously shaped and constituted their life-worlds, could have exercised significant influence on participants’ identity formations.
CHAPTER THREE

“The State Never Stops Talking.”\(^9^4\) The Spring Festival Gala as an Exemplar of the “Culture/State Nexus”\(^9^5\)

I have stated that Chinese media in general and Chinese television in particular have been playing a constitutive role in China’s politics of subject inclusion, itself a central component of the country’s broader project of nation-state formation. Making apparent its “governmental” or “state” nature as a narrative and its high audience rate, I have also explained why the SFG could serve as a case study for my research.\(^9^6\) Following the methodological approaches I have just explained, I now present a report of my study on the SFG to demonstrate how television production has been used as a vehicle to interpellate different people into the subject position of “being Chinese” so as to sustain “Chinese Nationality” as an “imagined community” for all alleged Chinese. Inasmuch as the project of securing identity undertaken by the SFG has a number of specific dimensions, I shall discuss them one by one. I hope to emphasize that all five of these dimensions – “constructing a primordial identity,” “manufacturing a cultural identity,” “familial nationalism,” “confident nationalism”

\(^9^4\) Writing about the formation of the English state, Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer note that the production of discourse is an integral part of the state’s exercise in legitimation. In their words, “the state never stops talking” (1985:3).

\(^9^5\) I borrow this term from Steinmetz (1999) by which he means to highlight the dialectical relationship between culture and state and the role of culture in state formation.

\(^9^6\) I should also point out that the party-state does not stand alone in making the SFG narrative in particular and Chinese media production in general. In other words, other factors or actors, such as television stations themselves, advertisers, production companies, and transnational capital have been playing increasingly active roles in shaping the landscape of the Chinese media industry. Future research should therefore take them into account. This said, I maintain that the main interpellator of the SFG is the Chinese party-state, as I will show later.
and “the conflation of the party, the nation, and the state” – have been operating on multiple registers. To employ these dimensions, ultimately, is to create a powerful interpellative call so as to secure the emotional attachment of the target populations to the subject position that has been offered to them. Let me start with the most banal strategy, that is, the construction of a primordial Chinese identity.

1. Inclusion Strategy 1: Constructing a Primordial Identity

1.1 Genetic/Genealogical Aspects of Primordialism

In the most general sense, primordialism sees the nation primarily as the “ethno-nation,” namely, a community which unites individual subjects through the same blood, ethnicity and/or race (Geertz, 1963; 1983). Some authors add cultural aspects, such as speech, history, religion, customs, and traditions, etc. as aspects of the creation of a primordial attachment (Conversi, 2002a; 2002b; Smith, 2001; 2002). My discussion in this section, however, focuses on the “biological” aspects of primordialism to illustrate how the SFG has been using the strategy of primordialism to set up a common genetic/genealogical index of subjects’ identification, thereby interpellating its audiences into the formative process of “being Chinese.”

I must first point out that using primordialism to produce a sense of oneness based on genetic, ethnic and/or “racial” identifiers, such as a shared bloodline or common phenotypic features, in order to carry out the politics of subject inclusion central to nation-state formation is anything but a novel idea. In fact, it is
considerably antiquated because most “nations” or “nation-states” have engaged in such a practice, in one way or another, as reported by numerous authors. These authors have made obvious that an ethnic and/or “racial” commonality based on certain forms of genetic or biological traits has been widely employed as a strategic mooring to distinguish oneself from others so as to achieve a sense of kinship and, ultimately, group solidarity (Hutchinson & Smith, 1996; Geertz, 1963).

As historically commonplace and obvious as it is, primordialism as a strategy has been repeatedly used by the SFG. Specifically, the genetic or biological features of “Chinese” have been utilized as ontological identifiers of Chinese identity, which not only makes Chinese as individuals and as a group clearly identifiable, but also ensures the eternalization of this group identity, given the essential and eternal nature accorded to the identifiers. Let’s look at *Long de Chuanren* (The Descendants of the Dragon), a song performed in the 1985 gala, as an example.98

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97 Wheatcroft (1997), for instance, points out that family ties or matrilineal descent, which have been somewhat contested, are still basic to Jews all over the world and in the Jewish state of Israel. Shin (2006) and Robertson (2002) paint a similar picture for the nation-states of South Korea and Japan respectively. In a recent collection edited by Turda and Weindling (2007), authors highlight again and again the prevalence of blood-based racial nationalism in Central and Southeast European nation-states, not to mention the much-studied Germany in this regard (Kohn, 1965; Snyder, 1978; Weindling, 1989; Ignatieff, 1995; Brubaker, 1996; Herb, 1997).

98 It is important to note that most of the selected examples should not be seen as a “pure” representation of any individual issue because, more often than not, a particular representation illustrates multiple issues. Moreover, according to the statistics about the specific content of the SFG, the category of “Singing & Dancing” accounts for 37% of the whole program from 1983 to 2000. It has sometimes had an even bigger share, i.e., 40%, in terms of time slot occupancy, which is far greater than that of any other category (Guan, 2000). Given that SFG presentations from 2001 on have been following the same format, we could safely say that “Singing & Dancing” is the most significant constituent of the SFG. As a result, the majority of my examples will be drawn from this category.
In the faraway East flows a river,
Whose name is the Long River.
In the faraway East flows another river,
Whose name is the Yellow River.
Though I have never seen the beauty of the Long River,
I dream of its water quite often.
Though I have never heard the roars of the Yellow River,
Its torrents always echo in my dreams.

In the ancient East flies a dragon,
Whose name is China.
In the ancient East live a host of people,
They are all descendants of the Dragon.
Under the Dragon’s wings we are growing,
Growing as offspring of the Dragon.
With black eyes, black hair, and yellow skin,
We remain the Dragon’s descendants forever and for good.

This particular representation contains a tremendous amount of ideological substance\(^{99}\) and will be cited in later analyses. For now, I emphasize one basic proposition of the SFG made apparent by this widely influential song – that the identity as well as the membership in an ethnic group is determined \textit{jus sanguinis}. 

\(^{99}\) In a dehistoricized context, this song could easily be read as a eulogy instead of as an elegy of China, or more precisely, of the Chinese Nation. However, to read it from a specific social, cultural and political point of view, historical references must be made clear. The song was composed in the 1970s by Hou Dejian, a Taiwanese songwriter/folk singer who traveled to Hong Kong, defected to China, was kicked out of China and returned to Taiwan (For a biography of Hou, see Jaivin, 2001). On October 25th, 1971, the Republic of China (ROC) government was officially ostracized from the United Nations. With the changing attitude of the US toward Taiwan at that time, the whole island was under unprecedented heavy pressure. It was in this historical context that Hou composed this song. Therefore, this “China” can hardly be read as the PRC and, by extension, is not necessarily “patriotic.” The song was brought into vogue in Taiwan by a pop singer named Li Jianfu and was banned in Taiwan when Hou defected to the PRC in 1983. The song’s ideologically opportune aspects, which could be put to the service of the PRC, were only too evident, hence its presentation in the 1985 gala.
In other words, what qualifies one to be Chinese is presented as, partially at least, a series of morphological or phenotypic features, i.e. “black eyes, black hair, and yellow skin.” By extension, therefore, the Chinese Nation, which encapsulates the group identity of all individual Chinese, is racially determined. If the Manchu rulers were the initiators of “racial nationalism” (Dikötter, 1997) in Chinese history, as I suggest in Chapter 1, the PRC wasted no time calling upon it at the SFG’s early stages in order to “make many one,” deemed by pragmatic state leaders as necessary to the modernization project.

When it came to the issue of televisual effects, however, I must say that the 1985 broadcast in general and *The Descendants of the Dragon* in particular failed to take advantage of various means at their disposal to enhance the affective power of the narrative.\(^{100}\) For example, due largely to poor lighting and the limited number of the cameras, only four cutaway shots of the on-site audience were used during and after the performance of *The Descendants of the Dragon*. Besides, the audio quality and the video quality were both under par, not to mention that no subtitles of the lyrics were provided. One might therefore argue that the technical inadequacies handicapped to a certain extent the interpellative power of this particular episode.

The legitimacy of such an argument notwithstanding, I hope to contend that these technical inadequacies did not necessarily undercut this episode as a

\(^{100}\) The 1985 broadcast, as an exception of all SFG broadcasts from the technical point of view, was the only one that was entirely staged outdoors as opposed to in a studio. Given the vast space of the Workers’ Stadium as well as the technological backwardness of Chinese television in the mid-1980s, CCTV failed badly in ensuring the audio and video quality of the broadcast. Feeling the hot breath of public opinion and that of the media, CCTV even made a public apology via *Xinwen Lianbo*, the paramount newscast of the central government, on March, 02, 1985. Since then, the SFG has always been staged in studio.
particular interpellative act. I argue this on two fronts. On the one hand, the special diasporic identity of the performer,\textsuperscript{101} which was emphasized by both the presenter of the performance and the performer himself, was in itself a powerful message suggesting the geographical and identitarian unboundedness of a primordial Chinese identity, if not Chinese citizenship in a political or legal sense. On the other hand, \textit{The Descendants of the Dragon} was already a familiar song for many before the 1985 broadcast. When it comes to the issue of interpellation, it should be noted that an audience’s prior familiarity with the song is an extremely important factor; with such cognitive affinity comes a much greater possibility of emotional resonance, which might in turn create a greater level of identification. On such terms, it would be reasonable to argue that \textit{The Descendants of the Dragon} could withstand all of the technical inadequacies, thus initiating a tradition of primordialism in the SFG.

In actuality, \textit{The Descendants of the Dragon} has indeed laid the groundwork for the future construction of a Chinese primordial identity because the practice of racial identification has been echoed by numerous episodes performed in the same and the following galas. Specifically, 158 out of a total of 1,070 episodes of the past 27 broadcasts of the SFG (1983-2009) have a direct or oblique reference to the “consanguinity” of Chinese Nationality; these references appear in multiple formats, such as in song lyrics, hosts’ dialogues, stage scenes, etc. In other words, the genetically-based inclusionary/exclusionary features or identifiers of being Chinese have been accentuated by the SFG successively and continuously. More importantly, well into the 1990s, episodes which aimed at

\textsuperscript{101} I will further discuss the significance of the performer’s “diasporic identity” later.
maintaining a primordial Chinese identity, such as *Ni Xiang Kan Shenme* (What Do You Like to See, 1995), *Zonghui Dengdao Na Yitian* (That Day Will Finally Come, 1996) and *Xibu Kuangxiang* (Rhapsody of the West, 2000), have made significant progress in terms of using various televisual means to enhance the affective power of the performances. I will use *What Do You Like to See* as an example here:

*Ni Xiang Kan Shenme (What Do You Like to See, Tao Jin & Xie Jin, Vocal duo accompanied by group dance, 1995)*

X: The big red lantern flushed the sky.
T: Today we *zhongguoren* (Chinese) celebrate the New Year!
X: The “fortune” character on the New Year couplet made everything red.
Chorus: All descendants of the Yellow and Fiery emperors from all over the world gather here together.

[Start rapping]
T: Speaking of us Chinese celebrating New Year,
X: Descendants of the Yellow and Fiery emperors from all over the world gather here together!
T: Boundless yellow skin resembles the wave of the Yellow River.
X: Countless black eyes are brighter than clusters of stars.
T: Grandpa Pangu leaves us this festival.
X: The Yellow Emperor uses it to connect all our blood and veins.
T: Everybody watches the television after eating some dumplings.
[Studio audience in chorus] That’s right!
X: So many people come to the television state to celebrate together.
[Studio audience in chorus] Exciting!
T: This lady, don’t be shy, don’t evade the camera.
[Studio audience in chorus] Come on!
X: That uncle, please applaud when the Beijing Opera is on!
[Studio audience in chorus] Alright!
T: Official, guests and commoners from various nationalities sitting together.
X: Everybody is looking at the stage. Tell me how to perform!
[Studio audience in chorus] Not easy!
[Stop rapping]

[A lady from audience standing up and asking other people around her in southern accent] We southerners like to see some delicate shows, right?

[A man from audience standing up and declaiming in northern accent] People at our place love to drink with a big bowl, eat as they please, and watch some bold performances!

…… (Second half omitted)

In addition to quick switches and zooms, this short episode (2 minutes 39 seconds) made use of camerawork to the fullest extent to showcase the interactivity between the performers and the studio audience. The camera showed us, 16 times over, lantern-waving studio audiences rapping in chorus with the two performers. Four audience members were even given the chance to make brief agitative remarks toward the performers and other audience members during the interludes. These were in Mandarin but with different accents suggesting different locations (Shanghai, Northwestern, Cantonese and Northwestern). Another five wide shots also demonstrated that the studio audiences were waving red lanterns in concert. As a result, various interpellations contained in this song, including one about Chinese primordial identity, were delivered both linguistically and televisually. In fact, to add more aesthetic appeal to the narrative, shot switches were conducted in more sophisticated fashion; camera jib cranes were frequently used; the accompaniment dances were better choreographed; and stage and costume designs were much improved as well. As a result, the SFG created a more “aesthetically friendly” environment through which to send out its interpellative calls.
In parallel, the SFG also follows the officially promoted belief that all Chinese are the descendants of the *Huangdi* (The Yellow Emperor) and the *Yandi* (the Fiery Emperor) (Pan, 1992; Li, 1992; Sautman, 1997a; 1997b; Chen, 2006). To use “Chinese as descendants of the Yellow and Fiery Emperors” as the genealogical index of identification was not a new invention either. According to Chinese legend, the primitive tribes that inhabited the middle and upper reaches of the Yellow River were unified into two major tribes under the Yellow Emperor and the Fiery Emperor. These Emperors later conquered those rival tribes active in south China under the leadership of Chiyou and incorporated the defeated into their own, thus forming the basis of the Han nationality and the Chinese Nation thereafter. As I have explained, it was in the late Warring States period when the Yellow Emperor was first claimed to be the common ancestor of the Huaxia people.\(^{102}\) Both revolutionaries and republicans openly claimed these two emperors as racial founders, but their veneration was banned by the PRC from its foundation to the early 1980s (Sautman, 1997a) for they were considered symbols of feudalism. While it is important to note that the reinstatement of the Yellow and Fiery Emperors as common ancestors signifies a return to the projects of the revolutionaries and the republicans, and even to that of the ancient writers, it is more important to point out that the underlying ideological imperative of these practices and their operative logics are all the same, that is, to bring all Chinese, whether Han or non-Han, domestic or diasporic, under one

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\(^{102}\) Compared with the Fiery Emperor, the Yellow Emperor has always been imbued with greater prestige in official rhetoric as well as in academic works.
national flag by making them attached to the nation,103 at least biologically and genealogically speaking. I will not belabor readers with more examples, as I believe the aforementioned episodes have effectively proven my point.

1.2 Primordial Identity and Its Contradictions

Neither genetic nor genealogical indices of subjects' identification, however, can account for the multi-racial and multi-ethnic realities of Chinese populations. To put it bluntly, not every Chinese has “black eyes, black hair and yellow skin,” and not all Chinese deem the Yellow and Fiery Emperors their ancestors. In other words, the contradictoriness of the primordial constructions as the common point of identification is too evident to disregard.104 To interpellate those who do not “look” Chinese and those who have drastically different beliefs about their bloodlines into the subject position of being Chinese, much work has to be done. However, when it comes to the contradiction itself, I must say that this obvious issue has been left largely unresolved in most episodes of the SFG, even if

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103 It should also be noted that as a reemerging genealogical index of subjects’ identification, the Yellow and Fiery Emperors have gained substantial popularity after more that two decades of official promotion and banal “flagging” (Billig, 1995), given that all kinds of discourses have been taking them for granted, adding substantial truth value to such a claim.

104 On such terms, Connor’s “ethno-national bond” (1986; 1993; 1994), that is, “passionate and deeply-felt attachment to one own’s ethnic values and identity” (Conversi, 2004:269) might be impossible after all to realize in China. What I hope to contend is that the nature of the “ethno-national bond” or racial identification that these practices might give rise to, perhaps, “beyond reason,” as Connor prescribes (1993), but it is by no means irrational. Following the footsteps of Shils (1957) and Geertz (1963), Grosby holds that the primordial attachment based on racial commonality “refers to the significance of vitality which man attributes to and is constitutive of both nativity and structures of nativity, whether that structure be the relation of lineage, for example, the family, or the relation of area, for example, the locality in which one is born and in which one is sustained” (1995:144). If so, racial nationalism, once enacted, can not be denied simply as irrational thought. Quite the opposite, it is often taken up by state strategists in a very rational manner to influence people’s identitarian aspirations.
familial nationalism as a “remedial measure” has been provided. As I mention in Chapter 1, China in the early to mid stages of the Reform Era made every effort to secure as much help as possible, especially the financial and political support of its diasporic subjects, to facilitate a modernization project that had as its aim the realization of China’s economic prosperity, cultural regeneration, and national reunification. Therefore, the self-contradictory primordial talk about Chinese Nationality might not always be practicable when all Chinese populations are called upon. The fact is, however, that the number of “impracticable groups” – meaning certain ethnic minority groups or diasporic communities which might not share similar phenotypic features with the majority or hold the common belief about ancestral roots – is few after all. This is certainly not to say that they are intentionally excluded from China’s politics of subject inclusion, since quite the opposite has been true in the vast majority of cases. It is to highlight that as long as a primordial Chinese identity could be used as an interpellative tool or a common point of identification for most of the putative populations, especially those who have the greatest potential to contribute to the modernization project, it will remain in force, however contradictory a strategy.

2. Inclusion Strategy 2: Manufacturing a Cultural Identity

2.1 Cultural Essentialism

In creating an all-inclusive Chinese Nationality, the appeal of the genetic aspect of the primordial narrative is strong, but extremely antiquated and

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105 The issue of “familial nationalism” will be discussed later to explain how the producers have attempted to “dissolve” this obvious contradiction, whether successfully or not.
contradictory. This antiquatedness and contradictoriness, however, do not stop here since another ground on which the SFG makes its claim about “Chinese identity” is no less, if not more, antiquated and contradictory. Specifically, whereas the genetic and genealogical narratives accord a biological and a biographical anchor to the symbolic membership of “Chinese Nationality,” “cultural essentialism”\(^{106}\) vouchsafes it with a cultural anchor. In other words, the symbolic membership of “Chinese Nationality” could be secured on both biological and cultural grounds. As depicted in the SFG, China is not only a territorially bounded area, but also a social, cultural and political entity that has continuously withstood all kinds of tests throughout its history, regardless of numerous “internal” conflicts and dynastic changes. Therefore, claims the SFG, it is always able to evoke a real, true, and absolutely whole-hearted group attachment which, theoretically at least, never fails to bring forth a whole set of core cultural “Chinese” values, ascriptive as well as prescriptive. Let me provide one instance from one of the most recent SFG broadcasts.

In the 2006 gala, three pop stars performed on stage a song entitled “Bai Jia Xing,” a proverbial term denoting hundreds of surnames that Chinese people have been using for generations.\(^{107}\)

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\(^{106}\) By cultural essentialism, I mean, on the one hand, a system of beliefs grounded in a conception of human subjects as ‘cultural’ or “culture-bearing” subjects located within a particular part of the world, which defines them and differentiates them from others by providing a set of cultural elements claimed to be unique. On the other hand, these cultural elements are normally treated as identifiers in a highly essentialist or reductionist fashion.

\(^{107}\) *Bai Jia Xing* (Book of Hundred Surnames) is a document compiled in the 10\(^{th}\) century and has been widely circulated since the start of the Northern Song Dynasty. It lists all of the known Chinese surnames in use at the time, which amounted to over four hundred surnames. The word “bai,” which literally means hundred, was normally used in ancient literature to denote many, as is the case of *Bai Jia Xing*. It is important to note that viewing surnames as a genealogical marker of Chineseness is in itself a cultural construct. After being defeated by the Yellow and Fiery...
Bai Jia Xing (Book of Hundred Surnames, Man Wenjun, Nicholas Tse, Harlem Yu & Jewel Lee, Vocal Trio accompanied by individual and group martial arts performance, 2006)

M (CHN): The Yellow and Fiery Emperors are our common ancestors.
   The tradition of Han and Tang are our common roots.
T (HK): Chinese characters are straight and square.
   Our parents bring up our Chinese nation.
Y (TW): Chinese hearts are strong and well-disciplined.
   The burning incense makes strong our nation of Huaxia.
Chorus: No matter Li or Zhang, all of our surnames come from Bai Jia Xing,
   The blood that flows in our veins is always the Yellow River and the Long River.
Whether Zhao or Wang, all of our surnames come from Bai Jia Xing,
   The spirit filling our hearts is always the glory of the Nation of Dragon.
(Repeat 2 times)
(Repeat all over again)

Man Wenjun, a singer from the Mainland, set the keynote from the very beginning. Here we see that primordialism based on genealogical or biological determinism (“the Yellow and Fiery Emperors are our common ancestors”) was given a lyrical as well as melodic rendezvous with its cultural counterpart (“the traditions of Han and Tang are our common roots”). Moreover, we can also identify that a few strategies were employed to augment the televisual effects of the narrative which sought to construct a Chinese cultural identity. For example, all singers were dressed in tangzhuang jackets; a giant LED screen was set up

Emperors, more and more non-Han people in China’s geopolitical peripheries assumed blood ties with the conquerors by adopting their surnames as well as the associated genealogical memories. The Huaxia ethnic entity was thus constructed. In other words, this association between particular surnames and Chineseness is from the beginning a result of a demographic mélange and cultural essentialization. There is no such thing as pure Han people after all.

108 Tangzhuang, literally meaning Tang clothing, has now been used to refer to traditional Chinese clothing. Given that this style of clothing mainly originated from Manchu clothing in the Qing Dynasty, its usage as the Chinese traditional clothing or national costume has triggered controversies. Many have argued that tangzhuang was too heavily influenced by the Manchu
in the background, playing the animation of different surnames written in diverse calligraphic styles; all 30 odd children martial arts performers were also dressed in a traditional fashion and were given a series of wide shots and close-ups. All of which, I stress, alluded televisually to the antiquity and distinctiveness of “Chinese culture.”

Writing about the general issues of cultural identity, Hall points out that “sometimes national cultures are tempted to turn the clock back, to retreat defensively to that ‘lost time’ when the nation was ‘great’, and to restore past identities” (1996a:615). Considering that three singers and one leading martial arts performer were handpicked from the Mainland (Man), Hong Kong (Tse), Taiwan (Yu), and Macau (Lee) respectively, I argue that the historical tradition established in the dynasties of Han and Tang was used not only to construct a unitary and glorious national culture, but also to create a timeless, hence essentialist, Chinese identity for all Chinese. On such terms, cultural essentialism was used as an interpellative tool to include different “Chinese” into the nation. Indeed, this was exactly what Hall calls “the regressive, the anachronistic, element in the national cultural story” (1996a:615).

To construct common points of cultural identification, cultural essentialism has been practiced in multiple forms. Other than atavistically harkening back to the glorious past and sending out multiple forms of evocations, the SFG treats “Chinese,” a term of significant complexity, like a “conglomerate whole.”

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habilatory styles to be a national costume. Nevertheless, it has been popularly and officially sanctioned as the national style in the contemporary moment. Chinese all over world wearing tangzhuang during the lunar New Year and tangzhuang being given to foreign dignitaries as gifts of the Chinese state are both examples of this cultural practice. As far as the SFG is concerned, using tangzhuang as costumes was not the most common practice for male performers or hosts.
Therefore, terms such as “Chinese culture,” “Chinese civilization,” “Holy State,” “spirit of the dragon” or “national spirit,” etc. could be heard from time to time throughout the whole show. Besides, the SFG has been making uninterrupted commitments to the identification as well as promotion of various cultural essences of China. For example, varieties of Chinese folk operas, especially the Beijing Opera which was officially conferred the status of “national essence” (Wichmann, 1990),\textsuperscript{109} and folk songs, have been presented in 188 (out of 1070) episodes over the past 27 broadcasts, not to mention that one such episode was usually composed of a few different pieces. Folk dances alone have made 88 appearances, not to mention that hundreds of episodes of singing have mostly been accompanied by folk dances. As well, a brief count shows that some cultural artifacts or artistic forms that could be easily associated with China, such as cross talks, martial art or qi-gong performances, acrobatic shows, Spring Festival couplets, and Chinese lanterns, etc. have seldom failed to make an appearance in each and every broadcast multiple times.

Stereotyping based on behavioral dispositions or linguistic traits that are customarily accorded to different locales was abundant: those who speak the Shanghai dialect were always either snobbish city-dwellers or hen-pecked sissies, whereas those who speak northeastern dialects, either sons of the soil or daughters with honest hearts. Interestingly, those who speak Mandarin with a

\textsuperscript{109} No less complicated than Chinese dialects, Chinese \textit{xi-qu} or folk operas have innumerable varieties. It would not be an overstatement to say that almost every province or region has at least one, and most of the time more than one, local opera. Some of them are regarded as having more prestige, such as “\textit{jing-ju}” (Beijing opera) and “\textit{yue-ju}” (Shanghai opera). One may even argue that culturally, geographically, politically and aesthetically, the hierarchy of Chinese \textit{xi-qu} is somewhat indicative of the Chinese social order.
(fake) strong Cantonese accent were, of course, upstarts with money to burn. The stereotyping practices have appeared most often in the genre called Xiaopin (mini-drama) which has 161 entries in the past 27 years. In short, appearing ordinary and even trivial, much of the SFG has been presenting discrete cultural elements as immutable essences. Given that these practices have been carried out continuously, they have made consistent contributions to the construction of the timelessness of Chinese culture. To summarize, cultural essentialism, in the sense of manufacturing a cultural identity that is based on continuous and immutable tradition (Geertz, 1973; 1988; Shils, 1957; 1981, 1982), has been actively used to present common points of subjects’ identification, thus setting up conditions for subjects’ interpellation.

2.2 Cultural Symbolism

Complementing cultural essentialism, cultural symbolism\textsuperscript{110} has also been employed in the creation and maintenance of the cultural identity of Chinese Nationality. Specifically, the dragon, the Great Wall and certain national landscapes, including Huanghe (the Yellow River) and Changjiang (the Long River), have been identified as major ethnosymbols,\textsuperscript{111} appearing as the central themes of about 48 ode-like episodes of the SFG. In addition, as fragmented forms, such as figures embroidered in the performers’ dress, in props, stage

\textsuperscript{110} By cultural symbolism, I am referring to those practices which promote ethno-national symbols in the creation and maintenance of the collective cultural identity of a given nation (Leoussi & Grosby, 2006).

\textsuperscript{111} Writing about the general issue of Chinese racial nationalism, Barry Sautman identified four biologized myths of descent as the underlying theses: 1) “the dragon as primal ancestor;” 2) “the yellow emperor as racial founder;” 3) “Peking Man’ as Chinese everyman;” and, 4) “the Great Wall as ethnic minority project” (1997a). In terms of the SFG, the legitimacy of Sautman’s observation has been confirmed over and over again, though “Peking Man as Chinese everyman” has not been overtly promoted by any particular episode.
scenes, cutaways, hosts’ scripts, greetings and taglines etc., these symbols have become ubiquitous elements of the show. Let me first take up national landscapes, the cultural symbols used by the SFG with the highest frequency.

2.2.1 National Landscapes

Amongst the numerous ethnosymbols that have been promoted in various popular discourses, significant natural landscapes seem to be of the greatest potential for creating and maintaining the cultural identity of Chinese Nationality. Not only are they physically “there” in the geographical confines of China, but they have also been imbued with all kinds of values, whether cultural or not. Given that two significant natural landscapes, the Yellow River and the Long River, have long been officially acclaimed and generally acknowledged as the two “mother rivers” of “Chinese civilization” in both official and popular discourses, it comes as no surprise that their ethnosymbolic appropriation is identified as key to the entire ethnosymbolic endeavor of the SFG. Allow me to go back to *The Descendants of the Dragon:*

*Long de Chuanren (The Descendants of the Dragon, Huang Jinbo, Vocal solo, 1985)*

In the faraway East flows a river,
   Whose name is the Long River.
In the faraway East flows another river,
   Whose name is the Yellow River.
Though I have never seen the beauty of the Long River,
   I dream of its waters quite often.
Though I have never heard the roars of the Yellow River,
   Its torrents always echo in my dreams.

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After a short interlude, the lyrics continue as follows:

In the ancient East flies a dragon,
   Whose name is China.
In the ancient East live a host of people,
   They are all descendants of the Dragon.
Under the Dragon's wings we are growing,
   Growing as offspring of the Dragon.
With black eyes, black hair, and yellow skin,
   We remain the Dragon's descendants forever and for good.

Formally speaking, two parts of the lyrics resemble two lines of the Spring Festival couplets such that both are literally paired together to form new semantic units. In other words, two lines of the couplets or two parts of the lyrics are semantically correlated or even integral; nonetheless, they are not necessarily inherently related. As well, it is interesting to note that given the tuneful nature of this folk song, these two parts of the lyrics are not only related literally and semantically, but also melodically. The melodious refrain, in turn, consolidates the semantic relationship of the two parts of the lyrics. Consequently, as far as this particular song is concerned, the corresponsive relationship between the Yellow River and/or the Long River and China or Chinese Nationality is symbolically established; thusly, national landscapes become part of the interpellation.

Over the past 27 broadcasts of the SFG, episodes of a similar kind abound. In the 1988 broadcast for instance, Peng Liyuan, the political songstress par
excellence, made an “ontological” statement of “who we are” based exactly on
ethnosymbols stemming from the national landscapes.

*Women Shi Huanghe Taishan (We Are the Yellow River, We are the Mount Tai, Peng Liyuan, Vocal solo accompanied by group dance, 1988)*

I ramble along the bank of the Yellow River.
The river torrents call out my name.
Like the Yellow River, the history of my forefathers flows forever,
Carrying so much sadness, so much anger, and so much tribulation!
The Yellow River calls out my name.
How can I bring shame on my ancestors?

*[Background Chorus] I climb on the summit of the Mount Tai.*
The wind from heaven calls out my name.
Like the Mount Tai, the spirit of China persists forever,
Engraved with so many feats, so much glory and so much dignity!
Mount Tai calls out my name,
Asking me to be a good Chinaman.

I stand in front of the sea and the sky,
Calling out the future with my singing voice.
The hope of China will rise as surely as the Sun will.
We will not put shame on our ancestors, we will march forward,
Walking into the future!
We are the Yellow River!
We are the Mount Tai!
We are the Yellow River!
We are the Mount Tai!
We are the Yellow River and the Mount Tai!

The clear-cut identification of the group “we” with two chosen ethnosymbols was
certainly an interpellative act, since the Yellow River and the Mount Tai were
obviously used to call for the viewers’ identification with the “we.” For this
particular episode, I also want to bring to light a less obvious interpellative strategy: the apposite use of the background chorus at different moments of the vocal solo performance. Specifically, a background chorus was used at the beginning as a way to bring in the vocal solo. It was used again to bridge two sections about two different ethnosymbols. Most importantly, it was used a third time when the performer was singing the last three sentences. That is to say, the interpellation was conveyed not only by the soloist act of the performer, but also by the background chorus. The affective power of the interpellation could therefore be enhanced by a background chorus, whose presence offered a sense of togetherness by signifying a larger off-stage group (the Chinese Nation) that was identifying with the onstage performer, even without lyrics (Budelmann, 1999).

In addition, in interpellating the audience with the strategy of cultural symbolism, the SFG has frequently employed a particular technique, that is, the personification of ethnosymbols, or more generally, the trope of prosopopoeia. For example, in *Two Rivers Toasting Together* (1996), a singing sequence composed of *A Eulogy for the Long River* and *A Eulogy for the Yellow River*, both the Yellow River and the Long River were personified as the second person pronoun “you.” In *Da Tuanyuan* (Great Reunion, 1997), we also heard these lyrics: “Mount Tian and Mount Tai gather here together and toast each other. The Yellow River and the Long River gather here together and sing in accord with each other.” The affective appeal of prosopopoeia, according to de Man (1984), lies in its capability to engender meaning and make possible a group
identification. Once in operation, therefore, it could pump up the interpellative force of cultural symbolism by creating a close bond between non-human symbols (various landscapes) and the human subjects (audiences) purportedly represented by those symbols. While I am not assuming that the use of prosopopoeia would necessarily spark off a greater level of identification, I do want to highlight its potential force as an interpellative tool.

As far as the aforementioned episodes are concerned, it is also important to note that the obvious linguistic aspects of the interpellation, whether the trope of prosopopoeia or the more straightforward referencing of ethnosymbols, have dovetailed with various non-linguistic aspects, such as the tunefulness of the songs, the virtuosity of the performers, the adeptness of the camerawork, and the ingenuity of the shot switches. All of these aspects, I stress, could enhance the affective power of the performance and are therefore of great interpellative value. Besides, I have discussed the interpellative significance of the audience’s prior familiarity with the songs. As a matter of fact, A Eulogy for the Long River is also a perfect example in this regard. As the theme song of the television documentary series Hua Shuo Changjiang (A Story of the Long River), A Eulogy for the Long River swept the country in the 1980s. It is therefore hardly conjectural to imagine what a deep aesthetic/affective identification its 1996 SFG appearance might have stirred up for those who happened to be familiar with it.112

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112 In fact, building upon an audience’s prior familiarity to enhance interpellative power has long been used by the SFG. The most recent broadcasts are no exceptions in this regard. While this dissertation was still being written, A Eulogy for the Long River, together with a few other songs, made a comeback in the latest 2009 broadcast.
The interpellation of cultural symbolism was not only sent out through vocal performances, but also just as well through other genres. Let us take a look at *Kankan Women de Muqin He* (Take a Look at Our Mother River, 1995) to see how this structured form of participation, which lasted only four minutes and twenty five seconds, made itself a classical case of multi-layered interpellation. It started with the hostess’s narration:

N: Speaking about our age-old nation, one would definitely think about the Yellow River – our Mother River. The Yellow River is more than 5,400 kilometers long, and she has been flowing for 1.6 million years! But in all the ages, who has ever had a full view of the Yellow River? In this Spring Festival, the “Ferry” Organizing Committee of the Yellow River has sent us a very unusual gift. Please come with me and have a look. It is said that the Yellow River has ninety-nine bends, you see, here we have ninety-nine bottles. Each one of them carries different water samples from different sections of the Yellow River, from the headstream to the estuary. Very interestingly, you see, the water collected from the headstream is as pure and clean as the sky. When it comes to the middle section, this yellow color resembles so much the yellow skin of our descendants, the Yellow and Fiery Emperors. The water sample form the estuary is as blue as the sea. Dear friends, you should know that it was very hard to collect all these water samples, because they have to be collected by more than a thousand hydrological stations along the Yellow River at the same time on the same day. At this very moment, Chinese people from all over the world are able to have a full view of the water samples of the Yellow River through the television screen, and to see our Mother River.

After a brief pause during which we heard the audience’s applause, the activity continued:

Dear friends, coming up to the stage are those water carriers from both sides of the Yellow River. Please allow me to introduce them to you. [9 water carriers from different nationalities along the Yellow River walking toward the stage] Ni: This young Tibetan lady’s name is Nima Lamu (My transliteration). Her family lives in the headstream area of the Yellow River. The river flows in front of their house. Lamu told me in Tibetan that every family in her village put their most precious accoutrements on her as soon as they knew Lamu was going to Beijing. Look how beautiful Lamu is now! It’s been a very hard journey for Lamu because her village has been
sealed by heavy snow, and she has been walking for a whole twelve days! [Ni hugging Lamu and saying] You’ve had a long journey!

N: Could you please tell us where you are from?

[Answer]: I am a Qiang from Sichuan Province.

N: How about this friend?

[Answer]: I’m a Yubu from Gansu Province.

N: How about this friend?

[Answer]: I’m a Mongolian from the grassland.

N: How about you?

[Answer]: I’m a Hui (Muslim) from Ningxia Province.

N: How about this friend?

[Answer]: I’m from Yan’an, Shaanxi Province.

N: How about this little girl?

[Answer]: Hukou, Shanxi Province.

N: How about you?

[Answer]: Huayuankou, Henan Province.

N: How about this comrade?

[Answer]: I’m from Dongying, Shandong Province.

N: Dear friends, all the friends from the estuary and the headstream areas of the Yellow River! This scene has just reminded me of an ancient poem: “I live in the head of the river. You live in the tail of the river. Though we drink the water from the same river, I see you not and miss you everyday!”

After calling for the studio audience to wish “our sons and daughters of the Yellow River” good luck and paying tribute to the planner of the “Ferry” Organizing Committee of the Yellow River for “making possible the full view of the Yellow River,” the activity made another move:

N: Moreover, dear audience, we have here today some university students from Taiwan. This is the first time they’ve come to Beijing, also the first time they’ve celebrated the New Year in Beijing.

[Turning to the Taiwanese students] How are you, my little brothers and sisters? Has any one of you ever seen the Yellow River before?

University student A from Taiwan: No.

N: How about you?
University student B from Taiwan: Haven't.
N: How about you?
University student C from Taiwan: Haven't.
N: Come here, Lamu. Please let us give you the first bottle of clear water from the headstream of the Yellow River, Ok? Do you like it?
University student D from Taiwan: I'm very happy! I like it very much!
N (Towards student D): Are you going to take it back?
University student D from Taiwan: I certainly will. I believe if I do bring this water back, my families will be very happy!
N: Yes. Let's take a look at the water sample of our Yellow River, because we are all sons and daughters of Huaxia. Our kinship is as close as that of bones and flesh!

Let us now take a close look at different layers of interpellation embedded in this episode. First, from the rhetorical point of view, this activity is a perfect practice of the trope of *synecdoche* in the sense that a part stands in for the whole. First, ninety nine actual bottles of water samples with ninety nine chromatic gradations, which were also claimed to be collected from different sections of the Yellow River, were put on the stage in the form of the Yellow River to synecdochically make possible the realistically impossible “full view” of the Yellow River. Second, nine real persons were ushered onto the stage to represent all the people who live along the Yellow River. As for the nine individuals, certainly there were no chromatic gradations involved; neither did they have to be arranged in the form of the Yellow River. However, by making apparent their nationalities and places of residence, they were eventually made into a symbolic Yellow River to serve as a great unifying symbol across all differences, beckoning the common identification of those who were interpellated, i.e. “Chinese people from all over the world.” In addition, five Taiwanese students were also synecdochically used to represent all people in Taiwan. Called upon by
the hostess to offer a water sample to one of the Taiwanese students, Lamu was no longer merely a girl from the headstream area of the Yellow River who purportedly represented all people in that area, but rather a girl who should stand in for all people who live in the Mainland. In other words, the water offering ceremony carried out by specific persons actually created a symbolic relationship between Mainland China and Taiwan. An ethnosymbol was thus used to serve the end of national reunification.\footnote{113 The Taiwan issue will be further discussed later.}

A second layer of interpellation lies in the extensive employment of the hostess’s emotional narration. In this type of onstage activity, the host or hostess usually plays a leading role. This episode was no exception. To help enhance the affective power of the narration, the SFG took full advantage of the narratorial and enunciative styles of the hostess Ni Ping who, in popular discourse, was famous for being proficient in “shanqing,” a word composed of “shan” (to arouse) and “qing” (emotion or feeling). Almost every sentence was enunciated with great clarity and emotionally-charged tonal fluctuations. The affective power of Ni’s narration was palpable as each one of her intentional pauses was followed by the thunderous applause of the studio audience.

A third layer rests with the use of diegetic music. I have emphasized the potential affective power of diegetic music in the previous chapter. This episode was worthy of special mention since the music used here was not a generic, but rather a modern Chinese masterpiece. Specifically, the second movement of the \textit{Yellow River}, one of the most acclaimed piano concertos ever written by a
Chinese musician,114 was played throughout the whole activity. On such terms, the interpellation could capitalize not only on the head-to-toe use of diegetic music, but also on the audience’s prior familiarity with the music itself and its nationalist ideological substance.

To maximize the affective power of the narration, this episode also dug from the cultural reservoir of Chinese classical literature. Specifically, it appropriated a well-known piece of songci poetry115 which read, “I live in the head of the Long River. You live in the tail of the Long River. Though we drink the water from the same river, I see no you and miss you everyday!” Interesting to note, in Ni’s narration the Long River was changed into a generic term, namely “river,” for apparent reasons. This fine-tuning, however, did not do any harm to the affective power of Ni’s recitation. Quite the opposite was case as the studio audience gave out another round of thunderous applause.

As far as the camerawork is concerned, I would like to highlight one particular shot as an example of how camerawork could be of great potential in adding affective power to the narrative. When the hostess was talking about the chromatic differences between different sections of the Yellow River, which was

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114 Based on the *Yellow River Cantata* by composer Xian Xinghai, the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* was arranged by several renowned musicians, including Yin Chengzong, into a four-movement piano concerto in the late-1960s. The names of the four movements are: 1) Prelude: The Song of the Yellow River Boatman; 2) Ode to the Yellow River; 3) The Yellow River Ballad; and, 4) Defending the Yellow River. Since its much politicized premiere in 1969 – the fourth year of the 10-year Cultural Revolution – the concerto has become extremely popular both in China and beyond.

115 Chinese ancient poetry is generally divided into three categories, that is, *shi*, *ci*, and *qu*. Some also deem *fu*, whose literary style sits between prose and poem, a special kind of poetry. Historically speaking, each category culminated in different dynasties. For example, whereas *shi* of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD) was seen as the apex of the *shi* form, *ci* is mostly associated with the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD). As the most highly regarded classical literary genre, selected pieces of *tangshi* (shi-poetry of the Tang Dynasty) and *songci* (ci-poetry of the Song Dynasty) have always held an important niche in the curriculum of public education in various Chinese-speaking societies.
key to the whole narrative, the director chose to use a moving close-up, as opposed to either a mid-shot or a wide shot, to illustrate the hostess’s narration. Given the significantly irregular shape of the Yellow River, the choice of a moving close-up was technically risky because even a minor slip of the cameraman’s finger could make the shot go out of focus. However, the successful use of a moving close-up effectively demonstrated the great geographical coverage of the Yellow River, thereby laying a solid ground for group identification.

Finally, it is of crucial importance to note that all of these different layers of interpellation always operated as one televisual unit. To discuss them separately is to help us have a “full view” of the interpellation in process, and to make manifest that television production as a form of interpellation could operate on multiple registers. By marrying cognitive channeling with affective appeal through a host of linguistic and televisual means, the particular episode of Take a Look at Our Mother River excelled in taking advantage of the emotional and subjective aspects of cultural symbolism.

### 2.2.2 Dragon

The SFG has not only engaged in the appropriation of natural landscapes as ethnosymbols, but has also participated in the creation of new ethnosymbols according to the specific ideological needs of the reigning government, and such is the case of the fictive dragon.\(^{116}\) Allow me to go back to The Descendants of the Dragon for a third time.

\(^{116}\) Contrary to common beliefs, the dragon had not been unanimously deemed as an ancestral symbol of all Chinese before its official acknowledgement and promotion that started roughly in the late-1970s. In other words, the dragon as a common identifier of Chineseness is a
In the ancient East flies a dragon,
   Whose name is China.
In the ancient East live a host of people,
   They are all descendants of the Dragon.
Under the Dragon's wings we are growing,
   Growing as offspring of the Dragon.
With black eyes, black hair, and yellow skin,
   We remain the Dragon's descendants forever and for good.

......

Giant dragon, you brighten up your eyes, giant dragon!
   Forever and for good, you keep your eyes bright!
Giant dragon, you brighten up your eyes, giant dragon!
   Forever and for good, you keep your eyes bright!

I have mentioned that this song was already widely heard before it found its way to the SFG in 1985. In 1980s China, it meant the song’s “right to live” had already been officially approved. Therefore, its presence in the SFG actually reconfirmed the official attitude toward the ethnosymbols carried plentifully in the song. In addition, the dragon, as a symbol of ethnic and/or national greatness, has gained much potency in day-to-day discourses over the past 20 plus years. Not only has the notion of the dragon as the common progenitor of all Chinese gradually taken root, its symbolic meaning has even “taken on an official cast” (Sautman, 1997a:78). While songwriter Hou Dejian could be deported because of his actions in the 1989 Tiananmen Incident, the song he composed was allowed to

contemporary invention. After offering a historical account of the use of the dragon in China, Sautman makes clear that “only since the 1970s has [sic] ordinary people begun to identify themselves with the dragon” (1997a:77). When addressing the issue of the birth rate increase in the year of the dragon in several Chinese speaking societies, Daniel Goodkind also pointed out that “First, a dragon year birth preference has never manifested itself in the People’s Republic of China. Second, there is no evidence of such a preference in any Chinese population before 1976” (1991:664). He goes on to conclude: “This phenomenon …… is a new tradition of behavior that the Chinese have only recently created” (ibid).
stay. After all, at a time when as many loyal subjects as possible are needed to accomplish the great mission of modernization, the song has offered too many indices of subject identification to be missed, let alone to “be deported.”

One might argue, then, that the symbol of the dragon is mainly used to serve the nationalist project in the sense that it aims to provide a common identifier to include both Mainlanders, whether the majority Han or not, and Taiwanese into the Nation of Dragon. I would contend that the SFG has brought the interpellation one step further. Let me explain by pointing out one important detail. In the 1985 broadcast of the SFG, *The Descendants of the Dragon* was performed by Dr. Huang Jinbo, a Chinese American and the then mayor of the city of Cerritos in California.\textsuperscript{117} Here is the literal translation of his confession which happened after he was ceremoniously presented to the audience and before he sang:

\begin{quote}
I am an American citizen born in Hong Kong, but I never forget that I am Chinese. The Chinese are the descendants of the dragon!
\end{quote}

Obviously, then, what the “dragon” symbolizes here is not merely a certain portion of Chinese, but global Chinese. By affirmatively occupying the subject position of being Chinese, Huang turned himself into a symbol as well. This symbol was at the same time used synecdochically to represent all diasporic subjects, which is exactly one of the ways in which the symbolic construction of a common identifier is brought into play to serve the purpose of contemporary China’s politics of subject inclusion.

\textsuperscript{117} See http://www.cctv.com/program/upclose/20051226/101345.shtml for a feature about Huang.
The employment of the dragon as ethnosymbol is certainly not limited to *The Descendants of the Dragon*. Although the dragon as a thematic figure was only featured in eight episodes, its presence is everywhere, whether in the form of lyrics, stage scenes or hosts’ scripts, as I have stated. Allow me to provide some examples of how this symbol has been scattered throughout the SFG. In 1988, a song entitled *Zhongguo Long* (Chinese Dragon) was presented, and the word “dragon” was in almost every sentence of the lyrics. In 1993, international action movie icon Jackie Chan lent out his stardom by participating in an episode called *Longgu Xuantian Zhen Sihai* (World-Shaking Dragon Drum) in which a dragon was made into multiple forms. The fifth section of the 2000 broadcast was dubbed *Longxi Qiannian Song Xinchun* (The Year of Dragon and the Millennium Praising the New Spring, 2000) in which the image of the dragon was dispersed everywhere. The dragon as ethnosymbol has been taken for granted in the most recent galas as well. Its identification with either the nation or the people has held normative sway, as demonstrated in the following lyrics: “The seeds of dragon have created miracles again; More glories have been brought under the national flag” (*Hao Xiaoxi*, Good News, 2005), and “The spirit filled in our hearts is always the glory of the Nation of the Dragon” (*Bai Jia Xing*, Book of Hundred Surnames, 2006).

### 2.2.3 The Great Wall

The Great Wall has long been studied as one of the symbols of Chinese cultural nationalism (Waldron, 1990; 1993; 1995). As Waldron’s extensive studies on the Great Wall demonstrate, contrary to many deeply held ideas, the Great
Wall as another ethnosymbol is also a modern construct. It had for many years been "a symbol not of national greatness but rather of dynastic evil" (1993:40) until the moment when Deng Xiaoping came to power. Sautman adds that “The Great Wall became increasingly a national symbol after 1984, when Deng urged its restoration” (1997a:90). Based on an extensive review of relevant literature published in Chinese, he maintains:

Although it is not directly a myth of common descent, the emphasis on the participation of ethnic minorities in the construction of what is now the principle symbol of the Chinese nation is intended to show that the minorities have always been ethnically Chinese (1997a:90-91).

In this way, he argues that making the Great Wall a national symbol is mainly an ethnic minority project. However, as far as the representations of the Great Wall in the SFG are concerned, I hold that the SFG has taken Sautman's proposition further. Rather than being used merely as an ethnic minority project, the Great Wall in the SFG has been used more broadly as, again, a symbolic identifier for all Chinese, including diasporic subjects.

The first wave of its intensive promotion was made possible by Cheung Ming Men on the eve of the Chinese New Year in 1984. Cheung Ming Men, an amateur singer from Hong Kong, made an unforgettable appearance by performing four songs in a row, the most popular being *Wode Zhongguo Xin* (My Chinese Heart).

*Wode Zhongguo Xin (My Chinese Heart, Cheung Ming Men, Vocal solo, 1984)*

Rivers and mountains of my country appear only in my dreams.
My motherland has been restless for so many years.
No matter what happens, however,
My Chinese heart won’t change!
Though I wear a Western suit,
My heart is still Chinese.
My forefathers had branded everything I have, years ago, with Chinese!

The Long River, The Long Wall (verbatim translation of the Great Wall),
Yellow Mountain, Yellow River,
   Weigh a thousand pounds in my heart!
Whenever, and wherever,
   They are equally endearing to me.
The blood that runs through my heart,
   Echoes the voice of China.
Though I was born and live in another place,
   My Chinese heart will never change.

This song, in the words of Geng, “encouraged a bout of patriotic passion and created an aesthetic storm” (2002:271-272). As the first Hong Kong singer to perform exclusively in Mandarin, Cheung Ming Men was singing against the grain of the Hong Kong vernacular (Cantonese and English). The lyrics of the song itself laid bare Cheung’s nationalist, perhaps even patriotic, attachment to the concept of the “Chinese nation” or “being Chinese.” At a time when no project mattered more than national resurgence, Cheung’s performance operated as a political message par excellence, because by enumerating straightforwardly a host of ethnosymbols, it created fundamentally inseparable ties among various Chinese. As we can see, taken up were not only the two “mother rivers” of China, but also the Yellow Mountain and the Great Wall.

In terms of non-linguistic means of interpellation, there is not much to say about My Chinese Heart except for its tuneful and catchy characters and, perhaps, one cutaway shot of the studio audience applauding. However, it still
managed to become a popular hit all over China. Perhaps the message of patriotism alone was strong enough to resonate with those who aspired to see China’s rise. Whatever the case might be, the Great Wall has now been unreservedly venerated as one of the most important identity markers of Chinese Nationality in the SFG. It has since been used as a symbol of Chinese Nationality about 150 times in later broadcasts, especially in the early stages of the SFG.

For instance, Dong Dai claimed in 1985:

Changcheng Jiaoxia Yiduo Xiaohua (A Little Flower at the Foot of the Great Wall, Dong Dai, Vocal solo, 1985)

I am a small flower at the foot of the Great Wall.
I am a drop of water in the waves of the Yellow River.
The small flower grows in the rich soil of the Holy State (China).
The water drops flow into the high wave of Huaxia.

In the same gala, Jiang Kun, a most famous xiangsheng performer who had hosted and performed in the SFG on numerous occasions, passionately stated:

The Great Wall is the symbol of our Chinese Nationality. Therefore, to eulogize the Great Wall is to eulogize our old Chinese Nationality.

This statement was followed by, “The 10-Thousand-Li Great Wall Will Never Collapse,” the theme song of an extremely popular television drama series entitled “Huo Yuanjia.”

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118 Huo Yuanjia (Fok Yuen Gap in Cantonese, 1869-1910) was a Chinese martial artist and co-founder of the Chin Woo Athletic Association, a martial arts school in Shanghai. He is revered as a legendary hero in China for challenging foreign fighters in highly publicized matches at a time when Chinese sovereignty was being eroded by foreign concessions.
Wanli Changcheng Yong Budao (The 10-Thousand-Li Great Wall Will Never Collapse, Lü Nianzu, Vocal solo, 1985)

After falling asleep for a hundred years, the countrymen are now awake!
Open your eyes, and look closely!
Who would like to submit to the other?
Because of wincing and forbearing,
They have become increasingly arrogant.
Open your mouth, and shout out loud!
Here all the countrymen are soldiers.
Those who have invaded us,
would finally meet their fate.
The 10-thousand-li Great Wall will never collapse.
The thousand-li Yellow River will always be torrential.
Our country is so beautiful, filled with mountains and hills,
Who said our country looks ill?
Let's charge and attack!
Let's commit to the resurgence of our country!
We will not let our country be trampled again,
Everyone will shoulder his/her own responsibility,
Because this sleeping lion is now awake!

Given the craze over the song and the television drama “Huo Yuanjia” in the early-1980s, there is little question that the affective power of the song would benefit significantly from the general audience’s prior familiarity with the song. It is worth noting that the Great Wall made even a fourth appearance in the 1985 broadcast. Hong Kong pop star Liza Wang not only performed a song entitled Wanli Changcheng Wanli Chang (The Ten-Thousand Li Great Wall), but also stated that “the Great Wall and the Long River can indeed represent the indomitable spirit of our Chinese Nationality.” Such an excessive use of the Great Wall clearly indicates that the Chinese state in the 1980s was determined to
enlist a group of cultural symbols, including the Great Wall, in its interpellative toolkit so as to secure people’s sense of Chinese cultural citizenship.

The promotion of the Great Wall as an ethnosymbol has not been the sole responsibility of the vocalists. Making use of an exterior shooting location, the 1993 broadcast entrusted internationally acclaimed director Zhang Yimou with an episode called Weifeng Luogu (Awe-Inspiring Gong and Drum). The traditional Chinese drum dance was performed at the Jiayu Pass, the largest and most intact entrance of the Great Wall. In the form of a statement, Zhang made clear in the first place the goal of making this short piece, that is, “to pay a New Year’s call to Chinese all across China and all over the world.” Zhang created a dazzling visual representation of the defense function of the Great Wall in ancient times through deploying a seemingly endless number of televisual strategies, including: a large number of performers, solemn diegetic music that was highly suggestive of war, the awe-inspiring sound of a gong and drum, moving low angle shots of a large-sized equatorial sundial, stunning shots of the Jiayu Pass from various angles, wide shots of the imperial mounted troops, close-ups of archers drawing bows and shooting arrow, mid-shots of the war drums beating and banners waving, low angle wide shots of the red ribbons of victory, swift shot switches made possible by ingenious editing, and archaistic cinematography. Taking Zhang’s statement and this short yet spectacular film together, we see a perfect case of how linguistic and televisual means can work together to create a narrative of interpellation.
Whether the Yellow River and the Long River, or the dragon and the Great Wall, through continuous acts of symbolization, these symbols have gradually been de-specified and made into something abstract and therefore timeless. When these timeless symbols are promoted panegyricaly, they become a sanctified common point of identification. The same story has repeated itself again and again. As a result, we “Chinese” “have been singing from the Long River to the Yellow River” (Luogu – Gongs and Drums, Vocal Solo, 1997); we have been “hanging the Chinese red lanterns one generation after another” (Da Hong Denglong – The Big Red Lantern, Vocal Trio, 1998); and we have been “asking the Long River” (Wen Changjiang – Asking the Long River, Vocal Duo, 1998) supposedly from time immemorial. Even when we dance, we dance in the pattern of a dragon (Longteng Huyue – Flying Dragon, Jumping Tiger, Group Dance, 1998).

2.3 Cultural Identity and Its Contradictions

In this section, I have identified cultural essentialism and cultural symbolism as two major interpellative tools in creating cultural points of identification that could be of use to China’s politics of subject inclusion. It seems that one of the logics behind both of them is that one can still be included in Chinese Nationality on a cultural basis if genetic and/or genealogical bases turn out to be inadequate or unacceptable. However, the cultural identifiers that the SFG has been trying to present are no less contradictory than their genetic and/or genealogical counterparts. Other than “racially othered” “barbarians” (Dikötter, 1992), the SFG still has a hard time accounting for those “culturally othered” “inside barbarians”
(Litzinger, 2000) who simply do not necessarily hold dear those symbols purported to be of universal value to all Chinese (Sautman, 1997a),\(^{119}\) and those diasporic subjects whose cultural attachments have long been mixed with, for lack of a better word, “things foreign,” through localization (Wang, 1991; 1999; Ma, 2003) or transnationalization (Ong, 1997; 1999; Chun, 1996; Ang, 2004). To be more specific, I will use “Chinese Kids” to illustrate the contradictions inherent in SFG discourse;

**Zhongguo Wa (Chinese Kids, Xie Xiaodong, Vocal solo accompanied by group dancing, 1997)**

All of our surnames can be found in the *Bai Jia Xing.*
Our ancestral home lies under the pagoda tree in The Huangtu Plateau\(^{120}\).
We live in the Holy State of the east whose name is also Hua-xia.
No matter how far we go, our name will always be “Chinese Kids”!

Our favorite water is always the water of the Yellow River -
It gives us a tan which is able to melt the snow.
Our favorite food is always tofu mixed with sliced green onion -
Green (onion) and white (tofu)\(^{121}\) ask us to be upright.
Our favorite shoes are always those handmade by Mama -
We can always keep our legs in them when we walk around.
Our favorite language is always Chinese -
It is rich and clear therefore it means what it sounds.
Our favorite characters to write are always the Chinese characters -
Upright or straightforward, teach us how to rightly behave.
Our favorite thing to do is always to repay our Mama -

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\(^{119}\) Sautman points out that “myths of origins among China’s ethnic minorities are not centered on the dragon, but include a variety of other animal progenitors” (1997a:78)

\(^{120}\) The Huangtu Plateau is a semi-arid area located in northwestern China. Because of its vicinity to the headstream of the Yellow River, it is commonly seen as a symbol of the origin of Chinese civilization.

\(^{121}\) The character that denotes the color of green onion is "青" (pronounced as "qing") and that which denotes the color of tofu is "白" (pronounced as "bai"). Piecing the two characters together, we have the word “青白” which sounds exactly like “清白,” a word denoting moral integrity and innocence.
Wherever we go we will always love our China.
We the ambitious Chinese kids!

Here, the interpellation and inclusion start from a cultural and genealogical encompassment, and then move quickly on to a bombardment of geographical, volitional, physical, gustatory, moral, linguistic, ethical and affective evocations. These evocations are potentially able to enact somewhat identical social and cultural imaginaries for/in those who are in the position of identification, just as songs of a similar kind have the potential to, in Chow’s term, “allude melodically to the rural and mythic origins of Chinese culture” (1992:154). However, not every Chinese possesses a surname that can be traced back to Bai Jia Xing, and not all Chinese would agree that they all stem from the ancient tribe of Huaxia. Leaving aside the contradictory and complex nature of the very term “Chinese” itself, some “Chinese kids” might not even speak Chinese (Ang, 2004). However, performances of this kind persist, however contradictory. The problem is that when state narratives are couched in cultural discourses, identity constructions appear to be free from politics, when in fact quite the opposite is the case.

To summarize, as much as the genetic and/or genealogical aspects of primordialism fail to account for China’s multi-racial and multiethnic reality, cultural essentialism and cultural symbolism also fall far short of illustrating

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122 I hope to stress that by separating primordial and cultural ways of identity construction, I am neither suggesting that cultural points of identification are extended forms of primordial indices of identification nor claiming that there is a clear-cut line between them. More often than not, as shown above, they inform, blend into, and mix with each other, therefore interacting and reinforcing each other without much distinction.

123 Please refer to Chapter 2 for an explanation of the “Chinese language” and the way in which the SFG deals with its tremendous diversity.
multiculturalism as an important historical and empirical aspect of “Chinese culture,” and the complexity of the cultural formations of global Chinese. Nonetheless, despite their contradictory aspects as strategies, in serving to epitomize in superficial terms the distinctiveness of Chinese Nationality and the existence of potentially strong rallying points for collective solidarity, the consistent employment of primordialism and the continual politicization of culture have much relevance to nation-state formation.

3. Inclusion Strategy 3: Familial Nationalism

Other than those significations which seek to create distinctive collective identities for all putative subjects, thereby blending distinctive parts into one, the SFG has also taken up the strategy of familial nationalism to include all putative subjects, be they Mainlanders, non-Mainlanders, or diasporic subjects, into the Chinese “super-family” (Horowitz, 1985). By familial nationalism, I am referring to state practices that seek to treat the claimed nation as a family/home and, ultimately, to make all putative subjects emotionally attached to that nation-state in the way that family members are attached to their families/homes. In the case of the SFG, familial nationalism also takes on another cast, that is, it not only seeks to create a family-image or “home” for all alleged “Chinese,” but also stipulates that who/what/where sits at the center of the family and/or home. I maintain that by bringing different “family members” under the same roof and

124 It should be noted that familial nationalism, which uses the concept of family or kinship ties as rallying points for collective solidarity, is no invention of Chinese television. It has been much employed in nations around the world (Smith, 2001; 2002; Connor, 1993; 1994; Horowitz, 1985). For an analysis of how metaphors of kinship provide symbolic devices at the service of modern nation-states, see Schneider (1977).
depicting them as nostalgic or homebound, this approach also operates to overshadow, albeit not to resolve, the obvious contradictions inherent in the so-called Chinese primordial identity or Chinese cultural identity. I will start my discussion with reference to the Mainlanders with a particular focus on minority nationalities.

3.1 Mainlanders

I have reviewed how various Chinese governments after the Qing Dynasty have consistently held a Han-centric view of China and Chineseness. For them, it is almost a non-issue to include the majority Han into the political platform of China. They need but take as given their membership in, and attachment to, the Chinese nation-state. Therefore, quite apart from including Mainlanders into the Chinese “super-family,” is the real knotty problem of how to include those ethnic minorities who are the de jure population of the Mainland, but are not necessarily willing to see themselves as “Chinese” in the Chinese “super-family.” As shown earlier, this has become a collective effort made in multiple ways by various Chinese governments since the Republican time.

The SFG has contributed to this effort through multiple means. First of all, over the past 27 years, it has presented 135 episodes which sought to maintain on a continual basis the imagery of the Chinese “super-family.” Here is an example:

*Da Zhongguo (Big China) in 95 Liuxing Feng (Greatest Hits in 1995, Part of Singing in Sequence, Gao Feng & Liu Xiaona, 1996)*
We all have the same family whose name is China.
We have lots of sisters and brothers; our scenery is very good as well.
Two dragons crouching at home are the Long River and the Yellow River.
And, Mount Zhumulangma (Chinese name for Mount Everest) is the highest hill.

We all have the same family whose name is China.
We have lots of sisters and brothers; our scenery is very good as well.
Look at the ten-thousand Li Great Wall shuttling through the cloud!
Look at the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau stretching wider than the sky!

Our big China is such a big family.
She has been suffering through so many winds and rains!
Our big China is such a big family.
Forever and for good, I will keep her company.
China, I wish you luck! You are always on my mind!
China, I wish you luck! Without thousands of words!
(Repeat the last two lines)

It should be noted that this song was the concluding part of a 1996 *lian-chang* (singing in sequence) episode called *95’ Liuxing Feng* (Greatest Hits in 1995), which brought together five popular hits of the previous year. In terms of enhancing the affective power of the song, audience familiarity with the song could certainly play a role. Besides, after twelve years of experience, the SFG seemed to have acquired more skills using various televisual means to serve the purpose of interpellation. Not only was the studio audience shown five times on camera smiling, clapping, and (some of them) singing along, the twelve singers who performed the previous four parts of the *lian-chang* episode joined the two singers of *Big China* on stage as the latter sang, “for ever and for good, I will keep her company.” Then, a series of zoom-ins, wide shots, close-ups, and slow pans gave us fourteen singers, smiling, clapping and singing twice in chorus,
“China, I wish you luck! You are always on my mind! China, I wish you luck! Without thousands of words!” A shot of the audience clapping and singing along was also inserted. At this moment, the performers, the studio audience, and perhaps the television viewers could all revel in the “Big China” narrative.

In terms of interpellation via the familial nationalism narrative, other episodes, such as Zhongguo Da Tuanyuan (Grand Reunion of China, 2000), Quan Jia Fu (Family Portrait, 2001), Zhonghua Quan Jia Fu (The Family Portrait of China, 2002), Haoda Yi Jia Ren (What a Big Family, 2004), Huijia de Ren (The Homecoming People, 2005) and Wan Jia Huanle (All Families Are Happy, 2006), to list just a few, also adopted similar interpellative tools, calling for people’s affective investment in these episodes. More often than not, these episodes also appealed directly to people’s cognitive identification with the idea of a Chinese “super-family” by unequivocally telling them that “China” is a “super-family.” It is reasonable then to argue that familial nationalism, like other interpellative strategies, also operates on different levels at the same time.

I have just said that the central challenge of including all Mainlanders into the Chinese “super-family” lies largely in the question of sustaining minority group allegiances to the state. Other than the aforementioned episodes which contributed to this “super family” narrative without focusing particularly on minority nationalities, the SFG has consistently endeavored to make “minority-themed” episodes that would interpellate various ethnic minorities: 55 out of 1,070 episodes have been either performed by, or dedicated to, various ethnic
minorities, and have been evenly spread in each and every broadcast (2 episodes per broadcast in average).

Formally speaking, it is of interest to note that the SFG, almost on an annual basis, has made use of the *lian-chang* format as a major strategy to paint a picture of solidarity amongst all ethnic groups. Allow me to use an episode from the 2001 broadcast as an example. I will start with the lead-in presentation by the host Zhang Zheng and the hostess Cao Ying:

*Minzu Dui Ge (Various Nationalities Singing in Sequence, 2001)*

C: Our fifty six nationalities are like fifty six shiny pearls, inlaid in our vast national territory.
Z: Yes, they sing in the grassland, in the countryside, by the lake, on the snow mountain ... but different tunes are expressing a common wish, that is, the motherland is our lovely big family.

Here is the *lian-chang* which follows the previous scripts:

1. *Bugu Cui Chun (Cuckoo Urging in the Spring, Dong Nationality, Chorus)*: The spring is here. All the mountains and trees are green. Cuckoos are chirping and twittering, urging people to plant the seeds. The willow at the river bank is sprouting; water in the terraced fields is laughing. Dong people are hard-working, planting the seeds under the urge of the cuckoos. Our work and our love are waiting for the harvest in the fall. Cuckoo, cuckoo.
2. *Qinnuli (Qinnuli, Uighur Nationality, Vocal solo accompanied by group dance)*: The lady who is as beautiful as the Moon, I've fallen in love with you! Love has driven me crazy. Please torture me no more. Please, let me get my wish.
3. *Taiwan Minyao (Taiwanese folk song, Nationality unclear, Vocal solo accompanied by chorus and group dance)*: No lyrics.
4. *Yiren Huijia (Homecoming of the Yi, Yi Nationality, Vocal trio accompanied by group dance)*: Looking at the bright Moon; thinking of the hometown. Since we left, it’s been so long! We heard the gentle call from the mother: come back, my stubborn children, the torch in the wind is greeting your return! The Moon hanging in the sky, have you ever understood the sadness of the vagabonds? Yi people are going home! Yi people are coming home! When the Moon becomes
full, Yi people’s wish is realized; Happiness befalls Yi people! A Brimming of wine of family reunion, toasting the Moon!

5. Hua’er Yu Shaonian (The Flowers and the Youngsters, Arguably Hui Nationality, Vocal duo accompanied by group dance): In the springtime, the yellow jessamine starts to blossom. Girls go out for a walk. Hand in hand, they meet with the boys in spring. The fragrance of the blossoming yellow jessamine flies everywhere. Girls start to think of boys. Such feelings are becoming stronger and stronger.

6. San Duo Hua (Three Flowers, Tibetan Nationality, Vocal trio accompanied by group dance): White flowers blossom on the summit of the snow mountain. My heart is whiter (more innocent or purer) than the mountain snow. Blue flowers bloom beside the river. My heart is clearer than the river.

7. Menggu Ren (Mongols, Mongolian Nationality, Vocal solo accompanied by chorus and group dance): Smoke rises up from the white yurt. I was born in a family of herdsmen. The vast grassland is the cradle that brought me up. The land that nurtures me treats me like its own body. The rivers that bathe me are as sweet as mother’s milk. These are the Mongols, the people who love the homeland.

In this episode, singers who are supposed to be the representatives of their respective nationalities, sing one after another in sequence, songs which are supposed to be representative of their “native” or folk songs. Though three out of six songs that have lyrics (No. 1, 2 & 6) were sung in native languages and another three (No. 4, 5 & 7) were sung in Mandarin, all of them had superimposed subtitles, which means, the semantic meaning of these lyrics was made accessible to the general audience. Moreover, like most lian-chang episodes, the length of each song incorporated in this episode was generally shorter than any other single-song episode, but long enough to form a complete semantic unit. These semantic units, however, expressed to varying extents the attachments of the performers, and synecdochically, that of their corresponding ethnic groups, to the lands which constitute the PRC. By bringing them together, the metaphoric ties of people to their lands was thus repeatedly articulated. While
mathematically impossible to compute the added affective power of the performance brought to bear by these linguistic means, taken as whole, they would have been highly suggestive of the idea of a Chinese “super-family.”

However, in play here was not just the trope of synecdoche or linguistic forms of interpellation. An assortment of televisual means was also employed to enhance the affective power of the narrative of familial nationalism. Not only could the audience hear these songs, they could also see a group of people who wore various “ethnic” costumes clap, stand, sit, stomp, smile, and play “ethnic” musical instruments. Meanwhile, the corresponding native/folk dances were performed as accompaniment, substantiating a sense of family gathering with a choreographic representation. As well, taking advantage of the large size of the No. 1 Studio,\textsuperscript{125} performers of each song did not go offstage or backstage, but stayed onstage after their assignments, “outflanking” the performers who sang after them. Due also to the studio’s large size, quite a few slow-moving, long and high angles shots were used, which not only gave the television viewer a “full view” of the stage, but also of a large part of the studio audience seen waving and clapping.

Through various linguistic and televisual means, the idea of the “big family” was thus well expressed through an allusion to the structural similarity of familial ties and ties to particular physical features of the land, all related within different ethnic “traditions.” As long as one recognizes these lands as China, then, this is

\textsuperscript{125} Put to use in October, 1997, the No. 1 Studio, which covers 2,629.1 square meters, is so far the largest studio of CCTV.
a big family. On such terms, the format of lian-chang has indeed provided the SFG with a powerful tool for creating the narrative of familial nationalism.

Superficially, this version of China as a nation is rather “familial,” but this family is far from nonhierarchical. In summarizing his observations from his field research in China alongside his viewing experience of the 1991 broadcast of the SFG, Gladney notes: “One cannot be exposed to China without being confronted by its ‘colorful’ minorities. They sing, they dance; they twirl, they whirl. Most of all, they smile, showing their happiness to be part of the motherland” (2005:245). Below I quote in detail his description of the opening presentation of the 1991 gala:

After the clock shown on the television struck 8:00 p.m., the doors to the elaborate stage opened and revealed a wide array of colorfully dressed minorities advancing onto the stage. After a brief introduction to the evening’s program, four well-known television personality hosts wished the audience a “Happy New Year” and initiated the first choreographed program of the evening by stating: “China is a multinational country, with 56 different nationalities, like 56 different flowers. The many nationalities wish to extend to all of you a Happy New Year through a special Tea and Wine Happy New Year Toast!” The program followed with first Tibetans, then Mongols, Zhuang, Uzbek, Korean, Wa, Hui, and other minority dancers presenting Buddhist “hata” (scarves), other minority gifts, and cups of tea and wine to the studio audience, singing their native songs in their native languages, with a Chinese subtitles superimposed on the television screen. In striking resemblance to the tribute offerings of the ancient Chinese empires, the minorities sang and performed ritualized prostrations as they offered their greetings to the studio audience, who appeared to be largely members of the Han majority. They appeared so, because the studio audience was uniformly (as if in uniforms) dressed in conservative suits with ties, Mao jackets, or other formal dark “Western” attire, which was in marked contrast to the “colorful costumes” of the minority entertainers. Non-minority entertainers and hosts exclusively wore Western-style suits and dresses (Gladney, 2005:246).

Such an examination of the opening minutes of the gala, however brief, immediately reveals how culturalization, exoticization and perhaps objectification of the ethnic minorities constitutes part and parcel of the marginalization of these human subjects. As a matter of fact, minority performers have always been portrayed as people who can do little more than sing and dance in their “native”
ways and in exotic and sometimes eroticized costumes (Gladney, 1996, 2004, 2005). To put it bluntly, as Gladney has just described, every time we see an individual or group dressed in native attire that is drastically different from that of the Han majority, they are either singing or dancing. In the majority of cases, such as in *Wushiliu Ge Minzu Tong Chang Yizhi Ge* (Fifty Six Nationalities Singing the Same Song, 1986) and numerous vocal solos with accompanying group dances, they sing and dance happily around the Han majority, creating a sense of fellowship and solidarity among all Mainlanders. For a moment everyone might feel as if they live under the same roof and have become family, yet this constructed family is no less Han-centric than before.

### 3.2 Non-Mainlanders

The targets of the interpellation of familial nationalism are not only Mainlanders but also non-Mainlanders, namely those who live in Hong Kong, Macau, and most importantly, Taiwan. The episode *Ai Wo Zhonghua* (Love My China), in which the eponymous song made a second appearance,\(^\text{126}\) illustrated how the inclusive power of the Chinese “super-family” extended its targets of interpellation to include non-Mainlanders (in addition to minority nationalities). I will provide a brief description. Pretending to be the “show guide,” pop star Zhao Wei ran to the stage and greeted a group of people who she claimed were from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macao and overseas. Then, Zhao introduced them to the episode entitled *Love My China*. To begin, singer Jing Gangshan played a

\(^{126}\) In its first appearance, *Ai Wo Zhonghua* (Love My China) was only the last part of a “minority-themed” *lian-chang* episode entitled *Minzu Huan Ge* (Various Nationalities Singing Together, 1999).
Xinjiang tune on oboe, whereas a group of ethnic minorities from the Xinjiang Autonomous Region sang a song made popular by Jing in their native language. In a similar fashion, singer Sun Guoqing played a Mongolian tune on a cello, while a group of Mongols from Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region played their native horse-head fiddle along with him and sang Sun’s song in Mongolian. Next, a group of dancers dressed in a native Tibetan way sang a famous song of Han Lei before Han played a Tibetan tune on a trombone. Then, singer Jiang Tao played a Korean tune on a saxophone while a group of Koreans sang his song in Korean. Second to last, singer Guo Rong and the CCTV host Zhu Jun played a folk tune with a violin and a clarinet respectively accompanied by a group of dancers dressed in various ethnic costumes. Then came the theme song *Love My China*. Judging from their dress, the four performers of this song were picked from multiple nationalities.

*Ai Wo Zhonghua (Love My China, Multiple Performers, Chorus, 2000)*

*Fifty-six constellations are fifty-six flowers*
*Brothers and sisters of fifty-six nationalities are families*
*Fifty-six languages crystallize into one sentence:*
*Love my China, love my China, love my China.*

……

While they were singing, a large number of people dressed in various ethnic costumes danced happily around them. Six performers who had just played six different musical instruments also went upstage, waving, smiling, stomping, singing along, shaking hands, and raising their arms. After that, Zhao and Hong
Kong pop star Deric Siu Lun Wan came out and led the next episode called *Macau, Let Me Take You Home*.


(Background) We are going home ……
L (HK): In our home the sea connects with the sky.
C (CHN): To meet you is our yearning of the century.
Z (CHN): Everyone says that the road of homecoming is very short.
H (MK): But we have walked for hundreds of years.
Z: Home is the starting point of a long journey.
H: We now reunite at home.
L: This home is a name that belongs to you and me.
C: Unification is right between the (Taiwan) strait.
……

So, after offering non-Mainlanders a glimpse of the Chinese super-family, this all-inclusive family has finally held in its arms another non-Mainland member. Televisually, this performance also made an attempt to create a sense of homecoming and warmth. When the four singers were walking from upstage to downstage, those dancers who had just performed in the previous episode looked at them quietly. Then, the dancers either sat upstage or stood behind the singers downstage, clapping gently. Towards the end of the performance, five wide shots were given of the stage and the studio audience, in which people were waving different balloon shapes at the performers. Finally, those who sat upstage all stood up, clapping zealously. A heart warming image of family reunion was thus created. In this particular case, we have seen a well-planned and almost “natural” extension from one “family member” to another. And though
this might not always be the case, the project of including non-Mainlanders into the Chinese “super-family” has never the less been carried out in a rather consistent and determined manner.

First of all, the SFG has consistently invited people from Hong Kong and Taiwan, and occasionally from Macau, to ensure the continuous visibility of these “Chinese” societies. Though these people have never become the leading characters of the program, they have always been there. Specifically, over the past 27 broadcasts, 112 non-Mainlanders have been invited to perform in 86 episodes that are purportedly concerned about non-Mainlanders. Some of the performers, the most renowned being pro-Mainland singer Cheung Ming Men who made his fame with *My Chinese Heart* in 1984 for instance, have appeared in the SFG over three times. Unlike minority nationalities, they have not only been seen singing and dancing, but they have sometimes been seen hosting as well. When they hosted, they could always find a way to express their willingness, perhaps even eagerness, to be included into the Chinese super-family. For example, Huang A-Yuan, a Taiwanese emcee who defected to China via Japan, was made one of the hosts of the 1984 and 1985 galas. Not only did he confess a few times his unchangeable membership in the “Chinese motherland,” he introduced another two pilots who had defected from Taiwan, Huang Zhicheng and Li Dawei (my transliteration) and let (led) them (to) express their attachment to the motherland. In the 1985 broadcast, a Taiwanese hostess named Zhu Wan-Yi also stated that “I come back, back to this big family.”
Secondly, in terms of format, the SFG has repeatedly paired up or grouped pop stars from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan to perform in vocal duos, trios, quartets or even choruses, such as in the episode *Book of Hundred Surnames* and *Macau, Let Me Take You Home* discussed earlier. The trope of synecdoche here operates in a similar way to how it functions in the *lian-chang* of minority nationalities. Therefore, it is precisely the composition of the performers that sends out the message of familial nationalism, thus creating synecdochically a strong sense of family reunion. Here I will recall the second appearance of *Big China* as an example of how an old song that was mainly used to include Mainlanders in the first place was reused to express a more inclusive version of familial nationalism. Instead of as part of a *lian-chang* episode, the song was performed with much more clamor by a China-Taiwan-Hong Kong trio in the 1998 broadcast.

*Da Zhongguo (Big China, Mao Ning, Andy Lau & Jeff Chang, Vocal trio, 1998)*

M (CHN):
We all have the same family whose name is China.
We have lots of sisters and brothers; our scenery is very good as well.
Two dragons crouching at home are the Long River and the Yellow River.
And, Mount Chumulangma (Chinese name for Mount Everest) is the highest hill.

C (TW):
We all have the same family whose name is China.
We have lots of sisters and brothers; our scenery is very good as well.
Look at the ten-thousand Li Great Wall shuttling through the cloud!
Look at Qinghai-Tibet Plateau stretching wider than the sky!

Chorus of M and C:
Our big China is such a big family.
She has been suffering through so many winds and rains!
Our big China is such a big family.
Forever and for good, I will keep her company.
China, I wish you luck! You are always on my mind!
China, I wish you luck without thousands of words!

L (HK):
We all have the same family whose name is China.
We have lots of sisters and brothers; our scenery is very good as well.
Two dragons crouching at home are the Long River and the Yellow River.
And, Mount Chumulangma (Chinese name for Mount Everest) is the highest hill.

Chorus of M, C and L:
We all have the same family whose name is China.
We have lots of sisters and brothers; our scenery is very good as well.
Look at the ten-thousand Li Great Wall shuttling through the cloud!
Look at Qinghai-Tibet Plateau stretching wider than the sky!
Our big China is such a big family.
She has been suffering through so many winds and rains!
Our big China is such a big family.
Forever and for good, I will keep her company.
China, I wish you luck! You are always on my mind!
China, I wish you luck without thousands of words!
(Refrain)

In the previous discussion about the first appearance of *Big China*, I discussed various televisual means of realization that could operate to enhance the interpellative power of the narrative. As for the second appearance, I hope to highlight a few other means that made it a good case of interpellation.

Linguistically, cultural symbolism was obviously mobilized and the trope of synecdoche was metaphorically used in the sense that each singer was meant to represent their own groups – Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.
Televisually, it is important to take note of a specific detail, that is, for the first time, the SFG was staged in the No. 1 Studio whose vast space could offer much more room and convenience for stage decoration and camera arrangement. For television viewers, it was rather striking to see that the main stage was half encircled by six giant pillars entwined by six giant golden dragons. With slow rotating shots and a series of shot switches between close-ups and wide shots, not only did we witness how three singers were united around the dragon pillars, but also how a large part of the studio audience responded actively to the singers by either clapping with them or waving yellow pompoms.

Speaking of the studio audience, I would also like to point out another major strategy of realization extensively used by the SFG in general and in this case in particular. Specifically, like many other episodes in the SFG, this episode also tried to capitalize not only on audience prior familiarity with a particular song, but also on their prior familiarity with the performers, or in Grossberg’s words, on the “affective sensibility of fandom” (Grossberg, 1992). Three singers, Mao from the Mainland, Lau from Hong Kong, and Chang from Taiwan, were all household names. It might not be possible to tell for certain if members of the studio audience were real fans, but there was no doubt that the impression of an adoring audience was created through the various televisual means mentioned above. As a result, viewer affective responses could be affected (Fiske, 1992; Jenson, 1992). Indeed, when it came to interpellating non-Mainlanders into the subject position of being Chinese, this "personnel reshuffle" was a really smart move because, with the assistance of various televisual means, it laid the
groundwork for the discourse of “familial nationalism” to be extended to non-
Mainlanders.

In addition to engaging in representations that are formally or structurally
suggestive of familial nationalism, more complex efforts have also been made.
Presenting episodes that can be referenced to previous broadcasts or lining up
episodes of a similar ideological nature together is also a much-used means of
realization. I have discussed an onstage activity episode called *Take a Look at
Our Mother River* in great detail. In that episode an ethnic Tibetan and an ethnic
Qiang who lived in the headstream area of the Yellow River, together with
farmers who lived in the estuary region of the Yellow River, gave a group of
university students from Taiwan the so-called “First bottle of water of the Yellow
River” as a gift. In its sequel, which was presented right before the reappearance
of *Big China* in the 1998 broadcast, three university students from Taiwan came
back to Beijing. This time they came with the water drawn from the Sun-Moon
Lake.127 Mr. Lei Yuanbin, an exemplary employee of the Project of Three Gorges
Dam of the Long River, and Mr. Cao Zhengqi, chief engineer of the Xiaolangdi
Hydraulic Network of the Yellow River, were also invited. While Lei brought on
stage the water sample of the Long River from after the damming the Three
Gorges, Cao presented the water sample of the Yellow River from after the
damming the Xiaolangdi. Following the hostess’s proposal “to blend the water of
the Sun-Moon Lake into our mother rivers – the Yellow River and the Long
River,” three water samples were ceremoniously mixed together. I will not
discuss the televsual means of realization used in this episode, since it basically

127 Sun-Moon Lake, located in the center of Taiwan, is the island’s largest lake.
followed the lead of its prequel. However, I do hope to stress the following: if the 1995 episode was mainly about bringing all ethnic nationalities under one roof, the familial nationalism expressed in the 1998 episode took the “goodwill” sent out from the Mainland to Taiwan in 1995, and turned it into “freewill” sent out from Taiwan to the Mainland.

In addition, in order to make this ritualistic realization of family reunion look less dramatic or less staged, two “lead-in” episodes were arranged. The one right before the Mother River was a vocal solo by Taiwanese opera singer Fan Yu-Wen. The song she sang was Wo Ai Ni Zhongguo (I Love You, China), the long-familiar interlude from the film Haiwai Chizi (Pure-hearted Chinese Diasporas). The prior popularity of the song was certainly an important interpellative advantage of the episode, but for the engaged audience, the fact of such a Mainland-oriented and patriotic/nationalist song being performed by a Taiwanese opera singer was in and of itself suggestive, if not indicative, of the common acceptance of the idea that “people who live on both sides of the Taiwan Strait are really families.”

Another lead-in before the vocal solo was a mini-drama entitled Yizhang Youpiao (A Stamp) which was about a Taiwanese young lady who came to a fictive town dubbed “Hometown of the Kite” to look for a kite stamp for her grandfather who had gone to Taiwan 50 years ago. Two stamp peddlers (let me call them A and B) appeared in this episode. A had a kite stamp, but he exchanged it with B for some other stamps. B, the new owner of the kite stamp, wanted to obtain a precious dragon stamp from A. A had an instant crush on the
Taiwanese lady who came across him. Taking advantage of this chance, B asked the Taiwanese lady to fetch the dragon stamp from A in exchange for the kite stamp. With tears in her eyes, the Taiwanese lady imparted her story: she was here because of her grandfather who wanted to have the kite stamp, since the kite on the stamp looked exactly like the one his mother had made for him when he left his Mainland hometown for Taiwan. Both A and B were moved. Then, B offered the lady his kite stamp for free and A agreed to let B have his dragon stamp. Importantly to note, diegetic music was played from the beginning of the Taiwanese woman’s story-telling to the end, stressing the emotional dynamics. To ensure the affective move between the performers and the studio audience, a close-up shot of one member of the studio audience being moved to tears and a few wide shots of the studio audience clapping were also cut in. There is no doubt that television viewers in that particular situation were also structured to identify with the performers as well as the studio audience. Finally, the central message of the interpellation was spelled out by B, who implored the audience to, “wish all Chinese who live on both sides of the Taiwan Strait an early reunification."

Now let me reverse these four episodes back to their actual order in the live broadcast. What the audience was offered, then, was an uninterrupted line of interpellations, which started with a goodwill wish from a far-famed “foreigner;”

was fueled by a eulogistic song performed by a Taiwanese opera singer; refueled

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128 B was played by Mark Rowswell, a.k.a. Dashan, a Canadian who achieved celebrity status in China due mainly to his “perfect” Mandarin speaking ability. Being the first and arguably the best “foreign apprentice” of xiangsheng Master Ma Ji, he has frequented the SFG, including the 2009 broadcast.
by a ritualistic blending of some ethnosymbols collected from both sides of the Taiwan Strait; and which finally culminated in a vocal trio of *Big China* performed by three stars from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong respectively.

In terms of reinforcing collective ideological substance with multiple presentations, the 2006 broadcast offers us another perfect example. Before the gala, the Chinese government had decided to send two giant pandas to Taiwan as a gift. Media were busy reporting the whole process of choosing the pandas. In the name of giving a much-wanted gift to Taiwanese children, the whole thing was depicted as an absolutely friendly gesture free of politics. In Taiwan, however, (not) accepting the pandas and the symbolic significance associated with it had been hot button issues in the Legislature from day one. Meanwhile, CCTV was busy searching for infant names for the two pandas. In this gala, the representation of this event was used as a chain. Two anchors came out at four different time spots asking the audience to vote for the infant names through text messaging, internet and telephone.¹²⁹ The chosen names were revealed right before the New Year's bell.

*Infant Name Selection for Two Giant Pandas (Zhou Tao & Zhu Jun, Activity at the scene, 2006)*

1st appearance:

ZT (the hostess): One of the things that has drawn a lot of attention in our society is the naming of a pair of pandas that will be given to Taiwan. Their names will be announced later tonight.

ZJ (the host): Giving pandas as gifts to our Taiwanese compatriots will bring the feeling of the compatriots from both sides closer. It is very hard to make a choice. At long last, experts in

¹²⁹ In a more general sense, this could be seen as a very good example of how modern technologies are used by state agencies to serve a political end.
forestry have handpicked No. 16 and No. 19 from 23 pandas. They are really a beautiful couple! Let's have a look at them on the big screen!

......

Then, a pre-made video of the pandas was cut in with a voiceover of children impersonating the pandas:

Hi, everybody, we are the baby pandas who are going to Taiwan. Hah ... aren't we lovely? It's so fun! The New Year is so fun! Stop playing! We are going to Taiwan soon. We should prepare a show! Look at me! ...... I don't know if Taiwanese children will like our show or not. I was told Taiwanese children can't wait to see us now. I have been so excited that I haven't gotten a good sleep for days! You see, our eyes sockets are black! ...... We are going to get our infant names today!

......

ZJ: The naming has drawn wide attention from the compatriots of China and Taiwan as well as global Chinese. So far, we have received more than 70,000 pairs of infant names ......

A lottery was also used. A total of 2,006 awards were up for grabs. The 10 top winners would receive tickets to the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics.

2nd appearance:

ZJ: Do you know who would be the happiest to know that we are sending pandas to Taiwan?
ZT: Children of course!
ZJ: That's right! The mainland children hope the pandas go to Taiwan as early as possible, whereas Taiwanese children want to see the pandas as early as possible. Let's watch a video.

Then the shot cut to a pre-recorded video in which a few children from Beijing and Taiwan voiced their opinions.

Child A from Beijing: Tuantuan and Yuanyuan
Child B from Beijing: Nini and Meimei.
Child A from Beijing: I had a dream last night. In my dream, two pandas had already gone to Taiwan.
Child A from Taiwan: The boy is Huahua, the girl is Dada.
Child B from Taiwan: The boy is Haha, the girl is Xixi.
Child C from Taiwan: The boy is Xingxing, the girl is Fufu.
……
ZT: Since the message was sent out and people know that mainland compatriots are sending pandas to Taiwanese compatriots, three zoos in Taiwan - Taipei, Taichung and Hsinchu - want to be the new home of the pandas and are all building it……
...
ZJ: We have now received millions of valid ballots! …… (Faking counting) …… (Zhou makes another call for more ballots).

In the third appearance, two finalists, Tuantuan-Yuanyuan (which together means reunion) and Hehe-Meimei (which together means harmonious or amicable), were selected out of over seventy million ballots. Then, the hostess called for more ballots. In the fourth appearance, which was also right before the zero-hour ceremony, the final infant names were announced: Tuantuan and Yuanyuan were declared the winners. CCTV claimed that this was a result of 107,513,568 ballots. Surrounded by a group of happy children, the host stated: “……in this ocean of happiness, let our baby pandas – Tuantuan and Yuanyuan – bring the sincerest wishes of our Mainland compatriots to our Taiwanese compatriots!”130 Apparently, such an activity was but another form of nationalist interpellation, an announcement of the inclusion of Taiwanese into the Chinese

130 After the KMT leader Ma Ying-jeou won the presidency, the KMT government finally agreed to take Tuantuan and Yuanyuan. On December, 23, 2008, Tuantuan and Yuanyuan landed at Taipei airport, with millions watching on television. After a period of quarantine, they were displayed in their new enclosure at the Taipei City Zoo in Muzha on January 25. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss in detail the political implications of such an event. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to see it as a specific practice of interpellation. On such terms, it is also worth mentioning that an eponymous xiangsheng episode Tuantuan Yuanyuan was performed in the 2009 broadcast by performers from both Taiwan and the Mainland.
“super-family.” When it came to the issue of affective appeal, the broadcast could also be considered powerful because of consecutive direct appeals to television viewers during the broadcast to participate in the creation of the interpellation, which offered a sense of ownership of the narrative to those viewers who might enjoy the idea of democratic voting, however momentary.

3.3 Diasporas

In its efforts to include all putative subjects into the Chinese “super-family,” the SFG has never lost sight of the various Chinese diasporic communities widely scattered all over the world. Though there are only one or two episodes per year specifically dedicated to diasporic subjects, they have been referenced or addressed as “family members” of the Chinese Nationality from time to time in each and every broadcast, not to mention in those episodes seeking to establish common points of identification for all putative Chinese subjects as discussed in the first two sections of this chapter. In other words, diasporic subjects as a particular cohort might have appeared in the SFG less often than both Mainlanders and non-Mainlanders, but their attachment to “Chinese Nationality” is no less strong, if not stronger. The attempts made to include them into the Chinese “super-family” have been equally resolute, and the ways in which these attempts have been made, just as multifarious.

As far as frequently used strategies are concerned, I contend that highlighting the global presence of Chinese subjects or the transnational nature of Chineseness has been the single most employed strategy throughout the past 27 broadcasts for including diasporic subjects into the Chinese “super-family.” On
the one hand, diasporic subjects have always been directly addressed by the SFG as family members at the start and the end of each and every broadcast, as well as during the Zero-Hour Ceremony, confirming their family member status over and over again, year after year. Take the start and the Zero-Hour Ceremony of the 1996 broadcast as an example:

*Hosts’ Scripts – Beginning (Ni Ping & Zhao Zhongxiang, 1996)*

N & Z: Dear audience, Happy New Year!

N: The annual Spring Festival is here again. At this moment of family reunion, we, with great pleasure, dedicate the 1996 SFG to all of you!

Z: First of all, please allow us to represent CCTV to pay a New Year’s call to all Chinese people from various nationalities, to Taiwanese compatriots, to our compatriots who live in Hong Kong and Macau, to diasporic Chinese, and to all sons and daughters of the Chinese Nationality in the world. Let us wish you ……

N & Z: A Happy New Year!

*The Zero-Hour Ceremony (Ni Ping, Zhao Zhongxiang et al., 1996)*

Z: Dear audience, the bell of the Zero-Hour will soon ring, I’d like to suggest that all of us …… count down together ……

After the bell, diasporic subjects from different places started chanting one by one:

Diaspora in Singapore: All descendants of the Chinese Nationality are family!

Diaspora in Australia: Families and the motherland, Happy New Year!

Diaspora in Eritrea: Families and the motherland, we miss you!

Diaspora in Berlin: Wish all Chinese a Happy Spring Festival! We pay a New Year’s call to all Chinese!

Diasporic students in Tokyo: Dear dad, dear mom, Happy New Year!
A group song entitled *Yingchun Zhongsheng*, or Chime of Spring, started at this moment, but was soon lowered to the level of background sound as another bout of chanting began:

Diaspora in New Zealand: Say hello to our motherland and pay a New Year’s call to all Chinese! 
Diasporic students in London, UK: On behalf of 8 thousand Chinese students in the UK, we pay a New Year’s call to all Chinese! Hello motherland! 
Diaspora in Paris: We pay all of you a New Year’s call from the faraway France. We wish all of you a Happy Spring Festival! 
Diaspora in Frankfurt: We pay all people in the motherland a New Year’s call! We wish all of you a Happy Spring Festival! 

When the diaspora in Chicago came on waving banners, the group song Chime of Spring went back to normal volume, and these lyrics were heard:

Tianya gong cishi (Sharing this moment with you);  
Sihai tong ciyin (Sharing this music with you).  
......  
Tianya gong ciqing (Sharing this feeling with you);  
Sihai tong cixin (Sharing this heart with you).

Then, Ni Ping the hostess led in another vocal duo entitled *Zhongguo, Wo Ke’ai de Jiaxiang* (China, Our Lovely Home). In the form of inserted footages, different diasporic groups appeared again one after another, each staying for a few seconds. Albeit with no audible chanting this time, their whereabouts were clearly stated by location supers, which read:

Hong Kong Compatriots  
Taiwanese Compatriots  
Chinese Diaspora in Singapore  
The Exhibition Group of Chinese Science and Technology in Berlin
In fact, the way in which diasporic subjects have been addressed has hardly changed over the past 27 years. In the previous 1995 gala, for instance, the Yellow River Troupe of Diasporic Chinese in Paris, Chinese diasporas in Sidney, Australia, the Chinese embassy in Cairo, Egypt, and the Chinese-American physicist and Nobel laureate Dr. Chen-Ning Yang all appeared, as did Cheung Ming Men who renewed his confession by saying “our Chinese hearts have always been thinking of you.” Yang Lan, who used to host the SFG several times, even got then General Secretary of the UN Butros Butros Gali onboard to pay a New Year’s call to global Chinese from his base in New York. In a word, like Mainlanders and non-Mainlanders, diasporic subjects have always been included in the SFG’s New Year’s call.

The case above has also demonstrated that diasporic subjects have not just been the receivers of season’s greetings; they have been the senders as well. In other words, in dealing with diasporic subjects, not only has the “interpellation” of diasporic subjects been featured, but also their subjectification, as if they all take for granted the subject position of being Chinese. Specifically, in its early stages, the SFG tended to feature particular groups of diaspora gathered together having a party and extending their warmest wishes to the motherland and to other
members of the Chinese “super-family.” Take, for example, a group of overseas
students studying in the Reading District of the UK, and a group of diasporic
subjects living in New York City, in the 1986 and the 1988 broadcasts
respectively. In the broadcast of the New York party, the hosts were even allotted
thirty seconds to claim:

(Female Host): Every Spring Festival, when the SFG is aired by CCTV, every family, every one,
old and young, will sit in front of the television, watching the wonderful show. Through the
television screen, people in the homeland will see our party today. We will happily celebrate our
Spring Festival with our people in the homeland."
(Male Host): That’s right, we will enjoy this moment with our people in the motherland!

With the popularization of the SFG worldwide in the 1990s, the number of New
Year’s calls paid by diasporic subjects has been steadily on the rise, as indicated
by the 1995 and 1996 broadcasts. To accommodate the increasing
transnationality of putative Chinese subjects in the new century, the SFG has
been assigning two hosts, who appear four or five times during each and every
broadcast, to read out loud in turn season’s greetings from diasporic subjects all
over the world. Every reading segment takes about three minutes, which is no
insubstantial amount of time when it comes to the SFG. Call payers vary from
members of embassies or consulates, to overseas students, ordinary diaspora,
diasporic celebrities, members of various China-related associations, and so on
and so forth, with the list getting longer and longer in recent years. Indeed, there
might not be that many episodes directly dedicated to diasporic subjects, as I
have just mentioned, but their constant referencing has been laying the
groundwork for creating an image of the increasingly transnational nature of
Chineseness and an imaginary of “diasporic subjects as transnational patriots.”

Given the list’s growth year after year, it comes as no surprise that the hosts of the 2004 broadcast could so confidently make such a sweeping claim:

*Hosts’ Scripts (Ni Ping & Li Yong, 2004)*

N & L: Millions of Chinese who live overseas! We believe that every Spring Festival, you must be missing our motherland and our home very much.

N: I believe that mountains and rivers won’t be able to change your feelings toward the motherland and the people.

N: They are using their songs to confide their feelings of homesickness, their dreams of homecoming and their spirit of returning to their roots.

I have pointed out the contradiction between China’s multi-ethnic and multi-cultural realities and the Han-centric construction of Chinese primordial and cultural identities; I have also indicated that familial nationalism toward minority groups has to a certain extent suspended such a contradiction. However, in the process of including diasporic subjects into the Chinese “super-family,” this contradiction has returned to the fore, with primordial and cultural distinctiveness being used once again as an unstated standard of inclusion with regards to diasporic subjects. Let me take the 1993 broadcast as an example. Other than old faces from CCTV (Zhao Zhongxiang, Ni Ping and Yang Lan), three hosts from three major Chinese-speaking societies, that is, Annie Leung from Hong Kong, Ching-An Lee from Taiwan, and Samuel Chong from Singapore, were invited to co-host the show. Here is the Opening Presentation of the gala.

*Opening Presentation (Hosts from China: Zhao Zhongxiang, Ni Ping and Yang Lan; From Hong Kong: Annie Leung; From Singapore: Samuel Chong; From Taiwan: Ching-An Lee, 1993)*
Z: Every year we greet the Spring Festival! Bright trees and silver flowers have lightened up the night into day! We pay a New Year’s call to everybody!

LA: At this moment, be it the Mainland compatriots, overseas, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore or China Towns all over the world (translated in this way since the original is linguistically confusing).

N: Everyone is hanging the red lamps, pasting the couplets, firing the firecrackers, and celebrating the Spring Festival.

C: Chu-Xi (the Chinese New Year’s Eve) is a night of happiness shared by all ethnic Chinese; the Spring Festival is a festival celebrated by all descendants of the Yellow and Fiery Emperors.

Y: Such a lively New Year’s Eve! Such a jubilant Spring Festival! We’re meeting in this unusually lucky year.

LC: Leaning upon the tradition, and facing up to the future, let’s pay a New Year’s call to all brothers and sisters of the same root and of the same origin. Happy New Year!

In addition, special episodes made in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore were also featured. In Hong Kong, movie star Sharla Cheung, celebrated song writer James Huang, songstress Cally Kwong and international superstar Jackie Chan appeared. In Taiwan, Hsiao-Yan Chang, a famous Taiwanese hostess from CTS (Chinese Television System), hosted the so-called “satellite connection of CTS and CCTV.” Singapore Broadcasting Authority (SBA) also participated by staging a group performance of a hit song by Luo Dayou\(^{131}\) with the lyrics rewritten, and

\(^{131}\) Luo is a Taiwanese cultural icon of the 1980s. His original work, written in 1986 and revised in 1991, is called *Dongfang Zhi Zhu* (Pearl of the Orient). This song, which references “yellow face” and confirms Hong Kong’s “oriental root,” was a huge hit in the 1990s in all Chinese speaking societies. At the night of Hong Kong’s handover to the PRC (July 1\(^{st}\), 1997), Hong Kong launched a television karaoke campaign. While *Pearl of the Orient* appeared on television, millions of viewers sang along. Here is Rey Chow’s translation (1992):

A small meandering stream flows towards the south-
It flows into the fragrant river, to see if
You, Pearl of the Orient, my love,
Are still as romantic in spirit as ever.
A crescent moon shines over the harbor,
The night is deep and lights are shimmering bright.
The Pearl of the Orient is sleepless through the night,
Keeping the promise of change-as-eternity.
You have let the sea winds blow for five thousand years,
resorted to both “blood” and “culture” as a way to acknowledge their own Chineseness:

_Chuantong Guanghui Yao Xinghe_ (The Glorious Tradition Shines over the Galaxy, Chen Shucheng et al., Chorus, Transcribed by Singapore Broadcasting Authority, 1993)

The river of time flows slowly.
It stems from history and flows through yesterday.
Following your trace to see -
Whether your elegance is still as romantic as ever.
Staring at your face with so much emotion,
to explore the vast world.
The virtue of the Orient is hidden deeply in our heart,
Keeping the promise of inheritance-as-eternity.
You have let the sea winds blow for five thousand years.
Every face seems to tell of your dignity.
Let the sea send me to search for you-
Please don’t forget I will follow you for ever.
Holding your hands tightly-
Let our heartstrings and pulses connect together.
Treasure of the Orient, shining as the Sun and the Moon,
Will illuminate our future for ever.

This was also the first time that Singapore, as an ethnic Chinese-majority society, was incorporated on a large scale into the representation of the Chinese “super-

Every tear seems to tell of your dignity.
Let the sea accompany me in blessing you-
Please don’t forget my face, yellow and always loyal.
Boats are meandering into the harbor-
Looking back at the boundless sea.
Pearl of the Orient, embrace me,
And let me warm your disconsolate breast.

Interestingly, _Pearl of the Orient_ and 29 other songs and music pieces, including _Love My China_ and _A Eulogy for the Long River_ mentioned earlier, became “30 Classical Chinese Songs and Music Pieces” brought to space by Chang’e 1, an un-manned lunar orbiting spacecraft. It comes as no wonder then that in the 2009 broadcast of the SFG, not only was Luo invited to grace the CCTV studio, performing another of his hit songs, but _Pearl of the Orient_ was also brought to the audience by two other singers.
family.” Genetic, genealogical and cultural indices of identification have all been linguistically mobilized to ensure the inclusion of both non-Mainlanders and diasporic subjects. Not only was common blood called upon (all brothers and sisters of the same root and of the same origin), but Hong Kong (as in the original *Pearl of the Orient*), was replaced by a much larger cultural concept, “the glorious tradition of the Orient,” which also contributed to the extension of subject interpellation. Televisually, this episode was essentially a music video staged on grounds surrounded by a number of Chinese traditional buildings. Other than close-ups of the singers who appeared from time to time, this piece was filled with four sections of group dance performance. While the male dancers were in ancient military attire reminiscent of the Warring State Period (from some time in the 5th century BC to 221 BC) in the first section, the female performers dressed like royal court dancing-girls from the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD) in the second section. In the third section, there were a group of male and female performers wearing Manchu imperial style court costumes; the fourth section unfolded as a presentation of various kinds of “Chinese” garb modeled by a large number of people. The lion and dragon dances were also featured in this section. The intended result was for all there to be “Chinese,” regardless of nationality. Indeed, in attempting to include as many as possible into the Chinese “super-family,” different strategies might contradict or suspend each other to a certain degree, but they could all be used as interpellative tools, contributing to the politics of subject inclusion in different ways.
In addition to highlighting the global presence and transnational nature of Chinese subjects, the SFG has emphasized the unreserved attachment of the global Chinese to the Chinese “super-family” by repeatedly featuring their confession of being emotionally nostalgic and/or spiritually homebound. *Hometown Visit*, an episode presented in the 1984 broadcast, is the SFG’s very first overt interpellation directed at diasporic subjects. The whole performance lasts for only 2 minutes and 39 seconds. Speaking from the perspective of the politics of subject inclusion, however, this ephemeral episode is nothing short of a precursor. By expressing the nostalgia of diasporic subjects, as claimed by the hostess Sisi Chen, the performance sets one of the keynotes of the SFG, that is, Mainland is the “home” for all diasporic subjects and diasporic subjects are always yearning to return. Below is part of the lyrics:

_Guxiang Xing (Hometown Visit, Ding Fan, Cantonese opera, 1984)_

Numerous pure-hearted diasporas are back to visit their hometown during the Spring Festival, Elegantly, Pearl River greets them with smile and grace. The City of Goats in the spring is now prosperous!

Like birds always return to the woods, diaspora always miss their home.

The current situation of *qiaoxiang*, Motivating the heart of the diaspora, And they all praise the Communist Party for shining over people.

One might argue that such a locality-concerned episode can hardly appeal to post-Tiananmen diasporic subjects whose composition has gone far beyond any

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132 Refer to Chapter 1 for a discussion about *qiaoxiang*, or the native places of the diasporic subjects.
particular locality, as introduced in Chapter 1. It is important to note that the overt expression of nostalgia or repatriation initiated by this episode has indeed been recycled and rearticulated in different ways over and over again in each and every SFG that followed. For example, in the 1985 broadcast, we are offered *Chizi Zhixin* (Heart of a Child, Vocal solo, Zhou Feng). In the name of representing all overseas students, Su Xiaoming, a once popular songstress who went to study in France, performed her vocal solo *Woyao Huidao Jiaxiang Qu* (I Will Go Back to the Homeland) in the 1986 gala. Thanks to the “star power” of Broadway performer Kris Phillips, the 1987 broadcast planted even deeper in people’s mind the image of diasporic subjects’ ceaseless desire for homecoming. As a mixed child of an American father and a Taiwanese mother, Phillips was invited to perform two songs in a row. Before the first song, not only did he introduce to the audience his grandmother, who looked like a typical “Chinese” woman, but he also made a rather culturally meaningful claim about his own “origin,” stating: “Now I have come back to my *zuguo* (motherland) …… I’d like to dedicate a song to my *guxiang* (homeland)…….”

*Guxiang De Yun* (*The Cloud of the Homeland, Kris Phillips, Vocal solo, 1987*)

The cloud of the homeland flows by the sky.  
It beckons me ceaselessly.  
When the breeze flows by my side, a voice calls out my name:  
Come back, come back! You sojourner who migrates the world!  
Come back, come back! Don’t migrate anymore!  
Striding the heavy footsteps, the road to return home is so long.  
When the breeze flows by my side, I smell the fragrance of the homeland soil.  
Come back, come back! You sojourner who migrates the world!  
Come back, come back! I’m tired of migration already!
I feel so exhausted; my eyes are filled with sad tears.
The wind of the homeland and the cloud of the homeland remove the scars for me.
I used to aim so high, but always come back empty-handed.
The wind of the homeland and the cloud of the homeland remove the scars for me.

Before starting the second song, Phillips told the audience that he would like to dedicate it to his great-grandmother, a centenarian who still lived in Shandong Province. At that moment, we heard loud applause from the audience and saw a close-up of Phillips’s grandmother wiping tears with a handkerchief. Composed by acclaimed diasporic musician Tan Changjian and performed by Phillips (whose diasporic status is both self-claimed and other-identified), in the CCTV studio in Beijing, along with Phillips’ conflated usage of zuguo and guxiang, *The Cloud of the Homeland* operated to confirm Mainland China’s status as the “motherland” for all diasporas, given its description as a virtual panacea for all the wears and tears experienced by diasporas around the world. In the same process, Phillips turned himself into a symbol, confessing diaspora willingness to be included by the motherland. No wonder he was widely promoted after the 1987 SFG and has since become an iconic figure in the Mainland.¹³³

Certainly, at work here was not familial nationalism alone. Other inclusion strategies, such as the construction of a Chinese primordial identity, were also mobilized to join forces with familial nationalism. To clarify, it should be noted that Phillips and Huang Weilin, another well-known bi-racial performer who performed in *Macau, Let Me Take You Home*, have always been seen as “Chinese” in the SFG. Even those foreign born performers who are of Chinese descent, such as

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¹³³ In fact, he was invited back to perform in the 1992 and 1995 broadcasts and became one of the most frequently appearing diasporic performers.
the American singer Coco Lee who appeared in the 2001 broadcast, were also categorized as “Chinese living in other countries.” In contrast, Mark Rowswell has always been seen as an international friend from Canada as opposed to a family member no matter how conversant he is in the “Chinese” language. I have explored how Chinese party-state citizenship politics does not politically or legally adopt the principles of *jus sanguinis* or *jus soli* with regards to diasporic subjects. Nevertheless, the SFG’s outright recognition of bi-racial figures and foreign nationals of Chinese descent as *Chinese* makes apparent that the blood-based *jus sanguinis* model has always been a fundamental criterion in securing diasporic subject identitarian attachment.

In reaching out to diasporic subjects, the themes of nostalgia and homecoming have also been persistently represented. *Xiangchou* (Nostalgia) presented in the 1992 broadcast is a good example.

*Xiangchou* (Nostalgia, Hu Haobo, Vocal solo, 1992)

When I was little, nostalgia was a tiny, tiny stamp.
   Me on this side, mother on the other side.
When I grew up, nostalgia was a narrow boat ticket
   Me on this side, bride on the other side.
But later on, nostalgia took the shape of a low sepulcher.
   I stood outside, my mom lay inside
and now … nostalgia is a shallow strait
   Me on this side, the Mainland on the other side.

The performer of this song was Hu Haobo, a Chinese Portuguese who lived in France. The lyrics were actually an extremely well-known poem written by a
highly venerated poet Yu Kwang-chung\textsuperscript{134} who left the Mainland for Taiwan in 1949 for political reasons. Love for the motherland has permeated his poetry and prose, in which \textit{Xiangchou} enjoys the highest acclaim. On such terms, audience prior familiarity with the lyrics could certainly be used to enhance the interpellative power of the song. In addition, a short video was cut in during Hu's performance, in which the audience could see Hu walking slowly along the Seine, a seagull flying against the hazy sky, a close-up of a statue of a female figure holding her chin and looking into the distance, a close-up of Hu also looking into the distance, and a seagull flying against the background of the Eiffel Tower. When a wide shot of the studio audience and Hu was used during the interlude, the following roll titles appeared: 30 million diasporic Chinese all over the world are spending this beautiful night with us. Before the end of the performance, another wide shot of the studio audience was cut in. Meanwhile, an almost full-screen caption was superimposed, which read: A mother’s wish goes to all overseas students and those who work in other countries. Through different means, lyrical, linguistic, and televisual, for instance, the SFG de-contextualized the poem and aestheticized the feeling of nostalgia. In so doing, the subject of the nostalgia was transferred from Taiwanese to diaspora, and a more inclusive vision of the Chinese “super-family” came into being.

A similar strategy was reused two years later. After finishing his vocal solo episode, diasporic opera singer Cai Dasheng had a conversation with host

\textsuperscript{134} Yu Kwang-chung was born in 1928 in Nanjing. During the civil war, he went to Hong Kong with his family and in 1950 settled in Taiwan. He is now Professor Emeritus at the National Sun Yat-sen University in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. As a prolific poet, critic and translator, Professor Yu enjoys high repute in all Chinese speaking societies, including Taiwan and the Mainland.
Cheng Qian. When Cheng said to the audience that Cai’s Western suit reminded him of two lines in an ancient Chinese poem (which read, “the thread of a loving mother, knitting the dresses of a travelling child”), and asked Cai to say something to his compatriots, Cai was choked with sobs. Seizing this opportune moment, the camera cut to a close-up of Cai and then to a mid-shot of the applauding audience. Regaining control over himself, Cai paid a New Year’s call to the audience on behalf of “all traveling children.” The studio audience responded with another round of applause, made visible to television viewers by a moving wide shot of the studio audience. Fine-tuning *My Chinese Heart*, the 1984 song by Cheung Ming Men, Cai made a tearful confession:

Though I wear a Western suit,  
My heart is still Chinese.  
Though we live in another country,  
Our Chinese hearts will never change.

While he was singing, the studio audience started to clap along in rhythm and offered a third round of applause for Cai at the end. Here we clearly see that audience prior familiarity with the song and various televisual means have significantly enhanced the affective power of this short piece. As well, it should be noted that in comparison with Cheung’s version, the confessional subject has been intentionally pluralized from “my” to “our.” Therefore, by changing the subject of the confession from a Hong Konger (Cheung Ming Men) to the diaspora, and by synecdochically equating personal identification with group
attachment, *My Chinese Heart* was recycled to express a more inclusive version of familial nationalism.

Emphasizing an unreserved attachment of the diasporic subject to the motherland is indeed a systematic effort. Complementing Cai’s confession, the tune of nostalgia also echoed in the 1994 gala. Joining forces with China’s greatest ballet dancer Xu Gang, three internationally renowned diasporic artists, pianist Kong Xiangdong, violinist Lü Siqing, and ballerina Tan Yuanyuan presented a magnificent interpretation of renowned diasporic composer/violinist Ma Sicorn’s legendary concerto, *Sixiang Qu* (*Song of Nostalgia*).\(^{135}\) The sheer talent of these artists might provide the audience with sufficient reason to focus on the aesthetic pleasure, but the hosts’ script following the performance conveyed the episode’s real, intended message:

*Hosts’ Scripts (Ni Ping & Cheng Qian, 1994)*

N: Some people are still looking for the door of homecoming.

C: That’s right. The home is both the starting point and the final destination of one’s long journey. The home symbolizes happiness, well-being and devoted passion.

N: They are using their songs to confide their feeling of nostalgia, their dreams of homecoming, and their spirit of returning to their roots.

In short, the SFG has made tremendous efforts to confirm the “home” status of the Mainland. In the process, all diasporic subjects have also been depicted as

\(^{135}\) Ma Sicorn was born in 1912 in southern China. Since twice going to France to study violin in the 1920s and 1930s, he was accused of being a traitor in the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. After being exiled to Hong Kong with his family, Ma moved to America in the late-1960s. It was not until 1985 that the Chinese government cleared his name. Ma died in Philadelphia in 1987 at the age of 75. His most famous work, *Song of Nostalgia*, was composed in 1937, when China was fighting the Anti-Japanese War. In fact, Ma’s experience has well illustrated various Chinese governments’ attitudes toward their diasporic subjects, as introduced in Chapter 1.
emotionally nostalgic and spiritually homebound. Though the feeling of nostalgia can not be equated with either nationalist sentiment or patriotic love, it demonstrated great potential in evoking these feelings in the cases discussed above. No wonder, then, that the theme of nostalgia has been repeatedly engaged as a way to enhance the affective power of the interpellation. Indeed, in the time of modernization when everyone is needed, diasporic subjects have been firmly seen as family members, just like Mainlanders and non-Mainlanders. We need to bear in mind that from the majority Han to minority nationalities, from non-Mainlanders to diasporic subjects, the SFG has never shied away from authoring this concentric tetralogy of Chineseness. The national territory of the PRC might have a somewhat definite acreage, however, the imagined “Chinese Nationality” dwells in a much broader transnational space. On such terms, China’s nationalist politics of subject inclusion at the contemporary moment is inherently transnational. Next, I will discuss “confident nationalism”136 which I see as a fourth major strategy employed constantly by the SFG to substantiate the emotional attachment of the putative subjects.

4. Inclusion Strategy 4: Confident Nationalism

By confident nationalism, I am referring to those practices which seek to secure a sense of belonging in the putative subjects by consistently putting on display the “greatness” of the alleged motherland with enormous confidence.

136 It was Michel Oksenberg (1987) who first used this term to characterize Chinese nationalism at the contemporary moment. According to Oksenberg, contemporary Chinese nationalism is a “patient and moderate nationalism rooted in confidence that over time China can regain its former greatness through economic growth, based on the import of foreign technology and ideas” (1987:505).
Speaking from the vantage point of subject interpellation, if familial nationalism could operate to suggest that the alleged motherland is one “super-family” where all putative subjects are members, confident nationalism could be mobilized to inform these members of the greatness of their common family. Complementing each other, these two strategies are thus of great potential in securing the emotional attachment of the target subjects.

As far as the SFG is concerned, it has allotted generous time over the past 27 years to episodes that seek to paint China into the *locus amoenus*\(^{137}\) for all Chinese. Without considering those discursive means such as the host scripts here and there, nearly 150 episodes (out of 1070) have committed themselves to this attempt. Not only have there always been a few episodes from this category in each and every broadcast, these episodes have also utilized multiple strategies to ensure the realization of confident nationalism, all for the purpose of creating an image of China Almighty. Specifically, whereas some episodes have claimed that China is currently in the “*shengshi*” or “golden age” while subtly denigrating China’s imaginary enemies in the West, other episodes have consistently portrayed post-Mao China as a country that epitomizes the modernist idea of permanent progress. In addition, some episodes kept foregrounding the power of being Chinese by continuously showing off various achievements of Chinese people in the international arena, be it in space science or sports competitions. As far as the politics of subject inclusion is concerned, therefore, confident nationalism has formed an uninterrupted line of interpellation,

\(^{137}\) *Locus amoenus*, the Latin word for "pleasant place," is a widely used literary term which generally refers to an idealized place of safety or comfort.
and has therefore been operationalized rather systematically. Let me provide a few telling examples in chronological order. I hope to stress that in including all putative subjects into the Chinese “super-family,” the SFG has employed the strategy of confident nationalism right from the start, when China had just kicked off its modernization project.

In the 1985 gala, for instance, Hongxian Nü paid tribute to the early stage of the Reform Era by performing *Shengshi Ouge Chang Buwan* (An Era Merits Countless Eulogies, 1985). Cheung Ming Men, the Hong Kong singer who made his name in the 1984 gala by emoting his “Chinese heart,” came back and sang *Deng Shang Gaofeng* (Reaching the Mountain Peak) in which he claimed that “Someday, Chinese people will eventually reach the summit of the world.” The SFG has thus confidently emanated a future oriented sense of Chinese supremacy since its early stages.

The trend continued in the 1990s. In the 1994 broadcast, well-known comedian Huang Hong and renowned *xiangsheng* performer Hou Yaowen presented a mini-drama episode entitled *Da Puke* (Poker-Playing). Two performers started their performance by throwing out some satirical comments on the *status quo*. Toward the end of the performance, however, they broached the topic of “Ma’s Army,” a legendary mid-long distance running team named after the notorious ironfisted coach Ma Junren. Pretending to complain, Huang stated:

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138 Ma was also invited to make this statement in this broadcast: “In 1993, Ma’s army has won five world champions in a row. Five athletes have broken three world records for thirteen times in the 7th National Games. All these achievement should be credited to the great Reform and Opening policy of our Party, to the correct leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist
When those foreigners won the championship, nobody said anything. Now that we Chinese win, somebody says drugs? Let me tell them: it is not Ma’s Army taking any drugs; it’s Ma’s Army injecting each one of the 1.2 billion Chinese and Chinese all over the world a shot of drugs. Just like Ma’s Army, our China will someday run ahead of everyone else!

In a time when economic reform had substantially improved the country’s overall international status, such a statement served very well to express China’s ambition as well as confidence in becoming a super-power. Televisually, we saw the studio audience, amongst which sat Ma and his army, respond with extremely enthusiastic applause as soon as Huang finished his line. Writing about the characteristics of Chinese nationalism and foreign policy after Deng, Allen S. Whiting distinguishes three types of nationalism, i.e. affirmative, assertive and aggressive:

Affirmative nationalism centres exclusively on “us” as a positive in-group referent with pride in attributes and achievements. Assertive nationalism adds “them” as a negative out-group referent that challenges the in-group’s interests and possibly its identity. Aggressive nationalism identifies a specific foreign enemy as a serious threat that requires action to defend vital interests …… Nationalistic communications have different functional attributes. Affirmative nationalism fosters patriotism and targets attitudes. Aggressive nationalism arouses anger and mobilizes behaviour …… Assertive nationalism lies between the two, sharing attributes of each and tending towards either depending on its intensity. (1995:295)

Following Whiting’s conceptual formulations, the previous case is evidently a perfect combination of at least “affirmative” and “assertive” nationalisms.

Interestingly, in terms of painting China into the *locus amoenus*, I have also identified an upward line of development from “affirmative” to “assertive” and finally to “aggressive” in the SFG from the late-1990s on. As the third generation of Chinese leadership has brought China into a relatively stable era after the Party of China, the State Council and our Provincial Committee and Provincial Government, and to all Chinese people.”
return of Hong Kong, the representation of the country in the SFG has become more and more “assertive,” if not “aggressive.” In a 1999 mini-drama episode entitled *Zuotian, Jintian, Mingtian* (Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow), Zhao Benshan, the most famous Chinese comedian who has appeared in every SFG broadcast since 1990, played an old farmer who, together with his wife, was invited to a famous CCTV talk show to discuss his life. When prompted to paint a picture of the past year, he incorporated the following remark into his response:

Z: Hello all. Ninety-eight, ninety-eight, what a great ninety-eight! Bumper crops everywhere, but flood plagues nowhere. People live and work in peace and contentment, and they praise the leadership of the Party. Especially our People’s Army, they are unparalleled in the world! Foreign countries turn things upside down, their people intrigue against each other. If their cabinet is disbanded today, their Prime Ministers will be fired the next. The financial crisis is just over, and they now are going to impeach their leaders. Looking around the world, only here the scene is good! Thank you!139

Zhao’s popularity certainly played a role in enhancing his statement’s interpellative power, as the assertive nature of a confession that is close to narcissism won him and his co-performers nothing but more acclaim from the studio audience. Consequently, what Chang termed “wounded nationalism” (2001) was transformed into full-fledged confident nationalism deeply imbued with a self-satisfactory sense of superiority.

I hope to emphasize as well that the development of Chinese nationalism from “assertive” to “aggressive” has also been abundantly represented in the

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139 This episode was listed in Chapter 2 as an example of my coding agenda. The analysis is provided here.
episodes directly committed to the construction of “China Almighty,” such as this one in 1995.

*Wanshi Ruyi (Everything Is Good, Zhang Ye, Vocal solo accompanied by group dance, 1995)*

Fragrance flows in the wind;  
Honey saturates the snow.  
Fortune fills the spring couplets;  
Wealth brims the wine goblets  
……

When it comes to the new millennium, the practice of confident nationalism has been brought to a higher level. According to the SFG, the country keeps getting stronger, and life in China continues to move toward a brighter future, as Song Zuying, one of the most officially touted songstresses in Mainland China since the 1990s, has testified:

*Yue Lai Yue Hao (Better and Better, Song Zuying, Vocal solo accompanied by group dance, 2001)*

The house is bigger; the phone is smaller; we feel better and better!  
We enjoy more vacation and higher income; the work is better and better!  
The commodity is nicer; the price is lower; we feel better and better!  
The sky is bluer; the water clearer; the environment is better and better!  
Ah ……better and better ……

Our life will be better and better because we all have a purpose.  
You have to try your best to achieve what you want.  
Better and better!  
Our faces are filled with smiles all the time.  
Better and better!  
In-laws get along; families are close; life is better and better!  
Children are taller and more thoughtful; their school performance is better and better.
More and more friends are getting closer and closer; we all get better and better!
The road is wider and we feel better; life is better and better!
Ah … better and better!
You don’t look old if you lead an active life,
You must try your best to get what you deserve.
Better and better!
Our faces are filled with smiles all the time.
Better and better!

In another episode, also featuring Song, China was further depicted as the only

locus amoenus in the world:

Fengjing Zhebian Du Hao (Only Here, Everything Is Fine! Song Zuying, Vocal solo accompanied by group dance, 2002)

Perhaps you’ve heard about much but have seen little, so there is a lot you don’t know.
But as long as you set your feet on this land, you'll say: only here, everything is fine.
Here, people are peace-loving; here, people are hard-working.
Take good care of our own home; create happiness with ease.
Ah …… Only here, everything is fine.
Ah …… The country is so beautiful!
Ah …… Only here, everything is fine.
Ah …… The Holy State is filled with songs and laughter!

Linguistically, the overtone of confident nationalism was extremely loud and clear in these singing episodes. When it came to making use of various televi
cial means to enhance the affective power of the performance, however, I must say that there were no signs of ingenuity. Other than regular shot switches, what caught viewers’ eyes was mainly an ocean of smiling faces – of the singers, dancers, and studio audience. Whatever they sang, however they danced, they all wore a cheerful look. In addition to singing, dancing, and mini-dramas, the
strategy of confident nationalism has been taken up by other genres as well.

Take *So Different*, a *xiangsheng* episode presented in the 2003 broadcast:

*Jin Fei Xi Bi (So Different, Chen Hanbai & Wang Min, Xiangsheng Segment, 2003)*

W: Dear audience, Happy New Year!
C: Happy New Year, folks!
W: Wait a moment. We are performing now. Why are you yelling here?
C: Don’t you recognize me?
W: You are …
C: I’m your “Lao Jiu” (means “always in need of help” but sounds exactly like “uncle”)!  
W: I’m YOUR uncle!
C: You are being impolite.
W: You were first!
C: How could you forget? Back then you “went to the countryside” and lived with my family. Everyone in my family was receiving assistance every year, so you gave me a nickname “Lao Jiu”!
W: Oh! You are the Chen Lao Jiu from Kaoshantun (name of the village)!
C: How could you not recognize me?
W: Well, you know, usually you came here with an electric wire around your waist. Today, you borrow a suit. How could I recognize you? Look at you …
C: This is the New Year right? I brought you something.
W: Hold on! You brought me something? Last time you brought me four corns and took away a whole bag of flour!
C: I won’t give you corns this time.
W: Then what?
C: I’ll give you a notebook.
W: Oh, a notebook (a book of blank pages for notes). Don’t do that. Come home with me.
C: Why?
W: My wife has prepared some clothes for you. You bring them back and give them to your kids.
C: I’ve caused you more troubles, haven’t I?
W: Don’t mention it!
C: I won’t take them.
W: Why won’t you?
C: I’m afraid the kids won’t like them.
W: Kids used to love what you brought back, didn’t they?
C: They did, but now it’s different.
W: Now …
C: Kids follow fashion now, so do the adults!
W: Is that so?
C: Your sister-in-law (meaning his own wife)…
W: Sister-in-law?
C: She saw those city women wear mink coats, so she wanted to buy one.
W: So you bought one for her!
C: It caused a joke!
W: Caused a joke?
C: She was trying to show off as soon as she got it. Our neighbor was puzzled!
W: Why?
C: (Imitating the neighbor) Hey, why is your ninon coat so thick?
W: Wait a second, isn’t it a mink coat?
C: She was actually wearing it inside out!
W: Inside out!
C: She said it was warm that way.
W: Turn it over!
C: She did, but after just one day she dared not wear it again!
W: Why?
C: You know her figure! When she put on that coat, all the dogs in the village were chasing her!
W: Why?
C: They thought she was a bear!
W: Come on! … Well, it is the New Year. Let me give you a big gift.
C: What is that?
W: I just bought a huge projection TV. So, you take that 29-inch one!
C: Is the 29-inch color TV so thick (hand gesture for a few centimeters)?
W: No, it’s a big TV.
C: Can you hang it on the wall?
W: No. You’re talking about the newest model called plasma TV.
C: Yes, plasma.
W: Right?
C: Only you know those terms.
W: I guess you have never seen it yet?
C: We got two at home, but I still don’t know what to call them, (laugh).
W: What? You got two at home?
C: One upstairs, one downstairs.
W: Well! Chen Lao Jiu! You are really leaving people behind!
C: Not really, only No. 3 in the village.
W: No. 3 only?
C: I got them too late.
W: Really?
C: Two other families got them two years ago!
W: So, you’re really rich now!
C: Thanks to the good policies of our Party, those impossible things are now realities. How can I afford to give you a notebook otherwise?
W: Wait a minute! We’re close friends, and you’re rich now, but you are going to give me a notebook only?
C: A notebook computer.
W: Computer?
C: It’s too small a gift.
W: No, no, no! Where is it?
C: It’s in my “ma-che” (literally meaning horse-drawn cart or buggy).
W: So you took your ma-che to get here?
C: I drove it.
W: How could you drive it?
C: It is a Bao-Ma (Chinese translation for BWM. “Ma” is used as a pun here, as is the case of the notebook,)! 
W: You’ve got a car already?
C: Aren’t we heading for the Xiaokang Society?140
W: Oh my! So, you are really well off!
C: Thanks to the good policies of our Party, those impossible things are now realities.

These cases make obvious that, as with many other countries that nationalistically gloss over everyday problems at moments of nation-state celebrations, China has also made every effort to render the “motherland” desirable so as to encourage people’s longing to be part of that “desirable.” In short, the dream–image is yoked to the idea of a confident nationalist

140 “Xiaokang Society,” literally means “society of small peace/comfort/health, is a society of modest means, or a middle-class society. The term has become a catchphrase in Mainland China since 2002 when the fourth generation of Chinese leadership set it as a goal to reach by the year 2020.
interpellation. Needless to say, little background knowledge about China is needed to tell that these episodes are literally filled with “yan er dao ling”\textsuperscript{141} (Pan, 2005). In other words, these episodes did not offer a truthful depiction of today’s China, but rather a phantasmal version of it. There is no doubt that these episodes actively engage in untruthful fabrication. From the perspective of constructing interpellation through television productions, however, I hope to emphasize that the affective power of these episodes lies precisely in their ability to offer a China fantasy. In other words, such practices, however ethically problematic, could fit perfectly into the cultural psychology of \textit{guo-nian} (New Year celebration), that is, people’s desire to pass over the dread, enjoy the moment, and look forward to a brighter future. On such terms, they hold great potential for encouraging people’s investment in, and attachment to, this “dream-image” of China. Taken this way, the episodes make it possible for one to take pleasure in the dream while knowing that everyday life is not like that at all. To put it differently, as long as people revel in these fantasies, the SFG’s ultimate aim of interpellation could well be fulfilled.

In addition, as I have mentioned above, to make Mainland China a \textit{locus amoenus} for all Chinese, the SFG has actively showcased “the power of being Chinese.” The most telling example is the continuous presentation of the success of Chinese sports and Chinese space science, the former from the early stage of the SFG to its most current broadcast, and the latter since Shenzhou 5 was successfully launched. Given that “\textit{Guoyun xing, tiyu xing}” (the might of sports

\textsuperscript{141} This four-character Chinese idiom literally means “covering one’s own ears when stealing the bell.” “The cat shuts its eyes when stealing cream” might be a close equivalent in English.
could represent the prosperity of the nation) is officially advocated in China, it comes as no wonder that sports stars, especially those who have excelled internationally, frequent the galas. If space allows, they sometimes demonstrate their sporting prowess, such as in the Ping-Pong game in the 1984 episode. Sometimes they are incorporated into certain episodes, such as in the *Poker Playing* episode I have just discussed. Sometimes they are part of the studio audience and watch themselves become objects of songs of praise, such as in the 2003 broadcast when Tian Zhen performed *Fengyu Caihong, Kengqiang Meigui* (*Weathered Rainbow, Puissant Rose*) for the National Women’s Soccer Team of China. Sometimes, as in the 2009 broadcast, they stand on stage and pay a New Year’s call to all compatriots, in this case against the upstage background featuring four giant characters that read *zu guo wan sui* (*Long Live the Motherland!*). According to the hostess, these four characters were made with the medals that those athletes won in the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics. However presented, the appearances of these great athletes have been used as testimonies to attest to China’s increasingly powerful status in the world. To enhance the affective power of these presentations, it is important to note that diegetic music was used along with numerous lengthy shots of the studio audience. In the end, all of the presentations were used to convey a simple message bluntly proclaimed in *Shengshi Zhongsheng* (*Bell of the Golden Age, 2005*): “China, my mother! I am so proud to be your child!”

Other than making instrumental use of sports achievements, the SFG has tried other means to get across the message of confident nationalism. For
instance, a Chinese space program dubbed “Shenzhou,” which literally means Holy Boat, has been used in highly ceremonious ways to serve the interpellation of confident nationalism. Yang Liwei, the first Chinese astronaut sent into outer space by Shenzhou 5 in late 2003,\(^{142}\) was invited to participate in an episode called *Feitian Yingxiong Hongqi Song* (A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero) as part of the 2004 broadcast’s Zero-Hour Ceremony. After hundreds of extras ran onto the stage waving flowers and small Chinese national flags, the hostess Ni Ping made the following opening remark with her hallmark emotional voice:

Dear friends! As the bell of the new spring is about to ring, I am very pleased to tell you that our space hero, Yang Liwei, who is also trusted by his colleagues and those scientists and researchers who have participated in the development of Shenzhou 5; appareled in the glory of realizing the Chinese National dream of entering outer space; and bosomed in the passion of the motherland, has come to our studio with the five-star red flag that has been roaming in space!

While Ni was speaking, all onstage extras stopped waving and just stood there, smiling and looking into the distance. Close to the end of Ni’s introduction, they started to wave and applaud enthusiastically. As Yang walked downstage, a giant Chinese national flag was unfurled to follow him the whole way. As soon as Yang arrived downstage, the entire studio audience bowed to him in a standing ovation. Then, Yang delivered a carefully scripted speech right before the Zero-Hour Ceremony:

\(^{142}\) Yang Liwei’s launch in Shenzhou 5 made China the third country to independently send people into outer space.
When I was traveling in space; when I saw the beautiful planet of Earth, I felt proud of our great motherland and people. I hope that all human beings can share a new century in which we live without wars and cherish each other, and that world peace is as eternal as the sky and the earth. In the time of the new spring, let us be filled with passionate love of the motherland and wait silently for another brand new dawn. Let us pay honor to our great motherland!

As soon as Yang finished his speech, all the extras behind him started to jump and wave again. The following shot showed the studio audience still standing and clapping. Notably, solemn and stately diegetic music was played during the whole activity, which could both bring the affective power of the activity to a higher level and ensure a “natural” transition to the bell-ringing moment.

In a similar fashion, Nie Haisheng and Fei Junlong, who were also officially christened as “space heroes” after accomplishing the mission of Shenzhou 6 in October 2005, were featured in the 2006 broadcast and delivered a speech similar to that of Yang. In the 2008 broadcast, performing right before the Zero-Hour Ceremony were not only 10 athletes who envisioned success in the upcoming Beijing Olympics through a group poetry recital, but also seven “space heroes” who pledged to bring both the national flag of the PRC and the song Sing for the Motherland to space on Shenzhou 7. Before the “space heroes” went onstage, the very first picture of the lunar surface taken by Chang’e 1 was also ceremoniously presented to symbolize China’s achievement in space science. Using similar means again, the most recent 2009 broadcast presented not only the three newest “space heroes” from Shenzhou 7, but also space scientists who

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142 An un-manned lunar orbiting spacecraft, Chang’e 1 was named after a Chinese mythological figure Chang’e. It is part of the first phase of the Chinese Lunar Exploration Program. Chang’e 1 was successfully launched in October 2007 and entered the lunar orbit in the following month. The mission is scheduled to continue for a year.
have participated in all space projects from Shenzhou 1 to Shenzhou 7. There were quite a few shots, including a close-up, of the national flag that had roamed in space with the space heroes. Again, in all of these presentations, diegetic music was used. One can hardly fail to notice that at such an important year-turning moment, the “New Year-celebrating” audience was fed national might in the form of China’s world-class space science.

Seeing CCTV as a state apparatus and the SFG as a state narrative, therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the Chinese party-state has never hidden its ambition and confidence to become, and to a certain extent the pride at having become, the strongest “nation” among nations. To put it bluntly, according to the logics of the SFG, as a Chinese in a time like the Reform Era, whether self-claimed or other-identified, you should take this subject position as a given, because the symbolic membership of the Chinese Nationality is granted to you, branded on you and invested in you, even though Chinese citizenship might not be bestowed upon you _jus sanguinis_ for the time being. Perhaps more importantly, you should take great pride in this membership, for “China” is not only the “home” of all “Chinese,” but also a _great_ home. On such terms, the SFG has indeed provided a perfect illustration of how a particular nation-state uses cultural practice to promote its nationalist politics of subject inclusion so as to sustain itself in the imaginations of its putative subjects.

5. Inclusion Strategy 5: The Conflation of Party, Nation, and State
Whether primordial and cultural significations, or familial and confident nationalisms, all interpellations so far discussed have been sent out in the name of Chinese Nationality. Had the SFG stopped at such a presumption without further ado, it would have already made a good case for self-justification, logically at least. Besides these practices, however, the SFG has steadily presented another line of interpellation, which offers a definitive explanation of the concept of Chinese Nationality in a rather retentive yet contradictory manner. Specifically, by conflating the concepts of “state” and “nation,” the SFG has consistently equated the Chinese nation or Chinese Nationality with the Chinese state or the country of the PRC, a practice that Barrington sees as “the most important and consistent misuse of ‘nation’ in political science” (1997:713). It is beyond the scope of this project to explain in great detail the difference between “nation” and “state,” but given the issue’s significant import to the politics of subject inclusion, I will provide some brief points of clarification.

As far as the concept of nation is concerned, definitions abound. For instance, Anthony Smith, one of the most important writers in the general field of nationalism and nation-state formation, sees nation as a “named human population who share an historical territory, common myths, and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members” (1991:14). This rationalist definition might apply to some of the classical nation-states in continental Europe, but it fails to capture the “internal” differences and complexity of the Chinese Nation whose members might share none of the indices listed by Smith. More importantly, it takes no
account of people’s identity formation or cultural citizenship that is also vital to
the sustenance of a nation. In a more general formulation, Robert Kaiser defines
nation as "a self defining community of belonging and interest whose members
share a sense of common origins and a belief in a common destiny or future
into consideration. However, by viewing “a sense of common origins and a belief
in a common destiny” as central elements of nationhood, he also fails to account
for many “nation-like” communities, such as the Chinese Nationality and various
multicultural nation-states, since members of these communities do not
necessarily have a sense of common origins or a belief in a common destiny, as
will be shown in the next chapter.\(^{144}\) In the final analysis, a nation does not
necessarily need these elements to be sustainable, though they doubtless play a
constitutive role in the nation-state formation process.

Taking the lead of Benedict Anderson, this project also sees nation as an
“imagined community” (1983). Of course, I am not just using his concise and
widely applicable definition as a convenient quote. I hope to point out that
Anderson has not only made every effort to account for the crucial role that
various cultural practices play in making possible the emergence as well as the
sustenance of modern nations, but that he has also highlighted the subjective
element of nationhood by studying various forms of imagination. In other words,
Anderson’s work has made apparent that only by studying the cultural conditions

\(^{144}\) Having said this, it should be noted that the SFG does work these dimensions in the service of
nation formation.
of imagination and the imaginations themselves can we really understand how a nation is created and lived in the minds of its members.

To facilitate the following analysis, it is also necessary to briefly explain my view of the concept of state. To this end, I will borrow Charles Tilly’s definition and view states as “coercion-wielding organizations that are distinct from households and kinship groups and that exercise clear priority in some respects over all other organizations within substantial territories” (1990:1). Generally speaking, such a definition is not free of controversy, but it is a baseline definition that many social scientists have assented to. As far as this project is concerned, we can make clear at least one point based on this definition: that attachment to the Chinese Nationality and loyalty to the Chinese state are not synonymous (Connor, 2002).

In the actual practices of the SFG, however, the concepts of nation and state have largely been treated as one and the same. Moreover, the CCP, the only ruling political party since the foundation of the PRC, has also been included on the same side of the equation with the Chinese state or the country of the PRC, which complicates the conflated use of nation and state even further. Therefore, for a project which seeks to understand the complex process of China’s nation-state formation, it is necessary to take a close look at this party-nation-state conflation.

I argue that the SFG has deployed two major strategies to realize this tripartite conflation. First, it has presented, continuously and consistently, an avalanche of paeans that strategically presents the concepts of the party, the
nation and the state as interchangeable subjects of praise without much
discrimination. Specifically, at least 150 paean-like episodes, consisting mostly of
songs of praise, have contributed to this conflation. I also hope to point out that
the importance of the CCP in this conflation has been more emphasized
relatively speaking in the SFG’s early stage, as testified by the following two
paean performed in the 1984 broadcast:

_Mama Jiao Wo Yi Zhi Ge (Mama Taught Me A Song, Shen Xiaocen, Vocal solo, 1984)_

Mama has taught me a song –
Without the Communist Party There Would Be No New China.
This song has flown out of mama’s heart,
This song has kept her company wherever she went.
Ah ……
This song has kept her company wherever she went.

I sing the song that mama has taught me –
Without the Communist Party There Would Be No New China.
This song has flown out of my heart,
This song has encouraged me to create a new life.

I taught my children a song –
Without the Communist Party There Would Be No New China.
This song has flown into their innocent hearts,
This song will never set.
Ah ……
This song will never set.
This song will never set.

_Dang’a, Qin’ai De Mama (Dear Party, My Dear Mother, Yin Xiumei, Vocal solo, 1984)_

Mother, mother, my dear mother!
You brought me up with your sweet milk.
You taught me how to walk and how to speak.
You sang me to sleep with a lullaby.
You think of me all the time.
Mother, mother, my dear mother!
Your have such a simple and unadorned moral character.
Mother, mother, my dear mother!
You encouraged me to be a revolutionary.

Party, party, my dear party!
You brought me up like a mother.
You educated me to love our motherland and encouraged me to learn.
The happy tomorrow is waving at me.
You have painted a beautiful picture of Four Modernizations.
Party, party, my dear party!
Your figure is so sublime and so great!
Party, party, my dear party!
You are my dearest mother.

As I have introduced in Chapter 1, one of the major tasks that the second
generation of Chinese leadership had tried to accomplish from the late-1970s to
the early-1980s was to regain people’s confidence in the party-state that had
diminished to a large extent due to the catastrophic effect of the Great Leap
Forward (1958-1962) and the ensuing Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)
(Lieberthal & Oksenberg, 1988; Lieberthal, 1995; Duara, 1995; Spence, 1999;
Hughes, 2006). Under such circumstances, the SFG’s emphasis on the CCP or
the party-state as the representative of Chinese Nationality comes as no surprise.

As well, I have mentioned that the third generation of Chinese leadership had
made every effort to regain the legitimacy of the party-state after the Tiananmen
Incident (Calhoun, 1994). Having realized the obvious “moral vacuum” created by
the virtual bankruptcy of communist ideology (Zhang et al., 2001; Zhao, 2001;
Bell, 2008), one of the strategies it used, as many have argued, was to play down somewhat the ideology of communism and put more emphasis on the common history and tradition of the nation as the foundation of solidarity. The validity of this argument notwithstanding, this practical adjustment has not been significantly echoed in the practices of the SFG. While the Chinese nation, Chinese state, and/or the country of the PRC have become more and more the conspicuous objects of the paeans, the CCP, although enjoying less mention, has always been there: *Ni Wo Shi Zhongguo* (You and I are China, 1991), *Zai Zhongguo Dadi Shang* (In the Land of China, 1991), *Zhan Qilai* (Standup, 1992), *Jinri de Zhongguo Ren* (Today’s Chinese, 1994), *Zhongguo Da Wutai* (The Big Stage of China, 1995), *Chuntian de Gushi* (The Story of Spring, 1997), *Zoujin Xin Shidai* (Walking into the New Era, 1998), and *Wei Le Shui* (For Whom, 1999) are all good examples of this presence. In *Our Country*, a singing episode in the 2004 broadcast, the centrality of the CCP was no less “conspicuous” than in *Mama Has Taught Me a Song* or *Dear Party, My Dear Mother:*


Fighting for the country, governing the country,
Whole-heartedly, it works for the common people;
Creating happiness, delivering warmth,
Day and night, it never forgets the well-being of the common people.  
The common people are the earth, the common people are the sky,  
The common people are always the concern of the Communist Party;  
The common people are the mountains, the common people are the sea,  
The common people are the lifespring of the Communist Party;
(Repeat 3 times)
The common people are the lifespring of the Communist Party;
The lifespring of the Communist Party!

Note that this was already the 18th SFG appearance of Peng Liyuan. Therefore, the performer’s fame was most likely a factor in boosting the affective power of the song. Televisually, an accompanying men’s chorus and group dance were both used, but what really caught the audience’s attention were two giant soldier-themed relief sculptures used as stage props for the performance. Soldier-themed relief sculptures were no strangers to the audience, as they could have been seen in various locations across the country, especially in revolutionary museums. Each of these two sculptures had eight *balujun* (The Eighth Route Army) soldiers\(^\text{145}\) played by real persons who held their different poses all the way through. To take the audience back to the years when the CCP was fighting against Japanese intruders, the episode started with a few slow-moving shots of the sculptures, illustrating the role of the CCP in the formation of the PRC. During the interlude, file footage of four generations of CCP/PRC leaders, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao, were also inserted, confirming again the sameness of the CCP and the PRC. Perhaps this renewed emphasis on the CCP should come as no surprise since China, as Chang argues, “is a political system where government is still the monopoly of a single party” (2001:6). Under the special circumstances of this “single-party dictatorship” (ibid), the party will still be assumed, nominally at least, as the common point of identification, even though the ideology of communism has virtually been abandoned since Deng

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\(^{145}\) The Eighth Route Army was led by the Chinese Communist Party during the anti-Japanese War.
came into power (Bell, 2008). In short, the CCP, the PRC and the Chinese Nation will still be used interchangeably, however problematic a concept.

At the turn of the new century as China has equipped itself with a “globalistic mentality” (Waters, 2001), the conflation of party-nation-state in the representation of Chinese Nationality in the SFG has fluttered with no less flamboyance. From Xibu Kuangxiang (Rhapsody of the West, 2000) to Qin’ai de Zhongguo, Wo Ai Ni (Dear China, I Love You, 2001), to Wo Jia Zai Zhongguo (My Home is in China, 2002), to Zhonghua Mei, Zhonghua Qin (China is Beautiful, China is Endearing, 2003), to Qing Xi Renmin (The Love of the People, 2004), to Wei Zuguo Shousui (Garrisoning for the Motherland, 2005), to Wanjia Huanle (All Families are Happy, 2006), to Hexie Yuezhang (Harmonious Movement, 2007) and to Zhongguo Da Wutai (The Big Stage of China, 2008), songs of praise and other forms of paeans have confirmed again and again the importance of the state, whether the party has been used as a prefix or not, in understanding the meaning of Chinese Nationality. In most of these eulogies, the state has been not only the sole subject, but the exclusive object as well. In other words, these eulogies are all self-authored and self-addressed in the final analysis. Besides, by conflating the party, the nation and the state in representing the Chinese Nationality, these eulogies are part and parcel of the construction of a social imaginary of “China,” that has inherited not only a communist history of the past 50 years, but also a history and tradition of over five thousand years. Therefore, there is no difference between the Chinese Nationality and the Chinese party-state in terms of deserving a sense of belonging of all Chinese
people. The very act of interpellation and the very goal of winning people’s
cultural citizenship are thus brought together.

In parallel with this conflation of party-nation-state, one of the major strategies
employed by the SFG from the very beginning has been to ensure the visibility of
state leaders, who are themselves leaders of the CCP. Before going any further,
I hope to stress the importance of this strategy by quoting Ong’s warning, that “in
China, the articulations of the leaders are very important in defining what is at
stake for China as a nation” (2005:28).

In the 1984 broadcast, Li Ruihuan, the then mayor of Tianjin and the then
Chairman of the CPPCC (The Chinese People’s Political Consultative
Conference) from 1993 to 2003, appeared in the gala to thank all Chinese people
for supporting the Luan River Project, which aimed to channel the water of the
Luan River into the city of Tianjin. In the 1986 gala, then party leader Bo Yibo
hosted the wedding of a “revolutionary couple” whose marriage was based on a
“shared revolutionary ideal.” Two years later in the 1988 gala, Madam Deng
Yingchao, wife of the then Premier Zhou Enlai, made this statement as the
chairperson of the CPPCC:

D: Today is the Spring Festival. I pay a New Year’s call to all Chinese people from various
nationalities, to Taiwanese compatriots, to compatriots who live in Hong Kong and Macau, and to
all of the diasporic Chinese. The dragon symbolizes good luck. I wish all of you a happy family
reunion, health, and happiness. I wish that you make new progress and new achievements in
school or at work."

For a country that has gone through a great deal of social, political and
environmental turbulence over the past decades, Li Ruihuan’s speech might
signify the goodwill gesture of a grateful government, whereas Deng’s statement might be read as simply a politically correct well-wishing. It is undeniable, though, that practices of this kind were of great potential to remind the audience of the symbolic as well as the actual existence of the party-state in civic life.

After the supreme status of the CCP took a dive as a result of the Tiananmen Massacre, restoring and maintaining the legitimacy of the party-state became an ever more urgent imperative. Therefore, we can see in the SFG that the strategy of ensuring the visibility of state leaders was brought to a “higher” level. Right after ringing in the New Year, the then President Jiang Zemin and the then Premier Li Peng came to the studio in person in the 1990 broadcast. Jiang, who headed not only the central government of the state, the central committee of the CCP, but also the Chinese Army, delivered a speech first:

J: Comrades, friends, ladies, gentlemen, and all television viewers. How are you? [Applause] …… In the first spring of the 1990s, we gather here tonight to watch the Spring Festival Gala produced by CCTV. Allow me to represent the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the State Council, and the Central Military Commission to pay a New Year’s call to all Chinese people from various nationalities [applause]…… A New Year’s call is also paid to all soldiers and officers of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA), Military Police and the Police [Applause] …… and to our compatriots who live in Hong Kong and Macau, Taiwanese compatriots, and all of the diasporic Chinese [Applause] ……. Let us wish you a happy family reunion, health, and good luck. Thank you [Applause] ……

After that, the then Premier Li Peng made his entry.

Li: Performers and friends, you just staged a wonderful show for all of us, and I say thank you very much as a television audience. Thank you for bringing happiness to thousands and thousands of families. The bell has just rung away the old Year of the Snake and rung in the New Year of the Horse. At this moment of resuscitation, I pay a New Year’s call to all parents, brothers
and sisters, to all comrades who are fighting (working) in every battle line (read, work line), and to all international friends who have been giving us support and understanding …… I wish our great socialist motherland a prosperous new year, our economy a stable development; may our people live and work in peace and contentment, and may all our work lead to one success after another…… Thank you.

Both speeches were intentionally “interrupted” many times by the studio audience’s long applause. Wide shots, moving shots, and close-ups of the studio audience were all used. Given that China was under unprecedented international pressure at that moment, these speeches certainly cannot be read as mere New Year’s calls. The multi-layered messages they carry go beyond the grasp of this thesis. Looking at it from the perspective of the politics of subject inclusion, however, we are not only informed about which subjects are included in the Chinese Nationality, but also about the determination of the Chinese party-state to see itself as the one and only paterfamilias of the Chinese Nationality. After the speeches, these state leaders shook hands with the performers. The technical treatment of this scene was equally telling of the SFG’s real nature. The camera followed Jiang for several minutes without any cutaways. Those who shook hands with him reflected different “ideal types” (Weber, 1949),146 which included people from Taiwan (Ling Feng, John Wen), Hong Kong (Cheung Ming Men), the Chinese diaspora (Zhai Chunping) and the so-called combat heroes, model workers, and performers from different places of the country – in short, quite an inventory of “identity models.”

146 The ideal type, according to Weber, is “formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct” (Weber, 1949:90).
For a quite a few years since, the appearance in the gala of the state’s highest leaders has become a tradition. In the 1991 broadcast, while Li Peng paid a visit to a Beijing resident, Jiang Zemin went to the 2nd Steel-Making Factory of Shougang (Capital Steel Group, one of the largest steel companies in China, located in the suburb of Beijing). Once again, Jiang paid a New Year’s call on behalf of “the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the State Council, and the Central Military Commission.” In 1992, we saw Jiang visit one of the military companies of the Beijing Garrison of the PLA, and Li visit the Chinese Embassy in Lisbon. In 1993, Jiang went to Doujian Village located in the suburb of Beijing, and Li paid a call to the Control Center of the Ministry of the Railway and to a market in Beijing. After a respite in 1994, Jiang delivered a speech again in 1995. Though they have not appeared in person since the mid-1990s, a time commonly seen as politically stable after a few years of ideological consolidation, the SFG has not forgotten them. Below is the concluding statement of the 1997 broadcast, in the words of the hostess:

Let’s closely unite around the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party led by President Jiang Zemin. Hand in hand, heart to heart, let’s breathe the same breath and share the same destiny to greet a more beautiful tomorrow.

In the year of the dragon (2000), a congratulatory message from Jiang Zemin was read out loud as part of the Zero-Hour Ceremony. Just as we started to realize that there had been no direct involvement of state leaders from 2001 to 2003, Jiang Shan (Our Country, 2004) provided us with a timely reminder of the old practice by, as I have just mentioned, using the file footage of four
generations of Chinese leaders during the performance. Two years later, another visual montage of these four leaders was also showcased on the giant screen during the performance of *Wanjia Huanle* (All Families are Happy). Again, as presumably the most important media event staged in the year’s most significant festival, the SFG has consistently informed the audience of the centrality of the Chinese party-state in understanding the meaning of Chinese Nationality.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of the politics of subject inclusion, the problem of this sweeping conflation becomes obvious given that those who are attached to the larger concept of “Chinese Nationality” in whatever sense, emotional or political, cultural or practical, might not be willing to offer their loyalty to the Chinese state, not even to, say, the CCP. Perhaps for most diasporic subjects and non-Mainlanders, especially the Taiwanese, the subject position of being Chinese has little to do with the PRC or the CCP. This being so, such a conflation might seem too arrogant and contradictory for these people, and might therefore cause a backlash effect, undermining rather than maintaining their “Chinese imagination.” Certainly, such a conflation would not be so much of a contradiction if non-Mainlanders and diasporic subjects were conceived of only as minor audiences. However, in view of the substantial amount of effort that the SFG has made in interpellating both non-Mainlanders and diasporic subjects, they can hardly be deemed minor audience groups. Given that the SFG is a program orchestrated by the state that must be approved before airing, it is hardly conjectural to surmise that the conflated image of the Chinese party-nation-state, however contradictory and problematic, is precisely the image that
the state hopes to accord to, and/or equate with, the imaginary of Chinese Nationality. We have to wonder, then, how this indiscrimination would affect the receiving subjects' sense of belonging, if these concepts are not as interchangeable as they are represented to be in the SFG. The following chapter intends to address this issue.

6. Summary

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how the SFG, as a particular set of media practices, has played an operative part in the cultural terrain that has been crucial to the politics of subject inclusion of the contemporary Chinese party-state. In fairness to the complexity of the SFG as a particular set of cultural practices, I also acknowledge its multiple aspects that go beyond the politics of subject inclusion, such as its aesthetic, folkloric, and festive significance. I argue, however, that its nature as a mediatized state apparatus has remained consistent. More specifically, to serve the ideological ends of the state, it has taken on a life of its own in some respects, by organizing a system of significations – the construction of a Chinese primordial identity, the manufacturing of a Chinese cultural identity, familial nationalism, and confident nationalism – to interpellate as many as possible to the subject position of being Chinese. I want to reemphasize that separating these significations is for analytical purposes only. In the actual practice of the SFG, they usually join forces with each other and operate as a system. Moreover, these different significations have employed an array of means of realization, not only linguistic but also televisual, to implement themselves. Of equal importance is the fact that these different means of
realization also operate as a system, enhancing each other’s potential for affective appeal. Consequently, the SFG has made itself an exemplary Ideological State Apparatus (Althusser, 1971) which not only seeks to “make many one” through cognitive framing, but also to win the attachment of the “many to the one” through emotional or affective appeal. To put it differently, by making every effort to keep alive the “Chinese imagination” of all putative subjects, the SFG has contributed on a continual basis to the sustenance of Chinese Nationality.

However, these practices have not proceeded without contradictions. On the one hand, we see an obvious contradiction between the presentation of the genetic and genealogical distinctiveness of being Chinese, and the simultaneous showcasing of China’s multi-racial and multi-ethnic reality. On the other hand, we see another obvious contradiction between the practice of cultural essentialism and the multicultural reality that has also been showcased, however superficial. In addition, though familial nationalism operates to suspend the aforementioned contradictions to a certain degree, ethno-nationalism based on consanguinity is mobilized at the same time in calling upon diasporic subjects as family members, thereby bringing the contradiction between the distinctive image of Chineseness and the hybrid reality of Chineseness back to the fore. The fact seems to be, however, that as long as these practices work in certain respects and do not collide with and undermine each other, they are to be employed at any rate. These contradictions have therefore highlighted the pragmatic nature of China’s politics of subject inclusion.
Besides, looking at the SFG from a historical point of view, we can also conclude that the SFG has retained certain strategies, while at the same time making strategic adjustments in different stages as a reflection of a metamorphosis in the broader social conditions. Generally speaking, while a lot of efforts were made in the SFG’s early stage to establish genetic and genealogical points of identification, these points have largely been treated as taken-for-granted signifiers in its later stage. Be clear, this is not to say that they have been abandoned. It is only to say that they have been referenced in a less direct manner once they have taken root. In comparison, the SFG has been more retentive in establishing and maintaining various cultural points of identification through repeatedly recycling and re-presenting an array of so-called cultural essences and ethnosymbols without much revision. As far as familial nationalism is concerned, though it has been consistently employed as the main strategy to keep all minority nationalities in the family, it has been fine-tuned when it comes to the interpellation of non-Mainlanders and diasporic subjects. That is, from the SFG’s early stage to the beginning of the new century, it has paid equal attention to diasporic subjects and non-Mainlanders, whether Hong Kongers or Taiwanese. With the return of Hong Kong and Macau, and in recognition of the increasingly transnational nature of Chinese subjects, more efforts have been made to interpellate Taiwanese and diasporic subjects. With the claimed success of China’s economic reform and in response to China’s changing status vis-à-vis the world, confident nationalism has evolved from an assertive to an aggressive stance. As for the conflation of party-nation-state as a way to represent the
Chinese Nationality, while the CCP has become relatively less conspicuous a hero, it has always been and remains there, and the role of the state holds fast. Indeed, lest we forget that:

Mass ritual was not a device to shore up the state, but rather the state … was a device for the enactment of mass ritual. Power served pomp, not pomp power (Geertz, 1980:13).

Where there is interpellation, there is *subjectification* (not necessarily subjection). I hold that the subjective elements of identity formation play no less important a role in the nation-state formation, and I do not intend to stop at a deterministic view of (media) interpellation whereby all power is located in the (media) interpellator. Instead, I opt for an approach that intends to do justice to the fragmented, dynamic, complex, and indeterminant aspects of subjectification or identity formation. I intend to accomplish this task in the next chapter, which is an analysis of a study into the reception of the SFG by a diasporic audience.
CHAPTER FOUR

“To Be, or Not to Be: That Is the Question:” The Complexity of Diasporic Subject Chinese Imagination

The polysemic nature of television and the “democratic”\textsuperscript{147} character of audience-hood has been established for quite some time (Ang, 1985; 1991; 1996; Bignell, 2004; Fiske, 1987; 1992; Hall, 1980; 1996b; 1997; Morley, 1980; 1992; 2004). Therefore, the focus of this chapter, which seeks to do justice to the complexity and dynamism of audience identity formation processes, is not merely to illustrate the agentic potential of the participants by indicating that they have identified with some aspects of the interpellation and have rejected others, but to present 1) what they have identified with; 2) what they have rejected; 3) on what basis they have made their “identitarian choices;” and 4) the implications of this for their identity formations.

Before going any further, I hope to make an important terminological clarification. The term “\textit{zhongguo},” translated as “China” in English, is composed of two characters. The first character (”\textit{zhong}”) means “central” or “middle,” whereas the second (“\textit{guo}”) denotes “kingdom,” “state” or “country.” Therefore, “\textit{zhongguo}” can be literally translated into English as “Middle Kingdom” or “Central Kingdom.” Though the term “\textit{zhongguo}” has existed since ancient times, it is now mainly used to refer to the state of the PRC. The term “\textit{zhongguoren},” a

\textsuperscript{147} Fiske coined the term “semiotic democracy” to capture the active nature of audience-hood. According to him, audiences are already “equipped with the discursive competencies to make meanings and motivated by pleasure to want to participate in the process” (1987:95).
compound word composed of “zhongguo” and “ren” which literally means “people,” refers therefore to “people of China,” “Chinese people” or, if loosely interpreted, “people of Chinese descent.” Another Chinese equivalent to the English term “Chinese” is “huaren,” which is composed of “hua” as in “zhonghua,” another traditional name for China, and “ren.” Though both “huaren” and “zhongguoren” could be used to denote “Chinese” as an imagined collective of people, “huaren” seems to be a more commonly accepted term in diasporic communities precisely because it does not necessarily carry the “burden” of being affiliated with the state of the PRC. Inasmuch as the terminological choices could be suggestive of speaker identitarian positionings, I retain most of the mentions of “zhongguoren” or “huaren” appearing in participant responses instead of translating them into the generic English term, i.e. “Chinese.”

In terms of the rationale for the organizing structure of this chapter, I hope to make clear at the outset that given the significant role of social origin in participant subjectification, I will analyze participant responses by group. Without hinting at any sense of priority, I will report in the order of Group MC, Group TW and Group HK. In addition, to understand clearly and in an uninterrupted manner how each participant has responded to different levels of interpellation, I will consider the responses of each participant in their entirety before moving on to the next participant in the group. Importantly, I will identify key themes and comment on the similarities and differences in this regard between and amongst individual participants and groups in the chapter summary.

1. Group MC (Subjects from Mainland China)
1.1 MCM1

At the time that I spoke with MCM1, this 37-year old gentleman had been in Canada for 13 years. Once a professional soccer player, he became a mobile phone repairman in Canada. In the pre-screening interview, he declared himself as an “unyielding believer” of the statement “once a Chinese, always a Chinese.” While watching my synopsis of previous SFG episodes (see chapter 2), he became animated; and, witnessing this palpable emotional change, I started to probe him for details:

YC: … [Opening Presentation of the 1993 SFG]  You look very happy, can you tell me why?  
MCM1: Of course I am! I’ve been watching the show for years! Never have missed one! As a zhongguoren, I think it’s an important part of our cultural life … it tells me everything that is unique about us, like our origin, our blood, our language, our custom, and our culture ……
YC: … [What Do You Like to Say?] … You really like this one, don’t you?  
MCM1: Look! This is what I mean by “this show is so zhongguo!” “Descendants of the Yellow and Fiery emperors from all over the world gather here together” … yellow skin … I like this episode! Tao Jin is such a great dancer, and he sings well too, the girl is so-so … wow, look at the audience – I don’t think other episodes are so interactive … wow, I like this shot, dazzling, isn’t it? ……

When we arrived at The Descendants of the Dragon, he began to sing along. He told me twice how melodic and powerful the song was and mentioned that this song was one of the “must-sings” whenever he went to a karaoke bar in Markham or Scarborough, two places known for their high concentrations of Chinese-speaking residents and that of “huaren-related” businesses. Without a doubt, these statements not only indicate how modern technology has made the transnational circulation of a nationalist cultural production easier, resulting in the

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148 The watching of the synopsis took a certain period of time. The square brackets announce the beginning of an episode in the synopsis.
popularity of the song in the Chinese-speaking communities, but also suggest that such a cultural production might be of tremendous identitarian significance to zealous consumers like MCM1. To explore, I inquired further:

YC: Why is it a must-sing, just because it's tuneful and powerful as you said?
MCM1: I like everything about it, yeah, it's tuneful and powerful and ... the lyrics are great too!
YC: What's great about the lyrics?
MCM1: The lyrics tell us who we are ... other than your passport, nothing else has really changed. Once a zhongguoren, always a zhongguoren. I'll never forget this! Those from the second or third generations may not think so, but they all look zhongguoren, so other people will always think they are! I always say that guilao¹⁴⁹ only use skin color and language to tell us from them ... Even though the guilao grew up in China, speak zhongwen,¹⁵⁰ use chopsticks and eat Chinese food, I still don't think they are zhongguoren because of their racial characteristics. Dashan is not a zhongguoren, right?

Considering MCM1's evident passion for his own Chinese identity manifested in his emotional way of speaking, I must say that his subjection to a Chinese primordial identity was affectively charged. Importantly, some televisual strategies involved in the interpellation, such as viewer prior familiarity with the song, the interactivity between performers and studio audience, the star power of the performers, and the camerawork, all contributed to his affinity with these episodes. More importantly, we should note that in commenting upon the lyrics of the song, MCM1 expressed a very strong sense of "diasporic dialectic," by which I mean the dilemma of belongingness associated with, or affected by, diasporic subject experiences of inhabiting an indefinite space between the "homeland" and the "hostland" (Sayad, 2004).

¹⁴⁹ “Guilao,” literally meaning devil, is a derogatory term for foreigners, especially from the West. “Laowai” is a commonly used but informal term for foreigner. The formal version of it is "waiguoren" which literally means "person from another country."
¹⁵⁰ Zhongwen is the conglomerate term for Chinese language.
In fact, “the dialectic of diasporic identification” (Gilroy, 1991) has been much studied over the past two decades. Authors, such as Skinner (1993), Brah (1996) and Gilroy, (1991; 1994), have forcefully demonstrated how various diasporic subjects have been caught up by the inherent “in-between-ness” of their “transnational” lives and how this “living-in-between-ness” has set up conditions for dynamic subject formation.\(^{151}\) To put it differently, these authors have made apparent that diasporic subject experiences and encounters with “the others” and their investment in both “lands” (“home-” and “host-”) have actively mapped onto their senses of identity. “‘Who I am’ or ‘who we are’ is never a matter of free choice” (Ang, 2001:vii). In the case of MCM1, the notion of the diasporic experience and the question of racism in Canada undoubtedly factor into his embrace of the experience of “homeland” belonging, which, I stress, is presented in a highly racialized manner. In fact, MCM1’s rather racialized view of zhongguoren and guilao (“I still don’t think they are zhongguoren because of their racial characteristics”), and his reaction to being seen as a “racialized” other here in Canada, point to how a “diaspora dialectic” has set up the condition for the operation of a racialized interpellation, which in turn contributes to his undying sense of a primordial notion of Chinese identity.

Moving on to Charms of Chinese Folk Operas (1998), MCM1 became more excited, showing a strong interest in folk operas:

YC: Why are you so excited? You love Chinese folk operas?
MCM1: Some of them, especially by the Beijing Opera, a national essence, right?

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\(^{151}\) For more studies on the dialectic of diasporic experience, see also Clifford, 1997; Gupta, 1992; Geertz, 1994; Hall, 1996c; Vertovec & Cohen, 1999; and Vertovec, 2003. Additionally, I will further address this issue in the next chapter.
YC: I wonder why you love them.

MCM1: They are typical Chinese traditional culture and eh … it’s great that we can see some highlights in the SFG every year, and I think all of us should be very proud of them, because they’re so unique! Lots of cultural and historical references, I guess that’s why people love them …… [Book of Hundred Surnames] … I like Harlem Yu! … Mmm … the lyrics are really good.

YC: What’s good about it?

MCM1: It’s all about Chinese traditional culture which I’m very proud of.

YC: Why are you so proud of it?

MCM1: Of course I am, those are my roots, that’s part of who I am, and eh … it’s so long, so unique, way ahead of the others …… [A Eulogy for the Long River] … I love this song, but the pitch is too high for me to sing [laugh] …… [Take a Look at Our Mother River] …

YC: Wow, you seemed to be much calmer when you were watching A Eulogy for the Long River, but I saw tears now, why are you so touched? Is the Yellow River song more moving to you?

MCM1: No, no, no, they are equally important. The storyline of this one [Take a Look at Our Mother River] is very touching, you know, it’s really great to see different Chinese get together because of the river and … Ni Ping is very good at telling these kind of stories and … the music is great too … and … I don’t know … it’s just touching …… [My Chinese Heart] …

(Singing along) …

YC: Wow, you still remember the lyrics?

MCM1: Of course I do. Tell me who isn’t touched the first time they hear it? I believe it was the first patriotic pop song I’d ever heard. I was very touched by the patriotic feeling of those who live in other countries or places like Taiwan and Hong Kong … See – this might sound a little like repeating what our teachers taught us at school – these rivers have nurtured all of the sons and daughters of China and they are the witnesses of Chinese history … the origins of Chinese culture, and … there are a lot of songs in the SFG about them. Not all of them move me but those good ones always give me a sense of pride and a strong sense of belonging ……

YC: … [Chinese Dragon] … You don’t like this one?

MCM1: I don’t like Li Shuangjiang [the singer] [laugh], but the song is fine, we Chinese are descendants of the dragon … and our nation, our culture … is very old, how can I not feel proud? Those Canadians, I don’t think they have this kind of culture, not so long, not so unique …

Apparently, the “diasporic dialectic” is now expressed in a cultural sense as well. The pride is built not only upon a cultural tradition that is “so long, so unique,
way ahead of the others” but also upon his perception of the culture of “those Canadians” being “not so long, not so unique.” Initially unsure of his racist or xenophobic tendencies (for example, when he used “guilao” to refer to “non-Chinese”), I became convinced about the nature of his cultural citizenship/allegiance when he described “those Canadians.” If Chinese Nationality really exists as an imagined community, MCM1’s Chinese imagination is certainly both “racial” and “cultural.” This is also a classical case of how various linguistic and televisual means of interpellation join forces and enhance the affective attachment of the target audience to a subject position that the interpellation intends to offer. According to MCM1, those elements that moved him were not only the linguistic construction of a Chinese cultural identity, but also the non-linguistic elements, such as the melodiousness of the song, the stardom of the performers, the diegetic music, and the narratorial style of the hostess.

When it came to those episodes intended to explore MCM1’s responses to being Chinese in a “familial” sense, his Chinese imagination remained active:

MCM1: [*Singing in Sequence by Various Nationalities*] … The stage looks really nice … It’s really hard to have so many nationalities live together and not fight. China is doing a much better job than a lot of countries. Look at Quebec here, right? … This song is nice … this is nice too …… [*Big China*] I love this song! … Mao Ning is pretty good … Jeff Chang! Wow! I love this guy! See how good he is! … [Singing along] … Andy Lau? As a singer, he is ok … [Singing along] … see, the tune is quite catchy. I guess everybody can sing along … being a zhongguoren, listening to this song, I feel proud again.

YC: Why do you feel proud?

MCM1: It’s obvious! We have so many good things … even Hong Kongers and Taiwanese came here to sing about Big China! … See how happy the audience is!

YC: I wonder how you feel about this Mainland-Taiwan-Hong Kong trio.
MCM1: Great! The SFG does this quite often, and this is exactly what a big family should be doing ... Look at them on stage like that! It feels really great to see some solidarity between different zhongguoren ... [Macau, Let Me Take You Home] ... See? Another one, this time four singers ... one from Macau ... Gigi Leung is from Hong Kong, cute girl! The other two are from China ... honestly, as a zhongguoren, I'm happy to see that Hong Kong and Macau have returned to the arms of the motherland ... Taiwan will too sooner or later ... [Panda Name Selection 1st Section] ... Ah, this one! We just saw it this year! Actually I watched it with my girlfriend. She is from Taiwan. I tell you, we're really similar! Zhongguoren is zhongguoren ... Giving them something we have but they don't, that's a nice gesture ... Actually I don't care if China and Taiwan unify in a political sense, but I think we are all zhongguoren! All zhongguoren are family, why don't we do something like ... like singing together? ... [The Cloud of the Homeland] Oh, Kris Phillips, all girls at that time fell for this guy, right? It's really touching to see his grandma here.

YC: Why is that touching?

MCM1: See how different he looks from us – his father is white but his grandma looks just like our grandmas, right? ... This song is a great song ... As a diasporic huaren, Phillips expressed his nostalgia, and I believe he expressed the true feelings of many huaren ... [Nostalgia] ... I know the lyrics! A very famous poem, right? ... This guy is really bad, but it doesn't matter.

YC: What doesn't it matter?

MCM1: I mean it doesn't matter if he can really sing. He tells us how nostalgic diasporas really are.

YC: What do you mean by nostalgic?

MCM1: Ha! Missing your jia-xiang (hometown). Missing your zu-guo (motherland). ... [The Zero-Hour Ceremony of 1996 SFG] Zero hour! Firecracker time! Ah, I really miss the good old times – carefree, good food, families ... [sigh] ... we do miss our families and friends all the more on a day like this, right?

No doubt, a few often-used interpellative strategies, such as the use of performer stardom and the synecdochical use of lian-chang, vocal trio and vocal quartet, have contributed substantially to MCM1’s subjection to the offer of being Chinese in a “familial” sense. More importantly, while MCM1 might have a confused understanding of nostalgia, having identified the feeling for one’s native home (nostalgia) with the feeling for one’s motherland (patriotic sentiment), his affective attachment to the subject position of being Chinese was deepened
precisely by this confusion. In addition, from the televisual message of Zero-Hour ceremony to the associations of “firecracker time” and “good old times,” personal memories also joined forces with the narrative of the SFG. While one might conclude that there are enough reasons to celebrate the great victory of “semiotic democracy” described by Fiske and his sympathizers, MCM1’s Chinese imagination has reminded us of the retaining power of state interpellation.

Compared with the first three sections of the interview, the fourth one aimed at exploring participant responses to confident nationalism was relatively short:

MCM1: [On Ma’s Army] Huang Hong, this guy is funny, I like him … Ma’s Army is superb, absolutely putting us soccer players to shame [laugh] … Yeah [applauding with the studio audience] …

YC: Do you like the fact that the SFG keeps presenting China’s achievement in sports on stage?
MCM1: Of course … a strong nation should be strong at sports. So, to show them is to show the world how strong China is becoming. It makes every zhongguoren proud … I always say that I hope China could become a superpower again, because other people will always see us as zhongguoren. If you got a strong nation behind you, it’ll give you a sense of dignity …

[Better and Better] … Song Zuying, the most beautiful performer of the SFG! … the lyrics are very good too.

YC: I’ll ask you about lyrics later. Look at you! Tapping to the song! You really enjoy it, right?
MCM1: Yeah, nice beat, happy and lively.

YC: Now, the lyrics, what’s good about them?
MCM1: I mean, who wouldn’t like their own country to be strong, right? … Nobody dares to call us “dongya bingfu” (the sick man of East Asia) now! We can beat anyone! I believe the Big China Era is around the corner. I’m very proud to see China is playing a more and more important role in the world. I love to see that Chinese Nationality is getting stronger and stronger …

[A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero] … The music is really powerful! What episode is this? … Oh, this! Yeah, space heroes! No wonder, this music … This is more forceful evidence that China is becoming a superpower! We can say no to everyone now! …

Not only was MCM1 applauding with the studio audience, tapping to the song, and taking great pride in the excellent performance of Chinese athletes and
scientists, he was also taking pleasure in the “good looks” of the performer and the diegetic music of the last episode. Indeed, various interpellative strategies used in these episodes have boosted his confidence and pride in being Chinese. In addition, he kept using the first person singular pronoun while referring to China, another clear indication of his subjection to the offered identity. Moreover, his imagination of being Chinese in a “confident” sense was also entangled with, again, his “diasporic dialectic” (“If you’ve got a strong nation behind you, it’ll give you a sense of dignity”). More exactly, his “diasporic dialectic” has pushed him to revel in the fantasy that confident nationalism sought to create. Furthermore, his sense of historical victimhood (the sick man of East Asia) also illuminates how confident nationalism, as a relatively new element of Chinese nationalism, could resonate perfectly well with anti-imperialist nationalism promoted by the Chinese party-state at that time, as introduced in Chapter 1.

So far, the first four interpellative strategies have worked in concert with each other to keep alive MCM1’s continuous imagination of Chinese Nationality. The foregoing responses demonstrate that MCM1 has treated Chinese Nation and Chinese state as largely interchangeable concepts. However, as I have argued before, the CCP has always been included in the SFG’s vision of Chinese Nationality. I wondered, therefore, how MCM1 would respond if the CCP were brought in play. The following response gives a rather clear answer:

MCM1: [Party, My Dear Mother] … Oh, can I go out now [laugh]? This is my cigarette time … You know we used to love firecrackers, right? If we saw this kind of episode, my father would ask me to light up the firecracker …… [Mama Taught Me a Song] … firecrackers [laugh]! …… [Jiang Zemin & Li Peng Speeches] … Get out, you big spoilsports!
YC: You’ve been enjoying the show right before this point. Why do you get upset all of a sudden? MCM1: … I’m proud of being Chinese, but not because of the CCP ……

Obviously, MCM1 has rejected being Chinese in a “conflational” sense. I would like to stress the final part of his response because it points to the fact that MCM1’s Chinese imagination has remained unspoiled despite how undesirable a role the CCP has played in his vision of Chinese Nationality. It seems, then, that the Chinese Communist Party is perhaps only a minor issue in relation to the ways in which the PRC works to construct another notion of Chineseness.

1.2 MCF1

MCF1, age 33, was a freelance writer who had been in Canada for six years at the time of our interview. In the early stage of the screening, she showed some evident bodily signs of excitement, giving me quite a few cues to probe further:

YC: … [The Opening Presentation of 1993 Broadcast] … Wow, you’re really happy, aren’t you? MCF1: Yes, I am! This is really nice, all kinds of Chinese getting together and celebrating the New Year, I wish I could be there …

YC: … [What Do You Like to See?] … You wanna dance too? If you do, just go ahead! MCF1: Yeah, I wish, I guess I’m getting rusty, but the beat of the song makes me move … look how good Tao Jin is … I actually don’t like rap, but this one is good. See, the audience is surely enjoying this episode … these interactions are absolutely pre-arranged because it’s too perfect, but it’s really good, very lively! You really feel like a part of the celebration …… [The Descendants of the Dragon] … I remember this one! I remember this one! The guy was from eh … California, right? This song by Hou Dejian was a huge hit at the time.

YC: How did it make you feel that the song is now sung by an American huaren? MCF1: Actually a lot of people were touched by Hou’s patriotic feeling about Chinese Nationality, so we were also touched by Huang. We didn’t know much about diasporic huaren at that time, so Huang’s appearance impressed us a lot! They are just like us – we come from the same people.

YC: Are you still touched this time?
MCF1: Oh yeah, perhaps even more because I’m now like him, also a diasporic huaren, so I guess I understand better and deeper that kind of feeling … Wherever we are, a zhongguoren is a zhongguoren … our looks will never change – “With black eyes, black hair, and yellow skin; we remain the Dragon’s descendants forever and for good,” right? ……

It goes without saying that the televisual appeal of these episodes, especially *The Descendants of the Dragon*, was tremendous for MCF1. Viewer prior familiarity with the song, the interactivity between performers and studio audience, the star power of the performers, the synecdochical overtone of the performer’s “diasporic status,” and the beat of the song all helped to lay the groundwork for the interpellation to exert its affective appeal. However, of more importance is the fact that MCF1’s Chinese imagination is no less racialized than that of MCM1. Her fixation on the phenotypic character of being Chinese has lain bare that racial nationalism, in a primordial sense at least, operates as a powerful source of collective solidarity for her. In short, MCF1 still sees Chinese Nationality as a naturalized racial concept.

In the second section, MCF1 adjusted her way of responding. Rather than making comments during screening, she chose to jot down notes from time to time. I made my inquiry after all six episodes of this section were finished:

YC: Let me ask you about the first episode, *Charms of Chinese Folk Operas*. How do you feel?
MCF1: I enjoyed most of it up until the modern Beijing Opera part, because this was not the authentic Beijing Opera … too revolutionary. Did you notice what the performers wore in this part? Western suits! The original flavor of the Beijing Opera was lost! Of course, not because of the dresses but eh … I think we should try to keep our traditional culture. It’s been changed dramatically since 1949. To me, cultural origin and history are important … The history of Chinese Nationality, whether Han and Tang that you can take pride in or the degenerate Qing you feel ashamed of, all zhongguoren should learn about it because traditional culture and history are the root of all zhongguoren, even you live in another country …

YC: Mmm … how about the others, I saw you have quite a few notes.
MCF1: Yeah … *Book of Hundred Surnames* is certainly a contemporary pop song, but it’s all about our traditional culture, *Book of Hundred Surnames*, is about martial arts and calligraphy, right? But I must say that somewhere toward the end I felt quite uncomfortable with the surnames on the giant screen – I mean the animated characters. Remember how big Hu and Wen were? Do they have to be emphasized like that because they are the surnames of the President and Premier? … Next one … *A Eulogy for the Long River* – actually any episode about the magnificent natural landscapes of our country can create immediate rapport and pride in my heart … The Yellow River and the Long River gave birth to the Chinese civilization, witnessing the history of China for thousands of years. They are certainly the symbols of the vitality of Chinese Nationality. Personally, *A Eulogy for the Long River* means something special to me because I grew up beside the Long River and the song was the theme song of a great documentary series – *A Story of the Long River*. So, listening to the familiar tune, I was brought right back to the past, to the place where I grew up.

YC: Wow, the next one, the one about the Yellow River water samples?

MCF1: Ok … I’ve mentioned the Yellow River, but I should add that the idea of *Take a Look at Our Mother River* was really great! I remember I was very touched the first time I saw it. This time, I still like the idea, you know, getting people together and … the next one would be … *My Chinese Heart*! Right! This is a classic SFG episode, making you feel proud of the nation … Now, *Chinese Dragon*, I don’t like the performance – Li Shuangjiang must be a CCP member …

YC: Anything to do with the dragon?

MCF1: Oh, no. the dragon is fine … it actually makes me think about the power of our great nation …

Just like MCM1, MCF1 also endorsed most of the cultural essences and symbols. Though she did not say anything specific about the aesthetic or televisual appeals of the interpellation, such as the tunefulness of the song and the use of diegetic music, she did mention how her prior familiarity with the episode and her emotional/personal attachment to the Long River have enhanced her identification with the cultural symbols. Importantly, in her responses there is a strong essentialist attachment to a national cultural identity of Chinese Nationality evidenced by how fragments of “cultural origin and history”
have apparently nourished her fantasy of a distinctive cultural identity.\(^{152}\) Though MCF1 distinguished herself from MCM1 by being particularly conscious of an authentic Chinese cultural identity, which to her only referred to the tradition established before the foundation of the PRC, she, like MCM1, also brought Chinese racial identity and Chinese cultural identity into a new synthesis. In other words, she also drew strength from both racial nationalism and cultural nationalism and made them the two pillars of her Chinese imagination.

MCF1 seemed more relaxed after two sections. Upon encouragement, she agreed to make as much spontaneous commentary as possible in the following screening:

MCF1: *Singing in Sequence by Various Nationalities* … I like their costumes, they must be wearing their best … see this end? Hata-offering? Have we ever seen any important episode about minority nationalities? No! Because they have always been the little flowers, only good for decoration, telling you that all family members in the Mainland are happy. So many performers get on stage, come and go, but can we remember their faces and voices? All I can recall are their ethnic costumes and the fact that they sang and danced, and … If you really see them as families, you treat them better …

YC: Mmm … I wonder how you feel about the way that these minority nationalities get represented, I mean, getting some of them together and having them sing one after another.

MCF1: It’s a much-used way – almost every year, either *lian-chang* (singing in sequence) or *lian-wu* (dancing in sequence) or both. You have to know, in this big family, they’ve always been treated as minors! I don’t know how they feel, but I feel sad for them …… *Big China* … Oh, this is China, Hong Kong and Taiwan singing hand in hand … better than pointing missiles at each other … we do have same ancestors in common, that’s important, right? …… *Macau, Let Me Take You Home* … Mmm, this one is mediocre, this is 2000, right? Macau has just returned, they must do something …… *Panda Name Selection 1st Section* … I knew *Tuantuan* and *Yuanyuan* would be picked. I would pick the same ones because culturally Taiwan is part of China. I just hope they can have direct flight, direct mail, not just pandas, but pandas might be a good start …… *The Cloud of the Homeland* Kris Phillips! This one was

\(^{152}\) To clarify, I am by no means claiming that all identities are fantasies. Here fantasy refers to a distinctive cultural identity imagined as external to, or above and beyond, cultural practices.
one of my favorite episodes ever because I was a huge fan of his, and the song is so good! I was very touched by his feelings … Hometown! Always has a place in my heart! …

[Nostalgia] … Awful tune but great choice of lyrics, this is indeed the most famous poem of Yu Kwang-chung … the video of this guy is good, you really feel the nostalgia … [The Zero-Hour Ceremony] … This is pretty boring! Why don’t they get a few diasporic artists performing in different places like they’ve done other times? I confess I always look forward to seeing diasporic artists perform because most of them are at the top of their games, and I find that patriotic sentiment expressed by these artists is particularly touching.

YC: I wonder why.
MCF1: Well … I guess a sense of belonging to something bigger wherever we are, right?

On the surface, MCF1 expressed a certain level of dissatisfaction about the way that minority nationalities were treated and represented, but I would argue that she did this precisely because she sees minority nationalities as “family.” Therefore, her position is not one of objection, but quite the opposite, as exposed by the last bit of her response. It is also important to note that when she commented on Big China, she brought her race thinking back again by stating that “we do have same ancestors in common, and that’s important.” When talking about Taiwan, she also brought cultural nationalism into play – “culturally Taiwan is part of China.” We can therefore argue that in the case of MCF1, nationalist thinking, both racial and cultural, sets up the perfect conditions for her to take in the interpellation of familial nationalism, thus reinforcing her sense of being a member of the imagined community of Chinese Nationality. Besides, her positive reactions to various interpellative strategies, including the synecdochical use of vocal trio and quartet, performer stardom, the tunefulness of the song, the prior popularity of the lyrics (poem in this case) and the evocative video, etc., also tell of her subjection to the idea of the Chinese “super-family.” This being said, her comment on the synecdochical use of lian-chang and/or lian-wu and her
perception of the “un-familial” treatment received by minority nationalities in the “super-family” must be acknowledged. While largely consenting to familial nationalism, she was asking for a “better” version of it at the same time.

After an active dialogue in the previous section, MCF1 seemed to have adapted to the investigation and became rather responsive in the following screening:

MCF1: [On Ma’s Army] … I remember this one! Not only me, the whole nation was proud of Ma’s Army at that time … China’s track and field used to be very bad …
YC: So you were very proud too?
MCF1: Yes, I’m now proud of them too, but only proud of the athletes and their great achievement.
YC: What do you mean? Do you mean it wasn’t like this in the past?
MCF1: Yes. In the past I felt proud of the country as well, but now I think it’s very naïve to link sports achievement with the fate of the country, but the SFG has kept doing it. I remember the first time they did this they invited two table tennis world champions, and then they had gymnasts and the women’s soccer team … Anyway, now I don’t like that “running ahead of everyone else” mentality.
YC: I wonder how this change of vision happens.
MCF1: Well, my life here has changed me a lot. Life here is relatively simpler, not that hectic. To me, a placid life is more important. I can think better, write better …
YC: Let’s watch the next one … [Better and Better] … You’re making faces, why?
MCF1: I feel uncomfortable watching this – actually this kind of show is what I hate the most. Did you see the lyrics? Full of fairy tales! The SFG have many episodes like this … I remember a xiangsheng episode from a couple of years ago, talking about Chinese farmers driving BMWs.
YC: I believe you’re talking about So Different from 2003.
MCF1: Yes, that’s the one! You know I really want to sew his mouth shut! How could a xiangsheng artist be so … unscrupulous? Farmers driving BMWs? In China? This guy has no conscience.
YC: Some people might like it. It’s the New Year, right?
MCF1: I understand that, but don’t go that far and don’t do it again and again. To me, it would be nicer to see a couple of true stories, as long as they’re not too sad or too bloody … If China is really that good, I wouldn’t have left.
YC: …… [A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero] … So, how do you feel about this one?
MCF1: … I found his speech very annoying. Any improvement in science and technology should belong to humanity, not just a country … He is really annoying.

YC: Did you feel the same way – I mean, annoyed, when you were in China?

MCF1: Honestly, no, I even felt a little proud ……

Clearly, the interpellation of confident nationalism and the related interpellative means failed to win MCF1’s subjection because her affective reactions to these episodes were all negative. MCF1’s responses are interesting in two ways. Firstly, if “diasporic dialectic” operated to encourage MCM1 to buy into confident nationalism, MCF1 presents a forceful case of how “diasporic dialectic” can work against the interpellation of confident nationalism, given that her diasporic experience played a vital role in her now different responses to the great achievement of Chinese athletes and Chinese space science. Secondly, her responses also illuminate the active nature of audience-hood because she, like many other participants, did not fixate on the imageries offered by the screened episodes, but actively compared them with her own perceptions of China’s social realities. As a result, confident nationalism became another source of her statement of objection.

As mentioned earlier, MCF1 confessed her antipathy towards the CCP when she expressed her view of cultural nationalism. Therefore, her responses to the last three episodes, which were anthologized into the synopsis to explore participant views on the party-nation-state conflation, came as no surprise:

MCF1: [Party, My Dear Mother] … I’m speechless. I have no feeling for the CCP …… [Mama Taught Me a Song] … Ok, objectively speaking, the CCP established the PRC, and we all have seen the achievement that the PRC under the leadership of the CCP has made over the past 30 years, but isn’t this show supposed to be a meeting place for global huaren? I don’t think people in Taiwan or other countries would say yes to the CCP, even I wouldn’t ……
Indeed, if MCF1 has saved some place for the Chinese state to play a role in her Chinese imagination, she has left no room for the CCP. Again, in the Chinese imaginations of diasporic subjects, the Chinese Communist Party is only a minor issue.

### 1.3 MCM2

MCM2, age 36, was teaching in a local university in Toronto. When the interview was conducted, he had been out of China for six years. During the screening of the first section, he looked attentively at the screen without saying a word. Only during *The Descendants of the Dragon*, when Huang arrived “with black eyes, black hair, and yellow skin,” he shook his head. Seizing this opportunity, I started my inquiry:

YC: I noticed that you shook your head all of a sudden. What made you do that?

MCM2: Right, did you notice there was a Uyghur girl who was standing behind the hostess from Hong Kong [Annie Leung], I mean the Opening Ceremony we first saw?

YC: Sorry, no, but why is that important?

MCM2: I know it’s just an extremely short shot, and it wasn’t really on her, but – she really looks like my wife [pointing to a picture on the wall]. See the lady beside me? That’s my wife, a Uyghur, a *zhongguoren*! Why did I groan? Because she would have! Every time we heard them say something like “black eyes, black hair and yellow skin,” she would groan. She has her Ph.D. in Chinese philosophy. She loves Chinese culture! But this obsession with “black eyes, black hair and yellow skin” would make her and people like her feel very uncomfortable! … By the way, did you notice that both the second and third ones mentioned “black eyes, black hair and yellow skin”?

YC: Of course.
MCM2: We cannot really see the audience in the third one, but did you notice the audience in the second one? Everyone has black eyes, black hair and yellow skin. You know they love to use accompanying group dances, with dancers dressed in ethnic costumes, but not this one … I’m a Mongol, and Mongols, Manchus, Hans, all Mongoloid have black eyes, black hair and yellow skin, and we are different from Caucasoid and Negroid, but so what? … And that hostess from Taiwan was talking about the same roots, same ancestors and – speaking of ancestors, we Mongols have many stories which have nothing to do with the Yellow and Fiery Emperors. Even if we come from the same monkeys, so what? Uyghur people have their own stories too. … I told you that I went to the Central University for Nationalities. From my classmates I know that almost all nationalities have their own stories about their ancestors! This obsession with the Yellow and Fiery Emperors would make me, my wife and many of my classmates feel very uncomfortable!

Before discussing MCM2’s response, I hope to highlight that of all 12 participants, MCM2 was the only one who had an ethnic minority background – Mongol. It is important to note that his non-Han identity and that of his wife, as well as his memories about the stories told to him by classmates of different nationalities, played a crucially important role in this response. Not only did he point out the discrepancies between SFG representations of the racial uniformity of Chinese Nationality and the multiracial reality of Chinese Nationality, he also derided the contradiction between the SFG’s hold on a singular genealogy of Chinese Nationality and diverse discourses on the genealogies of China’s multiple nationalities. After two highly racialized visions of Chinese Nationality presented by MCM1 and MCF1, here we see a challenge against the interpellation of racial nationalism or the construction of a Chinese racial identity. To put it differently, the biologized view of Chinese Nationality has failed, in this instance, to serve as a foundation of the participant’s Chinese imagination.
Getting into the second section, MCM2’s bodily responses told me that he had become more emotional. To capture his spontaneous thoughts, I made two pauses:

MCM2: Every nationality has its own musical tradition. We Mongolians don’t have operas, but that’s fine. It’s not fine though that the SFG has been trying to use this so-called national essence to define Chinese culture year after year. I know that some art forms of minority nationalities, such as Mongolian song and Uyghur dance, have been showcased in the SFG year after year, but the way they were dealt with was definitely different – it’s hard to explain, but when you watch folk operas, whatever it is, Beijing or whatever, you know right away they’re supposed to be orthodox Chinese culture … they don’t tell you so of course, but you kinda know that only Han culture is authentic.

YC: Mmm … Can you tell me how you feel about this episode?
MCM2: I like it a lot because these performances are great! But I must stress, it only represents part of the Chinese culture that to me is always multicultural.

YC: I noticed you were shaking your head while watching *Book of Hundred Surnames*, why?
MCM2: For the same reason! My surname sounds like a Han now, but it was adopted since my grandfather … I have a lot of friends whose names – oh, and my wife’s names, her friends – I tell you, few of them are included in the *Book* … Our martial arts are different too, so are our traditional dresses … So, a song like this keeps reminding me of our difference from the Han.

After screening *A Eulogy for the Long River* and *Take a Look at Our Mother River*, MCM2 made the following comment:

MCM2: There are a lot of episodes like this in the SFG … it’s a little boring, but ok. I remember the documentary and *A Eulogy for the Long River*, great film, great song … I might not relate to it as much as you since you’re from Sichuan, but it sure is a mother river of many nationalities – not just Han … I relate more to the Yellow River episode because Hohhot is very close to the Yellow River which, again, is a mother river of many nationalities … I also have a lot of personal memories about this river which I hold dear.

YC: How do you feel about these two episodes themselves?
MCM2: Oh, I like *A Eulogy for the Long River*, very tuneful, but I don’t like the group dance, I’d rather listen to it with my eyes closed [laugh] … the one about the Yellow River is very smart, I mean the design … Ni Ping is good, very sincere, I’m a little touched.
Going back to the screening, MCM2 seemed to appreciate *My Chinese Heart* very much and was, almost uncharacteristically, whistling along. Halfway through *Chinese Dragon*, however, he asked me to pause the episode:

MCM2: If you don’t mind, can we stop this episode please?
YC: Of course … so, what’s wrong with it?
MCM2: The performance is so weird, look at the way he moved? Why is he holding his arms like that? Is he singing or swearing an oath to be a revolutionary soldier? Mmm … and as I told you before, this dragon thing, right? It’s not part of my culture.
YC: You like *My Chinese Heart*, don’t you?
MCM2: Yeah, it’s very good song. This guy looked very sincere and those things he was singing about are also shared by various nationalities, not just the Han.
YC: Let’s go beyond the SFG for a moment. Do you think you have feelings for a Chinese cultural identity that is multicultural?
MCM2: Absolutely … It’s part of my life! … Actually I still see myself as *zhongguoren* precisely because I believe China is multicultural, not because I used to be a PRC citizen. China has been multicultural from time immemorial. We’ve influenced each other greatly! There is something we share in common, such as ancient literature, art, poems, scientific and technological innovations and … they don’t belong to Han people only. Chinese culture to me is more like a value system, a kind of spirit which transcends differences among various ethnic groups. As you know, when Confucius was alive, there was no such thing as Han or Mongols … Anyway, I don’t want to deny my own *zhongguoxing* (Chineseness) in a cultural sense … as long as it’s multicultural.

As I introduced in Chapter 1, Han nationalism has a long history dating back to the late Qing revolutionaries, and including the reformers and Republicans, as well as various stages of the PRC. MCM2’s responses make apparent that this particular form of nationalism has never really died away and is still being felt by the target population, which has consequently given rise to discontentment and, in the case of MCM2, a re-articulation of “Chinese culture,” if not “Chinese race.” It is crucially important to note MCM2’s belief that “China is multicultural from time immemorial” and hence his insistence that various historical heritages and
ethnosymbols (except the Dragon) should be seen as “shared by various nationalities, not just the Han.” In other words, we must acknowledge that, to people like MCM2, an “authentic” Chinese cultural identity must recognize its own multicultural nature.

However, we must realize that although MCM2 made a clear statement of objection to an essentialist treatment of Chinese culture as unitary and uniform, he still pitched himself tightly into the camp of Chinese Nationality in a cultural sense “as long as it’s multicultural.” In other words, despite the discrepancy between his own imagination of Chinese culture and that of the SFG’s, he has no doubts at all about his Chinese cultural citizenship. Moving on to the section about familial nationalism, MCM2 resumed his challenge against Han nationalism:

MCM2: … See? This is exactly how we have been treated! [Screening put on hold] We sing, we dance, and in the end, we offer hata to … I bet most of the studio audience is Han. This was the question that bugged me before and is still bugging me … culturally, we do share so much in common and we influence each other on a daily basis … It’s true that minority nationalities have been treated with preferential policies … but when it comes to being zhongguoren, we are always a little eh … different … I mean … why is our role in the family always subordinate? …… [Screening resumed] [Big China] See, even Hong Kong and Taiwan get better treatment … Well, if we see three singers as the representatives of their corresponding groups, I would say they’re singing on equal terms – look at the way this performance is structured: they have an equal share of airtime, shots on them are fairly equal, right? …… [Macau, Let Me Take You Home] … I don’t like this episode at all, it sounds so arrogant. How do you know people in Macau would see China as their “home?” … Two Mainland singers and one Hong Kong singer welcoming home a fourth one who is from Macau … and various minority nationalities standing on both sides – the storyline is too obvious …… [Panda Name Selection 1st Section] I remember this one, actually I was very impressed. I was telling my wife some Taiwanese would be furious about this episode, I mean those who resist China.

YC: How do you feel now?

MCM2: I don’t know whether I should laugh or cry. This is too obvious! We do share a lot of things in common, not only Taiwanese but also Hong Kongers, but … I don’t know. Imagine
us as families … eh … I don’t know … I don’t know how Taiwanese think … [The Cloud of the Homeland] … It’s amazing to see how a person with mixed heritage could have such a feeling for his mother’s birthplace, but it’s sort of understandable. My mom was actually born in Russia; I’ve never been there, but I do have a feeling for it, very abstract, but I keep imagining … Having said that, I don’t think I’m quite as touched as the last time, 1987, right? I guess my life has changed a lot – I’ve been out of China for six years already … [Nostalgia] … I remember this one, using Mr. Yu’s most famous work as the lyrics. I understand Mr. Yu because he grew up in the Mainland and … I mean, for that particular historical moment, this feeling is understandable, but this guy, I don’t know … [The Zero-Hour Ceremony of 1996] … I would be touched by this one if I were still in China.

YC: Are you not touched at all now?

MCM2: Far less than before … I know China is my “homeland” – I grew up there, but I’m not that nostalgic … So far I don’t have any desire to return … I remember you have a question in the list, asking about my sense of home. Honestly, it’s more than one location. China is certainly my home, so is Canada. You see that guy in Paris – I mean the one who did Nostalgia. He seems to miss China as a “home,” but he stays out of it, right? … I guess in addition to showing our nostalgia, they should also know we are doing fine in other places. So, wish us luck.

From a further critique of Han nationalism to his indifferent attitude toward non-mainlanders and diasporic subjects, it is clear that MCM2 did not articulate a national entity on the basis of familial nationalism, although he kept expressing a sense of cultural nationalism. On such terms, his position on being Chinese in a “familial” sense is one of objection. In addition, it is also important to point out that “diasporic dialectic” plays a constitutive role in MCM2’s statement of objection, as his sense of “home,” a necessary sentiment of familial nationalism, has been irrevocably modified during his diasporic life.

When it came to MCM2’s responses to confident nationalism, the power of his “diasporic dialectic” emerged yet again:

MCM2: [On Ma’s Army] … Honestly, this kind of episode used to be very powerful to me, making me feel I’m also part of the great China, but now, sports is just sports. I’d be happier if
people’s everyday life could be better ….. [Better and Better] … Oh, I can’t stand this! Song 
Zuying is such a beautiful woman, and the rhythm of the song is very nice! But why lie? “The 
water is clearer and clearer”? I lived there almost 30 years; I know what's going on [shake 
head, angry look]!

YC: You look really angry. Could you explain a bit more?
MCM2: You see, this is lying – lying to the world, that's a crime! … Every year, they have a 
couple of lies like this ….. [A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero]… sorry to say this, 
but the hero guy looks really stupid! This is a New Year’s show, not an oath-taking ceremony 
to show your allegiance to the state.

YC: Doesn't the sports achievement and scientific development make you feel a little proud?
MCM2: In the past, yes. But not now! I guess I’ve changed. In Canada, people like to talk more 
about their lives. So, I became more concerned about people … People – especially poor 
people – having a better life weighs a lot more than thousands of gold medals, hundreds of 
artificial satellites.

YC: So, what were your emotional reactions to these episodes this time?
MCM2: Eh … a little bit of anger and a little bit of distain.

Note that MCM2 mentioned the aesthetic appeal of Better and Better and that 
of its performer, but his reactions to the appeal were diametrically different from 
that of MCM1. In fact, MCM2 was offended by them as his emotional reactions 
were all negative, as he described them – “a little bit of anger” or “a little bit of 
distain.” What confident nationalism evoked was neither confidence nor pride, not 
to mention a national entity. Most importantly, MCM2 twice compared his 
previous and current viewing experiences. The second time, he clearly ascribed 
his altered sensibility and predisposition to his life experience in Canada, a clear 
indication of the role that “diasporic dialectic” has played in his identity formation.

In the final section, MCM2 presented a statement of objection to the 
confliational formulation of Chinese party-nation-state in a most unambiguous 
manner:
MCM2: [Party, My Dear Mother] … This is why I chose to immigrate: one-party dictatorship [Laugh]. Chinese Nationality and the CCP are two totally different concepts! … [Mama Taught Me a Song] … My wife will never teach my son this one [laugh], neither will his dad ……

[Jiang Zemin & Li Peng Speeches] … Look at those people around Jiang! Like he is a god or something? They shouldn’t have been here in the first place! The Government and the ruling party should never mess with culture!

Different from MCM1 and MCF1, MCM2’s objection is not only targeted at the CCP, but also the Chinese state. As well, considering his responses in the previous sections, especially those about Chinese cultural identity, it becomes clear just how powerful a source of collective solidarity that “culture lines” (Gilroy, 2000) can provide. In the case of MCM2, a Chinese cultural identity, though not well accounted for by the SFG in his eyes, has single-handedly sustained his Chinese imagination.

1.4 MCF2

Age 40, MCF2 had worked in the Chinese television industry as a news anchor for almost 20 years. Due to her extensive professional experience, she secured a similar job after leaving China for Canada five years ago. While watching the first episode, she was all smiles, and during the second one, she started to respond:

MCF2: [What Do You Like to See?] … Ha, “boundless yellow skin resembles the wave of the Yellow River … countless black eyes are brighter than clusters of stars,” great figure of speech!

YC: So you like it, I wonder why.

MCF2: Well, it’s very vivid and … relating our distinctive characters to our mother river and … you see, comparing eyes to stars, that’s beautiful … [The Descendants of the Dragon] … I remember this one. Mr. Huang was no great singer, but he seems to be very sincere, and it was quite touching to see an American huaren sing this great song written by a Taiwanese.
He might be an American citizen, but he can’t deny he is zhongguoren because he looks exactly like us.

Compared with most participants in the study, MCF2 did not speak quite as much, but this response was sufficient to make clear her position on being Chinese in a racial sense. Like MCM1 and MCF1, MCF2 also articulated her strong belief in racial nationalism, treating some physiognomic or phenotypic features as natural/essential identifiers of Chineseness. As I have argued, the contradiction between China’s multiracial realities and the racial uniformity depicted by the SFG is too obvious to overlook; nonetheless, in promoting the idea of Chinese Nationality, the strategy of racial nationalism has been mobilized without respite. The cases of MCM1, MCF1 and MCF2 make clear that the interpellators had enough reason to leave this contradiction unresolved, however problematic. After all, those who do not meet the standard of “black eyes, black hair, and yellow skin” account for only a minor portion of the population. Certainly, such a pragmatic choice also attests to the pragmatic nature of Chinese nationalism, as introduced in Chapter 1.

MCF2 did not make many spontaneous responses in the second section. However, changes in her facial expressions provided me with enough cues to explore further. I started my inquiry after all six episodes of this section were finished.

YC: You were moved by Take a Look at Our Mother River, weren’t you?
MCF2: I was … I’m a TV hostess myself, I know how hard it is to handle this kind of narration without sounding affected. Ni Ping is fantastic. The storyline was actually very affected, but she made it flow, and … excellent choice of music – the single most important piece about the Yellow River was just perfect for such an episode, I was moved as soon as I heard the music.
YC: Why are you so moved?
MCF2: ... We all have feelings for the Yellow River and eh ... I just cannot help but think about what our Chinese Nationality had suffered during the Japanese invasion as soon as I heard the music ... I'm a big fan of music and I must confess that good music gets me quite easily.
YC: How about *A Eulogy for the Long River*? You seem to like it a lot as well. Did it “get” you too?
MCF2: I do love this song. It's actually one of my all-time favorites ... it got me in a different way – so tuneful! The lyrics are extremely poetic too, very – how would I say – human, comparing the river to a mother ... so I guess good lyrics can make a tuneful song sound even better.
YC: You have the same feeling for the Long River as you do for the Yellow River?
MCF2: Mmm ... feelings yes, they are really important for our Chinese Nationality, but different feelings, I guess ... The Yellow River to me is always like a father figure, whereas the Long River is like a mother figure ... and I love them both, I guess.
YC: How did you feel about *My Chinese Heart* and *Chinese Dragon*?
MCF2: I like them too, very good songs, both were about our nation, but personally I don't like Li Shuangjiang even though he sang way better than Cheung Ming Men, it's just personal taste.
YC: I might be wrong, but it looks like you don't like the operas and the *Book of Hundred Surnames*.
MCF2: Actually I love folk operas, but I think it's very superficial and boring to represent our great cultural tradition with some so-called national essences every year, like that's all we've got!
YC: But how would they represent the cultural tradition otherwise?
MCF2: Well, I guess I want to say Chinese cultural tradition is far more complex.

Except for her relatively negative reactions to cultural essentialism, MCF2 embraced almost all other interpellative strategies. The narratorial style of the hostess, the use of diegetic music, the tunefulness of the song, viewer prior fondness for the song, and the trope of prosopopoeia (personification) all came together and operated hand in hand with her pre-established emotional attachment to two “mother rivers,” ensuring her emotionally-charged subjection to a Chinese cultural identity. In fact, when talking about Chinese Nationality, her persistent use of the possessive first-person plural pronoun “our” also suggested her deep feeling for such an imagined community, in a cultural sense at the very least.
To better understand MCF2’s subjection to a Chinese cultural identity, it is also important to bring her sense of “wounded nationalism” (Chang, 2001) into focus. As discussed in Chapter 1, to regain legitimacy of the state after Tiananmen, the third generation of Chinese leadership launched a large scale patriotic education campaign. One of the specific practices was to shift the attention of the masses from internal problems to China’s international positions. To this end, the Chinese government recycled an old practice of the Republican government, that is, reawakening people’s sense of historical victimhood through commemorating various events that marked China’s “national humiliation.”153 In other words, anti-imperial or “wounded nationalism” was mobilized to serve the goal of patriotic nationalism. MCF2’s response to Take a Look at Our Mother River reflects the power of the campaign.

While watching the third section, MCF2 became more animated. Near the end of the first episode, she caught my attention in quite an uneasy way. To inquire into her reaction, I put the screening on hold as soon as Singing in Sequence by Various Nationalities was finished.

YC: You said “most of the songs are nice” and then you said “that’s the way it is.” What do you mean?

MCF2: You have a question in the questionnaire, asking how we feel about the ways in which minority groups get represented. I think this is perfect. Every year some of them come out singing and dancing one after another, and … you know they account for only a small percentage of the population, right? So, I think this way of representation is very appropriate.

153 To see how National Humiliation Day activities go beyond producing and containing nationalism and how Chinese people are also consuming nationalism as part of a symbolic economy that generates identity, see Callahan (2006).
In later dialogue, she re-emphasized the predominant role that the “majority Han deserve to enjoy due to their sheer numbers,” explicitly expressing a Han-centric view of Chineseness. Indeed, as far as minority nationalities were concerned, MCF2’s subjection to familial nationalism was different from that of either MCM1 or MCF1. After we returned to the screening, MCF2 kept commenting on the artistic quality of the performers and the professionalism of the hosts. To clarify her subject position on familial nationalism as far as non-Mainlanders and diasporic subjects were concerned, I asked the following:

YC: Looks like you don’t like most of the episodes except for The Cloud of the Homeland. Can you tell me why you don’t like, say, Big China, other than because you don’t like Andy Lau?
MCF2: Honestly, I see the return of Hong Kong and Macau as a return of political sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity. The real return, cultural or ideological, needs more time. I’ve heard lots of stories of reluctance and resistance because they have different values and outlooks … Besides, I get to know a lot of people from Hong Kong and Taiwan. I think people from Hong Kong are really different – their language, their Westernized way of … I won’t go further, but I don’t think I can see them as family, I don’t even know if they are still huaren in a cultural sense.

YC: Mmm … How about people from Taiwan?
MCF2: I identify with the Taiwanese a lot more than with Hong Kongers, but still, we are very different. We both speak Mandarin – not exactly the same, but we have totally different political views and cultural values … Giving them a couple of pandas is fine, but seeing them as members of the Chinese super-family? … That’s quite hard! That’s why I don’t like this family idea.

YC: You don’t like it at all, or you don’t like the fact that it includes Hong Kongers and Taiwanese?
MCF2: I guess in my view the Chinese “super-family” should only include people in the Mainland and those who went abroad from the Mainland.

YC: So you feel that you belong to this family?
MCF2: Of course.

YC: Ok, let’s talk about The Cloud of the Homeland. You like it, don’t you?
MCF2: I love it! It’s wonderfully pleasant, Phillips is a great singer, but I don’t understand how he has feelings for China – this was the first time he went to China! Plus, look at him! He is totally
not a zhongguoren ... and I think he grew up both in Taiwan and the US, so culturally you know ...

Citing their Westernization and linguistic differences, MCF2 also excluded Hong Kongers, Taiwanese and their diasporic subjects from the Chinese “super-family” in the name of cultural nationalism. She also denied “membership” in the Chinese “super-family” to those who have bi-racial and bi-cultural backgrounds on the grounds of both racial nationalism and cultural nationalism. Writing about Chinese diaspora, Chow points out that “Chinese from the mainland are [often felt to be] more ‘authentic’ than those who are from, say, Taiwan or Hong Kong, because the latter have been ‘Westernized’” (1991:28-29). This observation might be a little too sweeping, but it applies perfectly well to MCF2. While we can say that MCF2’s subject position on being Chinese in a “familial” sense was complex, we must also point out that her Chinese imagination was both Han-centric and Sino-centric.

When I then screened three episodes featuring confident nationalism, this time MCF2 did not make many spontaneous comments. Observing her bodily responses, I made my inquiry after the last episode of the section:

YC: It seemed to me you don’t like the first one, right?
MCF2: Right. In fact, I don’t like sports at all, so I never get excited about any sports – I’m still a patriot though, I just don’t like sports [laugh] ...
YC: Ok, but I guess you really liked the last one – I saw your fingers shaking a little bit.
MCF2: I did like that one. The music was great, it put me in the mood right away ... but Yang Liwei (the space hero) looks very ... I don’t know ... funny? But you’re right, I was excited, I think I almost cried. The music, the music was good, and Ni Ping’s narration was good too.
YC: So, this presentation of China’s space science did make you feel proud of being Chinese?
MCF2: Yes, not too many countries can do this. Plus, I love to see China get stronger and stronger.
YC: Why is that important to you, I mean, to see China get stronger and stronger?
MCF2: If China is getting stronger and stronger, people here will see us in a different way. They would say something like “you guys are so good at this, so good at that,” you know?
YC: How about Better and Better?
MCF2: This one is actually very offensive! When she was singing everything is getting better, I was thinking about the reality. I hate to say this, but I know what’s going on – I lived there for 35 years! Besides, here we can access a lot of news that I couldn’t get from Chinese official media, right? So, I was thinking, how about millions of laid-off workers? How about thousands of students who cannot afford their tuition fees? How do you feel about the fact that a simple bad cold will take hundreds of yuan out of your pocket after the healthcare reform? … This is more than feishi taiping (white-washing)! This is hushuo badao (all baloney).

It’s true that MCF2’s reactions to the interpellation of confident nationalism were almost bipolar – while appreciating most efforts to put on display the “greatness” of China, she ridiculed the attempt to paint China as the locus amoenus for all Chinese. However, what is really at issue here, I would stress, is the identity-constitutive significance of her diasporic experience. Not only was it precisely her “diasporic dialectic” that made her “love to see China get stronger and stronger,” it was her diasporic experience, together with her life experience in China, that laid the groundwork for her to belie confident nationalism’s attempt to depict China as the locus amoenus for all Chinese. The statement that “here we can access a lot of news that I couldn’t get from Chinese official media” is itself a testimony of the identity-constitutive power of the diasporic experience.

If the previous section shows that MCF2 did not have much trouble accepting Chinese Nationality and the Chinese state on equal terms, the following response tells us that in her Chinese imagination the CCP has reserved no place at all:
MCF2: [Party, My Dear Mother] [deep sigh] I love Yin Xiumei. She is such a great singer, but singing a song like this, what a pity! I guess she had to …… [Mama Taught Me a Song] … My mother is tone-deaf [laugh], she never taught me any song. It's not that bad a thing, right [laugh]? …… [Jiang Zemin & Li Peng Speeches] … Disgusting, really! This is the part I choose not to watch. Every time they come out, my husband went to wash dishes and I went to the washroom [laugh] … What does the CCP have to do with this?

YC: Don’t forget they also represent the state, not just the CCP.

MCF2: Yeah, the state is fine, zhongguo, right? But not the CCP, please, I’ve had enough of it.

In short, the party-nation-state conflation has encountered another resounding statement of objection from Group MC. We can safely argue, then, that as far as the four participants from Group MC are concerned, Chinese Nationality is still largely imagined as a racial community. If state-nationalism has not been completely thrown away, the role of the Chinese Communist Party has surely been shuffled aside.

2. Group TW (Subjects from Taiwan)

2.1 TWF1

TWF1 is a 43-year old office administrator who had been in Canada for seven years. I must say that in the pre-screening interview, her great familiarity with the SFG took me by surprise. While I thought this meant she might have a lot of responses during the screening, she surprised me again by only making one comment during the Opening Presentation of the 1993 broadcast: “every year, more or less the same.” To explore what a Chinese racial identity meant to her, I conducted the following interview:

YC: You’re a little bored, aren’t you?
TWF1: Well, yeah. I've been watching it for years, all these episodes sound similar, like we have a long history, a unique cultural tradition, and ... yeah, like those hosts have just said, the same ancestors – *The Descendants of the Dragon*. So we have the same physical features, right?

YC: Do you feel that you belong?

TWF1: Well, I don't really care, but I guess I have to, look at me! I'm a *huaren*, right?

YC: I'd like to ask you to recall *What Do You Like to See*. Some people told me it's quite stimulating.

TWF1: Well, I know, it's got lots of eh ... audience participation and ... dances, rap, very quick shot switches, but when you know what they're trying to say, it's actually boring.

YC: Tell me please what it means to be a *huaren* in your eyes?

TWF1: To me, as long as you have yellow skin, have ancestors in China, you are a *huaren* ... I don't know if the Yellow and Fiery Emperors are our ancestors – they are legendary figures I believe, but we certainly come from the same kind of people, or we would look just like white or black folks otherwise, right? ... That's how they tell us from them, right? In their eyes, we Orientals are like this [making slitty eyes] ... But they're just physical features. I don't really care.

YC: What do you mean you don't care? Or, does it matter to you in terms of being *huaren*?

TWF1: Oh! Well, that's the biological part of me being *huaren*, but eh ... I really don't care, so I think the SFG's repetitive emphasis on it is very boring and annoying.

One might argue, then, that TWF1's position on being Chinese in a racial sense is one of subjection because she claimed her *huaren*-ness in a racial sense, albeit without much affective investment. The validity of this argument notwithstanding, it is important to see that TWF1 also professed a few times in a row her indifference to such an identity, however true it was. As a matter of fact, while admitting that all *huaren* look the same, she did not articulate a national entity on this basis. That is to say, in her vision of Chineseness, a racial identity mattered, but mattered little. To put it differently, although she saw race as a naturalized concept, she did not really use it as the foundation for race thinking, in a primordial national sense at least. It is also important to highlight that the
“diasporic dialectic” she experienced here in Canada also operated to substantiate her sense of being Chinese in a racial sense.

In the second section, she did not display much observable emotional change, creating an impression that she was not enjoying the folk operas at all. As soon as I started asking questions, however, she got excited all of a sudden:

YC: It seemed to me you don’t like these folk operas?
TWF1: I’m really tired of it, every year! Are they trying to tell us that’s Chinese culture? I lived in Taiwan for 37 years! You think I’ve never seen Chinese traditional culture? Our knowledge about Chinese tradition and Chinese culture is not inferior, well, if not better, because the KMT government valued Confucianism very much, unlike the Mainland … I don’t think they have much about Confucian culture in the SFG, they’ve got some superficial things – I’m not saying these folk operas are superficial, they are wonderful, but presenting them every year like this is superficial … [Book of Hundred Surnames] … the stagescene is getting more and more elaborate … Chinese characters being straight and square? Huh [sarcastic tone]!

YC: What’s the problem?
TWF1: Speaking of Chinese culture, Mainland culture is actually inauthentic. What’s the problem? They have turned Chinese characters our ancestors have been using for thousands of years into jiantizi (simplified characters)! Look at the characters on the giant screen! Look at the characters written on the wood pieces held by the kids! How can you convince somebody like me who is still writing with fantizi (complex characters) that you are the official interpreter of the Chinese culture? … By the way, the tune is awful! I like Harlem Yu, he has a lot of very good songs, but this one is just abysmal … [A Eulogy for the Long River] … this one is great! Very pleasant and powerful … you can feel the power of the river in terms of bringing up the Chinese Nation … [Take a Look at Our Mother River] … wow, this is touching, I love the music!

YC: Why is this touching? Because of the music?
TWF1: Yes, the music is eh … very solemn. Plus, you see the river like that, people from different places got together for a river – I’m sure everything is scripted, but for a moment you feel like we’re all together, right? … [My Chinese Heart] … nice tune, very pleasant, very catchy … Ah! The Great Wall! When the West was nothing, zhongguoren had built the Great Wall! I’m really proud – I guess you can call this pride “Chinese heart?” … [Chinese Dragon] … Oh! Oh! He looks really weird to me. Why is he singing like this? … but the dragon metaphor is good.
Apparently, not all episodes appealed to TWF1 aesthetically, but those that did elicited responses that made manifest her affective attachment to Chinese Nationality. As well, she confessed that various cultural symbols employed in these episodes “did make me feel closer to the Nation.” And, unlike in the previous section, she made it very clear that there is a Chinese national cultural identity. Furthermore, in relation to this idea, she staked a claim, or perhaps a counter-claim, about the Taiwanese being the bearers of authentic Chinese culture. Specifically, while accusing the essentialist representations of Chinese cultural fragments of being “superficial” and, more generally, Mainland culture of being “inauthentic,” she confessed with great emotion her attachment to another version of Chinese culture, namely Confucianism.154

Given that the interpellation of familial nationalism would inevitably touch upon the most politically sensitive issue of “unification,” and considering the general attitude of Taiwan toward China, I hypothesized that Group TW would react to the proposal of a Chinese “super-family” with a certain level of indignation, if not outright refusal. As expected, TWF1 became the first participant to confirm my hypothesis when she picked up on her earlier point about “something else in the SFG I find hard to accept:”

TWF1: [Singing in Sequence by Various Nationalities] … Fifty-six nationalities, I wonder if Taiwanese aboriginals were counted … “The motherland is our lovely big family” Ha! Let’s see … no, this is about their life … this is about a man falling in love with a woman … Ha! It’s a Taiwan folk song, but they don’t say what nationality … wait, no lyrics, how do they know this is about the “motherland?” … Ok, this is about nostalgia, but I think they are singing about their mother, not the motherland … this one mmm … the hat, ah! Muslim! … Another love

154 The issue of Confucianism will be further discussed at later points.
song … Tibetan … this is about themselves … Mongols … see? This is about their guxiang (native place), not zuguo (motherland). Remember I told you there is something else in the SFG I find hard to accept? Here it is: putting words in peoples’ mouths! None of them were about the so-called motherland!

YC: I wonder how you feel about this genre, I mean, different nationalities singing in sequence.

TWF1: I understand that. They want to pick some representatives because they can’t go too long on any one of them, but why have minority nationalities always been treated this way? … It might be very effective for them to present different nationalities in a short time, but it also tells me how unimportant they are in the family … [Big China]. Ok, Jeff Chang and Andy Lau are in it … “We all have the same family whose name is Zhongguo?” If so, it has nothing to do with you, Jeff! You traitor! … See, I find this format very disgusting – getting a few singers from different places like they could represent their own groups, like what they did with the minority nationalities … [Macau, Let Me Take You Home] … What? “Unification is right between the strait?” Who are you to say this? Thank God there is no Taiwanese singer in this one …

[Panda Name Selection 1st Section] … Wow, now you want to lure us with a couple of pandas! … As a Taiwanese, I want to ask: what is the role of Taiwan in this family? Why did they give Taiwan to their enemy when they lost the war to their neighbor? If you read a little bit of history, you’ll see how Taiwan has been treated in this family. After leaving this family for a hundred years, how is it possible for us to throw away our hard-won right, and go back to them to be a little concubine? …… [The Cloud of the Homeland] … What do you mean you have gone back to your motherland? Your motherland is both Taiwan and the US … I don’t understand this … [Nostalgia] … This man doesn’t know what he is singing about! You know who wrote it, right? At that time, the Taiwanese were still fantasizing about “fangong dalu” (recovering the Mainland by force) and “xiaomic gongfei” (eliminating the Communist bandits)! This poem can’t represent all diasporic huaren now … Guess what? As long as there is no democracy in China … “me on this side forever, Mainland on the other side forever”! … [The Zero-Hour Ceremony] … Ok, very nice cloning, very nice cloning …

TWF1 tried to calm herself down a few times during the screening. However, her downright objection to being Chinese in a “familial” sense was made apparent by her bodily responses and acrimonious remarks. Not only did she make a lot of contemptuous and angry faces, but she also harshly criticized the synecdochical uses of lian-chang, vocal trio and quartet. Additionally, she kept using the third person plural pronoun and its possessive and objective cases to
refer to China, indicating her negative affective reactions to the idea of familial nationalism. What is more, her pre-acquired knowledge about Taiwan’s history also figured actively in her interpretation of these episodes. On the whole, a statement of objection comes as no surprise. Moreover, we should realize that for most Taiwanese, familial nationalism would perhaps be a hard sell because it would too easily remind them of the existence of the PRC state. For TWF1, as soon as the PRC was on the table, she turned away, however deep her attachment to Chinese Nationality may be culturally speaking. Interestingly, TWF1’s antagonistic attitude toward the PRC also played a predominant role in her reaction to confident nationalism:

TWF1: [On Ma’s Army] … I’ve never been a sports fan … well, that’s just personal but I don’t really care how many gold medals you have won! As long as people have a good life, it’s a good country … [Better and Better] … If your country were really so great, all zhongguoren would stay there. Why do we see so many zhongguoren here? … If you want to convince others, why don’t you convince your own people first? … [A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero] … This guy is such an abominable idiot! I can’t imagine how a person could link himself so closely to his country … Look at those people. They almost look all alike! Their facial expressions are the same too!

YC: Do you feel any sense of pride for China’s achievement in space science?
TWF1: No, God, no! The greater their achievement, the bigger danger they are [laugh].

Obviously, TWF1 automatically associated this “greatness” or “power” with the PRC instead of with Chinese Nationality, and simply ridiculed China’s claimed *locus amoenus* as a result. Rather than pride and confidence, confident nationalism evoked in her a feeling of insecurity and a sense of being threatened. Again, TWF1’s Chinese imagination remained impervious to the state of the PRC,
and the following response only shows that she has kept not only the PRC, but also the CCP, out of view:

TWF1: [Party, My Dear Mother] … this is really really disgusting! How can you compare the CCP to your mother? I mean, I can’t imagine how someone could love a political party like this! It’s just a political party! … [Mama Taught Me a Song] … “Without the Communist Party there would be no new China”? Thank God I was born in Taiwan! Thank God my mother has never taught me a song like this, they can’t be serious! …… [Jiang Zemin & Li Peng Speeches] …

It’s after Tiananmen Square, what do we expect, right? The CCP can’t represent Chinese Nationality. If the CCP keeps saying that it is the only legitimate representative of Chinese Nationality, most of the Taiwanese would never want to unite with China.

It seems, then, that cultural nationalism and a biologist view of race have served as the mainstays for TWF1’s imagination of being Chinese.

2.2 TWM1

TWM1, age 44, was a doctoral student majoring in political science. Though he hardly made any verbal or non-verbal responses during the screening, he answered my questions with great eloquence in the interview that followed.

Below is his response to the first section, which sought to explore his position on Chinese racial identity.

TWM1: I found these episodes ironic. All of them were emphasizing common blood – they invited a Singaporean huaren and an American huaren, suggesting that all huaren are emotionally attached to China … Both the first and the second episodes are bustling with excitement as if everybody is really into this idea – they even planted a few extras in the audience, interacting with the performers in the second episode … If you pay a little attention, you’ll see these people are all Han who have “black eyes, black hair and yellow skin.” We all know that quite a few minority nationalities, Tibetan, Russian, Uyghur, and Kazakh for instance, do not share common physical features with the Han. So, these episodes are actually all expressions of Han chauvinism. I don’t know how those minority nationalities respond to this.

YC: I wonder how you respond, given you also have “black eyes, black hair and yellow skin?”
TWM1: Emotionally speaking, they definitively don’t resonate with me. That’s why I wasn’t excited at all by these episodes. However, I do identify myself as a huaren in terms of blood or race, which I believe is not optional. The bottom line is, I don’t take pride in it, nor do I feel ashamed of it. Plus, even if I don’t accept this identity, other people think that’s what we are anyway.

No doubt TWM1 was well aware of the content of the interpellation, and he also pointed out the contradiction between China’s multiracial reality and the SFG’s narrative of racial uniformity. He even used “Han chauvinism” to refer to the SFG’s racialized interpellation. Despite all of this, however, he still expressed his subjection to the huaren identity on the basis of “blood or race.” He might not have invested too much emotion in this racialized idea of huaren, or turned it into an important source of solidarity and collective strength on racist terms, but his identity formation in terms of being huaren was unquestionable. Writing about the social formations of North American society, Omi & Winant contend that North American society can be understood as a society structured through various racial formations or constituted on the basis of racialized differences (1986).

So far, participants’ responses in general, including those of TWM1, suggest that racial formation is indeed part and parcel of the formation of huaren society, to which the contemporary moment is by no means immune. Interestingly enough, TWM1 also mentioned in passing how the “diasporic dialectic” has worked to secure his sense of being Chinese in a racial sense.

TWM1 did not have many spontaneous responses during the second section either. Rather, he looked very calm throughout the process, and held forth

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155 According to Omi & Winant, the term racial formation refers to “the process by which social, economic and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings. Crucial to this formulation is the treatment of race as a central axis of social relations which cannot be subsumed under or reduced to some broader category or conception” (1986:61-2).

156 I will discuss the implications of “diasporic dialectic” at a later point.
responses that were rather impressive in clarity and eloquence in the subsequent interview.

TWM1: The SFG have been piling up cultural fragments on stage. Look at the folk operas, one after another. The *Book of Hundred Surnames*, again! Even the singers dressed themselves in *tangzhuang*, like that’s Chinese? I find the Chinese government is really smart [sarcastic tone], they know Mainland China is significantly different from Taiwan, Hong Kong and capitalist countries where most diasporic Chinese live, so they present something they think all of us share in common. Now that they have the political power to explain China’s past, they want all of us to live in the past, to look back. I know what they are trying to do. They want to make all of us feel like one of them! I can tell you, this is ludicrous wishful thinking!

YC: Hmm … Can you talk about those cultural symbols?

TWM1: Every country does this to create a sense of solidarity, Taiwan too. China knows that neither the Yellow River nor the Long River has got a mouth, so it just took the liberty of being a spokesperson for these rivers. Why only the Yellow River, or the Long River, or the Mount Everest? Why not the Mount Taihang or the Pearl River, or even the creek in front of my house and the hill behind?

YC: Ha … how about the dragon then?

TWM1: If I’m not mistaken, the dragon is an imaginary monster created by *zhongguoren*, now they try to impose it on the Taiwanese, this is crazy. China always claim itself as the only representative of Chinese traditional culture, but look at what they did after the foundation of the PRC. An Anti-Confucius campaign, the Cultural Revolution – I did my field research in Mainland China, I certainly know China is no longer Mao’s China, but how many selected readings of Confucian classics and other ancient Chinese classics are listed in the curriculum of the public education system? China’s new classics are Marxism! It’s what they say "Ma-En-Lie-Si-Mao" [first characters of Chinese names of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao]! Students are fed Marxism, and they even put it in the Constitution! Today, even Marxism has been reformed – I don’t know if the PRC is still a communist country as it claims to be or has turned itself into a capitalist monster! Actually a lot of Chinese scholars are also lamenting over the disappearance of traditional culture … In Taiwan, Confucian classics are still an important part of public education. Taiwanese students are still diligently practicing calligraphy, using traditional characters!

YC: Are you telling me that Confucianism is the authentic Chinese culture?

TWM1: It’s the main part, for sure, we grew up with it.

YC: So you identify with a distinctive Chinese cultural identity, even if it mainly means Confucianism?
TWM1: Deeply! It is the foundation of my own values. For me, personally, I also identify with Taiwanese local culture, which is very unique in many ways.

Later, he also emotionally expressed his attachment to both Taiwanese local culture, Chinese traditional culture and, in his words, “Western democratic culture,” confessing subjection in a cultural sense to multiple identities, including “Chinese.” It is obvious that from the beginning TWM1 conceived of the SFG as a form of state narrative. It is also interesting to note that, unlike TWF1, both cultural essentialism and cultural symbolism failed to enhance his affective attachment to Chinese cultural identity as presented by the SFG. However, his deep feeling for his vision of Chinese traditional culture, i.e. Confucianism, was not negatively affected at all. We must therefore conclude that his Chinese imagination was built upon different foundations. Here we see once again the power of Confucianism, as TWM1 not only turned to Confucianism as a source of distinction between the ROC and the PRC, but also used it as the basis to organize a counter-claim of an authentic Chinese cultural identity. As well, we can gather from his responses that the public education system of Taiwan, which emphasizes a Confucian education, certainly played an important role in his identity formation as far as being “Chinese” is concerned.

In the third section, TWM1 remained withdrawn in the viewing process. He kept making notes and occasionally showed some signs of anger and defiance. As soon as the last episode of this section finished, I started my inquiry:

YC: I believe I felt your anger. Shall we start from *Singing in Sequence by Various Nationalities*?

TWM1: Yes, I'm a little angry, and I'll tell you why. Beijing always compares its relations with its minority nationalities – Taiwan, Hong Kong and diasporic *huaren* – to a family. Actually, this is a very “accurate” comparison. See the episode about minority nationalities? You see, in a
patriarchal society, the father, the paterfamilias, is the only center of power, so the minority nationalities must be led by the CCP, the paterfamilias. In this Han-dominated family, how many rights can they enjoy? … As for minority policies, China always brags about autonomy, but anyone who has commonsense would know: how could autonomy be possible if there is no democracy?

YC: Mmm, I wonder what you make of this format, I mean singing in sequence?

TWM1: *Qingting dian shui* (like a dragonfly skimming the surface of the water). You don’t know how these people really feel. Everyone knows there are a lot of problems in Tibet and the Northwest. “The motherland is our lovely big family!” How shameless!

YC: What do you make of *Big China*?

TWM1: I’ll talk about it and other episodes together. I know that a lot of Mainland audiences are crazy about pop stars from Taiwan and Hong Kong, but in the SFG, they are only guests. They can play supporting roles only, just like those ethnic minorities. All these episodes are confirming their periphery status. The song about Macau going back to China, one of the singers – I believe he is from China – was saying “unification is right between the strait.” So, is this a song for Macau, or setting Macau as an example for Taiwan? This is really aggressive! I’ll go back to Taiwan later. Let me say something about Hong Kong and Macau. I always oppose the use of the term *huigui* (return). It implies a … an imposed fact because it is predicated on “Hong Kong and Macau belong to China originally,” which is too conservative and too feudalistic a view. The sovereignty of a particular place should belong to all of its inhabitants. The execution or transference of sovereignty should happen only with the permission of its people … Getting a few pop stars to represent the voices of the people is unacceptable. A government that is not democratically elected took Hong Kong and Macau’s sovereignty without the permission of their people. This is nothing but an imperialist practice abetted by the international community, and I felt very sad that the people of Hong Kong and Macau were silenced about it … Now you should know how these episodes, especially the one about panda names, made me feel.

YC: Yes, how about other episodes, like *The Cloud of the Homeland*?

TWM1: I believe they are in the SFG only to promote themselves. Other than some first-generation immigrants, can we really see this homebound desire? Is Mainland China always on the mind of *huaren* all over the world? Do they always think about *Yeluo Guigen* (fallen leaves return to the root)? My son was five when he came to Canada. Taiwan means nothing to him. For him, Mississauga is his home, and Canada is his roots. Taiwan is off his radar.

YC: Your personal take?

TWM1: Taiwan is my motherland but is no longer my home; Canada is my current home; China is the enemy state that threatens Taiwan. Beijing’s “home theory” is illogical and unrealistic.
From beginning to end, TWM1 made it crystal clear that his position on familial nationalism is one of total objection. The major drive behind his statement of objection was also obvious: this idea of Chinese “super-family” is but another form of state-nationalism because it is fundamentally sino-centric. His view that homebound desire is exclusive to first-generation immigrants is certainly too naïve a view (think of the attachment of Jews for thousands of years to a Jerusalem they never saw), but the related comment on home tells us that while one’s “homebound desire” might be indicative of one’s sense of belonging, we should never reductively equate these two sentiments with each other. For TWM1, although he has no homebound desire for any Chinese-speaking society, membership in the Chinese Nationality can be claimed in a cultural sense without reservation. In other words, TWM1 compensated for this refusal to evoke China as “home” by acknowledging a collective national cultural identity into which he allowed himself to fit.

When it came to the interpellations of confident nationalism and the conflational formulation of Chinese party-nation-state, TWM1’s positions were once again built upon a clear distinction between cultural nationalism and state-nationalism:

TWM1: I know China believes in “guoyun sheng, tiyu xing” (Only a strong nation can be a strong sports nation) or the other way around “tiyu xing, guoyun sheng” (Only a strong sports nation is a strong nation). To me, this idea is extremely myopic. A really strong nation can provide a good life for its people. Is China a really strong nation? … Looking at Better and Better, I really feel it looks like a Chinese buffet – so many dishes, so many colors, smells, shapes … this and that … We might enjoy the food without thinking about how filthy the kitchen could be, but occasionally the problems in the kitchen get exposed. So, how can I still enjoy myself? There is almost no truth to this song … I noticed that every SFG has a few episodes bragging about
China’s achievement and painting China as a paradise. Even I were to see China as the representative of Chinese Nationality – which I don’t – I can’t take pleasure in these episodes because I know it’s not true … Space science is a little different. The development of science and technology is a better index of the power of a nation, but I lived in Taiwan for 37 years, and my parents and brothers still live there, we’ve been threatened for decades! Do you think I could be proud of the space heroes?

YC: Understood. Let’s move on. Again, it’ll be great if you could make some comments while watching.

TWM1: … [Party, My Dear Mother] … The CCP says they are atheist, but what is this song doing? This is to deify themselves … We have seen this in China, in North Korea, in Cuba, and the former USSR, even in some democratic countries occasionally …… [Mama Taught Me a Song] … Listening to the lyrics, they use the image of a mother to represent tenderness, kindness and caring, so they can conceal the totalitarian nature of their rule …… [Jiang Zemin & Li Peng Speeches] … This is like Jiang’s inaugural speech, telling the viewers who the new boss is. They should do it in the newscast, not the SFG … Maybe they knew how many people are watching … like I told you earlier, culture and history are necessary rather than sufficient conditions for identification. To me, they have nothing to do with the history of the CCP or the culture of the PRC.

So far, I read TWM1’s positions as extremely similar to those of TWF1. As in the case of TWF1, the modus operandi of confident nationalism (see Chapter 3) and the very unique trinity of the Chinese party-nation-state have both failed to play a part in TWM1’s Chinese imagination. In addition, TWM1 also expressed a sense of insecurity in response to China’s confident nationalism and rejected “the history of the CCP or the culture of the PRC” as constituting the bases of his Chineseness. Perhaps the best way to summarize TWM1’s positions is to paraphrase his concluding remark: cultural nationalism and a racial identity are strong enough to sustain his Chinese imagination, which, again, resembles that of TWF1.

I also hope to mention that TWM1, compared with other participants, seems to be especially “analytical” in responding to the interview questions. His
socialization in the literature of political science is evident in almost all of his responses. At one level, this can be explained by his educational background – he was close to finishing his doctoral program in political science. But what is really at issue is that his responses, as well as those of the others, have made clear that in any study which involves human subjectivity, the particular circumstances, which characterize the specificity of the sample in terms of the capabilities that participants can mobilize, would exert a certain impact on their way of responding.

2.3 TWF2

Before I sat with TWF2, a 37-year old opera singer, I was very curious about what eighteen years of “diasporic status” had done to her sense of being Chinese. As soon as the first episode began, she expressed her excitement in seeing “different Chinese celebrating together!” While watching What Do You Like to See, she was all smiles and happiness. When The Descendants of the Dragon came on, however, she stopped smiling and looked at the screen rather thoughtfully. Perplexed by this sudden change, I started my inquiry as soon as the episode was over:

YC: This song really interested you, right?
TWF2: Yeah, what interests me is not the singing but the song. In Taiwan, people my age … or older, everyone knows about it … I’ve never seen those rivers but their images alone make me feel eh … part of the nation … a lot of people used to say this song should be our national song. I guess they are right. We do come from the same people, we do have a common history, and all of us do have black eyes, black hair and yellow skin. Nobody really thought too much about this when I was in Taiwan, but these trivial things became important all of a sudden when I came to Canada … They might be trivial but it is exactly these trivial things that
distinguish us … If they invite me to sing a song like this, I'll be happy to because this kind of song eh … transcends the differences between the PRC and the ROC! … I'm an opera singer myself, so I always take notice of the artistic quality of the song. I have to say, it's very powerful, not only the lyrics but also the tune.

Again, there was no mention at all about the poor quality of the audio and video of this episode. Her prior familiarity with the song, its lyrical and melodic power and, of course, her obvious sentiment about a Chinese racial identity all worked to interpellate her into the position of a loyal member of the Chinese Nationality on racial terms. Importantly, it was the racializing tendency of Canada – the major cause of her “diasporic dialectic” – that awakened TWF2’s race consciousness and pushed her to embrace the “yellow normalcy." It seems that in people’s identity formations race thinking along “color lines” (Du Bois, 1903) is neither an exclusively American experience nor a problem unique to the 20th century.

Perhaps due to getting use to the process, TWF2 became more animated in the second section, giving me a greater opportunity to explore her position on being Chinese in a cultural sense. What I found was that her race thinking did not stop at the biological level:

TWF2: [Charms of Chinese Folk Operas] … It's always great fun to watch different Chinese folk operas! They are so different, so Chinese [using English], I can always learn a thing or two from them … see they have a lot of physical skills, almost martial arts, which we don’t have … Chinese operas are more holistic, just like Chinese culture … Modern Beijing Opera? Please no, this is post-1949, not real traditional stuff, though it sounds like Beijing Opera.

YC: So, to you, Chinese traditional culture has to be pre-1949?
TWF2: Absolutely! Everything changed after 1949! It was no longer real Chinese culture. Mao changed everything … Confucianism was thrown away. I mean, it's interesting that Taiwan is doing a better job in keeping the Confucian tradition, and I think that's very important … [Book of Hundred Surnames] … Wow, martial arts and the Hundred Surnames! These are
Chinese! … Wow, these kids are good, I really enjoy watching this kind of traditional stuff … I think I enjoy watching these kids a lot more than the singing … So this girl is from Macau? Now we have everybody: China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau.

YC: You feel that you belong?

TWF2: Yeah, we do have the same cultural core – wait a minute! “The blood flows in our veins is always the Yellow River and the Long River?” I don’t like this, this sound too Mainland! … [A Eulogy for the Long River] … I don’t like the group dance but the song is amazing, and she should sing opera …… [Take a Look at Our Mother River] … she (Ni Ping) sounds so affected! Oh, Yellow River again? … She sounds really affected …… [My Chinese Heart] … Again, here comes the Long River, the Great Wall, the Yellow Mountain and the Yellow River … Pooh!

YC: What’s wrong with these rivers and … [cut off by the following answer]?

TWF2: I mean, I told you we have the same cultural core, right? That’s why I love the folk operas and the martial arts performance, but these rivers and mountains are all in the Mainland! To me, cultural core is like blood or … spirit. If you believe in it … if you love it, you can take it with you wherever you go, so I don’t like this emphasis on geography.

YC: [Chinese Dragon] … The dragon is not necessarily a “thing” in the Mainland, right?

TWF2: … Oh, he (Li Shuangjiang the performer) is awful, no.

YC: How about the dragon as a symbol?

TWF2: It’s slightly better than the rivers, like The Descendants of the Dragon, but it’s just a legend. At the end of the day, I don’t need any specific symbols to remind me that I’m a huaren.

Although TWF2 did not go as far as to call Mainland culture inauthentic based on the loss of the Confucian tradition, she vigorously rejected post-1949 cultural elements which, to her, were not part and parcel of an authentic Chinese traditional culture. Certainly, such a view is essentialist, but by going along with various cultural essences and approving of the synecdochical use of the vocal quartet, she apparently found another basis upon which to build her huaren identity – cultural nationalism. Again, we can witness another synthesis of racial nationalism and cultural nationalism. One might say that cultural symbolism largely failed to win TWF2’s heart and that her attachment to a Chinese cultural
identity was thereby undercut. However, I would contend that she rejected most of the cultural symbols only because cultural symbolism reminded her of the particular state of the PRC, as opposed to Chinese Nationality. For her, Chinese cultural identity, just like Chinese racial identity, can transcend both geographical restrictions (“you can take it with you wherever you go”) and, to quote the last section, “the differences between the PRC and the ROC.”

TWF2’s national cultural sentiments and her hostility toward the Chinese state continued to surge as the third section unfolded:

TWF2: [Singing in Sequence by Various Nationalities] … It’s really nice to see different styles of music, but their styles are really different from Chinese traditional music … and dance … almost not Chinese. Wait! Why does this look so familiar? Do they do this singing in sequence every year?
YC: More or less, but what do you make of this format?
TWF2: It surely tells you that China has many nationalities whose cultures and arts are very different …… [Big China] … Isn’t this guy (Jeff Chang) from Taiwan? How could he see zhongguo as his home? … Now, Andy Lau! Oh! Isn’t this too obvious – one from the Mainland, one from Taiwan, one from Hong Kong, and they’re singing Big China? What’re you trying to say? … I don’t know much about Hong Kong, but I do know a lot of people who are from Hong Kong. I tell you: to China, Hong Kong is like unrequited love. You own her body but cannot have her soul because that soul has been bribed and tamed by the West a long time ago.
YC: Bribed and tamed by the West? Are you saying they’re different in terms of being Chinese?
TWF2: Oh yeah, culturally speaking, very much so, and … I won’t say more …… [Macau, Let Me Take You Home] … Ha, are you sure you are going home? It’s very hard for me to imagine China as my home …… [Panda Name Selection 1st Section] … Ha! … There is a saying in Taiwan which says we’d rather become the 51st state of the USA than return to China. If Taiwan is no good, we emigrate! People, wherever they are, look forward to democracy and freedom … We won’t trade freedom and democracy for a couple of pandas, however cute they are …… [The Cloud of the Homeland] … Is he claiming that China is his “motherland?” … Well, my grandpa lives in China as well, but I don’t see China as my motherland! … If you want to go back, by all means, don’t take me with you though because that’s not my home …… [Nostalgia] … The lyrics sound familiar … nostalgia is fine, I’m nostalgic sometimes too, but what I miss is not China but Taiwan …… [The Zero-Hour
Ceremony] … Who are these people? … Oh, God, speak for yourself, don’t speak for someone you don’t even know, don’t count me in please.

As we can see, almost all of the interpellative strategies failed to lead TWF2 to read the SFG in the “preferred” way. What's interesting is that her statement of objection in this particular section was built on two grounds. Firstly, she distanced herself from both Mainland minority nationalities and Hong Kongers based on her radically essentialist view of Chinese national culture. In other words, she negated familial nationalism for an essentialist cultural nationalism rooted in Confucianism. Secondly, she rejected familial nationalism’s attempt to include Taiwanese as well as diasporic subjects based on her “stateless” view of Chinese Nationality. For TWF2, the PRC as a particular state entity failed to evoke any sense of “home.”

Thinking along these lines, her rejection of two interpellative strategies that have never made any attempts to hide their “state” nature – confident nationalism and the trinity of Chinese party-nation-state – comes as no surprise:

TWF2: I’ve been to a lot of really great countries, such as Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. Their sports power in general is definitely not as strong as China’s. Are you telling me China is better than these countries? …… [Better and Better] … She is a very good singer, no question about that, but do we brag about our life being better and better in front of everyone? I believe we only do that to cover something … look at the stage! So unnecessary! This is like Taiwan in the ‘70s …… [A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero] … I think my comment about sports applies to this one as well, but this one is more annoying.

YC: Why is it more annoying?

TWF2: If they claim this is a show about global Chinese, show more of what we really share in common, like folk operas and folk dance. Why did they ask such a person to express his love to his “motherland” like this? The PRC is not my motherland. Besides, how could they expect me to feel proud of their achievement in space science? It means a greater level of insecurity for Taiwan, even though that man was talking about world peace!
YC: So the power of China makes you feel insecure, so to speak?
TWF2: Oh, yeah! These episodes are talking about a strong China, not a great Chinese nation. If I see the rejuvenation of Confucian culture, I might feel proud, but these ones, nah!
YC: Got it, let’s move on to the final section.
TWF2: [Party, My Dear Mother] … This is a funny song! I can’t imagine me singing a song like this [laugh] … poor Yin, she is fantastic. I told you she should be singing opera, not this! …
[Mama Taught Me a Song] … this is getting funnier but I think it speaks the truth [laugh] …
[Jiang Zemin & Li Peng Speeches] … What an ugly man he is! … He is doing this on behalf of the country, the CCP and the military? If this is what Chinese Nationality is all about, I’d rather be stateless.

As a matter of fact, one of the key features of TWF2’s vision of Chinese Nationality is exactly such “statelessness.” In addition, it is also interesting to note that in expressing her PRC/CCP-free view of Chinese Nationality, TWF2 also brings cultural essentialism back to the table, highlighting again the power of cultural nationalism in sustaining her continuous imagining of the Chinese Nationality.

2.4 TWM2

The last participant from Group TW was TWM2, age 42, an actor who had lived in Canada for eight years. Since he was very active in terms of his bodily responses from the very beginning, I asked questions throughout:

YC: [The Opening Presentation of the 1993 broadcast] Why are you laughing like that?
TWM2: This is funny! It looks so much like those Taiwanese variety shows from the ‘60s and ‘70s – everything is pre-scripted, no one improvises … I think this format is long gone in Taiwan.
YC: So you don’t like this format?
TWM2: Well, I would hope they’d be more relaxed, I mean, this is supposed to be a happy gathering of all kinds of huaren, right?
YC: You like this idea of, as you said, a “happy gathering of all kinds of huaren?”
TWM2: Actually, I’m a very jovial person, so I like this kind of show in general, it doesn’t really matter if they’re huaren or not.
YC: But these are different huaren. Do you feel any sense of kinship with them?

TWM2: Kinship? No! It’s just nice to see them get together and have fun, which has nothing to do with kinship …… [What Do You Like to See] … Wow! Chinese rap! I like that! … This is more like it, the audience members are participating! …… [The Descendants of the Dragon] … Oh, he’s going to sing The Descendants of the Dragon? Hou Dejian. I like it … [Singing along].

YC: How do you feel when you hear this familiar tune?

TWM2: It brings me back to the past, which is very nice. I remember it was banned after Hou went to the Mainland, but I really liked it, and I think I still do.

YC: What do you like about it?

TWM2: I like the tune. I never paid much attention to the lyrics. Now as I listen to it again, what interests me is still the tune. The lyrics just tell us some facts about Chinese Nationality.

YC: What facts?

TWM2: It’s obvious, like the ancestors of all Descendants of the Yellow and Fiery Emperors used to live along the Long River and the Yellow River … and we all have black eyes, black hair and yellow skin – it’s really obvious.

YC: But I wonder if these “obvious facts” matter to your sense of being huaren?

TWM2: A little, I guess, because it was given to me by my parents.

YC: Let me ask you a similar question from another angle, do you consider these “obvious facts” something like “a must” to your sense of being huaren?

TWM2: Well, yeah, look at you, you’re from China! Look at me, I’m from Taiwan, but we are all huaren, aren’t we? Right? That’s how other people tell us from them.

YC: Is that also how you tell yourself from the others?

TWM2: Of course …

His denial of any sense of “kinship” with “other kinds of huaren” notwithstanding, TWM2’s taken-for-granted attitude toward what he called the “obvious facts” laid bare his rather strong beliefs in the distinctive racial identity of huaren; he not only saw huaren in a racial sense as a naturalized concept, but he also imagined it as a community, which, ironically, is exactly what “kinship” is all about. Meanwhile, what I would call “the double processes of racialization” – a simultaneous other-othering and self-othering on a racial basis – made apparent that his “diasporic dialectic” also played a part in his sense of being huaren.
Thanks to these factors, TWM2 presented a statement of subjection to the interpellation of being Chinese in a racial sense.

TWM2 continued to be very lively during the second section. He hummed along as though totally enjoying the Charms of Chinese Folk Operas and even jeered at the performers of the Book of Hundred Surnames for looking funny.

While watching A Eulogy for the Long River, he tried to sing along. When Take a Look at Our Mother River was on, he got excited and told me how long he had been a fan of the hostess Ni Ping. Listening to My Chinese Heart, he made a rather harsh comment: “what’s wrong with this guy?” I took this as an opportunity to begin my inquiry:

YC: What do you mean, what’s wrong with this guy?
TWM2: He’s from Hong Kong, right? I don’t know about his “Chinese heart,” but I certainly don’t have one. I’ve never been to the Mainland, those mountains and rivers sound very far away. To me, they were just something we learned from textbooks. The Yellow Mountain, the Yellow River, the Long River, and the Great Wall – one of the few things we can see from outer space … blah, blah! Do I have feelings for them? Not really. But, like I always say, the number one problem of the SFG is its non-stop propaganda. Can you blame those mountains and rivers? … The guilty ones are those who use them in that way! I mean, I love Ni Ping and her hosting style, but this time she was like a spokesperson for the government. Shouldn’t the New Year’s show be all about fun? But gosh! I’ve been watching the SFG since I was in the Drama Troupe of the Taiwanese Army. It has barely changed! Can’t we just get together and sing and dance and have fun?

YC: So these cultural symbols did not appeal to you? But still, it seemed to me you were totally pleased at certain moments.
TWM2: I was, yeah, see the kids who performed martial arts in the Book of Hundred Surnames, I love it! That’s part of Chinese culture! The idea of doing a song about the Book of Hundred Surnames was smart too. I guess our surnames are both in it.

YC: Yes, but tell me what Chinese culture means to you?
TWM2: … Well, to me, Chinese culture has nothing to do with the communist PRC … It’s a tradition with a very long history, like Sishu Wujing (The Four Books and Five Classics)\textsuperscript{157} and … anyway, ancient stuff, not exactly like we see in the SFG.

YC: Is Chinese traditional culture important to your sense of being Chinese?

TWM2: Ah … yes and no. I mean, I grew up with it so it made me different from other people from other cultures, and this is very important here in Canada, but it’s more important for me to see some good performances. To me, that would be more fun.

YC: Why is it very important here in Canada, I mean, to be “culturally” different?

TWM2: Well, everyone here seems to be very sensitive about it. Canada is so multicultural! Diversity, right? I guess we are different because we have a different culture.

It seems that TWM2 rejected cultural symbolism and downplayed his attachment to a Chinese cultural identity as though watching the SFG is merely an aesthetic experience. However, despite this seemingly aesthetic way of viewing, he conformed to his own sense of Chineseness beyond those “obvious facts” he mentioned earlier. Here it is important to note that what “diasporic dialectic” did to his awareness of being Chinese in a cultural sense is precisely what it did to his awareness of being Chinese in a racial sense – “We are different because we have a different culture.” In short, TWM2’s Chinese imagination was also entrenched in cultural nationalism, despite a vision not entirely identical to that of the SFG.

In the following section, TWM2 remained active, his expressive face providing me with useful cues for knowing when to ask him to verbalize his responses.


TWM2: Ha! Feels more like a master showing off his/her servants!

\textsuperscript{157} Sishu Wujing, literally meaning four books and five classics, is considered as the most important set of Confucian classics. Sishu is composed of Da Xue (The Great Learning), Zhong Yong (The Doctrine of the Mean), Lun Yu (The Analects of Confucius) and Meng Zi (The Mencius), whereas Wujing consists of Shi Jing (The Book of Songs/Poems), Shang Shu (The Book of History), Li Ji (The Book of Rites), Zhou Yi (The Book of Changes or The I-Ching) and Chun Qiu (The Spring & Autumn Annals).
YC: What do you mean?
TWM2: See, everyone is here, but is this really a happy and equal family like the hosts said? I doubt it.
YC: Why do you doubt it? Or, what do you doubt?
TWM2: I mean, these are just a few performers from a few different minority nationalities, how do you know what they really think.
YC: I wonder what you think.
TWM2: Like I told you, like a master showing off his/her servants. Or ... you know, it feels like these people were adopted from different places ... I don't know, I don't think this is a family.
YC: Again, I wonder why.
TWM2: Well ... the part about Taiwan is weird, and other guys are really different, some of them even look different, their dresses, and ... and their languages, harder than English for me [laugh] ... [Big China] ... Come on, Jeff Chang, don't you know you're a Taiwanese? Don't you know the big China is showing its love with missiles aimed at us? ... I wonder how Andy Lau faces those pro-democracy demonstrators in Hong Kong. I saw in the news that recently there are a lot of demonstrations in Hong Kong ... "One Country, Two Systems!" Very convincing! ... Thanks for singing for us, we know you're not in Beijing for fame and money! ... [Macau, Let Me Take You Home] ... To me, Macau is a very strange place. I don't even know where it is! Sorry, my bad.
YC: You don't feel akin to them?
TWM2: I guess not. Like I said, I don't even know them.
YC: Fair enough, let's keep watching ... [Panda Name Selection 1st Section] ... God! I love to see China always trying to include Taiwan in its dream! ... I tell you, with the gradual disappearance of the old generation who went to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek, most Taiwanese only want to do business with the Mainland ... taking advantage of pandas to make a show! I feel truly sorry for the pandas and the kids who did the voiceover for the pandas! ... [The Cloud of the Homeland] ... "Come back, come back!" To where? China is not your homeland, not mine either! I'm fine here in Toronto ... [Nostalgia] ... Again, nostalgic about what? Don't tell me it has to be China ... [The Zero-Hour Ceremony of the 1996 SFG] ... These are all zhongguoren, right? ... Everything is pre-planned. Are they making a show or textbook for diasporic huaren? ... I tell you, for us Taiwanese, we have our own family ... If I put a sugar-coated gun at your forehead and call you my dear brother or sister, will you kiss me like a brother or sister?

When TWM2 made these responses, he was all jeers, sneers and sarcasm.

He might not have shown a lot of obvious signs of anger, but his successive use
of enantiosis\textsuperscript{158} and erotesis\textsuperscript{159} were telling enough of his affective reactions. Like all other participants from Group TW, TWM2 also rejected, with passion, the subject position of “a familial sense” of being Chinese. Here I would stress that the highly racialized view of Chineseness he described in the previous sections was exactly the basis upon which he organized his statement of objection. Though he expressed discontentment about the ways in which minority nationalities were represented, he nonetheless regarded them as others based on “looks,” “dress” and “language.” In fact, it is due precisely to his racially and culturally nationalist idea of Chinese Nationality that he refused to see non-Mainlanders and diasporic subjects as family.

It is also of interest to note that when we arrived at this stage, TWM2 and all other participants from Group TW began to focus more on the key messages of the interpellation rather than on the various interpellative strategies, especially the televisual means. I would contend that this collective shift of attention supports my initial supposition, that the pre-established antipathy against “unification,” which brought the state issue back to the fore, was too significant a stimulus for participants of Taiwan origin to ignore. For people like MCM1, the offer of the Chinese “super-family” might be extremely attractive, but for all four participants from Group TW, such an offer reminds them of nothing but the hegemony of the Chinese state. Under such circumstances, TWM2’s negative reactions in the following sections, just like that of other participants form Group TW, were to be expected:

\textsuperscript{158} A figure of speech by which what is to be understood affirmatively is stated negatively, and vice versa.
\textsuperscript{159} This is a rhetorical question implying a strong affirmation or denial.
TWM2: [On Ma’s Army] … [Imitating the Huang Hong the performer] … this guy is really stupid!
I’m a sports fan but I never relate it to the country. If China is really strong, do you really need
Ma’s Army to inject a shot to boost your confidence? …… [Better and Better] Song Zuoying is
really a beautiful woman and a fabulous singer … what? The price is lower? … The sky is
bluer? The water clearer? … Where do you think you live? … What a pity to see a great
singer singing this kind of song [sigh] …… [A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero] …
Wow, this music sounds pretty militant … I wonder how much these extras get paid, jumping
like this! … Oh, Ni Ping! Is she trying to get more tears from the audience? … No, no, stop
your speech! … Motherland! Motherland! How many motherlands do you have to mention? …
Another one? This Five-Starred Red flag is even uglier than our “White Sun in Blue Sky” flag!
YC: But this Shenzhou thing was indeed a great achievement, wasn’t it?
TWM2: It is, for China! You know my background. My father went to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek
as a young officer in the Air Force, and I myself served in the Army for years! I know what this
kind of achievement means to Taiwan. I believe you know just as well, don’t you? [laugh]
YC: Well, I guess I know what you mean. Let’s move on, and we’re almost there …
TWM2: … [Party, My Dear Mother] … I’m a Kuomintang member, so is all my family, you think
this song could convert us [laugh]? …… [Mama Taught Me a Song] … Oh, no, please stop!
Mama, stop teaching me this song! I want to hear something else! Even a song about Monkey
King or whatever! …… [Jiang Zemin & Li Peng Speeches] … Shut up, please!

Evidently, TWM2’s rejection of both confident nationalism and the conflational
formulation of Chinese party-nation-state was no less strong than that of other
participants from Group TW.

Taken together, the participant responses from Group TW made clear that
one can participate in the collective imagining of a Chinese cultural nation as
long as one believes there is such a thing as a Chinese national cultural identity,
whatever its meaning. It is also important to note that – while no one talked about
out-migration from Taiwan to Canada since the 1960s being mostly attributable
to people’s fears of political instability and a possible military intrusion from the
Mainland (Ma, 2003) – all participants expressed in different ways a sense of
insecurity often visualized in the imagery of long-range missiles. In responding to relevant episodes, such as the one about panda name selection, this imagery could be juxtaposed with, or superimposed on, the imagery of, say, the pandas. We might argue, then, that this particular group of viewers is well conditioned to object to any interpellation attempt that assumes the necessity of the PRC and/or the CCP in the concept of Chinese Nationality.

3. Group HK (Subjects from Hong Kong)

3.1 HKM1

HKM1, age 38, was a producer of TV commercial who had lived in Canada for almost two decades. Though he understood Mandarin perfectly well, he chose English as the interview language. When we were watching the first two episodes, he did not say a word, but looked at the television attentively. As soon as he knew Huang would perform *The Descendants of the Dragon*, he stood up and exclaimed:

HKM1: This was a huge hit in Hong Kong in the ‘80s! I was a teenager at that time! I could even sing the lyrics without knowing what the song really meant! It was like a national anthem for me in the ‘80s! … I can relate to this part, not seeing the rivers, but feel its (sic) beauty, wow! … But this dragon thing … eh … never meant anything to me. Maybe because I am the product of the British education system with an Irish Catholic twist, and my secondary school is run by Jesuit priests, so I have never felt I am a dragon descendant.

YC: So you don’t echo with this symbol of the dragon, but if we understand it metaphorically and say that the Chinese people have common ancestors, would you agree?

HKM1: Of course, we come from the same people … now, see, this part I can relate to it again, this part about our racial features … you see, I left Hong Kong in 1986, way before ‘97, 11 years, and the second (sic) year when I was in Canada I was shocked by the Tiananmen Massacre. Those white people talked about this with me like I was part of it … [shaking heads] and it happened so often that … you know … I used to see myself as a Hong Konger only and
it was in Canada that I realized my Chineseness is undeniable. Whether I like it or not, I cannot change my race, and I guess people recognize themselves as Chinese on different bases. For me, the key word is race, not zhongguo the country. I don’t know about other people. I can’t tell. Probably a lot of ABCs (American-born Chinese) or CBCs (Canadian-born Chinese) do not agree with me, but race is important to me.

YC: How do you relate this to the SFG?
HKM1: Oh, right, I mean, we know we have something in common, right, why can’t we celebrate together as a race? So, the idea of making a show like the SFG is good. I mean, in a way, the SFG reminds me of my Chineseness, and my everyday life in Canada does the same. I can change a lot of things, but not my blood and my race.

HKM1’s prior familiarity with *The Descendants of the Dragon* certainly played a role in his affective investment in being Chinese in a racial sense, though he did not resonate with the symbol of the dragon due largely to his early education. What is more telling about his identity formation is that he had an extremely strong sense of “diasporic dialectic” – it was exactly this “diasporic dialectic” that provoked him to construct a Chinese identity on a racial basis. More importantly, his “newly” acquired race consciousness also set up conditions for him to imagine a community, again, on a racial basis.

Compared with the other three participants from Hong Kong, HKM1’s educational background was mostly “Western.” The pre-screening interview also told me that HKM1 had the least knowledge about various cultural elements commonly seen as “Chinese.” Therefore, I hypothesized that he might have some trouble identifying with a Chinese cultural identity, whatever its meaning. However, in the actual study, his “Chinese imagination” was shockingly active. Much like in the first section, he looked at the television rather attentively until the end of this section.
YC: I guess you were fascinated, I do wonder why. Let’s start with the folk operas, Ok?
HKM1: Actually, Chinese folk operas look very strange to me, ’cos I really have no idea what stories they are trying to tell except for the Monkey King … Too many cultural references I have no knowledge about, but I like it ’cos I know there is a long tradition behind them.
YC: Why is that important to you?
HKM1: Like I told you, my education was too Westernized, British in Hong Kong and Canadian here … but I’m racially Chinese, so I figure I should know more about my cultural roots.
YC: Ok, what do you make of the Book of Hundred Surnames?
HKM1: That song was awful, terrible, I mean musically, but it made reference to Chinese cultural tradition, history and martial arts, that was good … the martial arts performance was really fun to watch, very very Chinese.
YC: How about that song about the Long River and that activity about the Yellow River?
HKM1: That’s the boring part … I’ve never been to China and never witnessed her natural beauty, so it’s very hard for me to relate to these rivers emotionally … I mean the whole segment (about the Yellow River) reminds me of the book River Elegy160 which was a great inspiration to me as a university student in the ’90s. I still agree with the author that China’s future lies in the “ocean mentality” – looking outwards and being adventurous, that is why all these gestures of collecting water in the Yellow River did not appeal to me – too conservative.
YC: Do you like Chinese Dragon?
HKM1: No, not at all, the singer looked weird and … this dragon thing has never meant anything to me, even though I like The Descendants of the Dragon.
YC: How do you feel about My Chinese Heart by Cheung Ming Men?
HKM1: Well, I don’t have feelings for those things he was singing about, but I kinda like the song … actually any song that reminds me of the turmoil and humiliation that China went through in history would immediately draw up my patriotism, and tears sometimes, maybe that’s my Chinese heart.
YC: What do you mean by patriotism?
HKM1: Patriotism? The love of the Chinese Nation …

   Obviously, HKM1 interpreted patriotism as a form of racial nationalism, and his subjection to an imagined Chinese cultural identity was certain despite his dismissal of all cultural symbols and the relevant interpellative strategies.

However, at issue here is that HKM1’s Chinese imagination is built not only upon

160 River Elegy (He Shang) is a six-part television documentary directed by Su Xiaokang, Wang Luxiang and Xia Jun. For a review of the film, see Zarrow (1990).
his race thinking, but also his belief in a distinctive Chinese cultural identity. Moreover, HKM1’s confession about his “Chinese heart” suggests that an imagined common history of “national humiliation” or “wounded nationalism” also had a role in his sense of community, as in the case of MCF2.

Moving on to the first episode of the third section, Singing in Sequence by Various Nationalities, HKM1 became excited and expressed his amazement at the size of the studio and the high angle wide shots. Taking this chance, I put the screening on hold and made my inquiry:

YC: Ok, you like this kind of shot, but I wonder if this kind of shot makes you feel more in solidarity with various nationalities in the “motherland as our lovely big family,” to quote the hostess?

HKM1: No, I like this kind of shot only for aesthetic reasons … Speaking of ethnic minorities, I find them … well, with due respect, I like their performances, but they look very strange to me … I told you that racially and culturally I have no problem seeing myself as Chinese but every time I saw them, I feel different, I guess … maybe the way they sing and … dress? It’s so different.

YC: Are you saying you only see Han people as fellow Chinese?

HKM1: Mmm … actually I don’t know any other Chinese other than the Han Chinese. Nobody talked about this when I was in Hong Kong. So if you say they are also part of Chinese Nationality, fine, I guess they are, but … I mean the only things I identify with Mainland China is its art, culture, philosophy and language, right? But look at them, they speak different languages, they wear different dresses, their music and dances are different, one of them even looks different! … I mean, I do consider myself a Chinese in the racial and cultural senses, but I don’t think I have a sense of kinship with them. Fellow human beings? Absolutely! Fellow Chinese, mmm …

No doubt, to HKM1, Chineseness was both biologically inherent and culturally immutable. Though some interpellative strategies, such as the sheer size of the studio and the high angle wide shots, operated at an aesthetic level to improve his appreciation of this episode, HKM1 nevertheless rejected the interpellation of familial nationalism due to his highly racialized idea of Chineseness in relation to
minority nationalities. After a short pause, I screened the remaining episodes of this section:

YC: [The Zero-Hour Ceremony] … You think this one is really long, don’t you?
HKM1: Oh God, yeah! I mean, it’s not just long, it’s repetitious, like Chinese everywhere are … did you notice most of these people are either government employees working overseas or international students? Of course they would love to show their loyalty. They have to go back anyway.
YC: Kris Phillips doesn’t have to “go back.” How do you feel about his performance – I saw you sing along?
HKM1: He is a great singer and I think his version of The Cloud of the Homeland is actually better than the original. Musically, I like it a lot! But I don’t think I echo with him ‘cos I don’t feel I have a so-called motherland, so I don’t understand why that Chinese French or Portuguese guy sang about his nostalgia. I mean I don’t have this kind of feeling for any country, not even Hong Kong.
YC: What if we are talking about the Chinese Nationality instead of the country of the PRC?
HKM1: But they are using “motherland” all the time!
YC: Ok, I remember you told me earlier that any song that reminds you of the humiliations that China went through would kindle your Chinese heart, right?
HKM1: Yes, you’re right but … that doesn’t necessarily mean that I would miss China or Hong Kong all the time like migrants miss their home. As a matter of fact, I don’t. So, nostalgia or feeling for the motherland? I don’t think so.
YC: Mmm … let’s talk about Big China and Macau, Let Me Take You Home. It seemed to me you really don’t like Andy Lau and Gigi Leung – two pop stars from Hong Kong.
HKM1: I know Andy Lau has a huge fan base, look at the audience! But I don’t think he can represent Hong Kong. To me, 1997 and 1999 are the Chinese “takeovers” of Hong Kong and Macau, I don’t have any “homecoming” feeling at all … when a colony returns to its motherland, it should be celebrated by its people, but this was not really the case in Hong Kong. It brought a lot of anxieties and fears to its people and it’s only after the economic boom in the ’90s that some people became positive of the handover. For me, I still doubt it – Communist China has such a bad track record in governing … My sister lives in Macau, she knows how they feel … Plus, how could Gigi Leung see herself as a representative of Hong Kong to take Macau “home” with a couple of Mainlanders?
YC: How about the panda episode? You made quite a few sarcastic faces.
HKM1: Right, I mean, it’s too obvious … I am not from Taiwan, but I’ve been there. I found it very different, very different from Hong Kong or Macau … no matter how you look at it, it is a
sovereign country with its own government, military, currency and foreign policy. Honestly, I don't think this panda diplomacy would work.

Much like other participants from Group TW, HKM1 could not abide familial nationalism’s claim about the centrality of the PRC to the “motherland.” It seemed that for HKM1, Chinese Nationality as an imagined community existed only in the racial and cultural senses, though he did not explicitly mobilize racial or cultural nationalism in this particular section to defend his rejection of familial nationalism as far as non-Mainlanders and diasporic subjects were concerned.

I have argued that all participants from Group TW made a clear distinction between “Chinese Nationality” and the “Chinese state;” in fact, the historical tensions between China and Taiwan form the backdrop for the production of monumental objections to the interpellations of confident nationalism as well as the party-nation-state conflation. Interestingly, we have just seen that HKM1 also refused to see China as the center of the Chinese “super-family” or the “home” of global Chinese. Given this, I could not help but wonder how he would react to the same interpellations (confident nationalism and the party-nation-state conflation):

HKM1: [On Ma's Army] … Who is he talking about? … Ma’s Army? … I don’t know them that well, but Chinese sports have indeed made great progress. Everybody is talking about it!
YC: So, how do you feel when people are talking about it?
HKM1: Honestly, I feel proud too. Even though I’m from Hong Kong, people see me as Chinese, zhongguoren, right? …… [Better and Better] … This is Utopia! The lyrics sound like a speech from Bush: simple, stupid and positive [laugh].
YC: You don’t like that?
HKM1: Well, this is art, and might be a little exaggerating, but honestly, I’m impressed by the economic achievement of China! Even the US is scared of China now … The stronger China is, the better treatment we can get over here … We don’t wanna be bullied anymore, the Chinese are not to be pushed around…… [A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero] …
nice shot, the music sounds very solemn, what is this? … Oh, Chinese space science, quite impressive, isn’t it? I remember I saw a lot of media coverage about this … you know, though I don’t see Mainland China as my motherland, I have to admit that China is the foundation of global Chinese. Only because China has developed and become strong, could we all feel powerful.

YC: Does a stronger China make you feel more belonging to the “Chinese Nationality?”
HKM1: Somewhat, I guess … you know it’s nice to be associated with a strong and respectable community. Today’s China does make me feel that I could be part of the pride. Western media has been reporting China’s economic boom like crazy.

Indeed, HKM1’s response was very similar to that of MCM1 who also reveled in “the overall rise of China.” He even openly admitted that his attachment to Chinese Nationality was enhanced by the interpellation of confident nationalism and its various interpellative means, such as camerawork and diegetic music. Considering the unique colonial history of Hong Kong and HKM1’s sense of victimhood, I would assert that social origins did matter significantly to his identity formation, because his positive reactions to confident nationalism were at least partially based on the “wounded nationalism” that many subjects from Hong Kong have experienced. In addition, we should now realize that the power of the “diasporic dialectic” not only stems from HKM1’s socialization with “non-Chinese.” but also, I would emphasize, with the “Western media.” To put it rather bluntly, in interpellating the diasporic subjects to take up the subject position of being Chinese in a “confident sense,” the hostlands of the diasporic subjects have operated, perhaps unwittingly and even contrary to their wishes, as accomplices of the Chinese party-state and its various agencies – so much so that HKM1 even paid homage to the PRC state. Therefore, at issue here is not only how the interpellation of confident nationalism and personal vainglory can
feed off of each other, but also how the “diasporic dialectic” can act as a catalyst for the triumph of a transnational nationalist interpellation.

In the final section, HKM1 presented a brief yet clear statement of objection to the party-nation-state conflation, which was quite a divergence from the previous section. However, I would contend that his responses are actually quite understandable because 1) as he mentioned, he has never lived under a communist regime, and 2) in his words, “communist China has such a bad track record in governing.” To sum up, for HKM1, Chinese Nationality was about membership in a cultural nation rather than in a particular state.

It is also of interest to note that HKM1 has actually articulated a number of subject positions within the same interview. In responding to the interpellation of Chinese racial identity, he made explicit that what mattered to his sense of being Chinese was “race, not zhongguo the country.” Speaking of Chinese cultural identity, he somewhat associated his attachment to this identity with the state of the PRC. When “Chinese Nationality” was presented as a “super-family,” he flatly refused to see the PRC as the “motherland” of the “super-family.” However, as soon as China’s power was showcased, he took the side of the PRC and expressed his pride in being associated with the country. Finally, as I have just mentioned, when the CCP and the PRC were presented on equal terms with Chinese Nationality, he submitted his rejection without delay. No doubt, his positions were inconsistent and even contradictory. I hope to point out, however, that other participants, such as MCM2, TWF1, TWF2, have also produced inconsistencies and contradictions in terms of their subject positions, albeit to a
lesser degree. We should acknowledge, therefore, that subject positions can often be ambivalent and contradictory, not to mention that it is highly possible for people to lay out contradictory positions when engaged in a conversationally oriented study like this. After all, subject formation processes are not often that unitary.

3.2 HKF1

At age 41, the highly educated HKF1 was a vice principal of a local school in Toronto. At the time that the interview was conducted, she had been in Canada for 13 years. Smiles and nods dominated her bodily responses to the first two episodes. After *The Descendants of the Dragon* had been on for a while, she frowned and suddenly looked a little unhappy. Taking this chance, I started my inquiry:

YC: So what makes you unhappy?

HKF1: Oh, no, no, I’m not, I guess I got a little carried away, the song is fine, I actually like it, it was very popular in Hong Kong in eh … in the early ‘80s … I was actually thinking about your questions … about the concept of Chinese Nationality expressed in the show. Yes, I’m a Hong Konger, and a diasporic *huaren* too – both are part of the Chinese Nationality. So I actually like the idea that these episodes were trying to express, and it was about all of us, not just the Mainlanders or Taiwanese, you understand? … Actually I watch those New Year’s shows from Hong Kong and Taiwan too, I guess I just cannot deny the fact that I am a *huaren*, because my face tells me so, very obvious, but very true, right? So, no matter how much the PRC government and the CCP are repugnant to me, at New Year’s, I just want to relax and celebrate with my fellow *huaren*. As for those disgusting parts, I choose to ignore them.

YC: If you find anything that disgusts you later, let me know please. Can I ask you now to go back to the concept of *huaren* and tell me why it is important to you?

HKF1: Because we are no less *huaren* than anyone else. We might have been under British rule for a century, and they changed us a bit, but certain things just don’t change, like our blood, you understand? You speak Mandarin, we speak Cantonese, but both are *zhongwen* … I
think Mainlanders tend to see themselves as more huaren than us. Let me tell you, we might not be zhongguoren, but we are not inferior huaren.

YC: Is that why you like the first episode we saw, I mean the Opening Presentation of …

HKF1: Yes [excited]! … And the second one too, even though they said zhongguoren, but they actually mean “all descendants of the Yellow and Fiery emperors from all over the world.”

Although I was misled by HKF1’s facial expressions, her answers to my inquiry made clear that her subjection to a Chinese racial identity was actually emotional. As a matter of fact, she clung to this subject position and staked a claim for all non-Mainlanders and diasporic Chinese to be authentic huaren on equal terms with the Mainlanders. Perhaps this was why she was so excited about the synecdochical use of the hosts from different Chinese-speaking societies – an interpellative strategy based precisely on an essentialist view of Chineseness. Most importantly, like most other participants, HKF1 also established her Chineseness on racial terms, evidenced by her references to the “face” and “blood.”

Getting into the second section, HKF1 presented another foundation upon which her sense of being Chinese is confirmed and solidified. To her, being Chinese also means sharing an immutable culture, in addition to a “yellow normalcy”:

HKF1: [Charms of Chinese Folk Operas] … Oh yeah, this is one of the parts that I love the most … I’m a huge fan of Chinese traditional art, especially folk music and some of the folk operas, even though I don’t quite understand what they are singing …

YC: I wonder why you love them.

HKF1: I guess … what’s that word? … The verve! Right! The verve of Chinese art … And the costumes are so unique, absolutely Chinese! … And the performance is very charming too, very different from Western art. See this one, they even incorporate some martial arts … and characters from Xi You Ji (Journey to the West) – I love Chinese ancient literature – that’s my
university minor … Actually I love everything that can really represent Chinese traditional culture!

YC: What’s Chinese culture in your eyes?

HKF1: Ancient art, traditional art forms, philosophy, and literature … things that make us distinctive, in addition to our faces …… [Book of Hundred Surnames] Oh! This kid is really good! Look at his legs! I love martial arts! … Oh, Nicholas Tse, I didn’t know he can sing … When my sister and I were little, my mom asked us to memorize Bai Jia Xing (Book of Hundred Surnames) and San Zi Jing (The Three-Character Classic).161 she was really good, I wasn’t …… [A Eulogy for the Long River] … The tune of this song is really pleasant …… [Take a Look at Our Mother River] … I think she (Ni Ping) has been hosting for years, right? She is beautiful, but I don’t really like her way of speaking … it’s too affected …… [My Chinese Heart] … This was from the ’80s, I was in Hong Kong then … I still remember there were some nationalist sentiments and … I mean this song actually reminded me of a TV drama serial Fok Yuen Gap, the theme song, The 10-Thousand-Li Great Wall Will Never Collapse, was very popular too.

YC: Yeah? Actually, somebody performed that song in the 1985 broadcast.

HKF1: Really? I don’t know … anyway, I was so proud of this guy, you know? We’ve been bullied for so many years, finally a guy like Fok Yuen Gap … perhaps we need another guy like him over here as well. We’re not necessarily bullied here, but you know … we’re always different, right? …

YC: Two episodes we just saw, one was about the Long River, the other the Yellow River, and this song also mentioned them, the Great Wall, and other staff. Do you see them as national symbols?

HKF1: Of course! They symbolize our national spirit – indomitable! …… [Chinese Dragon] … I don’t like this singer but I like the lyrics … I prefer The Descendants of the Dragon.

Unlike HKM1, HKF1’s deep feeling for Chinese traditional art and literature and her education both at home and at university resonated very well with almost all the interpellative strategies employed by these episodes. Moreover, unlike all participants from Group TW, she neither used the year of 1949 to differentiate “authentic” or “inauthentic” “Chinese culture,” nor did she employ “Confucianism”

161 San Zi Jing (The Three-Character Classic), usually attributed to a renowned Confucian scholar named Wang Yinglin (1223-1296), has been customarily seen as a required classical Confucian text for children in various Chinese-speaking societies. It consists of a series of couplets of three characters, hence the title.
to make a counter-claim of being authentically Chinese. While this shows HKF1’s identification with an imagined Chinese cultural identity to be as total as that of other participants and even more in tune with the SFG version, it also makes obvious that differences in the formal educational systems of Taiwan and Hong Kong have affected the identity formations of their diasporic subjects. It is also important to note that “wounded nationalism” played a constitutive role in enhancing her affective attachment to Chinese cultural citizenship, as has the dialectic of her diasporic experience.

I have argued that some participants (TWF2 and HKM1) rejected the subject position of being Chinese in a “familial” sense on the basis of a cultural standard of “yellow normalcy.” In responding to the same interpellation, HKF1 gave me a strong feeling of déjà vu:

HKF1: [Singing in Sequence by Various Nationalities] … Wow, what unique headwear! We don’t have that … this (Uyghur) song is very different, very Persian I think … I like this one (Yi), very unique too … these Tibetan dresses are beautiful! … Wow, I absolutely love this one (Mongolian), so different and wonderful! … Wow, they’re really different from us.

YC: What do you mean by “us”?

HKF1: “Us”? … Oh, I mean our traditional culture … but I really like their performances.

YC: So, you really enjoy these performances. How do you feel about them singing in sequence?

HKF1: Artistically I enjoy it a lot … I just don’t know if this is the reality … I knew some groups want to be independent – saw some news the other day! … Sure, they are singing and dancing here, but I don’t know if they really like this idea of a “super-family.” …… [Big China].

YC: Ok, this one doesn’t involve minorities, but to follow your logic, people in Hong Kong and Taiwan should be fine with this super-family proposal because they are not that culturally different, right?

HKF1: Mmm … not really. I think it also depends on if they like it or not. You know that a lot of people left Hong Kong before 1997, right? I mean, this song is nice but I think Andy Lau and Jeff Chang are only there to promote themselves – you know how huge a market China is …… [Macau, Let Me Take You Home] … If 1997 did not mean home-returning for most of the Hong Kong people, I don’t think 1999 could possibly mean home-coming for Macau. This
song is more like a welcome ceremony prepared by the Mainland …… [Panda Name Selection 1st Section] … Wow, China is really doing everything to get Taiwan! …… [The Cloud of the Homeland] … Very cute guy, very good song, but it’s hard to imagine Mainland China as my homeland …… [Nostalgia] … I hope this song could be as pleasant as The Cloud of the Homeland and he could be as cute as Kris Phillips … I’ve never been to the Mainland, so I don’t think it’s possible for me to feel nostalgic for it …… [The Zero-Hour Ceremony] … This one is really boring … Of course, they’ll say that – they are all government employees or overseas students.

YC: Ok, you don’t see Mainland China as your homeland, I understand, but it seemed to be that you had no problem at all with your own huaren-ness in the first two sections.

HKF1: Of course, no problem. Biologically and culturally, I’m a huaren. But once they mention the word “big family,” I couldn’t help but wonder who the head of the household is, so …”

Needless to say, HKF1’s intentional ellipsis not only made clear the racialized nature of her sense of being Chinese, but also her objection to considering the PRC state as synonymous with Chinese Nationality. In the case of HKM1, this position did not undercut his subjection to the interpellation of confident nationalism, thanks mainly to his “diasporic dialectic.” However, in the case of HKF1, this position, together with her sense of social justice and her perceptions of China’s social reality, set up solid conditions for her to reject the same interpellation:

HKF1: [On Ma’s Army] … This is disgusting! If you feel like you need a shot of a drug, you get it! Don’t get me in the line! The poor audience, they were touched! …… [Better and Better] … This is shameless propaganda. I guess we all know the realities are quite the opposite … no, I take that back, not opposite but different. The PRC seems to be getting wealthier but corruption is a huge problem! And those socially marginalized, does the government really care about them? If they do, don’t lie like this …… [A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero] … Making progress in space science might be a good thing, I really hope he can change his script – don’t say “let us be filled with passionate love of the motherland”! Change “motherland” to “people” please. I might be touched that way. Look at these people on stage! Everyone looks more or less the same! Are they human beings, or stage props? Zero hour is a moment for all of us to celebrate the New Year, why do they present such a spoilsport?
At this point, HKF1’s statement of objection had reached the point of *ad nauseam*. She might not have remarked on the various interpellative strategies used in the first two episodes, but her comment on the last episode actually touched upon two SFG oft-used televisual strategies of interpellation – using a host of extras on stage to create a sense of identification, and taking advantage of the imagined “global synchronicity” of the zero-hour to bring the interpellation to a climax. Certainly, neither of them really worked as “preferred” in this case. Instead, we end up witnessing the genesis of another statement of objection.

In the last section, HKF1’s cultural nationalism was mobilized again to ridicule the SFG’s attempt to equate Chinese Nationality with the Chinese party-nation-state, as she put it:

HKF1: … What Chinese Nationality is it anyway? We are celebrating the Spring Festival as a cultural event, not a party convention.

She later told me explicitly that her vision of Chinese Nationality “has nothing to do with the PRC and the CCP,” illustrating yet again how Chinese Nationality has been imagined as a cultural nation as opposed to a modern state.

### 3.3 HKM2

HKM2, a 37-year old cameraman who came to Canada 19 years ago, had long been a media observer for both professional and personal reasons. During the screening, he paid a lot of attention to the SFG’s televisual strategies. As we watched the first two episodes, he mainly commented on the camerawork from a
professional perspective. However, when we viewed *The Descendants of the Dragon*, his attention shifted:

HKM2: … This song is very famous – almost a trademark of Chinese nationalism … the song is great, one of the few pop songs from that time that can still move you and eh … I still remember I was quite moved by it – I was in Hong Kong at that time.

YC: What elements of the song moved you?

HKM2: Well … it’s about the whole Chinese Nationality, right? Its history and … its great rivers.

YC: These episodes also talk about common origin and common ancestors. What do you make of it?

HKM2: It’s just a matter of fact, and it’s very superficial, the mentioning of the yellow skin was very annoying. Look at my skin … very dark, eh? So, it’s the blood … well, not the real blood, you know what I mean? Like the genes, not the molecule or … I don’t know how to explain it.

YC: I understand you, but I wonder, emotionally speaking, how importantly this “blood” matters to your sense of being Chinese?

HKM2: Emotionally speaking, it’s not important at all … If I like you, I don’t care what kind of blood runs in your veins. This biological thing has nothing to do with my feelings … I found people here are paying a lot of attention to these superficial things, like everyone who has Chinese162 blood is more or less the same. One Chinese did a bad thing, all Chinese are bad!? That’s ridiculous!

Here HKM2 made very clear that though he recognized his Chineseness on *jus sanguinis* basis, he, like TWF1, did not articulate a national entity on this ground. Even his “diasporic dialectic,” which certainly illuminated Canada as the racialized society it still is, worked only to confirm that he did not regard consanguinity as a basis for constructing a community that might be called “Chinese.” In other words, compared with most of the participants, being Chinese in a racial sense did not matter quite as much to HKM2’s identity formation. However, when offered a Chinese cultural identity, he accepted right away:

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162 The interview with HKM2 was conducted in English, hence “Chinese” instead of “zhongguoren” or “huaren.”
HKM2: [Charms of Chinese Folk Operas] … This is nice, telling ancient tales and legends … wow! The bianlian\textsuperscript{163} is absolutely amazing! They should show more of these … Mmm … Why do they wear Western suits? … Modern Beijing Opera? Pooh! You want to show some essences of Chinese culture, show something created by our ancestors! Don’t mix it with communist things.

YC: What’s Chinese culture in your eyes?

HKM2: … Ancient stuff, uniquely Chinese, something we share in common, something we take great pride in ….. [Book of Hundred Surnames] Mmm, martial arts, great! This is one of the things that do us proud … Mmm … The Book of Hundred Surnames is a very important document of Chinese history, but does it include Mongolian and Tibetan names? … If I happen to be one of the minorities, I might feel excluded … but their cultures are very different indeed, I guess they are Chinese only in the political sense ….. [A Eulogy for the Long River] … Don’t they have a video of the river? Why just a bunch of girls dancing like this? … Comparing the river to a mother, how pretentious! If you love the river like a mother, you should stop polluting it and punish those who do so ….. [Take a Look at Our Mother River] … It’s fine to eulogize the beauty of nature, and there is no denying the cultural significance of the Yellow River, but leave the political innuendos out of it please … Here we go again! Yellow skin being compared to the colour of mud! I’d like a toxicology report please … Walking? In a great country like China, walking? For twelve days? You mean the Central Government couldn’t afford to send her a donkey or a bus ticket! Walking all the way to the CCTV studio? Wow! … I don’t understand this statement. How does kinship have anything to do with water samples? Why are the hosts constantly lecturing the audience about their origins and ancestors? Do they think that Chinese are forgetful or stupid? … I need a close-up cutaway shot of tears please … I think a urine or blood sample would be more accurate and more scientific ….. [My Chinese Heart] … Typical Cheung Ming Men, also a good song, could be a better national anthem. Let us rise and do something! Clean the Yellow River, clean the Long River, and protect the Great Wall from acid rain! ….. [Chinese Dragon] … The camerawork is really bad, no steadicam? The dragon and the nation? You see it everywhere, but I don’t know. I think the dragon was used by those emperors to symbolize themselves … I guess this is like the beaver for Canada.

Despite HKM2’s sarcastic about the SFG’s interpellation of cultural symbolism, his affective attachment to being Chinese in a cultural sense was unquestionable nonetheless. As he commented on various cultural essences, his use of the first

\textsuperscript{163} Bianlian, which literally means “face-changing,” is an ancient dramatic art of Sichuan opera.
person plural in different cases (the possessive “our,” nominative “we” and objective “us”) also revealed that for him a Chinese cultural identity was truly a collective one. However, while he depicted the exclusionary character of the Book of Hundred Surnames as somewhat Han-centric, he stopped short of talking about the multicultural nature of Chinese Nationality. Instead, he described minority nationalities as “Chinese only in the political sense.” In other words, he still defined “Chinese culture” as a set of immutable entities, fundamentally distinct from minority nationalities. Consequently, his full embrace of various so-called cultural essences as presented by the SFG comes as no surprise. Importantly, he later told me that a Chinese cultural identity was very important to him as a “diasporic Chinese” because “that’s something that truly distinguishes us from them.” It is without a doubt, then, that the “diasporic dialectic” also contributed to HKM2’s subjection to the interpellation of a distinctive Chinese cultural identity.

HKM2 continued to make a substantial number of commentaries in the third section, becoming, in fact, even more excited. Considering the richness and clarity of the data from our dialogue, I quote him here at great length:

HKM2: [Singing in Sequence by Various Nationalities] … What’re you talking about – the motherland is our lovely big family? Let’s count, one … the camerawork is a lot better … two … mmm, this group does not have black eyes, black hair and yellow skin … three, Taiwanese folk song? What nationality? … Fish net, huh! … Ok, number four … this one is pretty good … Wait a moment! This is not about the motherland! … Five, what nationality is this? I can’t tell, looks like Han to me … Tibetan? That’s number six, The Dalai Lama is gonna be pissed off … Mongolian, seventh, right? … The camerawork is good! The studio looks nice! … Wow! Could you imagine the catering budget backstage?

YC: [Screening put on hold] … you seem to have more to say. Go ahead please.
HKM2: They shouldn’t have used subtitles … I don’t think any one was about “the motherland is our lovely big family!” … Oh, God! I love it when the state speaks for the people. Let’s make up facts and spread them around as if they were true!

YC: I wonder if you have any feeling of kinship with people from different nationalities.

HKM2: … No. The supreme PRC wants them, not me. I don’t know if they like to be included. You can’t tell just by the happy faces … [Screening continued, Big China] … Mmm, zooming out from the Five-Starred Red Flag, huh! … Jeff Chang … does this Taiwanese guy know what he’s doing? … Oh, not him! [Andy Lau] He’s everywhere, people really like him? … Ok, here is my annotation: Dear audience, in case you forgot, not because you’re stupid: 1) you’re Chinese; 2) we’re all related; 3) we have amazing scenery; 4) we have the biggest Great Wall; 5) we own Tibet, Taiwan and Hong Kong; 6) we’ve suffered for long; and 7) you must love your country. You think I’d love to be part of this family? … [Macau, Let Me Take You Home] … Holy! Gigi Leung! What does a Hong Kong singer have anything to do with Macau? I guess we can always pretend that we care about Macau … Let’s not forget who the boss is. If Macau had died and was now returning from the dead, salvation and resurrection! This idea of motherland and the need to be accepted back by mother is mind-boggling. The abandoned child is begging to be taken back and to be loved? The child has prospered and succeeded over the years on its own! That doesn’t count for anything? … I can’t take this corny, mushy, cheesy crap anymore. Stop insinuating everything will be better when the Central Government takes over and regains control. How can a few little pop singers represent the wishes of all of Hong Kong, Macau and China? This use of propaganda is so juvenile … [Panda Name Selection 1st Section] … Panda names? They let people vote? … Yeah, this is not to vote for party leaders anyway, so let them vote … Oh … really cute, my daughter would love this … Ah! Putting words into pandas’ mouths, that’s smart! Easier too! … I think this is almost disgusting. Here you see these cute pandas – gifts for Taiwan, and there you see a lot of military exercises. It’s really hypocritical to say one thing and do another. Why are there so many guns and missiles pointed at the strait if only families lived on the other side? I don’t understand how Jeff Chang agreed to sing Big China – I mean he is good and very famous already … and Andy Lau! Do they really believe this crap? … [The Cloud of the Homeland] … I wonder if he has ever been to China … does he really know where his homeland is? … Where was he born? Where did he grow up? … Does he realize what he is saying? … It’s a very pleasant song and he is very good but I’m thinking about my dad. He swam and smuggled out of China to look for food and a future for his family, leaving behind his parents and siblings at the age of 16! Are you telling me people like him would see China as home? … Yeah, yeah, forget the West, forget Broadway …… [Nostalgia] Nostalgia? What nostalgia? Has this guy ever been to China? … So he lives in France … I don’t have nostalgia. I don’t think my parents do. Sometime in winter they went to Hong Kong to see my brothers
and to avoid the snow, but they are not going to China …… [The Zero-Hour Ceremony] … so they got people in Singapore and Australia … Eritrea … Germany and Japan … oh! Dance again! Her [the singer’s] smile is so fake! … Again? … oh, no, what are these people? … Oh, God, another song about China being the homeland?! This is way too much … Hong Kong? I tell you, these people are not Hong Kongers, I’m sure! I wonder if they paid these people to do so!

Most certainly, HKM2 realized from the beginning the centrality of the PRC in the SFG’s proposal of familial nationalism, hence his negative reactions to it. Being a cameraman himself, he was particularly sensitive to the various televisual means of interpellation. It is true that he made quite a few positive comments about the camerawork of certain episodes, but positive affective reactions did not follow. As a matter of fact, other interpellative means, televisual or linguistic – performer stardom, subtitling, the synecdochical use of lian-chang, vocal trio, and vocal quartet, and the tunefulness of the song – all operated to enhance his affective detachment, if not repugnance, rather than attachment to this idea of a “super-family.” In other words, he rejected not only the interpellation itself, but also most of the strategies employed to realize that interpellation.

In responding to those episodes that offered the subject position of being Chinese in a “confident” sense, HKM2’s antagonistic attitude toward the PRC and his perception of China’s “dirty laundry” operated together in the formulation of a clear statement of objection:

HKM2: [On Ma’s Army] … What’s this stupid man talking about? How does the success of a few athletes do proud to all Chinese? I feel bad for the athletes, you know, they are not to blame, and we should celebrate their hard work, but isn’t somebody using them to lecture us? …

[Better and Better] … Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha! I know you (Song Zuying the singer) are good looking, but the environment is better and better? Do you forget about SARs, bird flu, HIV? … Yes! No more crime! No more corruption! No more deadly accidents in illegal mines! No more fake LV
handbags! No more dissidents! This is getting quite sickening. …… [A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero] … this is exactly like showing off the sports heroes: we are great! We love China! China is great! National flag! … You think this could make me feel proud?

When HKM2 – who seemed predisposed to laughter and cracking jokes – claimed “this is getting quite sickening,” he looked very angry. I must say, his statement of objection here was indeed emotionally charged. In reaction to the last few episodes that were meant to create the party-nation-state conflation, HKM2 made his oppositive position even more explicit:

HKM2: Again, if you really want to attract us, show us something that we share in common! China is rich with talented people – great artists, wonderful dancers, and fabulous musicians – do something we have, something we’re good at, and something culturally unique, not the CCP! God! Is this a New Year’s entertainment show, or a political gathering? The CCP, I’m not sure if it works in China! For me, me being Chinese surely has nothing to do with the CCP.

Again, this is another case of using cultural nationalism to argue against the interpellation of being Chinese in a “conflational” sense.

As I have said in Chapter 2, all participants must pass the minimum inclusion criteria to be part of the study. Therefore, those who were selected were all regular, if not avid, viewers of the SFG. Under such circumstances, HKM2’s antipathy (perhaps that of most of the participants) expressed at the later stage of screening was indeed somewhat surprising. By way of explanation, I should stress that the synopsis used in the study only produced the structure of my analysis of the episodic differences that are part of the SFG productions rather than reproducing the structure of the SFG. In other words, what I have observed is not somebody watching the actual structure of the SFG, but rather a very compressed notion of the synopsis within the structure that I created. In most of
the SFG broadcasts, all these “repugnant” episodes are usually not presented in a row but are buffered by other episodes that might appeal to the viewers.

3.4 HKF2

The last participant of the study was HKF2, who had recently retired after having worked as a civil servant for four decades. At age 61, HKF2 had spent the last 21 years in Canada. During the entire process she was all smiles, but hardly displayed any peaks of emotion. In the first section, she started to give input at the close of the first episode:

HKF2: [The Opening Presentation of the 1993 broadcast] …… Chinese Nationality, yes, the SFG should be all about Chinese Nationality. I think that’s very important, a common place where we meet, and that’s why I watch the show.
YC: Why is that so important to you?
HKF2: Well, see, here people don’t care about the Spring Festival. For them, we’re just … just Asian, no matter how many of us have lived here for generations … They have their Christmas show, why can’t we have our Spring Festival show, right? We share the same roots, right? …… [What Do You Like to See] … Look how happy they are … even though I’ve never been a fan of rap and the camera moves too fast for me [laugh] but that’s fine, it’s good to see that everybody is happy ……[The Descendants of the Dragon] … Wow, I think it is really admirable to always keep in mind your racial roots. Certain things just don’t change, no matter if you become a mayor in America or a civil servant in Canada. The longer I stay here, the more I feel so …

HKF2’s position here was clearly one of total subjection. There is no question, to borrow Ang’s more general observation, that “the ‘myth of consanguinity’ has very real effects on the self-conception of diasporic subjects, as it provides them with a magical solution to the sense of dislocation and rootlessness that many of them experience in their lives” (2001:49). However, more relevant here is how the dialectic of diasporic experience and the racialized nature of Canadian
society (and perhaps of American society) have had a great impact on securing Chinese diasporic subject investments in consanguinity.

Most certainly, however, HKF2’s investment in being Chinese was not merely “sanguinary.” After watching the second section, she made this rather emotional statement:

HKF2: I think the SFG has been trying very hard to promote Chinese culture for all *huaren*, I appreciate that. We watched folk operas, martial arts, calligraphy, a song about the dragon, and … two mother rivers of *huaxia* civilization, I think they are all necessary, we should celebrate them as a nation. The hostess Ni Ping was great, she tells the story in a very affectionate way … We saw the *Opening Presentation* of the ’93 SFG earlier. I actually love that year’s show the most, not just because they had hosts from different *huaren* societies; they’ve got all kinds of Chinese stuff, like dragon dance and martial arts, even people from Singapore performed a song – I remember they adapted a very popular song about Hong Kong, *Pearl of the Orient*, and turned it into a song about the common cultural root of global *huaren*. Very good adaptation, I was touched.

YC: So you really hold dear this cultural sense of being Chinese?
HKF2: Absolutely, I lived in Hong Kong for decades … and Canada for 21 years, but I never forget my cultural roots, and I think it is culture and habit that tell us apart from those who have the same looks, like the Koreans, Japanese or Vietnamese … because we have a different culture, different … national spirit.

YC: How would you define this national spirit?
HKF2: Well, the national spirit … I get excited every time I see those episodes about the Yellow River and the Long River, because they remind me that our nation is … how to say … tenacious! Just like these rivers, not to mention our Chinese culture was born in these places.

YC: How about the dragon and the Great Wall?
HKF2: Same thing, they also symbolize our spirit, tenacious … perseverant … You know, we have suffered a lot, but we survive, and that takes some spirit, right?

YC: I guess you really like Cheung Ming Men’s *My Chinese Heart*, don’t you?
HKF2: Yes I do.

Now we see clearly how HKF2 imagined Chinese Nationality as a cultural nation for global *huaren*. Unlike HKM2, HKF2 was not at all cynical. In fact, she basically succumbed to each and every interpellative strategy, whether the so-
called cultural essences or cultural symbols, with visible positive emotion. The most telling moment was when she also used “culture” as an identitarian marker, distinguishing *huaren* from other “Asian peoples” who might share the same racial features. Her comment on “Chinese national spirit” being tenacious and perseverant and the way in which she associated the “national spirit” with the historical sufferings of the Chinese nation also suggest that her cultural nationalism is entangled with a sense of “wounded nationalism” in addition to the racial nationalism she confided in the previous section.

However, the absoluteness of her subjection to a Chinese racial identity and a Chinese cultural identity did not translate into an unreserved subjection to all other forms of nationalist interpellation. On the contrary, after watching all of the episodes in the third section, the soft-spoken HKF2 dealt a severe blow to familial nationalism’s attempt to make Chinese Nationality into a “super-family”:

HKF2: … If the Mainland always sees itself as the head of the family and everybody wants to return to its arms, there will be a very serious problem. I am thinking about those anti-Chinese events that happened in Southeast Asian countries. A lot of *huaren* were slaughtered. This was certainly horrible, but it had something to do with *huaren*’s attitudes toward their host countries. They had no feelings for their host countries, they were unwilling to integrate, and they kept themselves from other people. Shouldn’t we diasporic *huaren* try our best to serve, even swear allegiance to, the country where we now live? Please don’t say we are your leaves! Please see us as seeds, if you will, because we can germinate in another place, and our new roots and new stems will need the nourishment from the soil where we are, so we can grow bigger and taller. I believe both diasporic *huaren* and the current Chinese government should learn a thing or two from history.

Indeed, HKF2 turned away immediately as soon as the PRC state was presented as the center of Chinese Nationality. As the forgoing discussion demonstrates, such an identitarian turn was by no means unique. Her
uniqueness resides in her efforts to explicitly point out the potential implications of the SFG’s state-nationalist attempt at interpellation and the willingness of certain diasporic subjects to buy into it. For her, both practices could negatively affect the living conditions of diasporic subjects in their “hostlands.” She later went back to the issue of Hong Kong and Taiwan, again expressing an apolitical vision of Chinese Nationality, or in her words, “it is fine to see people who live there or from there as huaren but not loyal citizens of the PRC.”

When we came to the fourth section, HKF2 became suddenly animated and started commenting only seconds into the first episode, and for once I had to pause the screening in order for her to finish:

HKF2: [On Ma’s Army] … I feel this is like using a superiority complex to counteract an inferiority complex. “China will someday run ahead of everyone else!” I think this idea is very dangerous.
YC: I wonder, generally speaking, how you feel about China’s great achievements in sports.
HKF2: China is the most populated country in the world and it has been implementing “juguo tizhi” (whole-country support for the elite sport system)\textsuperscript{164} for decades … [Screening put on hold] … so, they’ll do just fine! Why should I be proud of it? I wonder how China would be if they spared some sports money for social welfare or education …… [Screening continued, Better and Better] … We all know China’s economic reform has been a huge success, and the country is a lot richer now, but I tell you, I’ve been searching for something more important than getting rich.
YC: What is that?
HKF2: Equality, compassion, justice! I watch the SFG. But I also watch other things, I know there are a lot of serious problems in China, I hardly imagine that what we saw in the SFG could be compatible with the reality.
YC: But this is a New Year’s show. People might want to forget the bad things for a moment, right?

\textsuperscript{164} As a specific administrative system and mechanism of Chinese sport, \textit{juguo tizhi}, according to Hong et al, “channeled all sports resources in the country into elite sport and effectively produced hundreds of thousands of young elite athletes in a short time in pursuit of ideological superiority and national status. Its main characteristics are centralized management and administration and guaranteed financial and human resources from the whole country to ensure it maximum support” (2005:512).
HKF2: Of course, I want to be happy too, but don’t lie to people like this. Have more martial arts! Have more folk dances! Have more of what can really represent Chinese culture. There are a lot of ways to forget the pain for a moment … In the SFG, China is always prosperous, powerful, and vigorous, but I read a lot of other things too. I know that Chinese society is full of corruption, greed, despising the poor and currying favor with the rich, lack of sympathy, lack of caring for the socially marginalized. But look at this song! Such a huge contrast, I am speechless. What a beautiful, romantic imaginary world these people are living in! …… [A Eulogy of the Red Flag from the Space Hero] … This is another case of propaganda. Why didn’t the Chinese government invest a little less in space science and a little more to improve social welfare?

It goes without saying that the state of the PRC has never been sentimentalized as a space of belonging in the eyes of HKF2. In this section, her firm sense of social justice played an overwhelming role in her strong objection to the interpellation of confident nationalism. Neither confidence nor pride was evoked in her, but rather anger and angst, manifested by a shaking of the head, a knitting of the brows and quite a few deep sighs. Besides, HKF2’s responses also illustrate a crucial feature of audience-hood, that most viewers are “omnivorous.” In other words, if we see their responses as active processes of meaning-making, we must understand these responses as based not only on their experiences at the moment of viewing, but also, and perhaps more importantly in the case of HKF2, on their past experiences of all types of “stimuli,” including television. These experiences always interact with one another and therefore affect viewer “readings” in all kinds of unexpected ways. On such terms, television production, however powerful, is inevitably polysemic.

While watching the last few episodes, HKF2 did not discuss any televsional strategies of interpellation, but focused on critiquing “the annoying interference of
the government and the CCP in a cultural event such as the SFG.” In the end, she made a clear statement of her position on the party-nation-state conflation:

HKF2: … You don’t have to identify with that government or that regime to be a huaren. Huaren is an identity that is in you. Any government or any regime is not able to take it away, nor do we need any government leaders to confirm it for us.

It is again evident that while HKF2 actively participated in the practice of the formation of a Chinese cultural nation, she simultaneously rejected certain aspects of the process, especially those associated with the PRC regime and its ruling political party.

Unlike Hong Kong’s postcolonial writing self-characterized by “an in-betweenness and an awareness of impure origin, of origins as impure” (Chow, 1992:157), none of the participants from Group HK emitted any sense of “in-betweenness” or “impureness” as all of them took their Chineseness in a cultural sense for granted.165 Such a difference in identity formation, I would argue, might be explained by the “diasporic dialectic” since all of them in different ways talked about their race consciousness having been reawakened here in Canada. Besides, compared with the other two groups, participants from Group HK seemed to show higher levels of “wounded nationalism” or a sense of victimhood, which actually conforms to various Chinese governments’ official discourses of “national humiliation” (Gries, 2004; Zhao, 2004 Callahan, 2006) and might therefore have contributed to their subjection to various nationalist interpellations.

165 HKM1 did mention that his early education in Hong Kong was somewhat “in-between” and “impure,” so to speak, but he had no problem at all claiming his authentic or “pure” “Chineseness” in the racial and cultural senses.
6. Summary

Listening to the narratives of twelve diasporic subjects originally from three different Chinese-speaking societies exposes some dynamic and complex identity formation processes in a rather tangible manner. For instance, although the social imaginary of Chinese Nationality as proposed by the SFG has not been as securely established in people’s minds as the Chinese party-state would like to claim, there are a variety of interesting ways in which people interpellate themselves into membership in Chinese Nationality, keeping alive an imagined community which might be called “global huaren.”

As far as a Chinese racial identity is concerned, racial nationalism has largely prevailed as most of the participants “use[d] birth and bloodline as the most important markers or criteria for ethnic identification and membership” (Tong & Chan, 2001:367). The only variable that seems to affect subject identification in relation to a Chinese racial identity is nationality – Mongolian nationality embodied by MCM2 in this case. However, this variable has barely been taken into account in discourses about the so-called “Chinese Diaspora” in different multicultural settings. Moreover, the reality is that diasporic Chinese are predominantly Han. Given these facts, we seem to be in no position to expect a serious challenge to the very idea of being Chinese in a racial sense. Besides, although two participants (TWF1 and HKM2) did not necessarily articulate a national entity based on a Chinese racial identity, they acknowledged it as a naturalized given nonetheless. In short, a jus sanguinis view of Chineseness is still widely held as the norm of Chineseness.
When it comes to a Chinese cultural identity, cultural nationalism has simply held sway. The responses of all participants make apparent that a distinctive Chinese cultural identity has remained an extremely strong rallying point for collective identification, though participant understandings of it vary to a certain extent. Participants from Group MC, for example, described a version of Chinese cultural identity largely in tune with the representations of the SFG. Even MCM2, who criticized the Han-centric orientation of the SFG’s representations of Chinese culture, acknowledged his own “Chineseness” in a cultural sense “as long as it’s multicultural.” As for the four participants from Group TW, although they critiqued the SFG for not adequately taking into account Chinese traditional culture, they presented four counter-claims of an authentic Chinese cultural identity and confessed a deep affinity for the concept of membership in the cultural nation. As far as participants from Group HK were concerned, despite a number of factors that would suggest the contrary – namely, Hong Kong’s unique colonial history and its highly creolized political culture and social conditions together with the fact that out-migration from Hong Kong to Canada since the late 1980s was due largely to fears about an unpredictable future after Hong Kong’s return to China in 1997 (Ma, 2003) – their Chinese imaginations in a cultural sense were no less active than participants from other groups. Interestingly, findings from this particular study concur with Arif Dirlik’s more general observation about the ways in which Chinese Nationality has survived in diasporic subject imaginations:

Diasporic identity in its reification does not overcome the racial prejudices of earlier assumptions of national cultural homogeneity, but in many ways follows a similar logic, now
at the level not of the nations but off-ground ‘transnations.’ The ‘children of the Yellow Emperor’ may be all the more of a racial category for having abandoned its ties to the political category of the nation (2004:151).

That being said, it is also evident that those interpellative strategies that are highly suggestive of the centrality of either the Chinese state or the Chinese Communist Party have encountered more resistance than endorsement. Specifically, as soon as Chinese Nationality was proposed as a “super-family” that emphasized the centrality or the “home” status of the PRC, participants, especially those from Hong Kong and Taiwan, responded in the framework of “the PRC vs. us,” thus producing an avalanche of statements of objection. In contrast, all participants from Group MC took it as a norm to claim “zhongguo” as the homeland of the global huaren. However, when it came to the interpellation of confident nationalism, an inclusion strategy aimed at keeping viewers as loyal subjects of the nation by boosting their confidence and/or pride in being Chinese, only two participants (MCM1 and HKM1) reveled in the fantasy it might create. The other ten strongly rejected it as a barefaced lie. Moreover, as far as Group TW was concerned, just like familial nationalism worked to remind them of the Mainland’s determination to take them back, confident nationalism operated to inform them of the competitive advantage of the Mainland vis-à-vis Taiwan. As for the party-nation-state conflation, the strategy which has sought to bring the Chinese Communist Party into the imaginary of Chinese Nationality, it has invited nothing but a boycott from all twelve participants, regardless of their social origins. In short, when it came to participants’ Chinese cultural citizenship, the particular state of the PRC and the particular political party of the CCP were in most cases
a source of “pushing out” rather than “pulling in.” Nationalism in the form of racial and cultural nationalisms might have reverberated rather strongly in all three groups, but collapsed rather rapidly when it was directly linked with the party-state of the PRC, just as McKeown observes:

A common heritage of ‘Chineseness’ that spreads across space and time in China appears acceptable (except when too close a link to a government agenda is perceived), but those that span political borders are under suspicion as procedures of homogenization and hegemony that devour human agency and political empowerment (2001:358).

Such a phenomenon is actually quite understandable if we take into consideration the historical and current relationship between China and Taiwan, the CCP’s “bad track record of governing,” and the fact that subjects from Hong Kong have no direct experience with the PRC regime. It is not hard either to see why all participants from China, even MCM1, turned away from the CCP. In fact, their going abroad in and of itself is a clear indication of their political stand. This said, I must also stress that even though there are interviews wherein respondents identify the propaganda elements and easily dismiss them, the SFG cannot be defined solely on these terms given its complex mix of ethnocentrism and glorification of the state, a mix that offers a strong frame of identification even if that identification is with the nation and not the state.

To summarize, there is no denying that despite the “failures” of state-nationalism, all participants have positioned themselves as *huaren* in a variety of ways. Two highly racialized identifiers, “consanguinity” (a Chinese racial identity) and “culture” (a Chinese cultural identity) still work as powerful mobilizing modes of collective identification and are still vigorously implicated in the reproduction of various participant notions of being Chinese. In other words, the SFG resonates
with people not because it is a state narrative of the PRC government, but because it could evoke the very concept of huaren-ness. We can argue, then, that the real issue here is not communist propaganda, but the complex relationships between the formations of “huaren-ness” and various nationalist interpellanations. More specifically, the dynamics of racial formation seem to enhance the ways in which diasporic subjects identify with, and/or invest in, some forms of nationalist interpellanations associated with the SFG. As I have argued in Chapter 1, to understand how race/ethnicity is fundamental to the construction of Chineseness (huaren-ness) is of more than a matter of historical interest. It can also help explain much about the present and the foreseeable future, that is, while the Chinese party-state might only be transitory, the construction of a global huaren community, which is itself a racialized process, might be far more enduring. If the analysis of the highly racialized nature of the SFG makes apparent that race-based ideology is not unique to the “West” and its numerous colonies, the audience responses presented in this chapter reconfirm that racialized beliefs and forms of racist thought are still common across diverse diasporic “huaren communities.”

In addition, thanks to the continuous engagement of my participants, not only have I uncovered the essential role that race thinking – normally considered the consolidation of “color lines” (Du Bois, 1903) and “culture lines” (Gilroy, 2000) – has played in diasporic subject identity formations, but I have also exposed how each participant’s sense of being Chinese has been perpetually earmarked by the dialectic of their diasporic experience. As I have explained, all participants
emphasized, one way or the other, the inevitable and confirmatory role that socialization or other-identification has played in their cultural citizenship in regard to being Chinese. In other words, the “diasporic dialectic” has had an indispensable role in the racial formation of Chinese Nationality. Such a phenomenon, clearly, warrants closer scrutiny in the context of future research.

Before I move on to the next chapter, I also hope to reemphasize the exploratory character of this audience study. Though I made an attempt to ensure a balanced representation in terms of gender and social background, all participants of this study except for MCM1 happened to be highly educated middle class subjects, due perhaps to the inherent limitations of the method of snowball sampling in soliciting participants. I should therefore acknowledge that this sample only produces a certain kind of diasporic reflectiveness on the ideological structure of the interpellations sent out by the Chinese party-state via the production of the SFG. To account for more identity-constitutive variables, especially the ones as important as education and class, this kind of work needs to be extended to other groups of people as well.
Rather than providing a straightforward summary of the research project, my aim in this concluding chapter is to extend my discussion of three key issues which have emerged in relation to the research findings. First, I seek to highlight the contentious issue of cultural citizenship by bringing forward its under-researched subjective and affective components, problematizing the much-studied “race thinking” in the context of contemporary China and in relation to diasporic Chinese subjects. Then I move forward to discuss the implications of what I have called the diasporic dialectic, further problematizing conceptualizations of race and underscoring the dynamic nature of diasporic subject formation. Finally, in an exploratory manner, I outline my vision of “belonging without essences.” In addition to calling for a move that goes beyond the nationalist hold on “identity,” “diaspora,” “subjectivity” and “citizenship,” I also signal prospective concerns for future research.

1. Subjectivity and Cultural Citizenship

Though many serious endeavors in the general field of social and cultural studies have highlighted the powerful role that “Ideological State Apparatuses” have played in the making of “nation-states” and their “national peoples,” some

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dated views of state and society have still heavily influenced how the issue of citizenship has been framed and researched. To date, citizenship as constituted in abstract ways by legal and political rights and participation still represents the “mainstream” of citizenship studies and dominates various media discourses and government policies. Though theorists such as T. H. Marshall (1950) noticed that in constructing citizenship, other forms of loyalty could also play a constitutive role in addition to legal-political rights, the subjective aspect of cultural belonging was never central to their visions of citizenship. In parallel, the civic republican tradition of citizenship initiated by Aristotle, developed by Machiavelli, Rousseau, Tocqueville, and further refined in modern times by Benjamin Barber, emphasized heavily the active participation of the citizen (Pettit, 1997). The great significance of these works notwithstanding, they have left aside the cultural dimension of citizenship to varying extents, not to mention the subjective and/or affective aspects of cultural belonging.

In fact, I would add that even those theorists who do take into consideration the complexity of the very term “cultural citizenship” do so mainly in terms of the institutional dimension of both rights and participation. According to Axel Honneth, for instance, cultural citizenship is concerned with “the degree of self esteem accorded to his or her manner of self-realisation within a society’s inherited cultural horizon” (1995:134). For Renato Rosaldo, cultural citizenship is

167 Classical views of the state, whether Marxist, Weberian or neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian, and even Althusserian and Durkheimian to certain degrees, tend to underrate the dynamic role of culture in the general process of state formation. Rather, culture is largely seen as a product of state and cultural practices, and therefore, as only a representation of larger social structures. Even if there is a role for culture in state formation, its purview is seen as only marginal (Steinmetz, 1999). In short, while the power of the state and its impact on culture are duly noted, the dialectical relationship between culture and state formation are not appropriately acknowledged in this line of thought.
concerned with “who needs to be visible, to be heard, and to belong” (1999:260). According to Toby Miller, cultural citizenship “concerns the maintenance and development of cultural lineage through education, custom, language, and religion and the positive acknowledgment of difference in and by the mainstream” (2001:2). Clearly, for these scholars, cultural citizenship is, and rightly so, a matter of inclusion. Importantly, however, the “inclusion” here is mainly about everyone, especially the marginalized population, belonging to the larger collective. To put it more precisely, it is about every “citizen” being included and therefore having a place in, or feeling a sense of belonging to, the pluralist nation or multicultural society. The significance of these views is not to be discounted, however, as inclusion or belonging in terms of rights and respect has indeed been one of the social problems beleaguering various pluralist or multicultural societies including Canada. I would argue, nevertheless, that this line of thought is defined by the relegation of cultural citizenship to a demand for cultural rights or cultural respect. On such terms, cultural citizenship is but a counterpart of civic, political, and economic rights and participation.

Without a doubt, this project also relates closely to the notion of inclusion or belonging, but I hope to stress that it does so on different terms. As participants' responses have demonstrated, the sense of belonging involved in their cultural citizenship does not take place in just one particular site or in one conflated form. It is engaged transnationally and in an extremely complex manner. To put it differently, their senses of belonging or not belonging do not necessarily point at a particular nation-state, but rather at a totalizing notion of nation or national
imaginary. In short, at stake are subjectivity and/or affective attachment rather than aspiration for cultural rights or cultural respect.

Recognizing the important difference between these two senses of belonging and noticing that “there is much uncertainty on the relationship between the rights discourse and the wider and more transformative discourse of cultural belonging” (Delanty, 2002:66), some authors have pointed to the limitations of the mainstream cultural rights discourse and have suggested addressing the issue of belonging in the study of cultural citizenship from the perspective of subject formation and/or affective attachment (Delanty, 2000; 2002; Stevenson, 2001; 2003). However, as far as the general field of Chinese studies is concerned, as I have pointed out in the preceding chapters, the conglomerate terms of “China” and “Chinese” are still being treated largely as essentialist concepts external and immune to subjectivity/subjectification. The scenario becomes even more disturbing if we take into account relevant studies in relation to “Chinese Diasporas.” Again, as I have explained, the study of the nation-state formation of China from the perspective of subject interpellation is insufficiently developed, as is the issue of “Chinese cultural citizenship” in light of the diaspora’s subjective sense of belonging.

Under such circumstances, this project convenes twelve self-professed diasporic Chinese subjects who are SFG viewers as well. In so doing, it seeks to tell the story of how some diasporic Chinese subjects have negotiated their cultural citizenship with, and thus reevaluated the legitimacy of, the Chinese empire as an imagined community. Though not great in number, the participants
in this research make apparent that the ways in which the interpellations of the SFG have been understood and appropriated are no less complex than the particular strategies employed by the SFG in delivering interpellations to target audiences. While their continuous imagining of the “Chinese Nationality” helps to elucidate the complex mechanisms that contribute to the retaining power of interpellation, their moments of “de-imagining” also shed light on the problems and difficulties of such interpellation. The discussions in Chapters 3 and 4 thus demonstrate that at the heart of notions of cultural citizenship are not merely the issues of inclusion and exclusion in a legal-political sense, however important. Critically, my analysis reveals that a keen grasp of people’s subjective sense of belonging and/or not belonging and of their affective investments in such identitarian positionings are essential to understanding the issue of “being Chinese” and, in turn, the non-essentialist character of “Chinese Nationality.”

Consequently, this project contributes to the general field of China studies and various related fields because it not only brings to attention the under-studied issue of Chinese cultural citizenship, but also offers some insights into the subjective and/or affective components of the complex and dynamic identity formation that might be called “Chinese.” Most certainly, this project also intends to encourage in a variety of ways a wider range of studies that would attend to the issue of cultural citizenship in general and Chinese cultural citizenship in particular.

On the issue of Chinese cultural citizenship, I would add that some sinologists, such as Dikötter (1992; 1994; 1997), Duara (1995; 1997; 1998), Dirlik (2004;
2008) and Sautman (1997a; 1997b; 2001) have made clear what kind of a role that race thinking, both biological and cultural, has played in making the “Chinese Nation” and “Chinese people” over a long historical span. This project extends their works by contextualizing itself within the fields of cultural production and audience reception in the contemporary moment. Such a novel practice also enables me to show that race thinking is not only an uninterrupted as well as ongoing practice of state actors, but that it also exerts a significant impact upon the subjective sense of cultural citizenship of the contemporary subject, just as it did to the historical processes of China’s nation-state formation. To bring the discussion even further, I also raise a question that has not been asked seriously enough by the aforementioned observers of Chinese culture and of cultural practices in China and the diaspora: Other than presenting race thinking as “historical facts,” what are the implications as well as problems of race thinking in relation to the shaping of Chinese cultural citizenship?

In *Race Ends Here* (1998) and *Against Race* (2000), Paul Gilroy deals two major blows to race thinking in his writings against racism and what he calls “raciology.” In one eloquent tirade after another, Gilroy forcefully contends that “the old, modern idea of ‘race’ can have no ethically defensible place” (2001:6). In sympathy with Gilroy’s vision, I do not for a moment question his post-race sensibility; but I am forced to “sound the alarm” given what we have heard from the participants in this study. Contrary to what Gilroy supposes, this project demonstrates that transnational migration has, ironically, allowed for a highly racialized Chinese cultural identity to become fetishized under the auspices of
transnationalism and globalization. Racial observance, both biological and
cultural, is still commonplace across all three diasporic groups. Although most
participants might have discarded state-nationalism, an act that might have
challenged the hegemonic view of Chinese Nationality, they compensate with
racial and cultural nationalisms that continually impart ontological values,
however diverse and complex, to race, “with the effect that race can take on a
reified status” (Nayak, 2006:414). It seems, as succinctly put by Ahmed, “there is
no necessary link between forms of travel, migration and movement and the
transgression and destabilization of identity” (Ahmed, 1999:338). Therefore, to
understand how Chinese Nationality has survived in people’s imagination
transnationally, it is crucial to acknowledge the centrality of race thinking in
processes of interpellation. In fact, even Gilroy himself appears baffled by the
question of “why we implicitly deploy a concept that we explicitly recognize is
lacking validity” (Nayak, 2006:421).

The power of race thinking can not only persist, but can also be brought to a
higher level. I have discussed participant moments of “de-imagining” reflected by
the overall failure of PRC/CCP-related interpellative strategies. Here I hope to
“sound the alarm” a second time. Considering the highly mediatized “overall rise
of China,” it is entirely possible that racial nationalism could work in concert with
familial nationalism, confident nationalism and even party-nation-state conflation,
thus exerting more impact on diasporic subject identity formations in the future. In
fact, we can already see how the nationalist narratives of some non-Mainland or
diasporic “huaren” have gone from “wounded” to “confident” and finally to
“aggressive” in tone. Given the significance of popular culture as a site of affective phantasmatic investment and thus a cultural arena important for diagnosing emergent nationalist formations (Giroux & Simon, 1989; Simon, 1992), I use here a pop song as an example to illustrate my point. S.H.E., a Taiwanese girl band, received much attention and acclaim in Mainland China after performing the song Zhongguohua (Chinese Language) in the 2008 SFG. Below is part of the lyrics:

Different skin colors and different hair colors,
All are speaking the most popular language that is zhongguohua.
It used to be us learning diligently the English pronunciations and grammars,
It is now their turn to roll their tongues to learn all the tonal changes.
…… ……
The whole world is learning zhongguohua,
The language of Confucius is more and more internationalized now.
The whole world is speaking zhongguohua.
Whatever we are saying – the whole world better be listening carefully now!

Note that in Taiwan, people always use guoyu, as opposed to zhongguohua, to refer to the Chinese language because zhongguohua is a composite word of zhongguo (the PRC) and hua (language). However, not only is the song entitled Zhongguohua, its lyrics are illustrative of the transformation of the nationalist expressions from, once again, “wounded” to “confident” and finally to “aggressive.” Meanwhile, more and more well-known diasporic or non-Mainland Chinese have become active participants in various cultural events staged in Mainland China, embodying an increasing fondness for the idea of “a Chinese super-family” on racial/cultural terms. International movie star Jackie Chan, for
instance, has appeared numerous times in various cultural events staged in Mainland China over the past few years. Always dressed in either hanfu\textsuperscript{168} or tangzhuang, he not only played a part in the 2009 SFG, but also performed the highly promoted song called Guojia (Country) in multiple televised events such as the Opening Ceremony of the China 2009 World Stamp Exhibition – a nationally televised event claimed to be as spectacular as the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Olympics – thereby expressing his attachment to the concept of China, if not exactly the country of the PRC. Here is part of the lyrics:

\begin{verbatim}
The country is my country
The family is my family
I love my country
I love my family
I love my country and my family.
\end{verbatim}

Of course, one can point to the quest for market exposure to explain these strategic moves. However, I would argue that these moves are indicative of a larger trend, that is, the symbolic power of the Chinese state to play an increasingly influential role in the identity formations of global huaren in the contemporary moment.

Besides, more and more cultural ventures engaged in by diasporic subjects also suggest that the diasporic subject Chinese imagination can be extremely active without collaborating with, receiving funding from, or, to put it bluntly,

\textsuperscript{168} Hanfu, literally meaning Han clothing, refers to the historical dress of the Han Chinese people. Interestingly, the past decade has witnessed a movement in China and diasporic communities to revive hanfu, in addition to tangzhuang (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of tangzhuang), in everyday life, various media productions and special cultural events, such as festivals or celebrations.
making money out of, the party-state of the PRC. For example, in 2007, Ginger Post was launched as “a new online magazine for and about Chinese Canadians, Chinese Overseas in other parts of the world, and to a lesser extent the Asian Canadians.” According to the Editor and Publisher Dr. Wei Djao, the ultimate goal of this online magazine is to serve as “the means that connect the Chinese Canadians.” It is important to note that like some English websites which target diasporic Chinese or global huaren, such as the website of the World Huaren Federation (http://www.huaren.org), Ginger Post is neither sponsored by, nor seeks to serve the interests of, the Chinese party-state. It is also of interest to point out that though it does not offer a clear-cut definition of “Chinese,” its “Chinese imagination” remains palpable. Here is Djao’s introduction to the website:

…… there are millions of Canadians, whether they are of Chinese ancestry or not, who do not understand Chinese but are still interested in learning about what Chinese Canadians are doing or about issues that are of particular concern to the Chinese Canadians. Among them are hundreds of thousands of ethnic Chinese who were born and raised, or who grew up outside of China. These are the Chinese overseas, known in Chinese as the huayi (華裔, meaning the descendants of the Chinese). They are ethnically Chinese but their everyday language is for the most part English. They may want to know something about their Chinese

169 Let me be clear, this is not to say that the Chinese party-state plays little or no role in most diasporic cultural productions. In fact, as suggested in Chapter 1, the Chinese party-state has been actively involved in various diasporic cultural productions.
170 http://gingerpost.com/
171 http://gingerpost.com/?page_id=2
172 Ibid.
173 To see how this website used to operate as an “electronic diasporic mobilization,” see Ang (2001). In addition, the rapid development of the internet has also given rise to countless new websites over the last decade that explicitly target global huaren. To list just a few, see http://www.networkchinese.com/, http://www.worldchinese.net, http://www.huayuworld.org/, and http://www.tzzs.com/.
174 The website of the World Huaren Federation clearly defines huaren as “people of Chinese origin by birth, descent and heritage inside and outside China” (http://www.huaren.org/).
heritage or what is happening in the Chinese communities across Canada and around the world. (http://gingerpost.com/?page_id=2, italics added).

She continues:

There are several reasons behind the choice of “ginger” in our name Ginger Post. Culturally the Chinese Canadians, aside from the most recent immigrants, are more Canadian than Chinese, just as the Chinese overseas are more acculturated in the local languages, traditions, and customs of whatever countries where they were born or reside. It is likely that most of them may have some elements of Chinese culture in their everyday life. However, there is no common Chinese culture among all Chinese Canadians or among all Chinese overseas. Perhaps the only element of Chinese culture that the Chinese overseas may have in common is Chinese food. But even then, one is immediately confronted with the vast variety of Chinese regional cuisine. There is, nonetheless, one small item that is common to all Chinese food, wherever it is cooked, both inside and outside of China, and that is ginger (ibid, italics added).

Again, these are not special efforts made to define “Chinese,” but they are explicit enough to reveal how “Chinese” is imagined by the magazine on both ethnic/racial and cultural (culinary) terms and in quite an essentialist manner. To relate such a cultural venture to the relationship between race thinking and Chinese cultural citizenship, I also like to quote Amy Chow’s comment posted on gingerpost.com on January 27th, 2009:

I have always identified myself as “Canadian” despite my Chinese heritage. Yet the Olympics in Beijing this summer brought out some deep buried Chinese pride that I never knew existed.175

It is of interest to note that Chow was born in Canada to a mother who was originally from Taiwan. In a story about Ginger Post aired on OMNI-TV Canada

on June 27, 2009, Chow not only claimed that it was the Beijing Olympics that made her identify herself as Chinese for the first time, but also talked about how she availed herself of Ginger Post to know “my people” and “my roots.” Indeed, while only a single online post and television feature story, Chow’s responses to the Beijing Olympics together with her comment on Ginger Post show how the (self-) interpellation of racial/cultural nationalism could cooperate with confident nationalism in some seemingly trivial practices, thus contributing to the construction of the idea of Chinese cultural citizenship.

What is more, a glimpse of the most current Chinese-language media productions, whether produced inside or outside of China, also tells us of another aspect of the growing trend – that China’s relatively higher level of resilience in the face of the recent global financial downturn has laid additional groundwork for the promotion of both confident nationalism, familial nationalism and, ultimately, the “yellow normalcy.” Under these circumstances, it is quite possible that more people would choose to bask themselves in China’s symbolic power. For them, adjusting the very structure of their sense of being Chinese might be a rather practical choice. Therefore, it would be dangerously premature to celebrate the failure of the Chinese party-state’s state-nationalism in the formation of global huaren. The discourses of “race” and “nation” have not ended in China – or in Canada, for that matter.

2. The Dynamic Nature of Diasporic Formation

Race thinking not only plays a crucial role in the formation of Chinese cultural citizenship, it also contributes tremendously to the emergence of the “diasporic
diatetic." As this audience study has shown, the dialectic of the diasporic experience, or the “diasporic dialectic,” is of tremendous identitarian significance to all participants, regardless of social origin. All twelve participants discussed, in different ways, how other-identification (being identified as “Chinese” by the other), which they experienced primarily through socialization with “non-Chinese” and “different Chinese,” can operate on a daily basis to “confirm” or “remind” them of their own “Chineseness” or “huaren identity.” In short, a racialized view of peoplehood – “a mundane sort of violence” (Butler, 1994:6) – is far from obsolete in Canada. As a result, diasporic subjects are often caught between parallel racialized messages: from the homeland depicting their biologized or culturalized “roots” and from the hostland confirming their “otherness.” I would argue, therefore, that the social conditions of multicultural Canada (and perhaps of other major host countries) afford little protection against the Chinese party-state’s racialized nationalist interpellation. Indeed, most of these host countries are “free” countries. However, freedom is the form of interpellation that operates in countries like Canada to hide or mask other problematics such as class retrenchment or racism. Multiculturalism is precisely such a moralizing politics of freedom that fails to challenge nationalism (Brown, 1995; 2001). It is no wonder that Waldinger & Fitzgerald argue, “migrants do not make their communities alone: states and state politics shape the options for migrant and ethnic trans-state social action” (2004:1177).

176 See Chapter 4 for explanation.
Therefore, what Arendt calls an “enlarged mentality”\textsuperscript{177} (1982) might help us to question the “national, nationalistic, and ethnically absolutist paradigms” (Gilroy, 1992:193) in multicultural settings. To be more precise, each individual “Chinese” is not just another manifestation of an abstract entity conveniently called “Chinese Nationality.” If we are to treat the “Chinese” as active social actors, we should never reduce or erase their complexity and plurality with a simplistic acknowledgement of, or respect for, human difference. The use of “China” and especially of “Chinese” as sweeping terms is indeed another identitarian burden for some diasporic Chinese subjects; this is perhaps particularly so for non-Mainlanders given the many complexities, contradictions and conflicts that are unjustifiably elided in the process, which creates a rather unitary, linear, and reified sense of China and Chinese. In short, when the irreducible “Chineseness” of “other Chinese” is not engaged, a wrong is being committed. In the words of Roger Simon, “It is crucial … that we avoid taking positions that fail in recognizing the potential we have for accepting and legitimating oppressive thought and behaviour as a normal feature of our everyday life” (1984:126). Simon’s caveat, though made in a totally different context, is appropriate not only for individual “groupists”\textsuperscript{178} (Brubaker, 2002), but

\textsuperscript{177} According to Arendt, “An enlarged mentality is the condition \textit{sine qua non} of judgment; one’s community sense makes it possible to enlarge one’s mentality” (1982:73). I see this “enlarged mentality” as an expression of the ontological connectedness between the “self” and the “other”. In other words, the concept of an “enlarged mentality” calls for an intersubjective commitment to human difference, rather than for an ontological treatment of such difference.

\textsuperscript{178} In his incisive article \textit{Ethnicity without Groups}, Rogers Brubaker problematizes various forms of groupism prevalent in social and cultural analyses in general and in the studies of ethnicity, race and nationalism in particular. By groupism, he means “the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis. In the domain of ethnicity, nationalism and race, I mean by ‘groupism’ the tendency to treat ethnic
also for various groupist states and their institutions. With this in mind, therefore, both individual and state actors should make every effort not to reify “diasporic Chinese” as though they were an isolated/isolatable group, racially/essentially distinctive from “the other.” To put it more generally, diasporic subjects should not be categorized on racial and/or ethnic terms or be treated as racially and/or ethnically distinguishable groups in the name of multiculturalism or diversity.\(^{179}\)

Besides, we should remember that travelling across the ocean with all immigrants are not only various forms of “capital” in general and ready-to-use skills in particular, but also much more, including subjectivities and “identity blues” (Ang, 2001) ready to be unpacked by any unexpected stimulation at any unanticipated moment. To essentialize diasporic subjects is at the same time to set up the conditions for the possible emergence of diasporic nationalism, thus making such subjects more susceptible to the interpellation of the transnational (Chinese) nationalism emanating from the Chinese party-state (or any other nationalist “homeland”). As this project has demonstrated, as much as the cultural and political homogenization within its national borders has been an overt

\(^{179}\) It is beyond the scope of this project to discuss in great detail the issue of multiculturalism and the associated issue of diversity. It is necessary, though, to mention that key critics of multiculturalism tend to agree that, to borrow from Bhabha, “multiculturalism represented an attempt both to respond to and to control the dynamic process of the articulation of cultural difference, administering a consensus based on a norm that propagates cultural diversity” (1990a:208-209). To say a little more, a multiculturalist’s “politically correct” hold on diversity can paradoxically end up entrenching the cultural and ethnic differences between the “homeland” and the “hostland,” reifying different cultural, ethnic and linguistic traits and creating discourses of fixed, hence exclusive, culture and identity. See Ang (2001) and Morley & Chen (1992) for more discussion about the problems of multiculturalism and the associated issue of diversity.
project of the Chinese party-state, its aspiration to make this project transnational has become increasingly clear. Once transnational Chinese nationalism gains significant traction in Canadian society, its exclusionary vision could hinder amiable interactions amongst peoples of different backgrounds, even inside the so-called “huaren circle,” thus engendering tensions and antagonism, if not hatred. In this way, it could serve to spur social indifference and cultural voyeurism, and even political separatism and ethnic division between ethnicities, prompting “non-Chinese” to become nationalistic when interacting with “Chinese.”

In fact, it is just such a problematic that makes me wary of using “Chinese Diaspora” as a proper or collective noun. Therefore, rather than re-conceptualizing diaspora, which is beyond the scope of this project, I follow the lead of a group of anthropologists and critical social and cultural theorists, such as Aihwa Ong and Ien Ang whom I review in Chapter 1, and call for an alternative analytical tool which emphasizes the contested, contradictory, procedural and performative nature of diasporic subjects. Together, we advocate for transferring the subject of analysis from the static entity of Diaspora to its dynamic formation. This move radically repositions the category of analysis from entity to process: from a focus on the othered people in question to an exploration of how members of diasporic groups are differentially located within

\footnote{To me, the idea of political solidarity among diasporic Chinese will only be meaningful when it means a collective challenge to the Sino-centric and Han-centric view of China and Chineseness, or a group rebuttal when encountering government sponsored discrimination or large-scale exclusion in a particular society at a particular moment. It should never be a political strategy employed to break the “together-in-difference” (Ang, 2003) from the other on the pretext of blood folk or kinship.}
specific socio-historical contexts through processes of signification. Ultimately this analytic shift broadens the theoretical analysis by examining aspects of diasporic subjects neglected or masked by essentialized interpretations. Wang Gungwu’s oft-cited comment on the use of the term “Chinese Diaspora” bears mention in this context:

The more I think about it, the unhappier I am that the term has come to be applied to the Chinese. I have used the term with great reluctance and regret, and I still believe that it carries the wrong connotation and that, unless it is used carefully to avoid projecting the image of a single Chinese diaspora, will eventually bring tragedy to the Chinese overseas. (1999:15)

Indeed, considering the various essentialist understandings of “Chinese diaspora,” Wang’s concerns do raise a valid point, thus driving us to think further.

This brings me to some other zealous users of *haiwai huaren* (Chinese Diaspora), namely the Chinese party-state, its agencies, and its diasporic activists. I have made an effort in this project to illustrate how the Chinese party-state has attempted to establish a symbolic regime through which globally dispersed “Chinese” might affectively comprehend a specific relationship to each other and the Mainland state and its population. In fact, the nationalist activists of the Chinese party-state, according to Prasenjit Duara, have “sought to transform these multiple, mobile identifications into a Chineseness that eliminated or reduced internal boundaries, on the one hand, and hardened the boundaries between Chinese and non-Chinese, on the other” (1997:41). Therefore, to those avid users of *haiwai huaren*, I would also highlight the benefit of an “enlarged mentality.” They should know that this particular audience study, however exploratory, contributes to exposing the impracticality of “making many one.”
I would go so far as to argue that the central aspect of Chinese transnational nationalism is its tendency to falsely and summarily equate and variously position all "huaren" as having the same imagined roots, positions, and/or dispositions. To say that all Chinese hold an equally nationalist or patriotic view of China, or conversely that the interests of the Mainland government can adequately serve the interests of all Chinese is, as a matter of fact, committing an essentialist reduction of Chineseness. We should know, as forcefully expounded by Arendt, that essentialist reductionism could lay the groundwork for any state attempt at total domination which "strives to organize the infinite plurality and differentiation of human beings as if all of humanity were just one individual" (1973:438). Once turned into reality, the totalitarian rule could inflict insurmountable violence upon human society, as illustrated by the histories of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union under Stalin’s rule and China in the Cultural Revolution period (Arendt, 1973). Given that this project revolves around the issue of “China” and “Chinese,” it is appropriate to quote Arendt's observation about the CCP and its totalitarian past:

The Chinese Communist Party after its victory had at once aimed at being ‘international in organization, all-comprehensive in its ideological scope, and global in its political aspiration,’ that is, its totalitarian traits have been manifest from the beginning (1973: xxvii).

Considering the PRC’s current efforts to create a transnational solidarity of global Chinese, we should take history as a mirror and appreciate the astounding relevance of Arendt’s observation for the contemporary moment. To avoid the problem and the potential danger of essentialist reductionism being turned into a totalitarian form of socialization, perhaps we would also do well to remember
Phillip Corrigan’s warning against the symbolic violence of any form of identity politics that defies plurality as a basic human condition:

So long as we expect to find unitary (or potentially unitary) social individuals constituted around particular identities we shall not be able to understand the fragility, permeability, difficulty, agony, and yet poetic energy of most human lives which result from attempting to live with and through the contradictory combination of a variety of possible social classifications, possible identities (1990:114).

As this preliminary study has shown that all diasporic Chinese subjects do not share the same experience of being Chinese. An imagined or shared race/ethnicity and/or culture might seem to be sufficient to sustain a Chinese cultural nation for the time being; however, this is far from enough to guarantee a commonality in political positionings. For the Chinese party-state, it is imperative to realize that various diasporic “Chinese” subjects are in reality very active social actors, hence the range of responses to Chinese nationalism world-wide, be it religious, ethnic or cultural. Or, in Hall’s much-cited words,

The silent majority do think; if they do not speak, it may be because we have taken their speech away from them, deprived them of the means of enunciation, not because they have nothing to say. I would argue that in spite of the fact that the popular masses have never been able to become in any complete sense the subject-authors of the cultural practices in the twentieth century, their continuing presence, as a kind of passive historical-cultural force, has constantly interrupted, limited, and disrupted everything else (in Morley & Chen, 1992:140).

In fact, diasporic subjects have constantly negotiated their identities with their lifeworlds and have flourished in an “enunciative space” (Bhabha, 1994:259), which, in the context of my concern, is evident in the on going flux in the meanings of “Chinese citizenship” or “Chineseness” perpetually in motion.
3. Nomadic Subjectivity: Belonging without Essences

To further the discussion, I will take this conclusive remark as a chance to call for a “nomadic subjectivity” for diasporic subjects. To explain what I mean by nomadic subjectivity, let me once more call upon Hannah Arendt. “I have a metaphor,” Arendt once remarked, “which I have never published but kept for myself. I call it thinking without a banister. That is, as you go up and down the stairs you can hold onto the banister so that you don’t fall down. But we have lost this banister” (1979:336). If we imagine the “banister” as a set of guidelines for our behavior, philosophical foundations for our theoretical engagement, or values that provide a durable context for our judgment, we must acknowledge that they are both constructed and always under construction. In a similar fashion, Deleuze and Guattari also present a vision of “nomadology” (1986). For Deleuze and Guattari, however, far from thinking (or needing to think) with a banister, nomads constantly threaten the authority of the “banister.” In keeping with this spirit, nomadic science keeps infiltrating royal science, undermining its axioms and principles. The theoretical claim here is that both the work of Arendt and that of Deleuze and Guattari propose a creative and resistant ethics of becoming and a radical skepticism toward hegemonic norms, and thus strategize a continuous intervention into a unitary vision of human subjectivity. In terms of this project, when exploring “huaren” subject formation, we need to develop a capacity for conceptualizing the adjective “Chinese” without evoking an essentialist ontology of “Chineseness.” It is also on such terms that I argue for a wider range of
scholarly attention to the nomadic life of diasporic subjects from anthropological and ethnographic points of view.

In fact, in addition to the ideas of Arendt and of Deleuze and Guattari future research could also draw inspiration from the many theoretical constructions that have engaged in various ways with the plurality, complexity and multiplicity of human subjectivity, such as Trinh T. Minh Ha’s “the inappropriate/d other” (1989), Donna Haraway’s “cyborg” (1991), Zygmunt Bauman’s “tourists/vagabonds” (1998), Ien Ang’s “peranakan” (2001; 2003) and Gloria Anzaldúa’s “mestiza” (2007), to name just a few. This is not to say that these figures/figurations signify equal levels of “nomadism,” or that they capture all the complexities of diasporic subject formation. Rather, the theoretical claim here is that they all point to what Hall calls the “frontier effects” (1996a:3) of diasporic subjectivity, and to a constant and complex reworking, conscious or instinctive, rational or aesthetic, of the “self” and the “habitus” in which these “selves” are situated. Within such formulations, diasporic Chinese, as nomadic subjects, could be better equipped with a sense of “flexible citizenship” (Ong, 1999) and would therefore be in a better position to form their multiple identities through various actions and interventions.

Furthermore, I would like to call upon those “non-Chinese” subjects – for lack of a better phrase – who still hold “race” and “racial difference” as essentialist truths to look into the benefits that a nomadic consciousness could possibly provide and therefore not to essentialize Chineseness. In an age when the Chinese party-state is directly and actively engaged in the valorization of a Sino-
centric view of Chineseness, we “Chinese” and “non-Chinese” must nurture the kind of nomadic thinking that allows us to stand outside a given meaning of nation and ethnicity, and retain a radical skepticism toward the cultural logics of making and remaking the hegemonic construction of so-called Chinese identity. To this transformative end, we need to relinquish historically-established habits of thought. Instead, we must stand in favor of a decentered and multi-layered vision of the subject as a dynamic and changing entity, situated in shifting social, cultural, historical and political contexts. If the terms Chinese or Chineseness have not yet outlived their usefulness, we must, I argue, eschew the racializing and nationalist reductions of Chineseness, which cater solely to the political interests of the Mainland. This project makes apparent that, historically and culturally, the changing identity of Chineseness has never taken a single form, and therefore, that no single telos should be reductively assigned to all Chinese in a hegemonic, however subtle, way. If we could think along these lines and act accordingly, perhaps we could one day realize that:

‘China’, the mythic homeland, will stop being the absolute norm for ‘Chineseness’ against which all other Chinese cultures of the diaspora are measured. Instead, Chineseness becomes an open signifier, which acquires its peculiar form and content in dialectical junction with the diverse local conditions in which ethnic Chinese people, wherever they are, construct new, hybrid identities. (Ang, 2001:35)

Having said this, I must clarify that I do not intend to essentialize anti-essentialism by saying that ethno-national attachments, in whatever form, are fundamentally mere ontological “prisons.” Rather, they are, more often than not, real, palpable and even intense affects that any anti-essentialist view of identity must reckon with.
At the same time, I would like to recognize the limits of diasporic Chinese in terms of their political influence (Chow, 1993; Ang, 2001; Sun, 2006) and demystify the fluidity, border-crossing and hybridity normally associated with diasporic status as intrinsically subversive of power structures (Hutnyk in Werbner & Modood, 1997). Instead, I envision a novel perspective that encompasses the necessity of cultural forms of challenge, including this project, as a potential condition of social change. Over time, discursive transnational interventions through multiple narratives could come to constitute a great challenge to the hegemonic view of Chinese Nationality and Chinese subjectivity framed by the Chinese party-state. A novel social reform could start from, and dwell in, people’s everyday interpretation of the television message as a form of representational practice, such as Chow’s “tactics of intervention” and “specific social power” (1993) interpreted by Ang as “the power to interrupt, to trouble, to intervene tactically rather than strategically in the interrogation of dominant discourses” (2001:2).

I have attempted to signal certain prospective concerns, albeit partial and even exploratory, which challenge racializing and nationalist interpellations. Also, while cultural forms of interpellation are crucial elements of China’s politics of subject inclusion, it must be remembered that they are not the only elements. Thus, cultural challenges to these interpellation strategies must be seen as constituting a partial challenge to racializing and nationalist thought. In short, even if these epistemological transformations and accompanying socio-political, practical changes were to occur, “China” and “Chinese” would remain as
organizing entities in China’s politics of subject inclusion. Much more work is needed in this area. As an encouragement for redrawing various imaginary boundaries in relation to nation, whether totalitarian or multicultural, and people, whether national or diasporic, I would like to quote the powerful words of Nikolas Rose:

…… what is to be destabilized, what we are to try to think beyond, are all those claims made by others to govern us in the name of our own well-being, to speak for us, to identify our needs, to know us better than we can know ourselves. Perhaps they do, but, to the extent that others claim to speak in our name, we have the right thereby to ask them by what right they claim to know us so well; to the extent that others seek to govern us in our own interests, we have the right, as governed subjects, to interrogate and even protest those strategies in the name of our own claims to know those interests (1999:59-60).

In this same spirit, I would like to end with two quotes from participants in this study. I can clearly see the signals of nomadic subjectivity emanating from their beautifully crafted statements, which “break the restraining hold of nationalist history and its frozen past upon our political imaginations” (Gilroy, 2000:8):

In wine-making the term “terroir” makes reference to soil, climate and authenticity. You take the famous Syrah grape from Bordeaux, France and export the plant to McClaren Vale, Australia, plant it in the ground, yield grapes and then subsequently turn it into wine. Ask any wine-maker and they will tell you that it is a Shiraz – very good Shiraz, but no Syrah. Climate changes, soil conditions, acidity in the rain, the amount of sun exposure affect your final product. It becomes a different product. I do not feel any less Chinese than someone born and raised in Beijing, and I don’t think the Mainland is the center or the root. Even if there were such a thing as the Chinese super-family; it has broken up into many different families a long time ago. These families have turned into Shirazes, so to speak … (HKM2)

The place where huaren live are the roots of the huaren. This “living tree” metaphor, which is based on hierarchy, is discriminatory against those who live outside of Mainland China. I would rather compare all those places where huaren live to a forest. Every tree has its own roots, its own branches and leaves, holding up the sky, standing up on the earth, thriving and prospering, forming its own forest … (TWM1)


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