Material Avatars: A Sensuous Cartography of the Korean Wave

Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

DEBJANI DUTTA

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND AESTHETICS
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067
INDIA

2012

27th July 2012

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled '**Material Avatars: A Sensuous Cartography of the Korean Wave**' submitted by me to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy is my own work. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

Debjani Dutta

CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Dr.Parul Dave Mukherji   **Dr.Ranjani Mazumdar**

Dean   Supervisor

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

> You want me to say salanghae (I love you)
> Complain that our romance is not like that in a Korean drama
> You want me to carry you barefoot along the seaside
> Order me to eat a pack of Korean instant noodles everyday
> I am not Song Seung-hoon.[1]

Written by the Malaysian duo Hudson Gan and Kit Teo, this song expresses the woes of a man with a girlfriend infatuated with the Korean actor Song Seung-hoon. The singers lament their inability to recreate the sensational love stories and dramatic scenarios featured in Korean television dramas popular in the region, even as they fend off pressures to adopt a Korean lifestyle. Doobo Shim (2008) in his work[2] on the transnational cultural industries spawned by the Korean Wave, mobilizes these lyrics to reflect on the manner in which Korean popular culture is embedded in local communities in Asia. Intrigued by this passing reference, my attempts to find other resources for the song were met with naught. After scouring through several books and websites, I contacted one of the administrators of a Malaysia-based website on Korean popular culture. Within moments of posting the query on their *Facebook* page, the readers of *K-popped!* had unearthed an extensive archive. Barely ten minutes had lapsed before I had access to the original Chinese lyrics and a rough English translation of the full song. Others came forward to provide links to the music video and MP3 files, and what one had imagined to be an angst-ridden sound turned out to be a rather soft and melodious tune. These audio-visual resources breathed life into the brief textual snippet, contextualising its tone and cultural connotations. Apart from providing insight into the meaning of the song, the incident laid bare the mechanisms

---

[1] I'd like to thank the k-popped.com community for providing me with the full translation of the song.
[2] Doobo Shim, "The Growth of Korean Cultural Industries and the Korean Wave" in *East Asian Pop Culture: analysing the Korean wave* (2008) by Chua Beng Huat and Koichi Iwabuchi ed. Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong.

of online circulation of the Korean Wave that put the local in dialogue with the global. The vernacular negotiations of the Korean Wave could no longer be insulated from its translation and dissemination across virtually-connected transnational communities of fans.

The Korean wave or *Hallyu* refers to the emergence of an intensive and extensive wave of South Korean popular culture in the period after the Asian financial crisis of 1997, seen primarily in Japan, China and Southeast Asia but also in North America, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. According to a publication of the Korea Tourism Organisation, the Korean wave "is the growing aspiration to know more about Korean culture…which stimulates *Hallyu* to develop into more sophisticated cultural forms..."[3] While it is almost impossible to trace the Korean wave in terms of an 'event', it can be said to have registered its presence with the 2002 television drama *Winter Sonata*, which gained high ratings on Japanese television and fuelled the *Hallyu* wave in the region through its legions of ardent middle-aged female fans. Simultaneously, Korean films such as *My Sassy Girl* (2001) and *Shiri* (1999) and Korean pop music propagated by artists such as Shinhwa, BoA, H.O.T and Rain came to acquire large fan followings. Recently, however, it has become difficult to pinpoint any one of these sites as the mainstay of *Hallyu* due to their interconnected nature wherein stars move constantly between films, television and music and adaptations of television series into films and vice-versa abound. What began primarily as an engagement with television dramas has now come to spawn a wider interest in all kinds of Korean cultural materials including pop music, food, fashion, language, cosmetics etc. While some explanations of *Hallyu*'s success attribute it to the effective articulation of 'Asian values' (Kim 2004, Shim 2009, Lee,

---

[3] Liz K-popped, "What is Hallyu?," K-popped!, September 12, 2007, http://k-popped.com/2007/09/what-is-hallyu/ accessed on August 31, 2011.

Kim and Sung 2009) the widening geographical spread of the phenomenon has necessitated other ways of understanding its impact. As fans increasingly operate through online communities, it has become difficult to contain the phenomenon within national boundaries and explain it in culturally-specific terms. With the flow of information and images being directed through virtual routes and notions of cultural embeddedness becoming destabilized, one is confronted with the task of studying the Korean wave as a concrete phenomenon where the object of analysis seems to constantly escape one's grasp.

This dissertation is an attempt to map the Korean wave as it leaves its material traces –both in terms of the circulation of a mass of cultural goods as well as on the bodies of its fans. Focussing on online fanculture, I chart their intimate involvement with Korean popular culture as they subtitle, manipulate and disseminate images through digital networks. These virtual, textual encounters become deeply intermeshed with the textures of everyday life, intervening in offline spaces and shaping a new sensorium of experience for fans. This intensive engagement with Korean popular culture is viewed through the prism of haptic visuality. Laura Marks' formulation of the haptic as a relationship to the image based on *grazing* rather than *gazing* (2000:162) informs my approach in the dissertation. As I will show, the distance between the viewing subject and film object is obliterated in the case of Korean fan culture. Instead of contemplating it from the outside, fans weave themselves into the visual. Haptic visuality evokes a multi-sensory experience of material objects on screen, with the eyes functioning like organs of touch. I attempt to create a "tactile epistemology" (Marks 2000) that captures the viewers' embodied experience of cinema as they brush against one another

Moving Beyond Asia –The Korean Wave as a Multi-nodal Phenomenon

The Korean wave has generated a staggering amount of both scholarly and journalistic writing discussing its origins, the frenzied and sometimes antagonistic responses to its influence and its cultural and political repercussions. Doobo Shim (2005) argues that the presence of Japanese popular culture in the countries of South-East and East Asia prepared the ground for the acceptance of the Korean Wave in the early 2000s as the two shared aesthetic and stylistic similarities. Media liberalization in South Korea and many other Asian countries such as Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia in the 1990s meant that there was a growing market for the rapidly increasing production of Korean cultural products. (Shim 2006) Some reports highlight the changing socioeconomic conditions within South Korea that aided this boom.[4] The flourishing economy is believed to have bred a new generation of confident, young Koreans who participated in a thriving popular culture unhindered by the previous regimes of censorship. Yet others see the sharp increase in Korean cultural production as an attempt by South Koreans to counter the hegemonic effects of globalization by articulating a distinct cultural identity[5]. Jim Dator and Yongseok Seo (2004) point out that pop groups were carefully trained and promoted by Korean companies and the government at the time that the domestic market was being opened up to Japanese cultural imports.

The potency of the Korean wave has also been understood as a function of its ability to formulate a pan-Asian identity and successfully meld Asian and Western values. (Kim 2004, Lee, Kim and Sung 2009) Koichi Iwabuchi (2002), for instance,

---

[4] *Hyundai heavy industries report on pop culture*, January-February 2004, cited in Jim Dator and Yongseok Seo "Korea as the Wave of a Future: The Emerging Dream Society of Icons and Aesthetic Experience" (2004) *Journal of Futures Studie*s, 9 (1), 31-44.

[5] *Korea Herald*, September 11, 2001 cited in Jim Dator and Yongseok Seo "Korea as the Wave of a Future: The Emerging Dream Society of Icons and Aesthetic Experience" (2004) *Journal of Futures Studies*, 9 (1), 31-44.

argues that the growing preference for Korean television dramas over Japanese ones in Taiwan is due to their 'realistic appeal' to the youth's concerns regarding romance but also their parents and the extended family. Rather than Japanese dramas which tend towards individualistic concerns, Korean productions place their characters within a social context that resonates with the audience. Hae-Joang Cho (2005) believes that the increasing cultural exchanges between Asian communities marks a 'global shift' that enables the formation of alternative, non-Western consciousness. A number of reception studies have looked at the local mediation of Korean cultural products in different parts of Asia, analyzing the ways in which negotiation and resistance take place. (Kim 2009, Han et al. 2007, Espiritu 2011) Some of these accounts tend to puncture the celebratory glorification of the Korean Wave's influence by pointing out the ways in which it institutes new cultural hegemonies.

If academic writing has tended to focus on the reception of Korean television programming, recent press reports have begun identifying what they term as the beginning of a second phase of the Korean Wave centred on popular music. An article in *The Korea Herald*[6] contends that *hallyu* is bouncing back after a lull in interest. The initial popularity of television dramas, which were becoming increasingly formulaic, is being matched by the growing circulation of popular music and films. The report argues that the shift towards the more innovative and 'cutting edge' productions of Korean pop music has spawned a demographic change from middle-age women in their 40s to a younger audience. Another report[7] notes that the internet, especially video-sharing platforms like *YouTube*, has reduced marketing costs and

---

[6] Song Woong-ki, "'Hallyu' bouncing back through K-pop and film," *The Korea Herald*, November 11, 2010, http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20101110000956&cpv=0 accessed on September 16, 2011.
[7] Yoon Ja-young, "YouTube taking hallyu on international ride," *The Korea Times*, August 2, 2011,http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/biz/2011/02/123_81039.html accessed on September 16, 2011.

played a large role in the dissemination of Kpop in places like Europe and South America. Not all accounts of this newfound success have been positive, however, with the unfair labour practices in the South Korean music industry coming under scrutiny. A *BBC News* report[8] finds that music companies try to recover the high costs of production by placing restrictive contract clauses and providing extremely low remunerations to their artists.

While studies of the localised effects of the Korean Wave throw valuable light on the constellation of meanings created through the conjunction of history and memory, as well as the workings of power in particular contexts, I argue that the Korean wave must be understood in its manifestation as a cultural phenomenon of global proportions. While it remains important to historically situate the phenomenon, its meanings cannot be controlled solely by the specific cultural context from which it emerges. As the Korean wave becomes popular in North America, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East, it is important to interrogate fixed notions of culture and place. Moreover the internet, through which it is being increasingly mediated, effects a dispersion of identity and an emergence of pirate forms that exceed or contradict culturally-specific meanings. In studying it as a sensorium of experience, and tracking the flows of desire that constitute the Korean wave, my attempt is to understand culture in and through global movement.

Texts, Contexts, and Textures

Cinema's relationship to dreams, desire and the human psyche has been discussed by early film scholars in the 1920s and 30s, but it was not until the 1970s that the study of its effects drew sustained consideration from scholars. Loosely labelled as

---

[8] Lucy Williamson, "The dark side of South Korean pop music," *BBC News*, 14 June, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13760064 accessed on September 15, 2011.

'spectatorship theory', this new branch of knowledge attempted to conceptualize the manner in which cinema contributes to the formation of a universal subjectivity by suturing the viewer into the narrative. According to Judith Mayne (1993) theories of spectatorship articulated in the 1970s can be divided along two axes –those who emphasised the functioning of cinema as an institutional apparatus and those who looked at it through detailed textual analysis. Belonging to the first tradition, Jean-Louis Baudry, Christian Metz and Laura Mulvey drew on Louis Althusser's methodology and the tools of psychoanalysis to decode the ideological conditioning of the film spectator. The second tradition included the likes of Raymond Bellour, Stephen Heath, and Thierry Kuntzel, who uncovered the structural underpinnings of films through detailed textual analysis. Common to them was a dissection of the 'body' of film –both through an analysis of its deceptive material apparatus and by the scrutiny of minute details of filmic texts to throw light on the workings of ideology.

These theorists argued that the cinematic apparatus privileges the eye and optical viewing, setting in motion a series of misrecognitions. According to Metz (1982), the subject identifies with the camera and the projector as his vision is placed parallel to them. This creates the illusion that the 'look' emanates from the spectator, whereas it is actually guided by the perception of the camera. What the spectator misconstrues as active viewing is actually the passive reception of images that unfold in front of him. Cinema works as the imaginary signifier that makes this absence seem like presence. This lack is precisely what activates desire and encourages voyeuristic forms of looking, an idea central to the work of both Metz and Mulvey (1975). Mulvey's male spectator gazes at the female body on screen, both by aligning with the penetrative gaze of the camera and through narcissistic identification with the male characters. The spectator is conceived as wholly outside the film, the distance

between him/her and the screen encouraging scopophilia as the eye roams freely over the image without the fear of retribution. These theories of spectatorship saw the viewing subject as being constituted by the norms of classical cinema.[9] Immobilised when faced with its seductive power, he/she could only have a fetishistic relationship with film.

Miriam Hansen (1991) and Tom Gunning (1990) sought to rewrite the history of spectatorial practices by recovering the legacy of early cinema. Miriam Hansen notes that the category of the spectator did not exist before 1910, when different kinds of audiences relied on different forms of entertainment. The nickelodeon, as opposed to the high-class vaudeville, was frequented by an ethnically diverse lot of workers and consisted of a variety of filmic and non-filmic activities that invited interaction rather than passive consumption. According to her, the invention of spectatorship can be attributed to the American film industry's drive towards standardisation rather than the film theorists of the 1970s. The abstract category of the spectator is seen as coinciding with the rise of a 'consumerist subjectivity' that sought to homogenise audiences and bring them within the fold of a mass consumer culture.

Gunning points out that the development of classical narrative cinema was not a teleological inevitability but a construct that ignored an earlier *cinema of attractions*. According to him, early cinema was both a manifestation of and a cause for the generation of a new human sensorium coinciding with the onset of modernity. He argues that films before 1908 or so were concerned less with storytelling and more with the aesthetics of display. While elements of both narrative and display could be found before and after this period, early cinema functioned more through disjunctive

---

[9] Borrowing from David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson's (1985) definition of the term, 'classical cinema' is understood as a cinema based on a narrative based on cause-and-effect, a goal-oriented protagonist and the techniques of continuity editing.

irruptions of attractions such as gags, chase scenes, vaudeville performances and special effects rather than narrative integration. It constituted a different kind of relationship with the spectator, "arousing and satisfying visual curiosity through a direct and acknowledged act of display, rather than following a narrative enigma within a diegetic site into which the spectator peers invisibly." (Gunning 2000:44) It called forth bodily sensations, relying on the generation of shock and astonishment to directly address the spectator. The idea of a cinema of attractions allows one to envision a different relationship between cinema and the spectator where one adhered not to a logic of the gaze but to a "logic of sensations" (Røssaak, 2006).

Phenomenological film theory also marks a turn away from psychoanalytic and apparatus-based theories of spectatorship.[10] It seeks to re-embody the abstract category of the spectator by emphasising the visceral and lived experience of cinema. Instead of completely 'othering' the image, phenomenologists stress on the mimetic and mutually constitutive relationship between the spectator and the film. Among contemporary film scholars, Vivian Sobchack (1992, 2004) has emerged as one of the most important advocates of the phenomenological approach. Influenced by feminist scholarship and the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Sobchack "…introduces autobiography and anecdote as tools for enabling an embodied film theory that pays attention to the subject's corporeal, historically and culturally located experience of cinema, to ask what cinema feels like, how the feelings film inspires can shape one's thinking about it, as well as how cinematic feelings in turn affects one's relation to and understanding of the world." (Beckman 2010:36-37)

---

[10] Some of the most influential scholars on phenomenological film theory include Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Henri Agel, Amédée Ayfre, Roger Munier. See J. Dudley Andrew, *The Major Film Theories: An Introduction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

Challenges to the universalising project of psychoanalytic and Althusserian spectatorship theory also came from two other quarters –namely cognitivism and ethnographic studies. Mayne (1993) argues that these approaches sought to remedy the lack of empirical research inimical to 1970s film theory. Cognitivism, spearheaded by David Bordwell (1985), Edward Branigan (1984) and Noël Carroll (1988), foregrounded specific film-going practices rather than a generalised notion of film viewing. Bordwell, for instance, argues for a shift in emphasis from psychoanalytic readings of film-viewing to an approach grounded in the neuro-biological workings of the brain that defined active *perception*. According to him, filmic narratives are processed through a complex set of cognitive operations that call upon the knowledge of the viewer and may vary according to different norms of narration. While this method accounts for slightly more nuanced histories of reception, Hansen points out that it collapses the divide between the textually inscribed spectator and the empirically constructed viewer where "nothing but the one-hundred-percent successful performance of perceptual operations expected of the viewer should qualify as spectatorship." (1991:6) This threatens to erase considerations of gender, class, race and other social distinctions in favour of an invariable biological norm that governs film viewership.

A more potent challenge to the homogenising tendencies inherent in the formulation of an ideal spectator was effected through the adoption of ethnographic methods in film studies. Drawing from the traditions of cultural studies and anthropology, this approach sought to shift the focus away from textual construction of subjectivity towards practices of socially contextualised reception. Mayne notes that the emphasis was on viewers' ability to actively negotiate with texts in relation to their own social position. Popular culture was imagined as a site of resistance and

subversion rather than ideological domination. E. Diedre Pribram (1999) argues that the cultural studies paradigm not only rejected textually deterministic constructions of the spectator but also early audience studies that used quantitative analysis to reinforce the notion of passive viewership. Instead, the effort was to move towards qualitative analysis that accounted for 'real' viewing experiences of culturally and historically constituted audiences. The text was only constituted at the moment of its interaction with the viewer and the two could not be conceived independent of one another. Mayne points out that the ethnographic method has had a marginal presence in film studies, acquiring more currency in studies of television audiences. (Kuhn 1984, Ang 1991, Fiske 1987)

Moving towards an understanding of the viewing experiences of diverse audiences, the cultural studies approach sought to give the notion of an abstract and idealised spectator a concrete, material existence. This shift from textual to contextual analysis, however, is fraught with its own problems. Firstly, while their range of interpretive possibilities multiplies, the horizon of meanings that viewers can generate is limited in the last instance by their social position. Janet Staiger (1992) points out that British cultural studies produces ideal viewers who become representatives of their socioeconomic categories. Moreover, this runs the risk of becoming a reductive and uncomplicated exercise as competing identities and affiliations are rarely accounted for. Secondly, in its effort to move away from deterministic ideas of a textually inscribed spectator, this approach tends to resort to representational theories in its analysis of film texts. Lucia Nagib (2012) finds that cultural studies treats artworks as languages that must be decoded in order to reveal ideologically-charged depictions of minorities. Thus the critic's position in this case does not appear to be

far from that of apparatus theorists as both institute a distanced and rather judgmental relationship with the film.

Steering clear of the unwieldy distinction between texts and contexts, this dissertation will attempt to look for moments when the two come in contact with one another. The encounter between the viewer and the image is imagined in terms of haptic visuality. This type of visuality is contrasted with optical visuality, which presumes a distance between the viewer and the artwork and invites a detached, contemplative response. Drawing from the insights of Gunning's early cinema of attractions and phenomenological film theory, Laura Marks (2000) argues that cinema is not just an optical medium but an experience of sensuous immersion that calls forth the body of the viewer. She argues that alongside vision, the senses of touch, smell and taste also shape the viewer's relationship to the image.

According to Marks, haptics is both a quality of the image, and a particular form of relationship to it. Haptic visuality is seen as an inherently erotic relationship wherein the viewer and the image constitute each other and cannot be separated. She argues that "Regardless of their content, haptic images are erotic in that they construct an intersubjective relationship between beholder and image." (2000:117) The viewer is not merely a voyeur but one who actively constructs the image through an intimate involvement with it. This is not about mastery over the image, but of submission to the quality of sheer presence. As the viewer brushes against the body of the visual, both leave indelible marks on one another and are constantly modified through the process of interaction.

Using Marks' work, I deal neither with an abstract spectator nor a notional audience defined by its socio-cultural status but with the bodies of fans as they are

touched by, and touch the image. Both image and viewer are continuously transformed through their encounter, making it difficult to formulate the notion of a textually constructed subject or a fixed social identity for the spectator. Neither can cinematic images be mobilised as complete texts whose meaning is pre-determined. Instead of reading the narratives of films and television series, I work with their fragments and highlight the moments of sensory impact. The concept of the haptic not only provides the theoretical impulse for this project but also influences its methodological approach. Marks argues that haptic criticism involves coming close to the surface of the image rather than interpreting or decoding it. According to her, "Haptic criticism is mimetic: it presses up to the object and takes its shape." (2002:xiii) It involves dissolving the divide between subject and object, of yielding to the Other rather than perceiving it from a position of control. Far from placing itself at a critical distance, the dissertation functions as a loving account of the intricacies of filmic viewing and fan activity. As a member of the Korean fan community, I attempt to grasp the corporeality of the phenomenon and understand the affective charge around texts and objects through my own experiences and encounters. The line between interviews and conversations, analysis and pleasurable viewing, researching and 'fangirling'[11] blurs as this account functions, at least in part, as a personal record of intimate involvement.

Fan Cultures in a Digital Environment

Early academic work on fan cultures was formulated within the landscape of cultural studies, retaining the latter's interest in popular culture as a domain of contestation. Jonathan Gray, Cornel Sandvoss and C. Lee Harrington in their book *Fandom:*

---

[11] Internet slang that refers to the expressions of excitement that female fans may utter upon encountering their objects of affection.

Identities and Communities in a Mediated World (2007) identify three waves of fan scholarship. The first, which they term the 'Fandom is Beautiful' phase, began with the work of Henry Jenkins (1992) and John Fiske (1992). Drawing on Michel de Certeau's (1984) conception of tactics used by the disempowered to counter the strategies of dominance, they argued that "the consumption of popular mass media was a site of power struggles and fandom the guerrilla style tactics of those with lesser resources to win this battle." (2007:2) They believed that fans' evasion and appropriation of intended meanings was an act loaded with political significance and countered the assumption that fan behaviour was either pathological or wasteful indulgence. Operating from a subordinate position but far from being passive consumers, fans actively reworked and reinscribed texts by attending fan conventions, publishing fan fictions and magazines and writing letters.

The second phase of work on fan cultures began in the mid-1990s when public broadcasting started addressing itself to niche groups and popular discourse about fans began portraying them in a more positive light. Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington argue that there was a shift in the cultural status of fandom, with marketing strategies aimed at wooing fan communities and prominent cultural and political figures identifying themselves as fans. Academic analysis, drawing from Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) work on taste, also began focussing on the manner in which consumption and identification with fan communities reinforced other forms of social distinction based on class and gender. (Dell 1998, Harris 1998, Jancovich 2002) Far from being oppositional agents engaging in creative acts of appropriation, fans were seen as embedded within and perpetuating the economic, political and cultural status quo.

Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington place the third phase of fan studies in the changing landscape of mass communication. The proliferation of the internet, they

argue, means that fans can no longer studied as tightly-knit subcultural communities and the sheer scale of online fan activity no longer makes it an unconventional pursuit. Moreover, the ubiquitous presence of other communication technologies and the growth of print and broadcasting media has unsettled the previously marginal status of fan consumption. Fan studies has responded by redirecting attention towards the motivations and pleasures of individual fans on the one hand, and undertaking macro level investigations of the interactions between the local and the global as well as the spectacular and performative aspects of fandom, on the other.[12] According to them, the scope of fan studies has widened in the contemporary moment as fandoms do not just form objects of study in themselves but can be used to reflect on the very texture of everyday life and the conditions of mediatised existence.

Simultaneously, scholarship in film studies has also noted the impact of digital technologies on cinematic forms. Gunning's work has been used by many scholars to reflect on the co-existence of narrative and spectacle in contemporary cinema. They note that like early cinema, the contemporary moment renegotiates the terms of relationship between different art forms and presents new ways of ordering attention/distraction. (Schatz 1993, Manovich 2002, Røssaak 2006, Nakamura 2008) The adoption of digital technologies and the widespread use of cinematic special effects call upon the body's sensory faculties and allow us to rethink the category of the spectator as a more involved and active viewer of images. Scholars such as Lev Manovich (2002) and Lisa Nakamura (2008) have noted the ways in which the spectacular components of cinema survive in digital media such as the animated picture or the GIF which plays itself in a continuous loop divorced from narrative

---

[12] The micro level studies include works by Anthony Elliott (1999), Matt Hillls (2002), Cornel Sandvoss (2005) among others. Some macro level studies been conducted by Cornel Sandvoss (2003) and C. Lee Harrington, Denise D. Bielby (2005) See Cornel Sandvoss, C. Harrington Lee and, *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World*, (New York: NYU Press, 2007).

context. These images draw on pre-existing forms of visual representation to reiterate cinema's status as a sensory experience through a reconfiguration of the aesthetics of astonishment on digital platforms. Moreover, the idea of cinematic addressal has also been problematised through interactive technologies that allow one to alter and appropriate images. Anne Friedberg (2000) notes that the computer screen engenders a 'user' rather than a spectator or viewer of images. This user takes on an active role as he or she manipulates and interacts with the images placed within the field of the screen.

Given the pervasive presence of the cinematic through digital screens and devices, I argue that the study of fan practices and subjectivities cannot be separated from the analysis of the media texts that influence them. Early literature on fan studies such as Jenkins' work on textual poaching was placed in a pre-digital environment where fan-produced materials like magazines and newsletters existed on the peripheries of mainstream media. Digital technologies, however, allow viewers to write themselves onto the surface of the image and provide platforms for the widespread circulation of fans' creative output. Given the intimate involvement with images, I contend that the study of fan cultures needs to account for the perceptual implications and specificity of media forms. Rather than isolate fans in their social contexts or the intended meanings of texts, I see them in relational terms.

The contours of this relationship are set through the notion of the haptic as a form of entanglement of the image with the viewer. Neither the films nor their audiences are pre-constituted entities that compete to determine the generation of meanings. Instead, both realise themselves only when they continuously unfold into one another. The digital manipulation of images creates an intimate connection between the viewer and the image as they collapse into one another. The image is

marked by the viewer through digital treatments as well as certain textual practices such as fansubtitling and fan fiction. At the same time, viewers' online identity is constructed through the use of display icons and animated gifs used to express emotional states and responses on internet forums. The implications of this tactile experience of images inhere not only in cyberspace but manifest themselves in offline forms. This dissertation looks at the ways in which the cinematic intervenes in our relationship with everyday objects and spaces.

I understand the haptic engagement with cinema through three different sites. The first chapter charts the circulation of both official and fan-made merchandise as it moves from the textual world of films, TV and pop music to virtual and offline networks. It investigates our relationship to cultural objects under the pervasive influence of the media where objects are imagined not as units of exchange but of communication. They take on agency and constitute their own unexpected trajectories of meaning, desire and emotion. The world of objects is seen as deeply entangled with that of persons such that the bodies of objects acquire human qualities and vice-versa. In relation to the Korean wave, I track the manner in which fans acquire collectibles and other items which act as extensions of stars, even as star bodies are commodified. Brands, under the conditions of mediatized existence, come to hold their own productive potential, thereby blurring the distinction between producers and consumers. (Lash 2010, Lury 2004) Objects acquire their symbolic and affective charge through contact with the cinematic image and thereafter gain multiple afterlives in various forms. Their circulation outside of it is not in terms of the movement of a concrete object but mutations and modifications of the brand image imprinted on a variety of surfaces. I explore this mediatised object through two distinct sites. First, I look at the virtual and offline circulation of the multiple versions

of the Pig Rabbit –a stuffed animal featured in the popular Korean TV series, *You're Beautiful* (2009). Second, I explore object(ive) forms of the body of the pop music star as it is produced on-screen and in merchandise.

The Korean wave has witnessed widespread unofficial subtitling, initiated primarily by ardent fans with a certain amount of technical and cultural know-how. The second chapter will investigate online fansubtitling practices through which fans mark their presence on the very body of the cinematic. I locate fansubs within a differentiated economy where their quality and legibility varies according to the speed of their releases. These subtitles constitute a critical manner in which cultural meanings are filtered for viewers from a variety of linguistic backgrounds. Drawing on Jacques Ranciere's (2007) work on the overlap between the functions of text, image and sound in contemporary cinematic forms, I argue that fan-produced subtitles cannot be seen merely as textual translations of audiovisual media. The text of the subtitle not only serves an explicatory purpose but appeals to visual and aural faculties by experimenting with graphic forms that follow the textural qualities of the image and sound. Meanings are not made readily available for consumption but accessed only through sustained engagement as fan subtitles leave intact untranslatable cultural idioms. Speedier releases also threaten to lapse into zones of arrhythmic illegibility when they fail to synchronise with the image, leaving viewers to construct cinematic meaning out of the fragments available to them. I also look at the different temporal trajectories instituted by the subtitled image. Through the example of fan-made subtitles for the TV series *Queen In-hyeon's Man* (2012) I explore how its theme of time travel comes out differently through three different sets of subtitles. Depending on when they are released, subtitles can either flatten notions of historical time or produce a more nuanced understanding of Korea's cultural past

as it is inflected through the cinematic. I also examine how the process of producing

and waiting for quality subtitles is marked by delays and interruptions as fansubbers

struggle to reconcile the demands of their 'real' lives with those of the voluntary

economy. Delving into the lives of fansubbers, the chapter explores the ways in which

they appropriate and reconfigure time to fit in their creative pursuit.

Finally, the third chapter looks at the spatial dimensions of haptic engagement

as fans extend their corporeal encounter with cinema beyond the screen and into

urban spaces through touristic journeys and flash mobs. Drawing on Giuliana Bruno's

(2002) work on the similarity between the experience of cinema and that of

architecture, I look at the points at which these two spatial forms converge. Film-

related tourism to Korea induced by the flow of TV dramas and films changes the

manner in which the travel itinerary is constructed. Filming locations are promoted as

tourist attractions, and the map of the city comes to resemble the cinematic map of

affective and inner journeys. The reconstitution of cinematic experience arises not just

from an encounter with the actual site of filming but also takes place closer home.

Through a series of internationally co-ordinated flash mobs in support of the pop

music group 2PM and its member Jay Park, I look at fans' reproduction of dances

from music videos in public places. By breaking the habitual relationship with time

and space through the adoption of a different bodily rhythm, I argue that flash mobs

play a role in the affective production of social space. I engage both online as well as

offline ethnography, charting haptic routes beginning within the cinematic text,

travelling through virtual space and producing a sensuous map of the city.

CHAPTER 1

Screen Substances: The Materialized Object of the Korean Wave

> Minimal, incoherent fragments:
> the opposite of History, creator of ruins,
> out of your ruins you have made creations.
>
> Theater of the spirits:
> objects putting the laws
> of identity through hoops.
> > -Octavio Paz, *Objects and Apparitions* (1974)

The transnational phenomenon of the Korean Wave is characterised as much by its extensive spread as the intensity of experience it generates. Seeking to mine new markets, the Korean government and industry has made concerted efforts to promote its culture overseas. Jim Dator and Youngseok Seo (2004) argue that Korea may be the first nation to institute an official policy towards forming a 'dream society of icons and aesthetic experience'. The culture industry has emerged as a highly profitable one, with exports of Korean cultural products such as games, merchandise and music standing at approximately $4.24 billion in 2008, an increase of around $1.3 billion from the previous year. More recently, the Korean government has instituted a *Hallyu* index that measures the viability of Korean cultural products through online surveys with a view to increase overseas revenues.[1]

Equally, however, fans have played a large role in disseminating the Korean Wave. The engagement with Korean popular culture is often an intense one as fans not only access Korean TV series, films and music, but also food, fashion and

---

[1] Export figures and information on Hallyu index in Seo Ji-eun, "New index for Korea's hallyu," *Korea JoongAng Daily*, March 2, 2010, http://koreajoongangdaily.joinsmsn.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=2917224 accessed on November 16, 2011.

cosmetics. For instance, when it first aired in Japan in 2003[2] and subsequently in 2004, the Korean television series *Winter Sonata* created a frenzy of activity. In a nation that had historically been hostile to Korea, fans consisting mostly of middle-aged women propelled the lead actors to stardom. They started learning the Korean language and fuelled a lucrative tourism industry as they visited the sites where the show had been shot. The demand for drama-related merchandise also escalated, with a sharp rise in the sales of DVDs and CDs, books, magazines, clothes and cosmetics (Kim, Singhal et al. 2009, Creighton 2009). The proliferation of the internet has given rise to relatively small but vocal and dedicated groups of fans in the U.S.A, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and South Asia that congregate around a common fascination. With cyberspace emerging as a major site of cultural transactions, the virtual dissemination of music and images has been accompanied by the online and offline circulation of film, TV and popular music-related merchandise.

This simultaneously extensive and intensive movement of Korean popular culture is characteristic of what Scott Lash (2010) describes as 'intensive capitalism'. According to him, contemporary capitalism is witnessing the widespread expansion of multinational corporations, global media outlets and international and regional intergovernmental organizations. At the same time, there has been an increase in the intensity of experience precipitated by different forms of media, urban organization and cultural and professional networks. These extensive and intensive impulses come together under the conditions of the information economy as 'system' fuses with 'substance'. (69) Lash uses the notion of system to refer to the capitalist system of exchange where homogeneous atoms may be exchanged for one another while the overall equilibrium is maintained. Substances, on the other hand, are irreplaceable and

---

[2] It was shown on satellite TV in 2003 to a relatively smaller audience, and later on the NHK general channel. (Kim, Singhal et al. 2009)

unique—they cannot be exchanged, only changed—and are characteristic of gift economies. Rather than operating according to an externally-imposed force, they follow their own internal logic. While the atoms of a system work in terms of cause and effect, the units of substance perceive, think, and represent, communicating to other substances through signals and messages. Lash argues that the distinction between them becomes difficult to maintain in an information age where the system itself comes to embody the logic of substance and comprises of "heterogeneous units of information" (2010:129). Intensive capitalism thus becomes a materialisation of substance, a physical manifestation of the metaphysical.

This formulation has had profound implications for the way in which the commodity is conceptualised. Scott Lash and Celia Lury (2007) argue that the contemporary culture industry functions not through the homogeneous commodity but through cultural objects marked by heterogeneity and difference. The brand emerges as a communicative interface managing these distinctions and organizing the relations between specific products in time (Lury 2004). This chapter looks at the mass of cultural goods generated by the Korean Wave as a property of its mediatised nature. Film, TV and popular music-related merchandise become intimately connected to the brand instituted within the cinematic text where they acquire their symbolic and affective charge. Their circulation outside of it operates not in terms of an exact replication of a concrete object but through mutations and modifications of the brand image imprinted on a variety of surfaces.

Moreover, these objects are increasingly marketed and accessed through the virtual pathways of the internet. In this digital environment, the connotations related to the brand image are not just centrally managed and controlled but multiply as fans add their own meanings and associations. David Rodowick (2001) has noted that the

proliferation of information and digital technologies has led to a change in the nature of value and the commodity. As information becomes commodified, the physical dimension of commodities becomes less prominent. However, one finds not only a commodification of information, but the emergence of information as the very means of organizing the relations between actual objects (Lury 2004). The physicality of the commodity witnesses a 'desubstantialisation' not only as data acquire material value, but also as products begin to exhibit the properties of information and act like units of communication. As fans produce their own versions, cultural goods become as manipulable as the images they inhabit. It is this circulation of both unofficial fan-made goods and official merchandise and their relationship to emerging forms of community on the internet that requires analysis.

Rather than tracing the physical movement of concrete objects, I follow the cinematic, digital and offline trajectories of the different material manifestations of the brand. Revisiting Karl Marx and Arjun Appadurai's theories of the commodity, I contend that they preclude the communicative properties of the branded object in a mediated environment. I explore this mediatised object through two distinct sites. First, I look at the Pig Rabbit –a stuffed animal featured in the popular Korean TV series, *You're Beautiful* (2009). Circulating through both digital and offline channels, it spawned many official and unofficial versions. I trace its movement from within the text to its multiple afterlives outside it. Second, I explore object(ive) forms of the body of the pop music star as it is produced on-screen and in merchandise. The industrial form of the Korean popular music industry encourages the presentation of stars as brands, incorporating the meanings produced by communities of fans but sometimes running counter to them. This branding is not just a process of image-

creation but also productive of a corpus of objects that reproduce the star in miniature forms.

Mapping Matter: Revisiting Marx and Appadurai in a Brand Economy

For Karl Marx (1990), the tangible experience of the commodity was not an end in itself but the first step towards a systematic enquiry regarding the underlying nature of the social relations of production. What appears ordinary and natural is actually a rather peculiar entity emerging within a specific historical mode of production. The commodity is endowed with mystical qualities such that it seems to possess the inherent power to generate value. However, Marx urged us to look beyond its surficial characteristics to that which is not apparent and even intentionally obscured by its visible form. Functioning primarily through the mode of misrecognition, the commodity concealed the quality and quantity of human labour invested in it. The social labour of men was expressed as an objective trait of the commodity itself. Its relative independence from the social relations of production within which it was embedded is what Marx terms 'the fetishism of the commodity'. (1990:165)

Crucial to this formulation is the distinction between the use-value and exchange-value of a commodity, accrued to it through the process of production. Within the capitalist mode of production, it is only through the act of exchange that an individual's private labour is recognized as part of the "aggregate labour of society" (ibid.). Private labour, Marx noted, was divided into two parts—that which generated use-value, satisfying a social need, and that which possessed exchange-value and could be equated with other forms of labour. The 'value' of a commodity referred to its socially established exchange-value and created a relationship of equality between different types of labour. The social relations between men also came to be mediated

by this universal system of exchange. Commodity fetishism thus stemmed from the boundless system of equivalences set up by the regime of exchange values, where qualitative differences were obscured by quantitative uniformity.

While exchange is a mystifying process hiding the true nature of the relations of production in Marx's work, Arjun Appadurai (1986) argues for the need to study it as the very source of economic value. He advocates a 'methodological fetishism' where the tangible, material experience of the object as it travels through the circuits of exchange brings forth the transmutations of value that occur through the course of its career. The emphasis shifts from production as the movement of the object is traced through its 'cultural biography' (Kopytoff, 1986) following the entire trajectory of its production, exchange, and consumption. Individuals hold the capacity to manipulate the meanings and uses of objects through interest-based or morally-informed choices. The homogenizing effects of commoditization are said to be countered by the cultural tendency to de-commoditize or mark off things as sacred or falling in the realm of the private. The commodity emerges as a mobile entity not only travelling across transnational contexts but also through different spheres of exchange where the market and moral economy continuously tussle with each other to define its trajectory by expanding or limiting its reach.

The spatial and temporal dynamics of commodities are decidedly different in this formulation from its Marxist counterpart. Appadurai suggests that the commodity must be studied not only at the point of its origin but through the entire course of its life. Both Appadurai and Kopytoff (1986) propose that objects move in and out of commodity and non-commodity situations as they traverse the circuits of exchange. The 'commodity situation' of an object refers to "the situation in which its exchangeability (past, present or future) for some other thing is its socially relevant

feature" (Appadurai 1986:13). Objects are not categorised into classes of things, each with their own defining characteristics, but according to their 'commodity potential' which may be actualised or remain inert depending on the phase it finds itself in. This potential presents itself differently across time periods and cultural contexts, and capitalism ceases to be the only type of social formation where the commodity is found.

While arguing that different orders of value exist at different points of time in an object's life history, this approach keeps intact the distinction between use and exchange-value, coinciding with the moral economy of the gift and the market respectively. Taking a long-term view of the circulation of the object enables one to trace the changes it undergoes while moving from 'commodity situations' to zones of restricted movement and exchangeability. However, at any one point of time, the object is either a homogeneous unit of equivalence or a singularized entity that cannot be exchanged for another. That is, while an object can move between commodity and non-commodity situations, it can only exhibit the characteristics of any one form at a particular point of time. The spheres of gift and commodity exchange thus remain conceptually separate even as the object acquires mobility between them.

This leaves the formulation susceptible to charges of ignoring the institutional nature of value formation, and relatedly, to questions regarding the basis for the distinction between these spheres. Marxist critics like John Frow (1997) argue that the separation between the economic as an ever-expanding force and the cultural as a restrictive one becomes difficult to maintain in a situation where most material and immaterial goods can be commoditized. Frow argues that both commodification and singularization co-exist as "cognitive, ethical, affective and aesthetic processes" (144) that formerly fell in the realm of the sacred or the private, cannot be said to be outside

the purview of the market. Being sold on the market may not necessarily decrease an object's moral value, just as Kopytoff notes that the process of singularization, say of art and collectibles, only increases their market value.

Moreover, the widespread proliferation of cinematic and digital media calls forth ways of imagining the relationship between commodity and cinema that move away from the trope of fetishism. In an essay titled *The Economy of Desire: The Commodity Form in/of the Cinema,* Mary Anne Doanne (1996) has looked at how in the attempt to create an ideal feminine self-image, cinematic and commodity fetishism function simultaneously to produce the female spectator as a voracious consumer of products depicted on-screen. Such a conception assumes, firstly, a clear separation between cinema and the ideologically interpolated spectator. This distinction becomes increasingly blurred through digital media and brand interfaces that allow for interaction with and manipulation of images and goods. Secondly, it overlooks the manner in which the media has had a profound impact on the very nature of the commodity, which has emerged as a communicative force that need not adhere to predefined, linear paths but charts its own routes of desire, meaning and emotion. (Lash 2010, Lash and Lury 2007, Lury 2004)

Under the mediatised conditions of intensive-material capitalism, Lash and Lury (2004, 2007, 2010) argue that the abstract category of the brand functions in tandem with the materially manifested object. Drawing on Jean Baudrillard's notion of sign-value, they contend that rather than use-value or exchange-value, the brand embodies difference-value where its worth is explained in terms of its difference from other brands (Lash, 2010). According to Lash, "Where the gift or use-value is concrete difference, and the commodity abstract equivalence, the brand and intellectual property is abstract difference" (127, 2010). The brand emerges as a

"specific market modality" which "mediates the supply and demand of products through the organization, co-ordination and integration of the use of information" (Lury 2004:3). Much like the new media object, the brand as an interface is as much about design as it is about connectivity and brings together the aesthetic and the economic. Thus, the brand serves more as a medium rather than a means of exchange of the same order as money. Price ceases to be the primary factor regulating demand and supply as the brand enables various other attributes of the product such as packaging and promotion to assume significance during the process of exchange. According to Lury, these attributes are both concretely manifested in specific products and part of an abstract entity at one and the same time, making the brand both singular and homogeneous.

The attempt here is not only to move away from notions of the fetishized commodity as an obscuring force by tracing the movement of objects through multiple pathways but also to advocate a form of methodological fetishism that does not seek to privilege the concrete over the abstract. My investigation of the circulation of branded objects of the Korean Wave, suggests that the materiality of culture cannot be seen either in terms of its insight into the abstract world of social relations nor in terms of the trajectories of purely concrete objects. What I show instead is a reconfiguration of the relationship between the material and the immaterial as the boundary between them becomes increasingly blurred.

The Pig Rabbit –Attack of the Mutant Soft Toy

The Birth of the Pig Rabbit

> My advice for watching YAB: drink heavily, throw all your standards out the window, and surrender yourself to an epic explosion of crack, kpop, bad hair, boys in drag, slash parodies, random dream sequences, characters who freely discuss their own fanfiction, and a breast-binding nun in eyeliner and purple skinny jeans.[3]

Korean television often witnesses a scramble for ratings as various TV series in the same time slot compete against one another. Approximately hour-long shows run twice a week for the equivalent of a season in terms of the American television cycle. They function on a live-shoot system where episodes are shot only hours before airing in order to be responsive to audience demands. The fall season of 2009 saw a heated battle between big-budget spy action series *Iris* and the youthful teenage romance *You're Beautiful* (Korean title: *Minam-i-Shineyo),* airing on the channels KBS and SBS[4] respectively. While *Iris*, featuring Lee Byung-hun, a popular actor in Korea and Japan hot on the heels of his successful Hollywood debut in *G.I. Joe: Rise of the Cobra* (2009), was comfortably ahead where television ratings were concerned, *You're Beautiful* quickly gained a cult following and began to be referred to as a 'mania drama'[5].

It registered a strong online presence as discussion boards and online forums—both in Korea and internationally—were flooded with comments regarding the show. Ranking among the most searched terms on Korean portals, the official website of the drama registered frenetic activity with over 10,000 views on the day it

---

[3] Darkeyedwolf, "You're Beautiful: Not the James Blunt song, but in some ways just as excruciating," *Rainscene's Journal*, http://rainscene.livejournal.com/22086.html accessed on October 21, 2011.
[4] Korean Broadcasting System and Seoul Broadcasting System, two of the four major Korean television networks.
[5] Javabeans, "You're Beautiful's passionate cult following," *Dramabeans*, November 1, 2009, http://www.dramabeans.com/2009/11/youre-beautifuls-passionate-cult-following/ accessed on October 25, 2011.

was unveiled[6]. Fans mobilized both online and offline support–drives to increase viewership. They sent in pictures with words of support from across the world to help boost the morale of the cast. Chinese and local fans even arranged for food, dietary supplements as well as letters of support for the entire cast and crew. Promotional strategies also relied on online networks as parody videos of Korean pop songs made by the cast went viral on the internet.

Written by the sisters Hong Jung-eun and Hong Mi-ran, known for their quirky humour and parodic style, the Korean title of the series *Minam-i-Shineyo* is intended as a pun on the female lead character's name. It can either be interpreted as 'you're beautiful' or 'your name is Minam'. The 16-episode series follows in the tradition of cross-dressing dramas popular in the region where the gender identity of the girl is either mistaken or deliberately concealed as she enters exclusively male domains. The drama follows the adventures of Go Minam (Park Shin-hye), a sheltered nun-to-be living in the countryside, forced to fill in for her twin brother Go Minyeo after a botched plastic surgery prevents him from joining the musical band of his dreams. Motivated by the pleading manager and the chance to discover her mother who had disappeared during her childhood, Minam enters the boy-band A.N. Jell consisting of three other members –Hwang Tae-kyung, the lead singer played by popular actor Jang Geun-seok, Kang Shin-woo (Jung Yong-hwa), the guitarist, and the drummer Jeremy (Lee Hong-ki)[7].

---

[6] Townhawk, ""You're Beautiful" gets bad rating but a big hit online," *88news*, November 14, 2009, http://www.88news.net/2009/11/14/"you're-beautiful"-gets-bad-rating-but-a-big-hit-online/ accessed on November 2, 2011.
[7] Both Lee Hongki and Jung Yonghwa belong to the 'idol' bands F.T. Island and C.N. Blue respectively. While Lee's popularity was already well-established in both Korean and Japan, C.N. Blue debuted after the drama series was released, no doubt riding on the success of the show and Jung's much-loved character. Jang Geun-seok's musical career also witnessed an upswing when his solo debut ranked first on Japan's Oricon album and digital singles charts after the show was aired there.

A game of hide-and-seek ensues as she tries to conceal her identity but is discovered by both Shin-woo, who promptly falls in love with her, and Tae-kyung, who uses the knowledge to threaten her ousting but eventually comes around to liking her; while Jeremy remains in the dark and begins to question his own sexuality as well as that of his fellow members. The drama also has its resident villains –Yoo Hye-yi (UEE) the vain starlet in love with Tae-kyung, and Tae-kyung's emotionally unavailable alcoholic mother, Mo Hwa-ran (Kim Sung-ryung). The narrative switches from melodramatic twists and turns as Minam and Tae-kyung realise their father and mother respectively had an affair with each other in the past to the neglect of their families, to comedic tracks where the gender confusion is played out and elaborate dream sequences and parody sketches are inserted. At the heart of the series, however, is the development of the relationship between Tae-kyung and Minam which changes from one of antagonism to that of fond affection as the show progresses.

The progression of the romantic relationship between Tae-kyung and Minam can be tracked through the circulation of certain objects within the text. Among these, the Pig Rabbit emerges as the most prominent, serving not only as a token of affection but also mediating the relationship between them. While Tae-kyung behaves brusquely towards her, Minam develops a sense of admiration for his meticulous ways and starry airs which quickly transform into romantic feelings. Unschooled in the ways of the world, she comes to believe her feelings for Tae-kyung are akin to that of a fan's. At the same time, living in close quarters (they share a dormitory and even a room at one point) provides ample opportunities for the development of affections on both sides. Putting a spoke in their romantic wheel, however, is the need to keep her gender identity secret in order to avoid the wrath of both fans and the management. Having discovered the truth, Tae-kyung willingly takes part in elaborate

ploys to conceal her identity but at the same time gifts her a hairpin which, according to him, is a clear recognition of her gender. Purchasing it from a roadside counter at a disproportionately high price, the hairpin acquires symbolic value as the first token of affection from Tae-kyung to Minam that is also cognizant of her 'femininity'.

The fate of the Pig Rabbit becomes intimately tied to that of the hairpin. Known for her sloppy ways, Minam loses the pin after a run-in with her romantic rival, which Tae-kyung then finds serendipitously. Peeved at her thoughtlessness, he privately chides her for losing his gift, unaware that she was desperately searching for it. Wondering how to give it back to her without being obvious about his feelings, he devises the Pig Rabbit. In keeping with the show's outlandish sense of humour, Minam had earlier been identified with these animals –she believes naively when told by her manager that making a 'pig face' by scrunching up her nose would help her control her attraction towards Tae-kyung, and in a separate incident teases Tae-kyung for being scared of mountain rabbits when they get lost in the countryside.

He proceeds to procure two stuffed animals –a rabbit and a pig –from his vast collection and performs 'surgery' with great precision and care, replacing the rabbit's nose with the pig's snout. The sequence consists of close-ups of his face showing sweat dripping down his forehead as he exerts himself, and shots that show the pig's nose juxtaposed on his own. Thus, while the Pig Rabbit is closely identified with Minam, it is also a product of Tae-kyung's effort and becomes affiliated with him through visual suggestion. The link with her character is through the physical incorporation of certain features on its body but the connection to the male lead as the one breathing life into it is equally strong. The soft toy is placed at their interstices where it acts as an extension of both their personhoods.

Figure 1. Hwang Tae-kyung performing 'surgery' on the Pig Rabbit in a scene from *You're Beautiful* (2009).

The Pig Rabbit's mutant form closely corresponds to its function –it serves more as a common boundary between the two protagonists rather than the personification of any one character. It emerges as a mediating device between Tae-kyung and Minam both in terms of a medium transporting trinkets and Tae-kyung's affections back to her, as well as an interface for communication between them. Moreover, it also serves as a medium through which both producers and consumers communicate and interact with one another and a two-way relationship is established (Lash 2004). As the show progresses, Tae-kyung's feelings towards Minam are conveyed to the viewer through his conversations with the Pig Rabbit. It becomes his confidant as he drops his arrogant façade to vent his frustrations and express affection for her in lieu of her physical absence. The fact of its inanimateness, however, strikes him many times as he realises its inability to reciprocate and act as a substitute even as he tries to channel her through it.

It also assumes the properties of an interface through which the couple communicate when Minam adopts 'Pig Rabbit' as her internet username on the band's official online fan forum, which the members visit intermittently to check on the status of their popularity. Tae-kyung immediately identifies Minam through the username and proceeds to test the loyalty of his unsuspecting 'fan' and in another instance, Minam uses the ID to post a goodbye message and video shortly before going into exile. The Pig Rabbit is adorned with yet another trinket, a 'star necklace' meant originally for Minam which Tae-kyung is unable to give to her when she disappears for a prolonged period. When contact between them breaks down, he packs away the stuffed animal along with the necklace and declares it extinct. By the end of the series, as Tae-kyung becomes more vocal about his affections, the Pig Rabbit is deemed a poor substitute and possesses the necklace only momentarily before it is returned to its rightful owner during the climax.

The Afterlife

While the ratings of the show remained at an average 10 percent as opposed to 30 percent for *Iris*[8], the ensuing frenzy around it was manifested in the widespread circulation of videos and images on the internet, as well as the demand for its merchandise. The original soundtrack of the series sung by the actors became hugely popular through album[9] and concert ticket sales as well as cell phone ringtones. The show witnessed high DVD sales in the domestic market[10] and became the best-selling

---

[8] Approximation of TNS Media Korea figures as displayed on www.dramawiki.com accessed on November 5, 2011.

[9] "OST album of 'You're Beautiful' soars with nearly 20,000 copies sold in the first week," *HanCinema*, October 27, 2009, http://www.hancinema.net/ost-album-of-you-re-beautiful-soars-with-nearly-20-000-copies-sold-in-the-first-week-21190.html accessed on November 5, 2011.

[10] Lucia Hong, ""Minamishineyo" DVD sees high sales in Korea," *10Asia*, August 11, 2010, http://10.asiae.co.kr/Articles/new_view.htm?sec=ent0&a_id=2010081114492919308 accessed on November 10, 2011.

Korean drama DVD in Japan for the year 2010.[11] Phenomenally successful in Japan, it scored the highest rating in its time slot on the public network Fuji TV[12] and spawned a remake with an all-Japanese cast.[13] A.N. Jell stickers, pogs, fridge magnets, canvas bags etc. featuring cartoon figures of the stars that had been previously depicted on the show, Go Minam's hairpin and the star necklace also became popular items on online shopping sites selling both official and fan-made goods. The most conspicuous of them, however, was the Pig Rabbit, which appeared to assume a life of its own as it circulated through online and offline networks in various forms. It emerged as a brand interface located not in a single place, but distributed across various "surfaces (of, for example, products and packaging), screens (television, computers, cinemas) or sites (retail outlets, advertising hoardings, and so on)," and connecting these disparate spaces. (Lury 2004:42)

The tizzying speed at which images travel through the internet ensured that episodes became available to audiences abroad, hours after they were aired in Korea. Sequences involving the Pig Rabbit such as the ones where Tae-kyung performs surgery and where Minam expresses her joy upon receiving the stuffed animal gained wide currency on the internet in the form of gifs or moving images. Used to convey emotional states or as user icons, they became a popular means of expression on online forum discussions in communities and message boards pertaining to Korean popular culture. In this case, the viewer did not merely contemplate the image from

---

[11] ""You're Beautiful" drama was the #1 Korean drama in Japan," Yonhap News, January 6, 2011, http://www.allkpop.com/2011/01/youre-beautiful-drama-was-the-1-korean-drama-in-japan accessed on November 23, 2011.
[12] Lucia Hong, "Korean drama "Minamishineyo" scores top rating in Japan," *10Asia*, August 5, 2010, http://10.asiae.co.kr/Articles/new_view.htm?sec=ent0&a_id=2010080508424241476 accessed on November 10, 2011.
[13] "Takimoto Miori, Tamamori Yuta, Fujigaya Taisuke, Yaotome Hikaru star in "You're Beautiful" remake," Tokyograph, May 17, 2011, http://www.tokyograph.com/news/takimoto-miori-tamamori-yuta-fujigaya-taisuke-yaotome-hikaru-star-in-youre-beautiful-remake/ accessed on November 11, 2011.

outside but actively changed and manipulated them to speak to disparate contexts, states of mind and situations.

Alongside this proliferation of online images, the production company was flooded with calls from viewers enquiring about the availability of Pig Rabbit merchandise.[14] Responding to the overwhelming demand, the soft toy, among other 'official' goods from the series, went into production soon after. While online sales figures are hard to come by, the popularity of the doll can be witnessed in the explosion of comments and images on websites such as *Tumblr*, *Livejournal* and *Facebook* as well as on online discussion forums like *Soompi*, *AsianFanatics*, and *6Theory*[15] where users have posted pictures of their Pig Rabbit dolls. Sold primarily through online shopping sites such as *YesAsia*, *Amazon*, *Star_thots*, *DVDHeaven* and *Ebay*, the official version of the Pig Rabbit doll came in various sizes and became available at a range of $30-$50. The connection of the doll to the drama series is made explicit on most websites, where pictures from the show are displayed alongside the product. Most sites operate on a pre-order basis where items are not stocked beforehand but only after a certain minimum number of orders have been placed[16].

Lash & Lury (2004, 2007) point out that while commodities have linear trajectories with their point of origin located in the external process of production, branded goods acquire multiple ones owing to their own productive capacities. Functioning in the environment of a brand economy, the Pig Rabbit presents itself as a communicative surface through which this trajectory from production to consumption is reconfigured and practically reversed. Here, consumer demand is not

---

[14] Javabeans, "Pig-Rabbit for sale (calling You're Beautiful fans)," *Dramabeans*, November 6, 2009, http://www.dramabeans.com/2009/11/pig-rabbit-for-sale-calling-youre-beautiful-fans/ accessed on November 15, 2011.

[15] While most of the sites referenced here are English-language websites, the users come from diverse regions and speak different languages while holding varying levels of proficiency in English.

[16] The doll later came to be stocked regularly on more popular sites like yesasia.com.

merely a feedback mechanism meriting minor adjustments in the institutional frame of production but emerges as a productive activity in itself as it calls forth the very manufacture of these goods.

Lury notes that the brand is always open-ended and has a potentially infinite number of manifestations. Always in a state of becoming, its final form remains indeterminate (2004:38-39). She argues that branded cultural goods are not merely the end-products of the process of production but act as repositories of potential and hold the capacity to generate further value. The Pig Rabbit similarly mutates into a variety of avatars to become available not only as a doll but in a number of other miniaturised forms and imprinted on the surfaces of different kinds of objects. A search for the term 'Pig Rabbit' on online shopping sites such as *YesAsia* reveals a plethora of products –stationery such as notebooks, notepads, scotch tape, pencils, bookmarks; items of personal use such as Pig Rabbit cushions, pillows and plushies, compact mirrors and keychains; a variety of small pouches as well as larger canvas bags among other things. The most conspicuous presence, however, is of accessories for technological objects including the many varieties of miniature Pig Rabbit cell phone accessories, mobile straps, strap cleaners, phone holders and mouse pads. Endowed with a generative force, the Pig Rabbit brand creates several versions of itself and marks objects of everyday use such that they emerge as interactive entities through which the user can send and receive messages. This multiplication takes place on material as well as virtual registers, with at least ten different *Facebook* pages listing it as a 'public figure' with thousands of fans.

Figure 2. A screenshot of the website *YesAsia* showing different variations of the Pig Rabbit merchandise.

The productive potential of the brand is controlled not just through industrial management but becomes decentralised in this scenario. Cheaper and unofficial versions of Pig Rabbit merchandise became available as individuals sold both official and fan-made versions[17] through their blogs and online journals. The desire to recreate the tactile experience of the object and possess it in tangible form is evident in a number of videos and images on the internet that show fans producing different kinds of Pig Rabbits using an array of materials on a variety of surfaces—miniature Pig Rabbits made from polymer clay, plastic and cloth, origami and crochet Pig Rabbits, Pig Rabbit nail art and even Pig Rabbit cakes. Many of the videos are tutorials that not only present the finished product but show viewers how to make that particular version in a step-by-step process. Travelling from one screen to another, the Pig Rabbit becomes a medium of creative expression as well as a means by which

---

[17] While the majority of those involved in producing, consuming and circulating these products are indeed fans, some who have recreated the Pig Rabbit in various forms (often as gifts for their friends) claim not to know of its origins and the TV series it is linked to.

members of the fan community interact with one another. Contests and giveaways on private journals and as well as video-hosting sites such as *YouTube* involve fans gifting the Pig Rabbit in exchange for comments, subscriptions, 'likes' and reblogs. Just as 'users' of the image manipulate and leave their mark on it, fans do not merely consume these branded products but interact with them on a deeply personal, everyday basis. These affective connections are formed through engagement with the cinematic text, and subsequently through the possession and re-creation of the brand in object form.

A Pocket Full of Stars

> Put me in your pocket so I'll be close to you
> No more will I be lonesome and no more will I be blue
> And when we have to part dear there'll be no sadder due
> For I'll be in your pocket and I'll go along with you.

> - *Put Me in Your Pocket* by Hank Locklin (1966)

At the forefront of what has been termed a 'resurgence' of the Korean Wave in recent times, is Korean popular music, also known as Kpop,[18] which has emerged as the second-largest music industry in Asia. Driven by the search for more lucrative markets in the wake of poor domestic sales of both physical albums and digital music, Kpop is making its presence felt across continents. The internet has been instrumental in its dissemination as video and audio content has become available through video-hosting websites such as *YouTube* and digital versions of songs, legal and illegal, are accessible through *iTunes* and torrents. Having become cognizant of their popularity through online networks, Korean musicians are increasingly conducting tours and

---

[18]Many journalistic articles note the waning popularity of television dramas and the increasing influence of Kpop- Chung Kang-hyun, "Korean musicians leading a new wave," *Korea JoongAng Daily*, November 30, 2010, http://koreajoongangdaily.joinsmsn.com/news/article/article.aspx?aid=2928992 accessed on September 21, 2011. Song Woong-ki, "'Hallyu' bouncing back through K-pop and film," *The Korea Herald*, November 11, 2010, http://view.koreaherald.com/kh/view.php?ud=20101110000956&cpv=0 accessed on September 16, 2011.

concerts not only in Asian countries such as Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, China and Japan, but also in more unexpected places like Brazil, Spain, Russia and Germany.

Highly organized artist management companies that play a crucial role in producing and distributing creative content have been extremely influential in facilitating the transcultural flow of Kpop. The three major companies on the horizon are SM Entertainment, YG Entertainment, and JYP Entertainment, all of whom are listed on the Korean Stock Exchange. Set up in 1995, 1996 and 1997 respectively, Sun Jung (2011) notes that these companies were responsible for scouting, planning and managing stars. Starting at a very young age, artists are trained in music, dance, song-writing, music production and acting and every aspect of their career is managed by these agencies. Artists are also provided training in multiple languages, a practice that has helped the likes of BoA, Rain and DBSK acquire a strong foothold in the Japanese market. Moreover, foreign members are also recruited, helping acts gain popularity in that member's country of origin. Lee Soo-man, founder of SM entertainment, attributes the worldwide success of these groups to the development of 'culture technology' or CT. According to him, "CT is the driving force behind the development of SM's pop culture into global *Hallyu*. One of the elements of CT is our training system. Through auditions, we discover hidden talent and put them through three to seven years of music, dance, and acting training in order to create a star that's close to perfection. It's through this unique system that the *Hallyu* wave was created."[19]

While these companies provide the necessary infrastructural facilities and support for their artists, they also exercise a considerable amount of control over the

---

[19] Chung Min-uck, "Lee reveals know-how of hallyu," The Korea Times, July 6, 2011, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/art/2011/06/135_88764.html accessed on October 15, 2011.

production of their public image through a number of restrictions and prohibitions.[20] Artists usually sign long-term contracts ranging from a span of 7-15 years, including the time they spend training at the company. Remunerations are notoriously low[21] as the companies take a major chunk of profits from stars' activities including concerts, TV appearances, album sales, and advertisements. Working conditions are also deplorable as artists work long and irregular hours, often to the point of exhaustion, and many are asked to undergo plastic surgery. Such practices have prompted a slew of lawsuits by members of popular groups such as DBSK and Super Junior, bringing to light unfair contract clauses and disproportional distribution of profits.

These agencies carefully calibrate star images and invest in the exercise of brand-building through various strategies. Lury notes the importance of the production of a personality in the creation of a brand since "a personality, figure or a face is the most easily identifiable, intelligible and perhaps also the most powerfully persuasive configuration of space and movement" (2004:75). The personality need not relate to any real person but refers to a combination of qualities, carefully marked out and produced in this context. Barred from dating during the course of their contract, both male and female 'idols' are expected to put up virginal fronts and even the hint of a scandal can result in severe restrictions on movement and interaction in the public domain. Apart from dating, any form of rowdy public behaviour and especially the use of drugs can invite not only the wrath of fans but strict measures on part of the management. Artists embroiled in controversies in the past have typically been sent off to serve in the army for the duration of two years in an effort to salvage their image. TV appearances are also crucial to the crafting of star personas as artists

---

[20] While each of the big three companies have a distinct style of management with some being more autocratic than others, these problems have been witnessed across the industry as a whole.
[21] Lucy Williamson, "The dark side of South Korean pop music," *BBC News*, 14 June, 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13760064 accessed on September 15, 2011.

are expected to appear on 'variety shows' which encompass a wide gamut of programming from reality TV to game and chat shows. Sun Jung (2011) notes that stars are expected to reveal their 'true' selves on these shows, which far from being spontaneous, are usually scripted and carefully planned. Bands and artists also appear on short variety or reality TV series that track their everyday lives.

Furthermore, these agencies often directly manage fan clubs which are usually highly structured and require formal membership. Artists are expected to engage with fans at specially-held events known as 'fan-meetings' where they perform and interact directly. Fan expectations are often appropriated and incorporated into a gamut of industrial practices. Termed 'fan service', members of boy-bands indulge in public displays of affection to cater to the slash[22] fantasies of fans who create homosexual pairings between them. For instance, in a short comic skit[23] called *Dangerous Love* aired in March 2006, two members of the band DBSK who are routinely paired together by a large number of fans were shown in sexually-charged situations. While the show ended on a comic note and dismissed the notion as a misunderstanding, the romantic moments between them provided fodder for fans. Using both the edited version and behind-the-scenes cuts, fan-made videos, artwork and fiction re-inscribed these moments as evidence of their 'actual' relationship.

Just as consumers enter into a relationship with brands over a period of time on the basis of identification with certain qualities, these strategies of image-creation enable fans to relate to artists over a period of time, where their 'real self' is produced and accessed through various platforms. Mutual trust and affection play a significant role in facilitating this relationship as stars are expected to be respectful towards their

---

[22] Slash refers to a genre of fan fiction with pairings of members of the same sex, often relating to fictional characters in a TV series or film.
[23] Known as single or double-episode 'Banjun' dramas airing on Sundays on the network SBS.

fans and interact with them regularly, while fans guard information that could be potentially scandalous and defend them in the event of a controversy.

Christine Geraghty (2000) notes that fans often work through conflicting and discrepant notions of identity while engaging with a variety of materials generated around the figure of the star. As a result of this relationship with the formation of fan identity, the star has generally been considered "an unstable and contradictory figure" (185) in studies on stardom.[24] She finds, however, that with the proliferation of different kinds of media, stars come to function in a variety of ways that exceed the dualistic divide between their public and private persona. She refers primarily to the explosion of video, television and the tabloid press in her formulation while I argue that the advent of the internet and digital media has further complicated this process.

The internet has augured well for the spread of Kpop across the world but at the same time, made the regulation of star personas more and more difficult. While Kpop has assumed an industrial form, its reception and distribution have become extremely dispersed and decentralised, making it difficult to regulate the kind of discourses generated around a star. If the brand image is understood in terms of "the associations that a brand holds for a consumer," (Lury 2004:9) then these associations multiply and veer onto unexpected paths with the explosion of digital media. The regulation of meanings emerging from the profusion of visual materials online becomes almost impossible as fans scrutinize texts to arrive at their own conclusions

---

[24] Richard Dyer (1979, 1986), in his seminal work on stardom, put forward an understanding of the star as a figure constituted by multiple texts that spill out of the on-screen world and relate to a host of other materials such as pin-ups, posters, criticism, biographies etc. The management of the star persona is complicated due to the existence of these numerous, often contradictory texts. Christine Gledhill (1991) notes that gender plays a crucial role in the construction of a star and yields two opposing paradigms – empowered figures that are professionally and economically successful or the objects of male sexual fetish. Jackie Stacey (1991, 1994) has complicated this binary through her study of women spectators' memories and responses to female stars expressing admiration for their public and personal achievements.

about the 'real' nature of the star. Moreover, as the phenomenon spreads across different parts of the world, fan clubs have become more and more diverse and unstructured. Fans coming from varied linguistic, racial and ethnic backgrounds layer and interpret cultural meanings differently.

One such instance involves one of the most successful Korean groups, Girl's Generation or *Seo Nyeo Shi Dae* (SNSD), a nine-member group from SM Entertainment notorious for its 'slave contracts' and factory-line music. The girls' images are carefully managed and they are presented as the epitomes of feminine charm and beauty, and information about them is tightly controlled. In December 2010, however, there emerged fan videos of one of their performances which ostensibly showed one of the members, Jessica Jung, being molested by a man on stage.[25] The videos gave rise to endless speculation as fans contemplated her facial expressions and the reactions of the other members in the absence of unequivocal evidence. While SM Entertainment denied that she was sexually harassed, many fans were convinced otherwise based on the visual clues they obtained from the multiple recordings of the event. Moreover, the official Korean fan club of SNSD dismissed it as an attempt to malign the girls' image and requested international fans to stop circulating the videos. It was a plea that fell mostly on deaf ears as online message boards and forums were inundated with discussions on sexual abuse and expressed concern for their safety. The incident reiterated the difficulty of controlling information about stars on the internet even as it threw light on the functioning of power in the industry.

---

[25] Vitalwarning, "Was SNSD's Jessica inappropriately touched by a man?," *Allkpop*, December 7, 2010, http://www.allkpop.com/2010/12/was-snsds-jessica-inappropriately-touched-by-a-man accessed on November 12, 2011.

In an attempt to account for the different forms of stardom emerging across various media platforms, Geraghty (2000) makes a distinction between the celebrity, the professional and the performer on the basis of the particular configuration of their public persona, performative skills and personal lives in each case. However, along with reality TV and game show appearances, the widespread usage of social media networks to communicate and interact with fans among Korean stars blurs the divide between the public persona of the star and their personal biography. Instead, I argue that in this case, the star's public and private lives are tied together seamlessly to produce a holistic 'brand'.

Lury (2004) notes that brands resemble people on a number of counts – both have distinct styles and characteristics, engage in relationships, have a limited life cycle and display certain values. Here, in a reversal of the trope of the 'brand as person', the person is produced as a brand –an amalgam of qualities with which fans identify and enter into an affective relationship[26]. These qualities, however, are not only the sum of those manufactured through centrally organized management agencies but an almost infinite and open-ended addition and subtraction occurring in numerous, dispersed sites. Super Junior member, Kim Heechul, for instance, acts in TV series, conducts his own radio show, features regularly on game shows and reality TV and has a vast following on Twitter. Known for his blunt yet affable personality, his on-screen and off-screen selves seem to be in complete conjunction with one another. His sexuality, however, is the topic of debate among fans as he often cross dresses and kisses fellow members of his band on stage during concerts. While revelling in his 'honest' and 'free' personality, Heechul chooses to leave ambiguous

---

[26] Some recent works on the link between stardom and branding in the context of Hollywood have looked at the celebrity as a sign structuring meaning (Marshall, 2002), the tussle between corporate branding and the star's own performance (Austin and Barker, 2003) and the construction of branded authorship by the star-director (Lewis, 2011).

the question of his sexual orientation through contradictory statements that generate multiple fan interpretations.

As the brand acquires a physical presence in the very body of the star, brand personification ceases to function merely as a metaphor. The boundary between the physical manifestation of the brand and its purely abstract notion becomes difficult to maintain as both congeal onto the star's body. The multiplication of the abstract qualities of the brand takes place alongside the expansion of its material manifestations. The body-as-brand of the star becomes generative of a mass of physical objects that rely on his/her iconicity. The management of the brand therefore entails not just control over the person of the star but the production and dissemination of goods that are an extension of his/her brand identity. Furthermore, the fan's relationship to stars is conducted not just through an engagement with their physical personage but also through the possession and consumption of these products. Rather than a manifestation of the aura of the star who directly touches or wears a certain object, these products are incarnations of the 'star-as-brand', whose iconic imagery is captured in logos, caricatures, signatures or photographs imprinted on a variety of merchandise.

Kpop travels not only through the virtual dissemination of music and images, but also the proliferation of merchandise connected directly to the star. Kpop merchandise has emerged as a large source of revenue for entertainment companies through both online and offline networks. Concerts become lucrative through ticket sales but also as sites for selling officially manufactured goods ranging from T-shirts, playing cards and pouches to lightsticks specific to each band. These goods often enter online networks as fans auction or sell them on internet shopping sites. One of the companies, YG entertainment, also has an official e-shopping site through which

fans can buy merchandise including towels with band logos, pens and t-shirts specific to each member of a band, and cell phone charms with miniature cartoons versions of stars. Official goods are also sold at stores in France, Malaysia, Japan, Philippines and Australia, among others.

Moreover, the packaging of albums and DVDs includes posters, picture cards, songbooks etc. Successful albums are often sold in repackaged versions with little difference in terms of song content, but with different pictures and posters. That the star-fan relationship extends to the possession of these products is demonstrated by the fact that fan clubs often mobilise to buy multiple copies of albums, hoping to increase the sales figures of their favourite band. S.M. Entertainment, for instance, released separately packaged albums for each of the 10 members of the boy-band Super Junior which fans promptly bought in large numbers, helping it top album sales charts[27].

Like in the case of the Pig Rabbit, fan involvement is not limited to merely buying goods released through official quarters but also making their own versions. Just as the connotations of the star image are constantly modified and amended by fans, their concrete expressions exceed industrially-produced forms. A number of unofficial shops run by fans, no doubt in the wake of lax copyright laws, produce items of everyday use such as calendars, pins, shirts, cell phone accessories, mouse pads, mugs etcetera. For instance, Eka Prihatin[28], an Indonesian fan, takes orders for Kpop goods from her friends and acquaintances and sells them offline as well as on *Facebook*. She makes items that are both personal and personalised –ranging from

---

[27] This is in reference to their fifth album, *Mr. Simple* (2011), which, along with the repackaged versions, became the best-selling album of the year in South Korea.
[28] I interviewed her entirely through Facebook after a member of the Indian Kpop community facilitated our interaction.

nail clippers, bottle openers, pendants with signatures of Kpop stars and badges depiciting them in miniaturised forms to cell phones embossed with band and fan club names. The goods are often stamped with a hybrid version of her own name with that of Kim Heechul, her favourite member from the group Super Junior. (See figures 3 and 4) She also makes identity cards with the picture of a star alongside the name of the fan, which declare their membership to the fandom.

These objects constitute an intimate universe as they become closely related to one's body. The brand image, reproduced on things of daily use, no longer remains external to oneself but is experienced through deeply personal objects. In an essay mapping the proliferation of 'cute' character goods such as those of *Pokemon*, *Hello Kitty* and *Doraemon* in Japan, Anne Allison (2002) notes that designed for mobility, these products form a part of everyday life and become attached to the body. According to her, this portability "makes them prosthetically personal—not just a machine that is used and owned, but an intimate part of the self." (5)

The engagement with the star as an icon, recreated and imprinted in multiple material forms, is conducted through affective registers functioning alongside the market economy of the brand. In the case of fan-made goods, however, these affective connections are formed not only with the star but between a community of people who produce and consume these objects. Prihatin's clientele, for instance, consists not so much of customers as friends to whom she sends handwritten letters and pictures of herself and her family along with the merchandise. Rather than a singular totemic object around which a community is organized, the medium of the brand thus emerges as a platform that serves as a "dynamic support" for a variety of practices (Lury 2004:5).

Figure 3. Heechul badges created by Prihatin show him in his different avatars. The round faces are of his Twitter account's display icon, while the blonde miniature is a cartoon version of his cross-dressing performance as Lady Gaga in one of Super Junior's concerts.

Sourced from Prihatin's personal collection.

Figure 4. Mugs bearing Heechul cartoons and his signature created by Prihatin.

Sourced from Prihatin's personal collection.

Conclusion

Through this chapter, I have attempted to trace the productive potential of the brand as it operates through different sites, and across the traditional dichotomy between producers and consumers. While Lury in her work refers mostly to multi-national brands that are centrally managed, I have accounted for industrial as well as fan-based production and consumption of cinematic goods. What emerges is a fluid and heterogeneous field where the branded object is manifested in both concrete and immaterial forms. Its trajectories cannot be predetermined or dictated even through careful management. Rather than "transnational communities of consumers, variously constituted through their collaborative practices and modes of consumption…" (Chua 2008:88), fans emerge as nodes with their own productive potential.

Moreover, the brand is conceived as a mobile, dynamic idea. The notion of movement, however, is not merely in terms of the physical movement of concrete objects but that of the constantly mutating manifestations of the abstract brand, whether in terms of continuously unfolding images or variously actualised objects. An understanding of objects as actualizations of virtual potential allows us to account for the manner in which cinema and the internet intervene in the formation of the brand as it is produced, consumed and distributed both virtually and physically. In looking at the circulation of objects both within and outside Korean television series and films, I have interrogated them as sign systems whose value is generated within cinematic texts but spills over to other sites as they acquire a life of their own.

CHAPTER 2

**Picturing Words, Writing Images: Reading the Korean Wave
through Fansubs**

The ninth episode of the television series *You're Beautiful* aired in South Korea at

9:55 pm on 4th November 2009. Brendel Balaga, a professional nurse and occasional

blogger from Davos City tuned into the programme as it was airing on the Korean

network SBS at 10:55 pm Phillipine time through *TVAnts*, a peer-to-peer live video

streaming software. She then downloaded the video file when the links became

available online a few hours later and proceeded to watch the 1 hour 8 minute long

episode again in 'raw'[1] form without the help of English subtitles. While waiting for

detailed scene-by-scene English language recaps from *Dramabeans*, a blog on Korean

popular culture, she went through spoilers, analyses and pictures on the drama's

discussion thread on the online forum *Soompi*. She blogged[2] about her love for the

show later that day and watched it again after 12 hours when it was uploaded with

English subtitles on *Viki*, a community fan subtitling website. When *WITHS2*, a fan

subtitling group, released high quality English subtitles ten days after the original

airdate, she downloaded them so as to be able to re-watch the episode whenever she

wanted.

While Balaga's experience is not the norm by any standards, the meanings of a

text usually unfold in multiple layers for the non-Korean speaking fans of the *hallyu*

wave. Even though videos become available online soon after their official release,

---

[1] Raw files refer to unsubtitled videos in common internet parlance.

[2] Brendel Balaga "Officially Obsessed with You're Beautiful," Han Mania, November 4, 2009,
http://www.hanmania.com/korean-dramas/officially-obsessed-with-youre-beautiful/ accessed on July
14, 2012.

the viewing experience remains incomplete without access to subtitles. Commercially subtitled DVDs, however, are not only expensive but come into the market after considerable delay. In the absence of readily available official subtitles, the fan-produced subtitle or the fansub, is vested with the responsibility of sustaining the transnational popularity of South Korean television dramas, films and pop music. Fansubbing involves dedicated, decentralised groups of fans that take control of the technologies of subtitling and regularly translate the latest releases.[3] Fansubs have played a major role in creating and sustaining niche markets for culturally-specific products that are otherwise inaccessible through legal and commercial channels.

Fansubbing began sometime in the mid-1980s when groups of fans of Japanese animated films and TV shows (anime) began translating and subtitling them for circulation amongst other fans. When it first started, subtitling technology was expensive and the process extremely time consuming, with one episode requiring close to a hundred hours of work. Copies of subtitled videotapes were a rare commodity, hard to come by unless one was affiliated to an anime club. The proliferation of the internet in the 1990s helped circumvent some of these problems and the practice of fansubbing exploded onto the scene. Subtitling technology became freely available on the internet and it became easier for an expanding fan base to communicate and share fansubbed materials more efficiently. (Leonard 2005) While most scholarly attention focuses on Japanese anime fansubbing groups, (Leonard 2005, Díaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez 2006, O' Hagan 2009, Condry 2010) the fan-produced subtitle has also played a pivotal role in the spread of the Korean Wave. Fan-produced subtitling of Korean television and films is a relatively recent phenomenon. Korean fansubbing communities started to become organised around

---

[3] I deal primarily with the circulation of subtitled television drama series in this chapter.

2006-07 when a handful of groups such as *WITHS2* (Written in the Heavens Subbing Squad) and B.O.N. (Band of Nuts) were formed. Today, the field has become much more diversified, with Fansub Wiki listing close to 42 subbing groups which translate Korean TV and films into English, Japanese, Italian, Russian, French, Tagalog and German, among other languages[4].

Fansubbing can be placed within the peripheral economy of "poor images," a term coined by Hito Steyerl (2009) to refer to the army of remixed, compressed and dilapidated images that circulate at great speed through digital networks. Challenging the supremacy of high quality originals, poor images are low resolution copies that subvert the legal regime of intellectual property rights by ignoring its boundaries and restrictions. According to Steyerl, these images exist both within and outside commercial circuits –at times extending their reach to unexpected places, and at other times reconfiguring their flows by bringing the marginal to the mainstream. While technically illegal (once a show has been licensed in a particular area), fansubbed versions are often tolerated by license holders as it allows them to tap into a wider foreign market. A tacit agreement usually exists between fansubbing communities and licensing companies where the former operate on a strictly non-profit basis and only translate titles that are yet to be released in their region.[5]

As part of this economy of poor images, the dispersed and voluntary fansubbing industry can either be appropriated by commercial networks through

---

[4] Fansub Wiki is a site where fansubbing groups post their current projects in order to co-ordinate and prevent overlapping with other groups. http://fansub.d-addicts.com/Category:Fansub_Groups accessed on May 30, 2012.
[5] This code is not, however, adhered to universally as some groups refuse to withdraw their releases even after a title has been officially released in their area. It also applies more to Japanese anime fansubs than Korean ones, which often exist alongside licensed versions.

profit-based models[6] or invite its wrath by aiding and abetting copyright violations. Some of the legal hurdles are circumvented through the use of 'soft' subtitles which are released as separate text files rather than being directly embedded in the video. This allows the translations and timings of subtitles to be modified instead of being permanently etched onto the image, as in the case of 'hard' subtitles. While there is a preference for 'softsubs' fansubbing communities occasionally release 'hardsubbed' material. Viewers often convert the softsubs into hardsubbed videos and upload them to streaming sites such as *YouTube* and *Dailymotion*, much to the chagrin of subbing communities who see their work as being unfairly appropriated. This also makes fansubbing communities vulnerable to legal action. *WITHS2*, for instance, received legal notifications from South Korean licensing companies when their work was uploaded by others to streaming sites, prompting them to withhold services.[7] Pirated CDs and DVDs of TV series and films also tend to use a mix of fan-produced and software-generated subtitles, often retaining the message issued by these groups warning against the sale of their subtitles.

Despite being a highly mobile and compressed version of the original, the fansub is not necessarily of poor quality. On one hand is the subtitle that travels faster but suffers from omissions, translation errors and grammatical mistakes. On the other is the amateur subtitle that stands almost in polar opposition to the shaky, low resolution amateur video. Written with great precision and care, these provide detailed notes and explanations of terms but are released much after an episode has aired. If the poor image is "a lumpen proletarian in the class society of appearances, ranked

---

[6] Notably the website Viki.com that provides a platform for fansubbers to translate licensed material in as many as 150 languages, raising millions of dollars in investments and ad-revenues. It is not just limited to South Korean shows and films and includes Japanese, Indian, Spanish telenovelas and films, among others.
[7] Javabeans, "WITH S2 fansubbing policy," *Dramabeans*, December 23, 2007, http://www.dramabeans.com/2007/12/with-s2-fansubbing-policy/ accessed on November 25, 2011.

and valued according to its resolution," (Steyerl 2009) then the fan-produced subtitle stakes its claim to a higher status by virtue of being preferred to the official, licensed version.

In her work on intercultural cinema, Laura Marks (2000) uses the metaphor of the 'skin' of the film to signify cinema's ability to both perceive and be perceived. She foregrounds an understanding of cinema based on its material and sensuous qualities, plotting film as a zone of contact between the surface of the image and the viewers' bodies. Cinema as a haptic medium evokes a corporeal response, mobilizing not only the faculty of vision but also the senses of smell, taste and touch. In fact, she argues that viewers 'touch' the image with their eyes, caressing it in an intimate embrace rather than appraising it from a distance. This encounter also leaves its mark on cinema and she contends that, "The very circulation of a film among different viewers is like a series of skin contacts that leave mutual traces." (2000:ix) Mapping the terrain of fansubtitled images, I would like to view the eruption of text on the screen as a manifestation of fans' haptic engagement with cinema. While Marks' imagined cinematic contact is a metaphorical term with the viewers' eyes working like organs of touch, here fans leave their textual traces on the very surface of the image. The film becomes a palimpsest of sense impressions through its circulation as different sets of subtitles construct its meanings differently.

In this chapter, I will trace the history of cinema's relationship with textual forms arguing that text has been integral to film despite attempts to maintain the 'purity' of the cinematic image. It must be noted that the manner in which cinema's transnational circulation has been enabled by the subtitle. Using Jacques Ranciere's (2007) formulation of the sentence-image, where text assumes visual and aural

qualities and ceases to fulfill a purely explicatory purpose, I set the agenda for a textural engagement with fan-produced subtitles. The role of digital technologies and the internet will be positioned as crucial in enabling the practice of fansubbing and bringing forth new patterns of viewing where the text is integral to the image.

Fansubbing is a form of labour that is embedded within complex processes of production and active participation from viewers. Fansubbing foregrounds fans' haptic engagement with the image as they mark the cinematic with their textual interpretations. More conventional fansubbing communities produce high quality subtitles through tedious and time-consuming procedures, while newly developed community subtitling websites draw on the collective knowledge of their user base to release faster subtitles. Common to both, however, are conventions that engage with the materiality of the image and language by playing with the graphic and textural qualities of the text. They also tend to preserve untranslatable idioms and phrases rather than searching for an equivalent in English that skims over their cultural nuances. This tends to encourage a more sustained engagement with the image while refusing to offer up meanings for easy consumption. Fansubs can also position themselves as parodies, working through a play with the text's visual and phonetic qualities rather than a dialectical opposition between text and image. Apart from subtitles, some other textual practices such as user chats that appear on the screen not only transform the viewing experience but mark cinema with the impressions of its reception.

These poor subtitled images forge their own relationships of time –both in terms of their internal (ar)rhythmic conjunction of text, image and sound as well as the conditions of their circulation. Fansubbers, who play a key role in filtering and

disseminating these shows and films, 'create' time for their hobby through a disruption of the rhythmic cycles of work and rest. The speed of releases is crucial to the economy of subtitles as they scramble to catch up with the raw video files that become available soon after a show is aired in South Korea. I compare the faster, garbled version of a subtitle to slower, higher quality versions in the context of a time-travel series, exploring the manner in which time and space are flattened through a play with the image as well as the erasure of the (literal) meaning of the dialogue in the subtitle.

Scribbling on Images–Cinema's Encounter with the Subtitle

The search for an aesthetics of "pure cinema" has underpinned its claim as an independent art form. Cinema was to be defined by its own technical apparatus, judged by its own rhythmic movements and mapped through its peculiar relationship to space. Film fellneither within the traditions of literature nor dramatics; and painting and sculpture's relationship to the 'real' was decidedly different from that of the filmic.[8] The visual language of cinema was imagined to be distinct from the textual language of words, to the extent that the appearance of the written word on the cinematic frame was met with much disdain. Over-explication through intertitles and subtitles was believed to corrupt films and reduce them to industrial waste. Vsevolod Pudovkin (1947), for instance, argued that subtitles drew the audience's attention to the bottom of the frame and away from the visual imagery, hindering their ability to be 'moved' by the film. More recently, Amresh Sinha (2004) and Mark Betz (2009) have also commented on the distortive ability of subtitles, arguing that they take over

---

[8] András Bálint Kovács traces this as an impact of what he terms 'early modernism', beginning in the 1920s. See András Bálint Kovács, *Screening Modernism: European Art Cinema*, 1950-1980 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007) 18.

the cinematic screen and command more attention than the visuals, and tend to disfigure the source dialogue by trimming it beyond recognition.[9]

Despite the attempt to uncouple the written word from the filmic image, it has found its way into the frame since the very beginning of cinema. Scholars have noted the hybrid nature of cinema –its combination of visual photography, speech, music, sounds, and graphic traces. (Rodowick 2007, Ranciere 2007) Tom Conley (2006) notes that alphabetical or iconic writing has always been a part of cinema, whether accidentally presenting itself on screen, or used consciously to either generate critical agency or serve ideological purposes –including the title and credits, text inserted into film trailers, actual scenes of reading and writing in films etcetera. The intertitle and the subtitle in particular, have been intrinsic to cinema since its inception. Early cinema was punctuated by intertitles that "commented on the action, attested to the accuracy of the setting [we have only to think of the intertitles in *Birth of a Nation*, where Griffith parades the authenticity of his sets in what are, in fact, subtitles within the intertitles], identified locations, explained abstract terms or difficult concepts (such as the passage of time), played on the viewer's emotions and expressed the characters' feelings and thoughts. In addition, the typeface, type size and layout of the text on the screen were designed to suggest, symbolize or emphasize."[10] (Naficy 2004:144) Subtitles emerged on the scene with the advent of sound cinema, and became a key instrument through which Hollywood maintained and furthered its global circulation. (Nornes 1999:23) While enabling the transnational dissemination of cinema, the subtitle has been curiously subordinated to the analysis of the image.

---

[9] The three viewpoints summarised in Courtney White, "Transliterated Vampires: Subtitling and Globalization in Timur Bekmambetov's Night Watch "Trilogy"", *Translating Media, Chera Kee, editor, Spectator* 30:1 (Spring 2010): 11-18.
[10] Hamid Naficy, "Epistolarity and Textuality in Accented Films," *Subtitles: On the Foreignness of Film,* Ed. Atom Egoyan and Ian Balfour, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press/ Alphabet City Media, 2004) 131-152.

Scholars have noted the need to recover this 'submerged history' of subtitling in order to uncover the workings of power associated with its apparatus. (Nornes 1999, 2007)

Apart from Hollywood films' widespread use of the subtitle, the avant-garde also experimented with textual forms "with on-screen titling as an expressive, narrative and calligraphic component…," while posing a challenge to the aesthetic norms of mainstream cinema. (Naficy 2004:150) It was in fact Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinema* (1998) that led Jacques Ranciere (2007) to theorise the image as a combination of disparate visual and textual fragments that render meaning. While the image is a 'pure form' with the power to disrupt the narrative, it also has a propensity towards communalisation – that is, to construct commonly held meanings and significations through a community of visual, textual and aural elements. According to Ranciere, Godard's film puts the visual and the textual on an equal footing, such that "the visible forms speak and that words possess the weight of visible realities; that signs and forms mutually revive their powers of material presentation and signification." (35) The image-forming function of the sign is no longer subordinated to its textual function and intelligibility is not established by a sequential connection of words and images. The 'representative regime' in the arts gives way to the 'aesthetic regime', where commonality is not conceived as the great, consensual binding thread of (narrative) history but as the chaotic mixture of the otherwise incommensurable domains of text, image and sound. Ranciere calls this the law of the great parataxis where, rather than a common term of measurement, "It is the common factor of dis-measure or chaos that gives art its power." (45)

This aesthetic regime is marked by the sentence-image that becomes responsible for ordering its tumultuous clutter and dividing "the chaotic force of the

great parataxis into phrasal power of continuity and imaging power of rupture." (ibid. 46) This sentence-image is not just the coupling of verbal sequences and visual forms but a reconfiguration of their relationship. It constitutes an unmooring of the sayable and the visible such that the sentence is no longer merely the sayable and the image, the visible. Rather, the image-forming function and sentence-function are distributed across the various elements of the image. The sentence links images as much as it imparts substance to them and the image is not just a supplement to the text but holds a disruptive power. As the seeable and the sayable collapse into one another, one risks losing the thread of continuity and falling into complete chaos. This is when sound comes to assume a phrasal function – the sound of the sentence read out loud imputes distance and allows one to gauge its 'truth' value. The sentence-image is thus marked by "this strange tension between the hand writing, the eye, the blind eye, and the ear with which he hears the sound of the sentence and the sound of truth." (Ranciere 2011: 298-299)

Thus, the sentence-image is not just the juxtaposition of the subtitled text and the image but also alludes to the expressive powers of the subtitle that go beyond its ability to elucidate spoken dialogue. Fan-produced subtitles perform the textual function of translation but also experiment with aesthetic forms. In one sense, the subtitled text retains its distinct character and refuses to meld in completely with the image. It maintains its identity as a separate text file that runs alongside the image but can be accessed and modified independently of it. However, the text's powers of translation and explanation do not exist in a vaccum and function in tandem with the image and the soundtrack. High quality fan-produced subtitles tend to keep intact some of the terms and references of the source text, providing detailed explanations of culturally and historically-specific terms in the form of notes appearing either at the

top or the bottom of the screen. Instead of distracting the viewer from the image, they call their attention back to it and encourage fans to understand words as they are uttered in a particular context.

The subtitle contains its own ability to generate sensuous engagement, its own "power of contact" (Ranciere 2007:55) that exceeds its narrativising functions. Words appearing within the frame are experienced as part of the cinematic image track and do not remain immune to its spatio-temporal movement. Animated by cinema, the subtitle is not experienced as a fixed form of text but becomes as fleeting as the image itself. Moreover, fansubs express the graphic qualities of the text through experimentation with font, size, placement, and colour. They attempt to match the textural feel of the image and soundtrack and convey meaning through form as much as through content. The fan-produced subtitle also shares an intimate connection with the dialogue, as syntactic fidelity is abandoned for a more literal translation of words as they are spoken.

For Ranciere, the common term of measurement in the aesthetic regime is not the consensual harmony of text and image corroborating one another, but the rhythm that connects disjointed words and images and weaves them into a whole. Godard's cinema carefully orchestrates this rhythm by building "a little machine, a little optical instrument, an interpretive grid through which to look at the images of the century." (2011:300) The differentiated economy of the poor (subtitled) images is, however, often constituted by states of arrhythmia marked by a breakdown of synchronization. Often, the picture blurs, the text becomes illegible, or the soundtrack lags –giving rise to an unchoreographed melange of images, words and sounds. Disjunction between these elements is not so much the result of careful calibration evident in avant-garde

cinema as a failure of synchronization that tests the perceptual faculties of the viewer and encourages them to tie the loosely bound threads together. Even when the material does not fall under the purview of the aesthetic regime of arts and follows a representational logic, the online conditions of dissemination and reception of this body of imperfect cinema interrupt their consensual drive.

The innovativeness of fansubtitling marks a clear break from conventional subtitling practices, where the text is modified according to the spatial and temporal restrictions that cinema is perceived to place on the process of translation. (Zojer 2011:399) Precision is often sacrificed at the altar of legibility as subtitlers try not to overcrowd the image with words and adjust the number of characters according to "the average reading speed of the viewers". (Ibid.) New technologies of cinematic viewing have reduced these restrictions of time and space considerably, allowing a different form of subtitling to flourish. Anne Friedberg (2000) points out that the coming of pre-digital technologies such as the VCR and remote control allowed viewers to 'defer' or 'shift' time, producing new forms of spectatorship. These technologies prepared the ground for a more intimate experience of cinema through personal computers, using which viewers could manipulate images more freely. Lengthier subtitles thus become less problematic when accessed through a personal computing device where one can pause and rewind at the click of a mouse.

The computer screen also engenders "an entirely new visual system –a text or image in one 'window' meets other texts or images in other 'windows' on the same screen." (Friedberg 2006) Thus, text becomes less intrusive as it is experienced simultaneously alongside the image on the space of the screen. The presence of the text is no longer odd or distracting but integrated through the emergence of new

patterns of viewing resulting from the convergence of different kinds of data on the internet. The hypertextual nature (Landow 2006) of the internet, where blocks of text, visual information, animation and sounds are connected through links further erodes the distinction between them. For instance, the website of the person who first began subtitling Korean television shows in the early 2000s[11] uses a hypertextual format to create a comprehensive database on a show. Links to subtitle and video torrents coexist with hyperlinked nuggets of textual, visual and musical information that provide insight into the historical background, linguistic nuances and cultural relevance of a series. Blogs on Korean popular culture such as *Dramabeans* recap shows using screenshot images followed by a textual summary of the sequence. Recaps are usually released before subtitles and fill the temporal gap for those who are impatient. They also play a mediatory role by providing detailed commentary and helping viewers decide which series to watch. The viewer's relationship to text in the online landscape of Korean popular culture thus begins much before the subtitle physically presents itself on the screen. These textual resources form a key supplement to subtitles, helping the viewer make sense of complicated scenarios and unravel the different layers of meaning.

Fansubbers at Work

For Michel de Certeau (1984), reading is a nomadic activity that poaches on the text and reassembles it in pleasurable ways. Rather than accepting its legitimized meaning, readers engage in acts of cultural appropriation through a number of tactics. These

---

[11] Although it is difficult to pinpoint exactly how it all started, a fansubber and blogger on Korean TV dramas known by the internet pseudonym of Thundie has recorded an interview with a man who was apparently the first to start subtitling Korean television shows. Known only as Totuta, a man of Korean origin educated both in South Korea and the United States, he began single-handedly subtitling TV series such as *Attic Cat* (2003) and *Ruler of Your Own World* (2002) in the early 2000s. Thundie, "Meet Totuta," *Thundie's Prattle*, April 26, 2012, http://thundiesprattle.com/2012/04/26/meet-totuta/ accessed on June 3, 2012.

tactics become effective due to the constantly shifting nature of reading that opposes itself to the fixity of the written word –a nomadic form that lacks a place. While the readers of a book may be able to leave their marks on it by scribbling on the margins, de Certeau takes a critical view of television, where the viewer is reduced to passive reception. Henry Jenkins (1992) has used de Certeau's conception of reading to theorise fans as 'textual poachers' who construct alternative meanings by mining existing popular cultural materials. However, he argues that television viewers also hold the capacity to 'write' on the margins of the text through gossip, written criticism and fan fictions that reinterpret the main plot of the story and focus on peripheral characters and details. Jenkins is able to conceive of televisual viewing as a creative act of reproduction by identifying a 'place' for it outside the physical contours of the image.

While there have been many instances of active readers-as writers, including authors playing with the cannons of classical literature and slash fiction, fan-produced subtitling re-writes the pleasures of reading. Illusions of authorial intent are shattered at the hands of fansubbers who create and re-create a work by making it comprehensible to a larger community of fans. The fansub pulls itself out of the margins of cultural production and re-locates onto the (ontologically unstable) body of the existing work. The reader is no longer a homeless wanderer, nor functioning on the periphery of the main text but writing her interpretations onto the very surface of the image. The pliability of the image is not just a "culture of the look" (Ranciere 2011) that actively constructs cinema through its gaze but a material manifestation of its tactile appropriation. In leaving visible imprints on the image, the fansub re-configures the source text not only through the interpretation of its 'meaning' as expressed in the dialogue but also by changing the visual experience of cinema itself.

The absence of the subtitle can be viewed as a lack that renders the image illegible and invites anxiety and impatience. It is the many subtitled lives of the film that impute value to it, the copy that determines the response to the 'original'. This creation of value thriving on the voluntary labour of fans can be a painstaking and time-consuming process. The deceptive ease with which one can access and download fansubs on the internet often masks the complexity of the effort that goes into it. Fansubbing involves high levels of co-ordination and division of labour among people with different skill sets. In an interview to Xiaochang Li (2009), Amrayu, the founder of the fansubbing group *SARS* (Search and Rescue Subbers) describes the tasks involved.

> The process first begins with the acquisition of "raws," or untranslated files either ripped from TV broadcasts or DVDs. The raw file then goes to a translator, usually a native speaker, who does the bulk of the dialogue and environmental translation (important signs and other written information that appears on screen). From there, a timer tracks the beginning and end of speaking times for each line of dialogue in order to synch the appearance of words on screen to when they are spoken. And editor then checks for grammar, punctuation, and spelling, while a "spot translator" looks over the translation for accuracy, consistency, and anything left untranslated. Then a typesetter takes the approved and revised translations and applies the fonts, colors, position, and effects of the subtitles on the screen. A quality checker then takes pass over the entire file as a whole to check for errors that over missed, before an encoder finally takes the typeset scripts and applies them to the final file in the preferred format.

Producing subtitles is clearly different from translating texts from one language to another. In the case of fan-produced subtitles, the text is not only meant to convey meaning but also imitate the textural qualities of the soundtrack and the image. Fansubbers constantly have to refer to the 'raw' video file at every stage and put the text in dialogue with the image both in terms of content and style. The main translators can either be those who know Korean and translate directly from the video or Chinese translators who work with the Chinese version of the subtitles. Even the

latter, who deal with text in another language, have to refer to the video to understand the context in the event of mistranslations, which are fairly common. Timers also have to re-watch scenes many times over as they try and anticipate the timing of the next dialogue, especially when they overlap. Editors and spot translators clean up grammatical mistakes but also make alterations in translations based on the context of the show. They also decide on the font, colour and size of the text depending on whether the subtitle is referring to dialogue, written text, voiceovers or soundtrack lyrics.[12] Experimentation with the graphic qualities of the text is enabled by an alteration of the temporal structure of the cinematic image. The video is slowed down and constantly replayed, and each sequence minutely dissected. According to the website of the fansubbing community *WITHS2*, "It's a tedious exercise of play-pause-type, and more typically, play-rewind-play-rewind-play-dictionary-type."[13]

Older subtitling communities such as *WITHS2*, *SARS* and *B.O.N.* where most translators are proficient in either Korean or Chinese, grant greater autonomy to the editors to decide on the accuracy of the translation and make stylistic choices. On the other hand, community subtitling sites such as *Viki* and *DarkSmurfSub* provide an interface where many of these tasks are integrated.[14] These sites rely on their large user base with varying degrees of linguistic proficiency to collaborate on subtitling and it passes from the domain of language experts to that of amateurs. Even users without formal training in Korean and Chinese can help by cleaning up the English grammar or assisting with co-ordination and the technical aspects of subtitling. Translations are arrived at collectively as the main subtitling page has a built-in chat interface where one can consult with project co-ordinators and double-check

---

[12] Information on the technical aspects of subtitling from http://withs2.com accessed on May 10, 2012.
[13] http://withs2.com/fansubbing#fansubbing accessed on May 10, 2012.
[14] *Viki*, being legal, allows fans to watch videos on their site, while *DarkSmurfSub* only creates subtitles.

meanings and usages of terms by discussing them with other users. Users can also change existing subtitles or leave comments and suggestions where they feel the translation is inadequate. Writing thus ceases to be a fixed form and is constantly erased, modified and altered, and the 'meaning' of the film continuously reconstructed as the subtitles are edited.

Figure 5. A screenshot of the *Viki* editing interface that allows users to modify the video while watching it, automatically timing the subtitle to the video. The panel on the right shows the number of languages subtitles are available in and lets users rate and modify existing translations. The video on the left shows the South Korean script and Hindi subtitles at the bottom of the screen, and chat discussions on top. From www.viki.com

In order to simplify the process for their mostly untrained users, community subtitling websites draw up elaborate guidelines for translation and stylistic decisions. *DarkSmurfSub*, for instance, has divided its Community Translated Subtitling (CTS) guide[15] into two sections –form, dealing with questions of translation, interpretation and grammar, and format, relating to the visual presentation of the text through the use of italics and symbols. Their website also has buttons integrated into its interface

---

[15] http://www.darksmurfsub.com/forum/index.php?/topic/4118-cts-general-guidelines/ accessed on May 20, 2012.

for inserting notational marks –with different symbols for the lyrics of a song, explanations provided in text embedded in the video, voice narration etc. If Trinh T. Minh-ha laments the loss of "language as voice and music -grain, tone, inflections, pauses, silences, repetitions…" (1992:60) in traditional dubbing and subtitling, then fansubbers develop conventions that reinstate these qualities in the written word. The subtitles convey meaning not just through their textual content but by experimenting with visual forms to bring out contextual complexities and tonal differences.

Figure 6. A pictorial guide to the appropriate stylistic choices for subtitles issued by *DarkSmurfSub*. Their interface shows the Chinese subtitles that are first converted to English and then edited to make grammatical sense, often by multiple users. Separate buttons are provided for inserting symbols appropriate to the situation. Photo from www.darksmurfsub.com
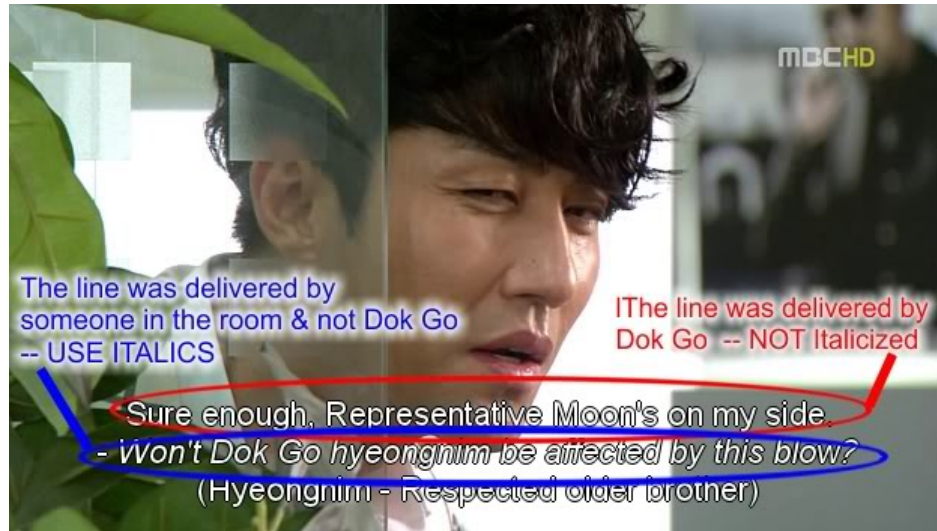
Figure 7. Instructions on how to treat diegetic and non-diegetic sounds using a screenshot from the drama series *The Greatest Love* (2011) issued by *DarkSmurfSub*. Photo from www.darksmurfsub.com

Fansubs exhibit the characteristics of what Abe Mark Nornes (1993) calls 'abusive subtitling'. According to him, 'corrupt' subtitles violently erase foreignness by appropriating and converting the nuances of the source text into an easily consumable form based on ideological assumptions about the spectator. Abusive subtitles, on the other hand, direct the viewer's attention back to the text by playing with the materiality of language. Instead of censoring and bulldozing the culturally untranslatable idiom, it foregrounds it and celebrates the encounter with the Other. Fans, as both viewers and producers of the subtitle, are able to enhance its abusiveness by engaging "readers' sensibilities with the same sensibilities with which the readers engage their texts." (1993:32)

Fansubbers prefer to retain terms that they consider untranslatable rather than searching for an equivalent for it in the language they are translating it into. This comes from a conscious decision to preserve the unique cultural context in which they are used, and recognize cultural differences rather than ignoring and appropriating

them. The experience of viewing a Korean TV series can thus differ drastically depending on whether one watches them with subtitles used by a broadcasting station or those used by fans. *Javabeans*, a popular blogger on Korean dramas, compares the subtitles she helped write for *WITHS2* for the series *Goong S* (2007) with those of the TV channel LA18:

> As for the royalty, we chose to stick with the South Korean words, like "Young Sung Gong" to refer to Prince Hoo (Seven), "Pye-ha" to represent the queen (Myung Se Bin), "Hwang Tae-hu" to represent the older queen… The TV subs translated those terms to their Western counterparts, referring to Joon's father, the Hyo-jang Dae-gong, as "Grand Archduke" or something of that sort. When we worked on the series, we didn't go that route because I felt that although Hyo-Jang Dae-gong is an unwieldy term, calling him a duke or archduke applied a certain Westernness to the monarchy that Goong S doesn't actually carry. I was a little looser with the terms prince and queen, because those words are more recognizable and less "borrowed." If I could go back, I might prefer to convert "Mama" to "highness"… although I'm torn on that one.[16]

An explanation of the term is inserted either below the dialogue subtitle or at the top of the screen for the benefit of viewers unfamiliar with the words. However, it usually appears only once, encouraging them to become familiar with the connotations of the word rather than referring to the textual explanation every time it is used. *DarkSmurfSub*, for instance, has drawn up a list of words that are exempt from translation and instructs its community of subtitlers to provide an explanation only when they are used for the first time in an episode. Fansubs thus draw attention to the fact of their own incompleteness, their inability to be an all-encompassing conveyor of meaning. They invite consistent engagement rather than distracted consumption on the part of the viewer. Marks (2000) argues that this kind of cinematic experience where the viewer is expected to fill the gaps and actively construct the image is usually charged with an erotic quality. It brings the viewer

---

[16]Javabeans, "Wherein I self-critique," *Dramabeans*, September 11, 2007, http://www.dramabeans.com/2007/09/wherein-i-self-critique/ accessed on June 1, 2012.

close to the image by encouraging an intimate interaction. However, this is a form of desiring relationship based not on an impulse to know and uncover everything, but on a recognition of the inability to completely posses the Other. Fansubs, in keeping intact culturally-specific terms, set in motion a play between nearness and distance – inviting closer scrutiny while refusing to offer themselves up for comprehensive decoding.

The situation becomes complicated when a word has several connotations and its ambiguity is deliberately played up in the drama to create tensions. '*Oppa*' is one such cryptic term kept intact by the fansub –it can either refer to a woman's older brother, an older man she is close to, or to her boyfriend. Some shows employ these different meanings all at once to flirt with the possibility of incest, or keep alive the potential for a romantic relationship between friends. The series *Triple* (2009), for instance, shows a teenager, Haru, developing feelings for her much older ex-stepbrother Hwal. Hwal considers her a sister since they used to live together with their parents when they were younger, but Haru's use of the word *oppa* becomes charged with romantic connotations as she develops an interest in him. The confusion around the term characterises the ambiguity of their relationship as Haru's obsession with Hwal forces him to reluctantly contend with her feelings. She also refers to his friend Hyun-tae as *oppa*, but shares a platonic and friendly relationship with him. The viewer's interpretation of the word thus becomes largely contextual, and depends on the manner in which it is vocally inflected. When used in a romantic context, the term *oppa* is usually drawn out, often to the extent of becoming a whine. Thus, even when the viewer is provided with a subtitled explanation, they have to constantly engage with the image and the voice to grasp the shifting meanings of a word.

The construction of meaning is further complicated by the existence of multiple subtitled versions of the same episode. Shows are sometimes subtitled by more than one community, and their translations compared and contrasted by fans. Bouquets or brickbats are directed towards the entire community and not individual translators in recognition of the collective nature of fansubbing. However, due to the free and easy availability of subtitling technologies, individuals can also produce their own versions, often to humorous or critical effect. As they circulate on online networks, these alternative subtitled versions of videos emerge as zones of cultural contact. Chih-chieh Liu (2010) notes how a Taiwanese Chinese subtitled music video of the pop group Super Junior's song 'Sorry Sorry' is transformed into the nonsensical 'That Banana' using phonetic play. The words of the song are deliberately misheard and translated according to their Chinese sounds –for example, the word 'dance' becomes '*dian-shi'*, the Chinese word for 'television'. The subtitles become divorced from the literal meaning of the lyrics and instead follow the materiality of the spoken word,

In another example of an appropriative subtitling practice, a *YouTube* user, *gokoreapodcast* has uploaded subtitled versions of a few episodes of the popular Korean drama series *Boys Over Flowers* (2009). These masquerade as the real thing and no warning is issued against them being rather critical parodies, causing much confusion among those directed to the page[17]. Made by an American expat teaching in South Korea, the videos lampoon what he sees as the misogynistic and classist discourse of the show, which narrates the story of a poor and feisty young girl who takes on four boys belonging to the richest families in South Korea and ultimately

---

[17] While some *YouTube* comments are happily oblivious ("thanks SO much for uploading this. it wasnt available in my region. TT^TT"), others express confusion ("is this really what they are saying?"), amusement ("This is killing me! So funny!"), or anger ("THE HECK?!?!??! She aint a slut!"). http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GG9eyqg4nIc accessed on June 10, 2012.

befriends them. The opening sequence of the first episode begins with a lilting female voice introducing the achievements of the fictitious Korean conglomerate, *Shinhwa*. The camera pans over scenes of economic development and luxury –high-rise buildings, booming industries, the glossy interiors of shopping malls, the South Korean presidential house and the vast campus of the Shinhwa High School. While the *WITHS2* subtitled version of the episode remains faithful to the narration, sacrificing syntactical accuracy to imitate the order in which the words are spoken, the *gokoreapodcast* version positions itself critically in relation to the source:

> *WITHS2* version (See figures 8 and 9):
>
> The South Korean corporation Shinhwa group has been selected,
> to be the largest corporate sponsor in the 2011 London Olympics.
> [Text embedded on screen: Largest sponsor –Shinhwa group]
> South Korea's economic growth started,
> it has maintained the status of the best company
> and kept growing and growing and then reached the level of a multinational renowned corporation,
> its name is Shinhwa.
> Electronics, oil, automobiles, distribution and telecommunication.
> If you are a citizen of South Korea, you know the two letters of Shinhwa before you know the president's name,
> and have created a kingdom and therefore is South Korea's largest conglomerate.
> (Women at a gas station welcoming customers) "Hi, this is Shinhwa".
>
> *Gokoreapodcast* version (See figures 10 and 11):
>
> The South Korean Corporation, Shinhwa Group
> has been selected as having the second worst logo in corporate history.
> It lost first place to the London Summer games logo.
> South Koreans should start hacking UK websites.
> And hammer bulldog puppies to death in front of the UK embassy.
> All to defend the honor of… Shinhwa
> If you don't, Shinhwa will increase the price of electronics, oil, cars, food, and telecommunications.
> If you are a citizen of South Korea…
> …you know who is working your father to death.
> Shinhwa created South Korea's largest conglomerate out of a company that collaborated with the Japanese.
> But then who cares when you can have four chicks in fuck-me boots pump your gas?

Figures. 8 and 9. Screenshots of the *WITHS2* subtitled version of *Boys before Flowers*.

Figs 10 and 11. Screenshots of *gokoreapodcast*'s subtitled version of *Boys before Flowers*.

While the irony of the textual meaning running counter to the images can hardly be missed, the *gokoreapodcast* version also plays with these elements to set in motion a different dynamic. It cleverly retains the basic structure of each sentence and then proceeds to derail its meaning in such a way that the subtitles straddle the line between faithful translation and deliberate appropriation. The confusion reflected in the comments is exacerbated by the incorporation of pauses and ellipses that correspond to the narrational voice. At other times, it consciously shortens the text to a single line while the narrator continues to wax eloquent. It also employs a non-standard typeface that contrasts with the minimalist font of the *WITHS2* version. The font here is bolded and increased in size and almost overwhelms the image, taking over the entire screen at some points. The subtitle's critical positioning is not just a

function of its substantive content being diametrically opposed to the decadence of the sequence but also to the way in which it engulfs the image and victoriously marks its presence upon it. It thrives not on a dialectical opposition between text and image but a manipulation of the pictorial qualities of the written word in its encounter with the texture of the voice and image.

Apart from subtitles, other forms of text appearing on the image can also alter the viewing experience. Typically, these include credits to the subtitling group and the pseudonyms of individual contributors as well as a warning against uploading fansubs to streaming sites or selling them for profit. Credits are almost equivalent to the insertion of an authorial signature, and their removal is viewed as an unethical practice. In its effort to create an interactive viewing experience, *Viki* has also enabled user chats that appear on top of the video. Korean shows being among the most popular on the website, the maximum amount of chat discussions also take place on these videos. Being a multilingual site, the chat is not necessarily in English, and the occasional Russian line or Arabic font can also pop up. The peak of activity occurs when videos are first released, with multiple users reacting to the video and responding to each other's comments. Viewers can insert timed comments that correspond to the moment in the video and if too many people respond at the same moment, the chat lines become a frenetic blur of movement –appearing for less than a second before giving way to another.

Tom Conley (2006) notes that there is often a gap between the images we see and the sensations they produce –a disparity between the visions and voices of the film and the memories, pleasures and traumas they evoke. He contends that this gap produces impressions "that belong neither to themselves nor to the narrations from

which they might be inspired." (xxiii) It is precisely these hidden readings of the film that the chat visibilises by removing the temporal distance between the act of watching a film and writing about it. Viewers note down every association the images triggers, every emotion they generate and every thought they spur as they watch them unravel before their eyes. The appearance of the chat lines on the image turns it into a surface of conversation and bears testament to its sensory impact. User comments vary from their profession of love or criticism for the show and its actors, reactions to the expressions and gestural language employed by them, to the details of the mise-en-scene and gaps in continuity. Commenters are also quick to catch onto any references to other TV shows and films that the imagery and aural landscape may generate intentionally or inadvertently. The words appearing at the top of the screen mark the moment of contact between the viewer and the film, recording the minutest responses to it. As the impressions are expressed on the skin of the film, the image becomes a record of its own reception. Along with subtitles, these chat conversations reiterate fans' haptic encounter with cinema.

Temporality, Territory, and History

The subtitled image carves out its own temporal trajectories as it circulates through online networks, redefining the experience of time for its fan-producers. Closely matching the speed of commercial releases, videos become available shortly after they are aired in South Korea. The subtitle, on the other hand, relies on the unpaid labour of fans to be able to keep pace with the videos. This voluntary economy follows its own rules and temporal rhythms which intersect with the lives of its producers, and depends on their ability to manipulate their own rhythmic cycles of work and rest. The dispersed, transnational character of fansubbing communities implies that they

have to reorient their activities according to a different time zone. For English-language subtitlers, this not only means keeping up with the Korean television programming schedule but often adjusting to the pace of Chinese subbers who are among the first to release translations.

Driven by the desire to share their passion and make Korean dramas and films more accessible, fans take time out from their own activities to pursue their hobby. Apart from providing creative fulfilment, many view fansubbing as an opportunity to give back to the community that helped initiate and sustain their interest in Korean popular culture. While recognition and praise do come their way, it is usually directed towards the entire team rather than a single individual.[18] Ranging from students and part-time workers to professionals with families, fansubbers have to 'steal time' from their regular lives for a pursuit that can be time-consuming and has no ostensible personal rewards. Many fansubbing groups are at pains to emphasise the amount of time invested at each stage of the process in order to fend off demands for faster releases. Given that some subbers are involved in many activities at the same time, combining subtitling with blogging and reviewing TV series and films, requests for taking on new projects are not looked upon kindly. *Samsooki*, a subber and guest blogger who works full-time as an attorney, besides being married with a child, explains the situation:

> For example, if you take a look at the number of things that dw4p and soyjoy have done, just from a *WITHS2* translating perspective, over the same period of time that they've done recaps for dramabeans, and you would be amazed that they aren't hooked up to ventilators and have a few humdifiers trying to keep them alive. The same goes for thundie, who solo'ed the editing for

[18] The Korean fansubbing scenario is slightly different from the Japanese anime one in this regard. Many anime fansubbers cite rivalry with other groups as a motivation for subtitling. Such rivalries are rare amongst Korean subbing communities which are much smaller in number and do not usually work on the same projects. In fact, there have even been instances when well-established groups have merged for the sake of efficiency.

Queen Seondeok subs for many many months and managed to run her own blog, and do other things at the same time, like guest blog, make reviews, etc. As if running her own blog wasn't difficult enough![19]

The long hours required for fansubbing tend to cut into other leisurely activities as well as the time for rest. Fansubbers in China, for instance, consist mostly of college students and young office-goers who work through several nights to release a show. Chen Xin, who contributed during his college years, notes how he often stayed up the entire night working on an episode and went to class directly after.[20] Insomnia becomes a normal state of being for many of them and complaints about being overworked and stressed out are common. The members of *HaruHaruSubs* run an online blog documenting their experience, jotting down poems and little snippets of their daily life as fansubbers.[21] Going by the pseudonym *methuongcon*, a mother of four and avid drama watcher, writes about poring over subtitles in the wee hours of the morning and multitasking while watching shows. Fansubbing emerges as a rewarding experience that allows one to bond closely with other members of the community, but can also become frustrating as it increasingly encroaches on regular life.

Fansubbing involves what Ranciere (2004) identifies as "a whole reconfiguration of the partition of experience" (14) where the time designated for rest is appropriated for the pursuit of aesthetic activities. Speaking in the context of 19th century French workers who aspired to become artists, Ranciere argues that their social identity as workers was defined by a spatial and temporal regulation of their times of work and rest. It was believed that workers had no time for anything but their

---

[19] Comment in response to a request for recapping a series. See http://www.dramabeans.com/2010/01/regarding-guest-blogging/ accessed on June 11, 2012.

[20] Interviewed in Annie Wei, "Broadcast battle off limits to local fansubbers," *Beijing Today,* December 16, 2011, http://www.beijingtoday.com.cn/feature/broadcast-battle-off-limits-to-local-fansubbers accessed on June 10, 2012.

[21] http://haru2subs.blogspot.in accessed on May 30, 2012.

occupation –that they would work during the day and replenish their bodies by resting at night. They challenged this notion by appropriating their time of rest to pursue artistic activities, thereby reconfiguring the partition between day and night. By re-thinking the categories of time, Ranciere argued that the workers engaged in a process of dis-identification, rejecting the restrictive and all-encompassing definition of their occupational status. While their subversive potential may vary, the night becomes a time of creative indulgence for fansubbers, allowing them to construct an identity different from the one they take on during the day as teachers, students, parents, or office workers. The communal nature of fansubbing gives individuals an opportunity to affirm this alternative identity and find solace in kindred spirits scattered across different parts of the world. It is, however, rather fluid and flexible in nature as many subbers treat it as an intermittent or temporary activity, withdrawing when it begins to take a toll on their bodies and day jobs.

The process of waiting for subtitles is often marred by interruptions and viewers become used to these disruptions rather than smooth, cyclical releases. Being a voluntary force, subtitling communities consider themselves to be exempt from demands for speedier releases and issue strict instructions against queries that seek a time-frame for updates. Constant rushing may be looked upon as ingratitude and considered a breach of the code of ethics, warranting delays in extreme cases.[22] Unable to enforce any legal or contractual obligations, time is often the only bargaining chip for fansubbing communities when they seek to moderate the expectations of viewers or to control the circulation of their work. In December 2007,

---

[22] For instance, the website of *HaruHaruSubs* states clearly, "Please do not rush us by sending a PM to us telling the subbers "Why are the subtitles taking so long?", We are a people with lives as well! So please understand us! We are trying to bring the best subtitles so far for our current projects. If you will complain about our subtitles, we are not afraid to delay our releases!!" http://www.haru2subs.com/about accessed on June 10, 2012.

WITHS2 temporarily halted releases after its users repeatedly failed to heed warnings against hardsubbing and uploading their subtitles to streaming sites. Faced with legal notices and the threat of closure, they shut down for more than two weeks, hoping to build consensus against what they considered to be an unfair appropriation of their work.[23] Faster subtitles can become a special privilege like *WITHS2*'s VIA (Very Important Angel) Access program for users who contribute small amounts of money or help out by writing reviews or producing artwork. However, even when some form of mutual exchange is initiated, viewers are expected to eschew the vocabulary of consumer 'demands' for more respectful 'requests', whose fulfilment is contingent on the pressures and workload of the subtitler.

Faster subtitles, it is generally understood, relate inversely to their quality of translation. Viewers' usually clamour for quicker releases for popular shows and often resort to watching low quality versions to feed their curiosity. The experience of a TV series, however, can be radically transformed depending on which set of subtitles they watch it with. The text of the subtitle may lapse into zones of incomprehensibility as it struggles to catch up to the video, leaving speech untranslated or generating software-produced gibberish. Especially in case of shows that deal with culturally and historically-specific references, speedier subtitles often fail to grasp their nuances.

Similar issues cropped up with *Queen In-hyeon's Man,* (2012) a 16-episode miniseries aired on the Korean cable network *TVN*. Playing with the generic boundaries of historical drama series, known as *sageuks*, the show mixes actual historical scenarios with the fictional figure of Kim Bung-do, who is vested with the ability to move through time. The show is set during the reign of King Suk-jong, the

---

[23] For a discussion of their policy see this post: http://www.dramabeans.com/2007/12/with-s2-fansubbing-policy/ accessed on June 12, 2012. Such conjunctions have become scarce since, as paid subtitles and legal streaming options have emerged.

19th ruler of the Joseon dynasty who ascended to the throne in 1674 and ruled till 1720. This period was marked by economic and cultural development but also saw increasing factional fights within the court, with the King constantly changing loyalties and completely purging the faction he fell out with. The childless Queen In-hyeon was deposed and exiled by the king in 1689 after his concubine, Lady Jang, gave birth to a son. The Western faction supporting the Queen was driven out and Lady Jang became the royal consort[24] with the help of the Southern faction. In 1694, King Suk-jong began to regret his actions and reinstated Queen In-hyeon to her former position, purging the Southern faction and demoting Lady Jang[25] in an event known as the *Gapsul Hwanguk*.

The series takes off in the turbulent year 1694, just before Queen In-hyeon's reinstatement. Kim Bung-do (Ji Hyun-woo), an upright Confucian scholar whose own family had been murdered by the Southerners, is charged with protecting the Queen after rumours of the King changing his mind start circulating. While on the run from assassins, he receives a magical talisman from the *gisaeng*[26] Yun-wol (Jin Ye-sol), which transports him to the year 2012 just when he is on the brink of death. He finds himself in the King's palace but in the midst of a shoot for a historical adaptation of Lady Jang's life. Here, he encounters Choi Hee-jin (Yoo In-na), the newly-appointed actress playing the role of Queen In-hyeon in the series. Confused at first, Kim Bung-do slowly manages to manipulate the powers of the talisman to his advantage. He learns to shift between the two times, relying on Hee-jin to learn the ropes of the new world. He uses his historical foresight to go back and change his own fate, foiling the

---

[24] She was bestowed with the title *bin*, which was the highest rank for women in the court besides the queen.

[25] Lady Jang was later order to drink poison after the King suspected her of causing Queen In-hyeon's death through black magic.

[26] Korean women who served as entertainers to the nobility and the upper classes, excelling in literary and performing arts and sometimes taking to prostitution.

machinations of the Southern faction to slander and assassinate him. Not everything goes according to plan, however, as the talisman takes on a life of its own –marring his budding romance with Hee-jin and threatening to alter the course of history.

The show uses textural and tonal differences to distinguish between the history recorded in books and the experience of time undergone by Kim Bung-do as he traverses the two worlds. The timelines of Joseon and Seoul take place on the same day, only centuries apart, running alongside each other at the same pace. Rather than a linear flow from the past to the present, the two eras are presented as parallel universes that exist 'at the same time'. Moreover, the talisman gives Kim Bung-do the ability to travel only through time and not space, and the place from where he teleports becomes the exact place where he re-appears when he finds his way back. The series frequently uses split-screen imagery to bring these two places together, putting them on the same plane and allowing us to experience them simultaneously. This sense of the present-ness of both time periods is exacerbated through the use of colour. Even though there are tonal differences, with the Joseon era shot in a slightly bluish tint whereas modern-day Seoul has brighter tones, these serve to bring forth experiential differences rather than mark time. The darker atmosphere of Joseon matches the climate of political intrigue and the constant threats to his life, while Seoul's lighter accents become conducive to Kim Bung-do's love affair with Hee-jin. In contrast, the images clearly consigned to the past are treated differently –memories are marked with a blurry effect and enactments of historical events found in the annals are black and white.
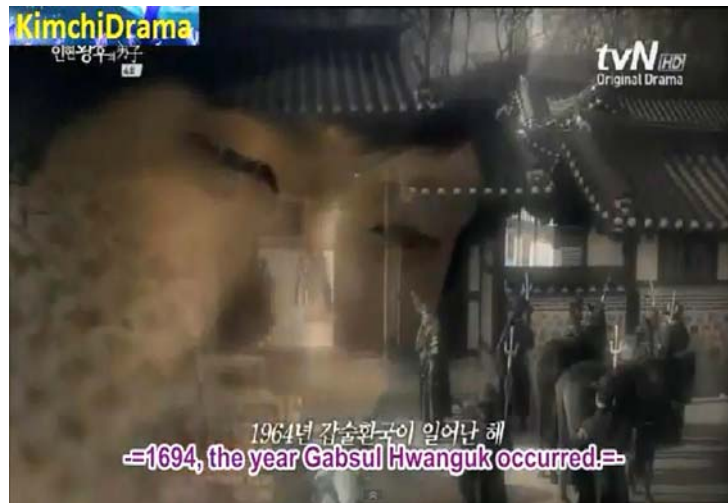
Figures 12, 13 and 14 respectively show the different subtitled versions of the series *Queen In-hyeon's Man*.

After the initial shock of time-travel subsides and he comes to terms with the powers of the talisman, Kim Bung-do embarks on a trip to a public library with Hee-jin's help. He searches for historical records that will help him achieve his goal of reinstating the Queen and restoring his family's honour. When Hee-jin alerts him to the well-known legend of Lady Jang's rise and subsequent downfall, he pores over the Annals of the Joseon Dynasty hoping to gain more insight. While Bung-do's voiceover narrates, the black and white text of the book dissolves into colourless images that play out the reinstatement of the Queen, the execution of Minister Min loyal to Lady Jang, and her own execution a year later. He literally becomes immersed in history as his face merges with the text of the book and the visuals re-enacting the events. This sequence sets up the grand narrative that Kim Bung-do must contend with, the 'actual' historical occurrences that he threatens to overturn through his incessant time-travelling.

Even as the juxtaposition of the book, the black and white images and the narrational voice conspires to evoke a 'real' sense of the past, the subtitling creates fissures in the reception of historical knowledge. Depending on when they are released, different versions of the subtitles for this particular sequence have generated varying levels of coherence. To begin with, the caption used by the network contains a typographical error, showing the year of the *Gapsul Hwanguk* to be 1964 rather than 1694. While experienced fansubbers and native speakers may catch onto the mistake easily, the first subtitled version (see figure 12) retains the faulty date. Being the fastest to be uploaded to streaming sites, the level of expertise in this version is visibly low. While most of the episode is comprehensible, this sequence with complicated historical details has retained the software-generated subtitles, reducing them to a nonsensical string of words. The translations for the narration and the embedded text

are jumbled together and no distinctions are indicated either through the font or with notational marks. As the dates become indecipherable, it makes it difficult to tell whether they are referring to an actual event or a fictional one constructed within the universe of the show. Here, the viewer has to refer to the visuals in order to gauge the level of authenticity and construct narrative continuity. The nuances of Joseon history, however, are completely lost in translation and the viewer's engagement with it comes more through visual comprehension rather than the content of the text. Meanings are not made readily available but articulated actively by the viewer who weaves together the odd sounds that seem familiar, the mildly legible images and the stray words that make sense –producing a fragmented experience of cinema.

The second version (see figure 13), does slightly better, translating only the text embedded within the image, indicated through the notational marks. While this version provides a faithful translation of the text, the viewer is still left grappling with the term *Gapsul Hwanguk*, for which no explanation is provided. It also creates a lag between the narration and the subtitle as the translation of the narrational voice skips a beat and only appears in the next shot. The third version (see figure 14), and the last to be released, is the most coherent one. It accurately translates the dates as read out in the narration and distinguishes it from the translation of the embedded text through the use of notations. The explanation for *Gapsul Hwanguk* is also provided as a footnote within parentheses. The appearance of the translations of the narration, the embedded text and the fansubbers' explanation timed perfectly to the video, functions together to alert viewers to the finer details of Kim Bung-do's confrontation with the 'real' history recorded in the annals. History, as it unfolds on the spatial field of the screen, can thus be radically altered not only by the visual and narrative devices used

consciously by the drama, but also by subtitles that confuse both the linear progression of official accounts and the intended deviations of the show.

Affect, Touch and the End of 'Spectatorship'?

This chapter has imagined fan-produced subtitles as textural rather than textual encryptions. Far from being a mechanical act of translation, the process of making fansubs is one of creative expression that sets up a play of meanings, forms and styles. Common to both Marks and Ranciere's formulations is a recognition of the multiple sensuous registers through which we engage with both textual and visual forms. The image offers itself up to be read, heard, tasted and smelled, just as text appeals to our visual and aural faculties. The fansub brings the two together –weaving the image and the text together in such a way that one remains incomplete without the other. It is the subtitle that renders the 'raw', unprocessed image fit for consumption. In a blog entry[27], *methuongcon* refers to fansubs as a delicacy that allows her to bite into images and savour their taste:

> I was just thinking of how yummy subs are. Without subs, my life of drama watching would be incomplete. So I have come to a conclusion that subs are a delicacy in my life. I feel subs are a special treat that bring a smile on my face when I'm sad or happy. Whatever the case, this delicious treat of subs calls out to me and I partake.

This haptic engagement with cinema is not just a metaphorical touch, but a material intervention by the 'user' of images whose textual compositions are etched onto it. Fans mark their physical presence onto the body of the film, collapsing the spatial distance between cinema and its 'spectator'. Fan-produced subtitles travel as affective labour, co-productions that testify to the passion and enthusiasm of viewers. Whether in the form of high quality subtitles that require great investments of time

---

[27] Methuongcon, "Subs as a Delicacy," *HaruHaruSubs*, September 25, 2010, http://haru2subs.blogspot.in/2010/09/subs-as-delicacy_25.html accessed on May 20, 2012.

and energy, or as poorer garbled versions, fansubs deny instant gratification even as they meet the demand for accessibility. Stalled, interrupted, missing or incomplete, these poor subtitled images present themselves in fragmented forms. Their partial nature demands an active engagement, drawing viewers close to the film's surface as they scrutinise the meanings that constantly escape them.

Mapping the S(e)oul: The Urban, Cinematic and Cyber Spaces

of the Korean Wave

Deciding to begin the year on an adventurous note, my friend Meghna and I made our way to New Delhi's bustling tourist area of Paharganj on January 1st, 2009. Keen to try out Korean food after a year-long obsession with Korean cinema and television shows, I had managed to convince her to accompany me on the trip. We embarked on what can be best described as a wild goose chase in an unfamiliar neighbourhood. Queries to the local shopkeepers were met with puzzled looks and we were about to give up when we came across a couple of Korean tourists.

Unable to verbally communicate the directions, they led us through the winding lanes to the place where they were staying –a run-down motel with a quaint rooftop café. Known as Indo Bangrangi, the café stood out amongst its dilapidated environs –walls covered with beautiful graffiti drawings, string lights and the Korean flag conspicuously displayed in a corner. Feeling slightly out of place among the Korean tourists, we ordered Kimchi Jjigae, a staple stew featured regularly in dramas and films. We clicked as many pictures as we could, hoping to be able to find our way back the next time.

These pictures were to take on a life of their own, leading me into another unexpected journey. I had shared them with the English-language Malaysian website *K-popped!* as part of their 'Around the World' series where they asked readers to send

in pictures of Korean influences spotted in their neighbourhoods or on their journeys.

Begun in 2008, the announcement for the feature read:

> Whenever we travel, we get very excited when we discover Korean influences in the simplest form. For example, we were so excited to discover that Pizza Hut in Bali, Indonesia served bulgogi-flavoured pizza. When we walk around Petaling Jaya or Kuala Lumpur (in Malaysia) we are always on the lookout for Korean stuff too! Sometimes, we hunt down Korean-related things, such as that 'lil excursion we had to Koreatown in Ampang, Malaysia! Now, we're curious about Korean influences in your neck of the woods.[1]

Photos documenting fans' encounters had poured in from California, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Israel, Mexico and China. The post featuring my pictures[2] drew a particularly excited response from another one of their Indian readers. Orlinda, a student from Mumbai, would become the first Indian fan of Korean popular culture I would establish contact with.

Years passed and I became increasingly involved with a growing community of Indian fans, many of whom lived in Delhi. Our search for all things Korean led us back to the bylanes of Paharganj. Although we discovered a new restaurant tucked away on the 4th floor of a nondescript building, my attempts to locate Indo Bangrangi were frustrated on multiple occasions. Where the pictures of the first trip had helped me connect with a wider online community, it was only through an online journey that I would be able to re-discover the place in my own city. Failing to find any English-language sources, I sought the help of a Korean friend, who directed me to a blog entry that provided pictures of the path leading up to the joint. Setting out with a group of ten, we discovered the place only to realise that it had been shut down long since. A trail of stray Hangul[3] letters and a few queries later, we found ourselves

---

[1] Orchid, "K-popped! Around the World," *K-popped!*, February 28, 2008, http://k-popped.com/2008/02/k-popped-around-world/ accessed on February 10, 2009.

[2] Orchid, "K-popped! Around the World: Scene 4," *K-popped!*, April 7, 2009, http://k-popped.com/2009/04/k-popped-around-world-scene-4/ accessed on April 7, 2009.

[3] The Korean script.

redirected to a cramped eatery where the original owner had been forced to move after his lease had expired.

It is this movement between the spaces of cinema, online sites and urban landscapes that forms the focus of this chapter. The experience of traversing the city through its connection to the filmic is tied to the notion of the haptic as a form of cinematic addressal that mobilizes the body and its sensuous capacities. In this chapter, I argue that the Korean Wave puts in effect new forms of bodily and spatial organisation. Continuing with my explorations of the haptic, I contend that the drive towards establishing contact with the image involves not just an application of sight but the senses of touch, smell and taste. (Laura Marks 2000) While the previous chapter dealt with subtitling as a form of touch, this chapter looks at the play of sites and spaces enabled by the haptic. The haptic connection with cinema is an intensive mobilization of the viewer's sensuous faculties but also implies their movement in and through space. Drawing on Giuliana Bruno's (2002) work on the conjunction between the haptic and spatial qualities of cinema, I trace movements of fans as they stroll through cinematic and cyberspaces, as well as the offline routes of the city. Dispersed communities of fans that connect and congregate on online spaces, retain a 'sense of place' even as they move across intercultural terrains. Looking at the manner in which cinema evokes a desire to inhabit space and make it one's own, I argue that this corporeal encounter extends beyond the screen to off-screen spaces. The body of the fan is foregrounded as a transformative force that can affect the habitual perception of space and time.

Cinema's haptic and spatial force is mapped through two sites. Film-related tourism to Korea produces an affective tourist that plots her travel itinerary along the lines of the cinematic. Filming locations are promoted as tourist attractions, and the

map of the city comes to resemble the cinematic map of an emotional inner journey. Sites marked by their association to film dot the urban landscape, changing the manner in which the flaneur relates to city spaces. Moreover, the touristic experience recreated through pictures, videos and maps posted on the internet allows personal journeys to inform the imaginaries of a larger community of fans.

The recreation of cinematic experience arises from an encounter with the referential world of the film but can also take place closer home. Using the example of a series of flash mobs in support of the Kpop group 2PM and its member Jay Park, I look at the way in which fans reproduce dances in public spaces as a form of affective expression. Urban landmarks such as public squares, cultural monuments and shopping malls are appropriated momentarily by fans who disrupt the rhythms associated with them. Breaking the habitual relationship with space through the adoption of a different bodily rhythm, flash mobs play a role in producing social space and marking it with their affective agenda. Mapping the flash mobs that took place in 23 cities across both online and offline spaces, I also look at the new forms of community emerging from the effort. The internet serves as a site functioning parallel to the physical flash site as videos of the mobs are uploaded and circulated amongst a wider community of fans.

Cinema as a Haptic Medium

Laura Marks' work on haptic visuality draws heavily on the interventions of phenomenological film theory, as well as the work of Alois Riegl, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, to posit a form of looking that relies on sensory engagement and bodily contact rather than optical distance. According to Marks, hapticity can be an inherent quality of the image but also a form of relationship to it, and it is primarily

the latter that I seek to emphasise. For her, the experience of watching a film is a moment of contact rather than cool contemplation as viewers 'touch' the image with their eyes, discerning its texture and materiality through a tactile form of vision. The embodied experience of cinema involves not only the faculty of sight but the senses of smell, touch, and taste that function together to evoke memories and facilitate an intensive involvement with the images. Cinema activates and mobilises the viewer's body rather than lulling it into passive acceptance of an overarching ideological project.

Haptic visuality as "the combination of tactile, kinesthetic, and proprioceptive functions, the way we experience touch both on the surface of and inside our bodies," (2000:161) involves internal sensory responses as well as a play of surfaces. Cinematic engagement becomes a mutually transformative experience as the boundaries between the image and its perceiver blur. Marks argues that, "In a haptic relationship our self rushes up to the surface to interact with another surface. When this happens there is a concomitant loss of depth—we become amoebalike, lacking a center, changing as the surface to which we cling changes." (2002: xvi) She postulates a new form of erotic relationship with the image that is based not on mastery and fetishization but intimate recognition and interaction. Viewers are not required to position themselves critically towards the image but instead institute a desiring relationship with cinema and indulge in its carnal pleasures, overturning the relations of dominance implicit in optical spectatorship.

The moment of cinematic encounter is not just the instance when the bodies of the viewer and the film collide; it is also a dialogue between their particular organizations of sensory experience. Intercultural viewing takes place at the intersection of personal and cultural sensoria and becomes "an act of sensory

translation of cultural knowledge." (2000: 152) Marks argues that haptic images constitute their own *sensuous geographies* that mediate our experience of 'place' and also influence the personal and bodily organization of senses. Referring to the landscape of intercultural cinema, she notes that even in a world of increasingly homogenised sensory environments facilitated by the infrastructures of commodity capitalism, "pools of local sensuous experience are continually created anew." (2000: 244) Immigrant populations may institute their own sensuous geographies through quotidian practices like cooking and singing, as well as monuments like temples, grocery stores and restaurants. She points out that for those residing in urban contexts, these rituals, artefacts and landscapes constitute a microculture within a hegemonic mass culture. The highly dispersed and ethnically diverse composition of fans of Korean television, films and music, consists of a range of microcultures that attempt to recreate the sensuous experience of cinema through a bodily negotiation of spaces.

Marks' intercultural filmmakers operate within a certain institutional framework and launch a challenge to the prevalent modes of representation through recourse to culturally-informed modes of knowledge. What remains unexplored, however, is the disjunction between memory and history that often takes place in a globalizing order. I understand the experience of dislocation not merely in terms of a physical movement of human traffic but the state of cognitive dissonance generated through an exposure to cultural images divorced from one's immediate context. Arjun Appadurai's notion of "nostalgia without memory" (1996: 30) shows a disconnect between cultural articulation and historical memory. Taking the example of Filipinos who faithfully mimic old American songs, Appadurai finds that they exhibit nostalgia for "a world they have never lost" (ibid.). The forms of cultural memory divorced

from actual historical experience allows us to see fans' sensory engagement with Korean cultural materials.

Giuliana Bruno's (2002) notion of the haptic stems from a more spatially-oriented understanding of the concept. If the body of Marks' haptic viewer is affected through an intense sensuous engagement with cinema, Bruno posits a spectator that moves through space and holds the ability to change and construct their surrounding environment through this mobility. She begins by noting the shift in film theory from *sight* to *site*, and the conceptualisation of the spectator more as a *voyageur* than a *voyeur*. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's work, she posits spectatorship not as a static activity but a traversal of space that resembles urban flânerie and our relationship to architecture:

> The (im)mobile spectator moves across an imaginary path, traversing multiple sites and times. Her fictional navigation connects distant movements and far-apart places. Film inherits the possibility of such a spectatorial voyage from the architectural field, for the person who wanders through a building or a site also absorbs and connects visual spaces…This relation between film and the architectural ensemble involves an embodiment, for it is based on the inscription of an observer in the field. Such an observer is not a static contemplator, a fixed gaze, a disembodied eye/I. She is a physical entity, a moving spectator, a body making journeys in space. (56)

The overlap between the spatial praxes of cinema and the city, opens a dialogic relationship between the sensate qualities of cinema and the city. Fans move *through* the cinematic landscape –travelling across space to 'touch' and experience the image sensuously, and transform their immediate environment by charting it through alternative, emotionally-inflected routes.

Bruno expands on the notion of the haptic to speak of a form of sensual aesthetics that involves a fluidity of identity and location. For her, the haptic refers not only to the sense of touch but also to "kinesthesis, the ability of our bodies to sense

their own movement in space."(6) Cinema, like architecture, is perceived as a haptic space that one can inhabit, a house one can voyage through. This idea of the haptic thus sets up an interesting tension between habitation and movement, allowing us to think of both cinematic and city spaces as experiences of 'dwelling in motion.' (7) They become places we can live in, but also devices that transport us from our current location and facilitate an experience of mobility. This formulation of cinema as an experience of travel allows us to explore the ways in which intensive involvement with Korean culture is facilitated through cinema, which serves to project fans into motion. The notion of cinematic space expands beyond the screen, spawning touristic voyages as well as the transformations of local spaces through the sensuous manoeuvrings of the body.

The movement through space generates a sensuous geography, relating the spatial journeys of cinema to a map of emotions. The experience of moving through cinema as well as the city involves spatial practices that blur the dichotomy between the internal and the external by allowing us to create affective cartographies. They involve a movement through exterior spaces but re-encode them as cognitive maps of the interior universe of the voyaging viewer. They offer up *tactics* through which the viewer can orient herself sensationally and engage in a tender and intimate mapping of space. Cinematic images are 'lived spaces' in this sense –mobile, yet tangible entities that hold the power to move us emotionally. Cinema imitates the art of memory as both consist of a collection of motion pictures that bring forth recollections and are subject to constant re-drawings. Like cinema, memory functions spatially and places are revisited and affectively coloured in the mind as well as in film. Cinema holds the ability to generate its own memories, to "take the place of memory" (221) and also serves as an abode for memory. New orders of memory are

constructed as fans seek to recreate the sensory world they encounter through images -'other' spaces are rendered intimate while familiar sites are re-mapped and made foreign.

Fans' intercultural excursions, conducted both online and offline, are marked by a sense of "cartographic anxiety." (107) Bruno notes that along with cinema, new technologies of communication have expanded our realm of spatiality while destabilising our notion of location. Communicative devices that keep us in touch around the clock, and links, web 'sites' and 'home' pages through which we navigate the internet demonstrate the manner in which "our spatial culture reinvents the drive to make an imprint of lodging on travelling space." (ibid.) Cyberspace has created new geographies and increased the sphere of haptic connectivity. The internet is an order of spatiality functioning in dialogue with the onscreen universe of the filmic and offline cinematic spaces. Digital networks enlarge the possibilities of haptic engagement and house fleeting and ephemeral encounters, magnifying and giving expression to the mundane and the everyday. At the same time, they are unstable archives where links are regularly erased and removed and constitute a constantly shifting cartography. They also offer the possibility of coalition-building, of sharing the experience of passionate and affective navigation. Cinematic and online spaces come to bear these impressions as they circulate among, and are circulated by audiences.

Dramatic Journeys –The *Hallyu* Traveller

The growing interest in Korean dramas, films and pop music has seen a simultaneous rise in tourism to the country. The desire to visit filming sites popularized by Korean dramas and films draws a large number of visitors from different parts of the world,

with sightseeing packages and tours offered exclusively for fans. After dramas like *Winter Sonata* and *Stairway to Heaven* gained popularity, especially in neighbouring Japan, roughly two-thirds of the three million Asian tourists travelled to Korea for TV drama-related purposes. (Kim 2007) A large body of case studies looks at the flows of film and television-related tourists in relation to specific nationalities. (Kim and 'O Connor 2011, Creighton 2009, Kim, Agrusa, Lee et. al. 2007) However, I would like to understand this phenomenon in terms of an extension of the sensuous engagement with cinema that can cut across national and regional boundaries.

This explicit connection between the cinematic and the touristic draws on what Giuliana Bruno (2002) describes as modern tourism's haptic link with film. According to her, motion pictures played a critical role in transforming travel culture from an experience of sightseeing to that of 'site-seeing'[4] through the incorporation maps, illustrations, and other visual aids. Conversely, travel culture's movement between the public and the private also impacted the cinematic imagination. Cinema and tourism share similar ways of making and navigating through space. Poised at the threshold of the public and the private, they both involve temporary journeys based on an attraction to sites.

> Cultural and emotional (dis)placements, as well as journeys between the familiar and the unfamiliar, the ordinary and the extraordinary, can produce the liminal zone of a home away from home. Markers and signs direct the spectator-passengers in their site-seeing…Anticipation through daydreaming and fantasy, and the experience of this state as a phantasmagoria of visual space, further link tourism to film. (83)

Moving away from empirical accounts, Youngmin Choe's (2009) work on film-related tourist sites as repositories of affective memory and articulation foregrounds the power of cinema to 'move' the body. According to him, tourists are able to mimic

---

[4] She identifies the 'moment' of the transformation as beginning in the 1600s and extending into the 19th century.

the emotions evoked by the film as they place themselves within filming locations. He argues that the 'transmission of affect' occurring at these sites can undermine or run counter to the dominant structures of feeling and prevailing tensions in the region. Looking at Hur Jin-ho's films *One Fine Spring Day* (2001) and *April Snow* (2005), he notes that unlike Hollywood, there is no distinction between their interior and exterior locales as the film is mapped onto the city rather than being shot on constructed sets. Thus, a touristic revisiting of the film involves not just a tour of the filming locations but a mapping of the city along the lines of the cinematic text.[5] Signposts erected across the city of Samchok, where *April Snow* was shot, direct visitors to the different sites and allow them to create an emotional map of the city. These locales are marked by images corresponding to the scene that was shot there. According to Choe, this referencing of particular cinematic moments allows the tourist to be transported into the world of the film and experience it in a tactile manner.

Such cinematic markings not only transform our experience of film by bringing us 'closer' to it, but also change the nature of our encounter with the city. The act of urban flanerie becomes a literal navigation of filmed spaces as the city is transformed into a cinematic map. Christine Ka'aloa, an American travel blogger who teaches English in Korea, writes about wandering through the streets of Seoul as a single woman[6]. She finds the city dotted with numerous filming spots and recounts accidentally stumbling onto sites marked by photographic images of the drama series shot on that location. (See figure 15)This moment of encounter produces a flash of recognition, altering the memories associated with a site. Housed on online websites,

---

[5] There are, however, specially constructed tourist sites such as the Dae Jang Geum Theme Park built on the renovated sets of the drama *Dae Jang Geum* or Jewel in the Palace (2003) and Dramia run by the broadcasting network MBC, which doubles up as a shooting location for historical dramas.
[6] Christine Ka'aloa, "How to make your own K-drama film tour," *Grrrl Traveler*, February 17, 2011, http://grrrltraveler.com/countries/asia/korea/korean-drama-tours/ accessed on 7th June 2012.

these solitary excursions become collective encounters. They allow internet users in far-flung places to experience the city in its tryst with cinema through the eyes of the blogger.

Figure 15. The filming site for the restaurant in the 2010 drama series *Pasta* in Apgujeong, Seoul. (Photo courtesy Grrrl Traveler)

Lanie Jo, a Phillipine blogger living in Korea, gives an online account of her visit to a coffee shop cum restaurant where the drama *49 Days* (2011) was filmed.[7] The series, drawing its reference from the Buddhist belief in a 49-day transitional period after which a spirit may be reborn, deals with themes of the afterlife and bodily displacement. The lives of the seemingly perfect and well-to-do Shin Ji-hyun and the depressed and lifeless Song Yi-kyung intersect when they get involved in a car accident. An orphan leading a solitary existence, Yi-kyung's attempt to end her life fails when she is rescued from being run over by a truck, but sets off a chain of accidents. On her way to making her upcoming wedding's arrangements, Ji-hyun

---

[7] Lanie Jo, "Heaven Restaurant / Ando cafe (49 days Filming Location)," *Lanie in Korea*, August 15, 2011, http://www.lanieinkorea.com/2011/08/pure-love-49-days-filming-location.html accessed on 15th June 2012.

becomes one of the victims. Her body goes into a comatose state while her spirit roams free, only to encounter an angel of death. He informs her that her only chance of getting back to normalcy is if she can find three people outside of her family who will shed 'pure' tears for her within the 49-day period. Ji-hyun's spirit is vested with the ability to take over Yi-kyung's body while the latter sleeps, and uses it to complete her mission. As she discovers the betrayals and machinations of her fiancé and closest friends, the café run by her childhood friend Hang Kang comes to serve as a haven of sorts. Kang, familiar with her habits and personality traits, is the only who discovers her true identity and makes an effort to provide her with a comfortable environment at the eatery. Doubling up as her workplace, it becomes the only space within which she can let her guard down and be herself.

The body acts as a vessel for Ji-Hyun's spirit and becomes a vehicle that enables her to reinstate her visceral experience of moving through space. The series is a narrative of inhabiting another corpus and becoming immersed its rhythms, of transporting and being transported by another body. This passionate movement across bodily and geographical terrains resembles the experience of the traveller who moves through landscapes even as she is moved by them. (Bruno 2002) The act of journeying through space and tracing one's own movement through the movement of another body is recreated by Lanie Jo in her trip to the filming site. Moving across the city to the café where the show was filmed, she establishes a sentimental connection with concrete structures. The affective connotations emerge not only from her connection to the textual world of the film but also as a fulfilment of her sister's request, and as an excursion with her Korean husband. The fleeting impressions of her journey acquire a slightly more permanent expression when housed on her blog, which allows her to spatially reproduce her affective trajectory in the form of pictures,

videos and maps. Documented through a short *YouTube* video and an extensive set of pictures, her images offer a glimpse into the referential world of the series. The video is set to the soundtrack of the show and if not for the shaky handheld camera, the images could be mistaken for an actual episode. She physically inhabits the site of the televisual, 'consuming' it as she films its mise-en-scene and tastes the food. At the same time, she also reproduces it cinematically as a place bearing the imprint of her presence. Her blog visitors are in turn invited to navigate this re-inscribed space, and form new memories and associations that overlap with the existing ones.
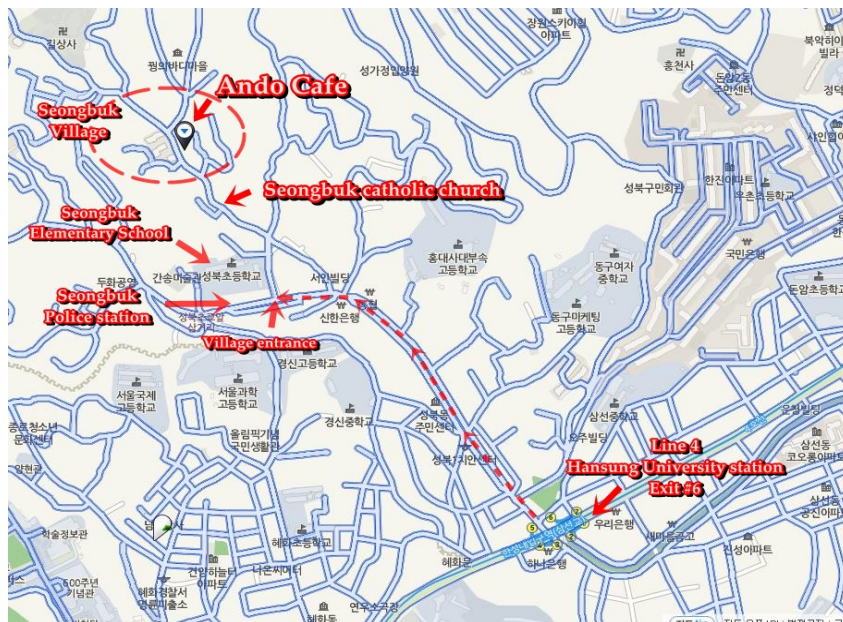

Figure 16. Lanie Jo's map charts her journey across Seoul to the Ando Café where *49 Days* was filmed. (Photo courtesy Lanie in Korea)

Jo also provides instructions on how to reach the somewhat secluded area, charting her path onto a map of Seoul city. (See figure 16) Urban landmarks such as churches, police stations and schools become signposts guiding her to her filmic destination. She describes the lengthy trip involving a subway ride, a taxi and then a walk to the location, visually and spatially grafting onto the map her lived experience of the city as a cinematic traveller. Bruno notes that this form of tender mapping of

space that charts emotional movement erodes the distinction between maps and tours and brings them together as forms of 'architectural narration'. (2002:245) In turn, these pictoral maps inform the imagination of Seoul for Jo's readers when posted on socially networked platforms, with many expressing the desire to undertake their own affective journeys. The map not only becomes a tangible expression of her inner journey, but a guide for her readers, who are advised to carry it with them if they make the trip. The very act of reading a map, as Bruno points out, involves an imaginative exploration of space even as it "stimulates, recalls and substitutes for travel." (185) The foreign and unfamiliar terrain of the city is transformed into a relatable, intimate landscape as fans engage with Jo's cinematic map of the city.

Government-run institutions like the Korea Tourism Organisation (KTO) have tried to mine this affective power of Korean television and films through various strategies. One of the earliest attempts at encouraging film-related tourism was in 2004 when the government invited journalists from Asian countries to visit tourist attraction with *hallyu* stars. In 2005, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism launched a website, *Hello! Hallyu*, which listed information regarding major TV dramas and films as well as their filming location, and the site was later merged with the main website of the KTO. (Kim 2006) Taking cognizance of the growing demand for *hallyu*-related tourism, the Seoul Metropolitan Government released a map of Seoul marking 17 major filming sites in the city in 2007, distributing it through travel agencies and tourism information centres.[8] (See figure 17) The annual Seoul Tourism Awards, begun in 2008, has instituted an award for the Best Korean Star Promoting Seoul Tourism, recognising the contribution of actors like Lee Byung-heon, Ryu Shi-

---

[8] Aran Han "Map makes surfing Korean Wave easy for Seoul's tourists," *Korea.net*, August 25, 2008, http://www.hancinema.net/korean-movie-news_10589.php accessed on June 25, 2012.

won and Jang Nara who are popular both domestically and overseas.[9] Special tours that take visitors around shooting sites and the homes of stars are also offered. Newest in the long line of star-filled promotions, the 'Touch Korea' campaign of the KTO launched in 2011 uses pop music groups 2PM and Miss A as its ambassadors, offering dates and guided tours with the stars to contest winners.[10]

Figure 17. The Seoul Metropolitan Government's 'Hallyu Map' showing some popular filming locations in the city. Duchamp, for instance, was featured in *My Lovely Samsoon* (2005). (Photo sourced from HanCinema.com)

---

[9] Linda Hohnholz "Korean soap dramas boosting Seoul tourism," *ETurbonews*, June 9, 2009, http://www.eturbonews.com/9699/korean-soap-dramas-boosting-seoul-tourism accessed on June 22, 2012.

[10] Carolicity, "Spend a day with 2PM and miss A in Korea!," *Allkpop*, April 18, 2012, http://www.allkpop.com/2012/04/spend-a-day-with-2pm-and-miss-a-in-korea-2 accessed on June 23, 2012.

Figure 18. An advertisement for a contest organised by the KTO in 2008 offering a 2 night/3day tour of drama filming locations to winners. (Photo sourced from the official KTO website)

The website of the KTO[11] provides detailed information on some of the most popular Korean dramas and films. It allows users to create their own itineraries by picking and choosing their favoured filming locations from a wide array of places. Travellers are encouraged to create their own 'tender maps' and traverse cinematic locations which they intimately connect with. Each television series has a dedicated page that gives an overview of the context and cultural impact of the drama, a synopsis of its narrative, and a background of the main characters. It then proceeds to list the major filming spots, accompanied by pictures and descriptions of the exact scene that was shot there and its emotional import within the universe of the show. Telephone numbers, website addresses and detailed instructions on how to reach these places is also provided. The pages become 'sites' for the production of city spaces as

---

[11] http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/index.kto accessed on June 20, 2012.

tourist locations and become the nodes through which travel itineraries can be co-ordinated and imagined.

These locations can, however, contain some unlikely candidates. The page for the drama *My Girl* (2005)[12] for instance, features hotels, cafés, and spas but also the Incheon and Gimpo international airports, which provide the setting for major twists and turns in the plot. The series traces the love affair between Ju Yu-rin (Lee Da-hae), a mischievous tour guide burdened with a constantly debt-ridden father and prone to lying and devising outlandish money-making schemes, and Seol Gong-chan (Lee Dong-wook), the straight-laced heir of a hotel empire. The show consciously mobilises a touristic experience as Yu-rin, gifted with the ability to speak many different languages, conducts special *hallyu* tours for Chinese and Japanese visitors. The couple keeps travelling to and from Jeju Island, and the province is offered up for visual 'consumption' as the camera captures its natural beauty.

The airport becomes the scene of fateful meetings and agonising partings. The tension between mobility and habitation afforded by these sites is played up in the series. In the very first sequence, for instance, Yu-rin rushes to the airport with a busload of Japanese tourists and holds up the flight, on which Gong-chan also happens to be travelling. She pretends to search for the love of her life just so the tourists can make it onboard despite running late. Even though the experience of mobility is crucial to the series, it is only by delaying and 'grounding' his flight that Yu-rin's first encounter with Gong-chan is set up. In another sequence, Gong-chan decides to leave Yu-rin behind and go to Jeju for a few years. He is held back at the airport and finds himself unable to depart when it starts snowing, reminding him of a

---

[12] "My Girl, Korean Drama," Official Korea Tourism Organization, http://english.visitkorea.or.kr/enu/CU/CU_EN_8_5_1_15.jsp accessed on June 20, 2012.

conversation he had with her. The airport forms a passage through which journeys are conducted but also constitutes a place where the protagonists linger, brood and reminisce. As the series progresses, the airport is imbued with its own memories and affective charges. Drawing explicitly on these connections, the tourism website incorporates the Incheon and Gimpo airports as monuments of touristic import. Rather than being just the points of arrival and departure, travellers are encouraged to relate to them emotionally as filming sites and their connection to particular scenes is delineated. For the touring spectator, the airport functions as a site of transit, but also becomes a sight-seeing spot where the 'scene' of cinema unfolds. Its connection to the filmic space of the drama transforms its position on the itineraries of travellers and on their affective map of the city.

The website also mobilises this haptic engagement with cinema through the senses of touch, smell and taste by focussing on food as a key component of the touristic experience. Restaurants and cafés featured in TV shows are displayed prominently on the website and their relationship to the filmic scenes is clearly spelt out. Their interiors are mapped spatially and visitors are often pointed towards the exact seating location of a particular scene. Viewers are encouraged to recreate the sensorium of the show by tasting the food featured in it, and the cuisine itself becomes a tourist attraction. The page for *My Lovely Samsoon* (2005)[13], a drama that features food prominently, uses its sensuous qualities to invoke the experience of the show. The female protagonist in the series, Kim Sam-soon (Kim Sun-ah) is an aging and overweight Nantes-returned pastry chef who finds herself out of work and out of luck in romance. She starts off on the wrong foot with Hyeon Jin-heon (Hyun Bin), the owner of the posh Bon Appetit restaurant, and even cakes his face with her mango

---

[13] "My Lovely Samsoon," Official Korea Tourism Organization, http://asiaenglish.visitkorea.or.kr/ena/CU/CU_EN_8_5_1_10.jsp accessed on June 20, 2012.

mousse after he is rude to her. Surprised by the taste, he provides her an opportunity to work at his restaurant. At her interview, Sam-soon explains that her confections are shaped by her experiences and that she uses food as an expressive force that reflects and relates to the quality of her life. This trope is used throughout the drama, and each food item, as well as the space of the restaurant, acquires an emotional significance. It also becomes a means by which cultural boundaries, class differences and radically different personalities are reconciled.

The website, in turn, exploits this connection to draw film-related tourists to eateries featured in the show. The blurb for the restaurant Urijip Gamasot, for example, foregrounds the *seollongtang* (beef stew) served in one of the scenes shot there. Visitors are encouraged to mimic the scene where Jin-heon attempts to bridge the cultural gap with his romantic rival, the Korean-American Henry Kim, by teaching him how to eat *seollongtang* properly by mixing *kkakdugi* (cubed radish kimchi) with it. A tour of the drama becomes a tour of the restaurants and cafés in the show –the place where Jin-heon and Sam-soon eat *haejjangguk* (hangover soup) after a night of heavy drinking, the bakery where they go to sample 'real' French pastry, and the café Sam-soon pops into for a drink, among others. Each serves as an important point of plot development, and the food becomes integral to the memory of the place and that of the series. Travellers are invited to create their own sensuous cartographies and come 'closer' to the film by experiencing the sight, smell and taste of the food they had first savoured while watching it on-screen.

Thus, the notion of tourism moves beyond the actual physical movement of people and links up with other spatial-sensuous practices. The filmic voyageur's journey operates along the three mutually collapsible axes of cinematic space, actual filming sites dotting city landscapes, and online websites that put these two in

107

dialogue and increase their interactional possibilities. Moreover, this engagement involves a haptic mobilisation of the senses, a desire not just to 'touch' the image with one's eyes but to taste, smell and experience it at a bodily level.

Choreographing Spaces –K-pop Flash Mobs and Fan Activism

<u>1:59PM</u>

On September 8th 2009, about 500 despondent fans of Jay Park turned up at the Incheon International Airport in Seoul pleading the pop music star not to leave for his hometown of Seattle.[14] Things had gone horribly wrong for Park, a member of the 7-member pop band 2PM, within a span of four days. In 2004 Park had auditioned in Seattle for JYP Entertainment, one of the leading music companies in Korea. After being selected, he had moved to Seoul, bag and baggage, at the age of 17 and put through a rigorous training system for four years.[15] Unfamiliar with the customs and barely managing to string a sentence together in Korean, Park vented his frustrations while communicating with friends back in America on his *MySpace* page. Expressing his desire to go back home, he had ranted against Korea in comments posted in 2005– "Korea is gay," "I hate Koreans" –words that would come back to haunt him four years later.[16] At the peak of the group's popularity in 2009 and on the day they celebrated the first anniversary of their debut, the Korean media reported these comments after they were unearthed by internet users. The topic generated around 700 (mostly negative) articles in one day and prompted a slew of harsh remarks by

---

[14] Funkyliv, "Everything About Jaebum's Departure," *Soompi*,September 10, 2009, http://www.soompi.com/2009/09/10/everything-about-jaebums-departure/ accessed on June 27, 2012.
[15] Donnie Kwak, "Complex Exclusive: Jay Park Talks U.S. Album, Covering B.o.B, and Life After 2PM," *Complex*, February 22, 2011, http://www.complex.com/music/2011/02/complex-exclusive-jay-park-talks-us-album-covering-bob-and-life-after-2pm accessed on June 27, 2012.
[16] Jae-yeul Ko, "Jay Park & The TGIF Fandom: "The Miracle of Jay Park" – What is the Secret?," SisaIN magazine, August 21, 2010, http://poisontongue.sisain.co.kr/1630, translated by Judy Lee, jayparknetwork, http://jaypark.net/2010/08/2010-08-jay-park-the-tgif-fandom/ accessed on June 27, 2012.

Korean 'netizens' who demanded that Park leave the country. The group's pages on social networking and video hosting sites turned into battlegrounds between fans and anti-fans, and a petition with close to 3000 signatures asking Park to end his own life began circulating. Voices of reason were registered but lost under the overwhelmingly critical response and Park decided to leave Korea after terminating his activities as a group member.

His departure, however, saw an outpouring of sympathy both in Korea and abroad. 2PM, perceived as incomplete without Park, began to be referred to as 1:59 PM by their fans. Korean fans protested in front of the JYP building in Seoul, returning 2PM CDs and plastering the walls with sticky post-it notes demanding Park's return. Fans in New York followed suit, re-fashioning the walls of the JYP office in Chelsea, as it were, and clothing its surface with their expressions of protest.[17] (See figure 19) Both domestic and international fans started collaborating online to keep track of his whereabouts and show support for Park. Unpublished information about the incident and rumours regarding his agency and the rest of the group members became available to international fans through translations circulated on online networks. In turn, Americans who lived in Park's hometown provided updates and testimonies about him, which were then uploaded to fan sites and translated for fans in Korea, Asia-Pacific, Latin and North America and Europe. A fan from Australia organised a 'skybanner' project, with a plane flying over Park's house in Seattle at exactly 2:00 pm flashing the words, "J. What time is it now?" The $2500 dollars required for the effort were raised by fans through online donations and door-to-door collections in their neighbourhoods.[18] A documentary on Park's life was filmed by U.S. fans and the French issued an online appeal to Koreans to forgive him.

---

[17] ibid.
[18] ibid.

A Canadian fan undertook a 'map project', sent to both Park and the other members of 2PM, where a large world map was covered with handmade hearts representing fans from different countries who had sent in their names and locations.[19] (see figure 20) Letters of support, lunch boxes for Park's church in Seattle, and numerous other fan-made projects were also set in motion. A Malaysian fan's suggestion to conduct flash mobs was met with much enthusiasm and set off a chain of events co-ordinated both globally and locally, online and offline.[20]

Figure 19. (Left) The JYP building in New York City covered with post-it notes from fans in support of Jay Park in September 2009. (Photo courtesy minsarang@wordpress)

Figure 20. (Right) The map of South America pasted with hearts representing the fans from the continent as part of the 2PM International Fans Map Project. Each one of the 1046 hearts on the world map was personally inscribed with "I (heart) Jay" by Lisa Tang, a Chinese-Canadian fan. (Photo courtesy Lisa Tang's *Twitter*)

---

[19] http://www.2oneday.com/forum/topic/11160-2pm-international-fans-map-project-for-jay-2pm-%E2%99%A5/ accessed on June 27, 2012.

[20] Jae-Yeul Ko, "Jay Park & The TGIF Fandom: "The Miracle of Jay Park" – What is the Secret?," *SisaIN Magazine*, August 21, 2010, http://poisontongue.sisain.co.kr/1630, translated by Judy Lee, *jayparknetwork*, http://jaypark.net/2010/08/2010-08-jay-park-the-tgif-fandom/ accessed on June 27, 2012.

Organising the Mobs

In order to understand the specific manner in which flash mobs functioned in this scenario, it is necessary to contextualise the historical and cultural manifestations of this phenomenon. Flash mobs refer to a temporary gathering of people in a public place, who seemingly appear out of nowhere, perform a co-ordinated activity, only to disperse immediately. The task of defining a flash mob becomes difficult due to its multiple antecedents. While some trace its beginnings to the gatherings of labour shop women in early 18th century Australia (Shah 2006), others cite the counter cultural movements of the 1960s and 70s, as well as other protest movements of the last century. (Gore 2010) Its etymological roots have also been traced to "Howard Rheingold's (2003) idea of the smart mob, a leaderless organisation, or in Larry Niven's notion of a 'flash crowd' that supplied the terminology for massive influxes of net traffic..." (Gore 2010: 126) The first contemporary manifestation of the flash mob, however, is widely acknowledged to be the work of Bill Wasik, editor of Harper's Magazine, who co-ordinated a gathering of 200 people in 2003 in Macy's departmental store in New York. They were instructed to ask for a 'love rug' for their commune on the outskirts of the city and break into synchronous applause, confounding bystanders and sales assistants.

Georgiana Gore (2010) points out that flash mobs cannot be characterised as either purely pointless fun or intrinsically political due to their constantly mutating form and function. These changing modalities may be related to the purpose of the mobs, or to the manner in which technology is mobilised. The cellphone, for instance, plays an important role in some theorisations (Kluitenberg 2006) since most early mobs were gathered within a matter of hours using mobile technology. This was tied to the notion of the flash mob as necessarily ephemeral, a loosely-constructed

111

gathering of strangers who did not intend to extend their relationships beyond the event. In this case, however, the dance mobs required rigorous practice and were organised almost a month in advance. As both local and international fans came together on online forums such as *2ONEDAY* [21] and *Facebook*, new forms of community were perpetuated.

The flash mobs were planned in 23 cities around the world – Seoul (Korea), Paris (France), Frankfurt (Germany), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Manila (Philippines) Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), Singapore, Bangkok (Thailand), Jakarta (Indonesia), New York, Boston, Seattle, San Francisco, Sacramento (US), Vancouver, Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton (Canada), Monterrey (Mexico), Sao Paulo (Brazil), Santiago (Chile), Melbourne and Sydney (Australia). The sizes of the mobs varied, with 15 participants in some cities and up to a 100 in others. According to the main topic thread on the *2ONEDAY* forum[22], the events were to begin with a "Time Stop" flash mob, which was conceived specifically to protest Park's unceremonious withdrawal. Fans were to gather at a crowded location in their respective cities and freeze in their positions at 1:58 pm for two minutes, only to disperse and blend into the crowd at 2:00 pm. The videos of the event were then released online, each of them containing the message, "Without you, Jaebum[23], it feels like the time has stopped." Mobs were encouraged to follow the "Time Stop" routine with dances imitating the choreography in 2PM music videos, a form known as 'cover dance'. The dances were meant to be an act of support for the entire group, which risked falling apart at the time.

---

[21] 2ONEDAY is the largest international fan forum for the JYP-produced pop groups 2PM and 2AM.
[22] http://www.2oneday.com/forum/topic/9411-project-international-hottests-flash-mob-for-2pm/
accessed on June 27, 2012.
[23] Refers to Jay Park's Korean name.

The main thread spawned a number of smaller threads for each of the cities involved in the project. Every thread had a co-ordinator who recruited dancers as well as photographers and camerapersons to help shoot the event in their respective cities. They also collated relevant information, including links to dedicated *Facebook* groups and event pages or other country-specific forum boards. These constituted the localised sites where the practice and event timings were threshed out according to the compulsions of the members. Some of the online event pages such as the ones for Sydney and Paris were embedded with interactive *Google* maps indicating the venue of the event. Both groups chose what were considered to be the cultural nerve centres of their respective cities –the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Opera House in Sydney. Through the maps, users were able to gain navigational control over these places, zooming in and out and exploring their neighbourhood. The event page allowed them to discuss and plan the event, placing the mapped and otherwise monumental sites in direction relation to their affective agendas. Tagged and plotted on the map as sites of the transitory perfomance and placed within the spatio-visual field of the event page, these prominent locations acquired layered connotations for the users navigating them.

Figure 21. The *Facebook* event page for the Sydney flash mob with a map indicating the venue – The Sydney Opera House.

While some groups conducted all discussions virtually, other events were co-ordinated through a mix of online and offline meetings. In Kuala Lumpur, almost all ideas and suggestions were discussed on the Malaysian fanclub's online forum.[24] This allowed fans from the rest of the country to actively participate in conceptualising the mob even though the actual event was attended only by those living in the capital. Marie Frederique, the organiser in Montreal, conducted an offline meeting with 35 people who later regrouped on *Facebook*. After the members spread the word, a much larger group of people turned up on the day of the event.[25] The dances were also learnt through online tools as well as offline practice sessions. Some groups, like the one performing in Sacramento, emphasised on offline meetings to thresh out the routines and identified practice spots for those living in different localities.[26] Practice sessions were also aimed at welcoming newly recruited fans and familiarising the members with one another, possibly leading to more meetings and collaborative activities in the future. Most groups provided their members with links to videos of the choreography –practice versions released by the band and fan-produced tutorials available online or made by the team members themselves. The Paris team, for instance, asked members to learn the steps on their own through videos.[27] (see figure 21) This reliance on online materials could also be due to a lack of space or resources. One of the organisers of the event in Vancouver notes that cheap and easily accessible dance studios were hard to find. They could afford to rent a space only for an hour

---

[24] Melkimx, "The Hottests: Taking the World by Storm," *Soompi*, October 20, 2009, http://www.soompi.com/2009/10/20/the-hottests-taking-the-world-by-storm/ accessed on June 28, 2012.
[25]ibid.
[26] http://www.2oneday.com/forum/topic/9436-flash-mob-in-sacramento-ca/ accessed on June 28, 2012.
[27] http://www.2oneday.com/forum/topic/9644-paris-flash-mob/ accessed on June 28, 2012.

and she learnt the dance mainly by practicing on her own everyday from 'mirrored' and slowed down videos available online.[28]

Mirrored versions refer to videos that are flipped or reversed such that the viewer can imitate the actions as if looking into a mirror. They are especially useful for learning dances as one can simply copy the movements in the image without worrying about which hand or leg to move. Videos are also slowed down in some cases to allow dancers to observe the nuances of a step and minimise the need to constantly rewind and go back to a particular moment in the choreography. The New York team, for instance, produced a mirrored video tutorial of 2PM's choreography for the song "10 Out of 10" for their flash mob.[29] (See figure 22) Since only one practice day had been scheduled, members had to rely almost entirely on the video to learn the dance. Annotations were strategically placed in the video to indicate positions and clarify the timings of the steps in order to help dancers practicing online co-ordinate their performances during the actual event. Apart from the main tutorial video, each band member's steps from the original choreography were broken down into short, separate clips. These combined the footage from 2PM's practice videos, live performances and the fan-produced tutorial –slowed down, mashed together and annotated to illustrate a particular part.

[28] Melkimx, "The Hottests: Taking the World by Storm," *Soompi*, October 20, 2009, http://www.soompi.com/2009/10/20/the-hottests-taking-the-world-by-storm/ accessed on June 28, 2012.
[29] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUap89HV1uQ accessed on June 29 2012.

Figure 22. A screen capture of the flash mob tutorial video uploaded by the New York-based fans of 2PM.

These mirrored dance videos encourage a fleshy, mimetic relationship to the image as on-screen bodies are put in dialogue with off-screen ones. The act of mimesis, as Michael Taussig (1993) points out, involves not just to imitating or copying but to a form of deep contact with the Other. Speaking in the context of colonial power relations, he understands mimetic representation as a means of both control and subversion. The mimetic faculty is defined as "…the nature that culture uses to create a second nature, the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, yield into and become Other. The wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby representation may even assume that character and that power." (xiii) Taussig posits mimesis as a form of sensuous, corporeal engagement. The body becomes porous as it comes in contact with the artefacts and images of the world. This process of confronting alterity becomes crucial to the construction of one's own identity.

For Bruno, this sort of reciprocal, two-way movement of mimesis has a haptic quality. According to her, "This is a haptic route that can push mimesis to the edge of mimicry, taking us into the image as the image, in turn, is ingested. In this "transport" of acculturations, we travel across terrains and between cultures." (2000:256) If the mirror-screen of psychoanalytic film theory created an unbridgeable gap between the spectator and the film object and activated a fetishistic desire, then this literal mirroring draws the viewer closer to the image. It enables the exact replication of movements, allowing fans to choreograph their bodies along cinematic lines. While the body of the learner absorbs the movements of on-screen bodies, the image is in turn manipulated and marked through annotations as well as the fan's actual visual presence. Even as they are propelled into motion, fans dissect and slow down the image to match their own pace. Moreover, videos combining the original dance steps with those of the fans bring them together on the same plane and further erode the distinction between them.

The Flash Sites

The fan not only moves across the terrestrial map of the image but also conducts this affective journey outwards into the landscape of the city. Flash mobs become an extension of this desire to inhabit space and make it one's own. Here, the mobs aspired to occupy busy intersections and prominent landmarks such as commercial districts (Orchard Road in Singapore, Myungdeong in Seoul and Union Square in San Francisco), cultural hubs and monuments (Sydney Opera House, Seattle Centre, Notre Dame and Centre Pompidou in Paris), public squares (Federation Square in Melbourne, Macroplaza in Monterrey, Plaza de Armas in Santiago and Union Square in New York) and shopping malls (Edmonton, Sacramento and Manila). The occupation of these spaces of gratuitous consumption and public assembly takes place

alongside a disruption of the temporal rhythms associated with the place. Gore points

out that the flash mob marks out both space and time:

> It territorialises anonymous spaces of public passage (streets, steps, halls and so on), which belong to no one, giving them new form, function and meaning, while deterritorialising staked out spaces, such as parks, gardens, galleries, shopping malls etc. Moreover, through its intrusion into individual and collective routines, it disrupts schedules and programmes, tearing into time frames, slowing down the speedy and speeding up the slow. Flash mobbing forces a cognitive shift, dislocating and intensifying experience. (2010: 130)

The generation of bodily rhythms becomes vital to this reconfiguration of time

and space achieved by the dance flash mob. In his book *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time*

and Everyday Life (2004), Henri Lefebvre contends that the ideas of space and time

are neither abstract nor distinct but must be brought together in an analysis of

everyday life through the notion of the *rhythm*. Time, he laments, is understood

outside its spatial context and usually divided up into different categories that separate

the spheres of life. On the other hand, *concrete* time –time made real and experiential

–has a rhythm that must be located within a place. Conversely, the spatial cannot be

immune to the temporal and one must "'listen' to a house, a street, a town, as an

audience listens to a symphony." (22) The idea of a rhythm therefore, implies the

construction of a "temporalised space". (89) Any analysis of lived experience would

have to follow movements through space in order to grasp the repetitions, cycles and

disturbances that constitute the quotidian.

Both time and space are animated and connected through the expenditure of

energy, which creates rhythm. According to him, "Everywhere where there is

interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is **rhythm**."

(2004:15, emphasis author's own) Rather than having an essential character, places lie

at the intersection of different flows and interconnections. Space is not static but

produced through various kinds of mobilities, and a study of its rhythmic movements

brings out its processual qualities. Lefebvre identifies four different kinds of rhythms –polyrhythmia (the rhythm of one's own body), eurhythmia (the rhythm of everyday interactions), isorhythmia (rhythmic equivalencies of a higher order) and arrhythmia (the pathological disruption of rhythms).

While arrhythmia poses the threat of death and decay for Lefebvre, the flash mob's disturbance of normal, everyday flows constitutes a creative interjection into the life of a place. The 2PM flash mob in Thailand, one of the largest in the series, articulates this changed relationship to both time and space through the manipulation of rhythmic movements. Habitual activities like walking, through which we traverse through space as well as time, are reinterpreted and presented in a new light. The abrupt freezing of movement and the performance of dance routines affects the perception of space by creating rhythms at odds with the ones usually associated with a place. Breaking with the customary pace of life, fans are able to inhabit space and make it their own. The onlookers are also forced to change their pace and look at the place anew as they are sucked into the spatial field created by the mob. Moreover, the dance movements, generated through a mimetic connection to the cinematic, express the desire to mark, navigate and recreate public space along the lines of an inner journey. The flash mob becomes an eruption of the fans' desire to reconstitute an impersonal space and leave their affective imprint on it.

Bangkok's flash mob[30] was conceptualised as an expression of support for all the 2PM members and attracted close to a hundred participants. It was held right outside the MBK Center, a gigantic eight-story high glass and steel mall located in the shopping district of Pathum Wan. The building lies at the intersection of the busy and traffic-congested roads of Phaya Thai and Rama I. Facing the Bangkok Skytrain, it is

---

[30] 2PM has a large fanbase in Thailand and Thai member Nichkhun Horvejkul is extremely popular.

directly connected to it through an overhead bridge. The Thai fanclub's official video,[31] a well-produced affair complete with behind-the-scenes footage, captures the imposing structures and crowded environs that form the backdrop of the flash mob. It begins by mapping the usual rhythmic flows associated with the space –the Skytrain passing across the city's skyline, the ticking of the large clock at the train station and the hustle-bustle of people passing by the mall. The soundtrack, borrowing the short introductory track from 2PM's album *Time for Change* (2009), repeatedly echoes the words, "What time is it now?" As the clock strikes 1:58 pm, the large mass of bodies in front of the mall suddenly freeze in suspended animation, even as the traffic moves past them. Time is 'set aside' and used for affective display, made amply clear by the subtitle that reads "It's time for love 2PM,"as if in response to the question being posed on the soundtrack. Even onlookers do not remain immune to the spectacle, peering through bus windows and lingering on the overhead bridge and the pavement to catch a glimpse. The video sets up a contrast between the flows of transportation and the movement of the public clock on the one hand, and the motionless bodies of the fans as well as the curious dawdling of the audience, on the other. The performers stage an appropriation of both time and space as their bodies are entrenched on the street for two minutes, proceeding to break up when the clock strikes two.

The dance begins immediately afterwards as the hitherto dispersed crowd of fans neatly segregates into two, clearing up the space for the performance. As their bodies move across the floor, its spatial configuration changes and it transforms from a busy public pavement to a stage for the performance (to which the audience on the overbridge has premier seats). The routine starts with a small group of boys and grows bigger as more and more people join in at various junctures. The young dancers

---

[31] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhtiJyU9cWc accessed on 18th June 2012. Only a poor quality, 240 pixel version is still in circulation.

exhibit a mastery over the space –speeding up and slowing down their movements, separating into groups and constantly switching dance formations. The video employs special effects such as multiple split screens to create the illusion of multiplying space, and tints in different hues colour each partition. The video uses both eye-level shots capturing a closer, frontal view of the choreography and long shots that show an aerial view of the entire 'stage'. Frantically alternating between one another and placed side-by-side on split screens, the shots put the fans' more intricate bodily movements in relation to their traversal of the space as a whole. As more and more people join in almost organically and the crowd of onlookers multiplies, the mob seems to grow like a living, breathing organism that takes over the space of mundane, and often mechanical functioning.

The dancing ends with seven boys performing a complicated b-boying routine made famous by 2PM, incorporated into the video using the same editing techniques as the clip released by the band. The fans recreated the movements with precision even as the anonymised space of the original video, filmed against a pitch-black background, became the recognizable referent of Bangkok's city spaces. The video goes on to show pictures of the fans expressing support for the band as part of their 'Hug Project'. They organise themselves into a large heart in the middle of the square after the performance. The formation dissolves as fans throng into a giant hug, with a few of them wearing masks with the faces of 2PM members placed at the centre. Fans hugging each other are also pictured at various outdoor locations such as markets, malls and other tourist spots in the city of Chiang Mai. Their public affective display not only marks the space around them but also evokes the qualities of haptic communication to send a virtual hug to their beloved stars. The flash mob thus clearly addresses itself to the local city spaces inhabited by fans but also to online space,

where it circulates amongst a wider community of fans and viewers. The video by the Thai fans drew more than 320,000 views on *YouTube* and gained the admiration of fans in other countries for its execution as well as it sheer scale. The flash mob videos shot in different parts of the world evoke the sense of an international community of fans coming together to express solidarity with the group. Captured on video and uploaded on the internet, the spectacle of the flash mob can be re-experienced and re-visited even as it creates new imaginaries of space.

Figure 23. Screen capture of the Thai fans of 2PM forming a large heart in front of the MBK Center in Bangkok after their flash mob.

Conclusion

This chapter has been an exploration of the reciprocal movement between on-screen and off-screen spaces. Cinema and cyberspace are not just marked by ephemeral movements, but emerge as spatial forms that involve bodily navigation. At the same time, they intervene in and transform our experience of everyday spaces. On the threshold of the divide between the public and the private, a cinematic engagement with space reclaims its affective qualities even as it thrusts inner journeys under the public eye. The cinematic traversal of space is mediated through the body of the fan

that sets in motion a play between the foreign and the customary. Fans hold the capacity to make familiar places strange by changing the contours of their spatio-temporal experience through the manipulation of their own bodies. Moreover, unfamiliar places are rendered familiar as they journey through tourist sites by tracing their connection to the affective world of cinema.

CONCLUSION

While bringing out the experiential textures woven into the fabric of the Korean Wave, this dissertation serves as an extension of the material practices that it seeks to map. The project bears testimony to the four long years of a somewhat isolated existence as an unlikely fan in an unlikely place. Unable to sing, dance or draw, this lengthy 12-point, double-spaced ode is perhaps my only offering of creative expression. It seeks neither to impartially scrutinize nor to explain away, but to traverse the routes of a phenomenon that has affected the course of my life. The labour pains of a disciplinary shift aside, most of the deviations have been pleasurable excursions into an unfamiliar, yet fascinating territory.

My narrative, as I discovered a year ago, was not as unique as I had first imagined it to be. Once upon a 2010, on a faraway *Facebook* page, Athira, Surabhi and Katyayani[1] were heatedly discussing *Secret Garden*, the latest Korean drama featuring their heartthrob Hyun Bin. They had chanced upon each other in the group and, delighted at the discovery of fellow Indian fans, decided to form a separate *Facebook* group that would bring them all together. The India-Korea Friends Group or IKFG, as it was called, came into existence on July 2011. With the help of Prashanth, an NRI living in Canada, Unmesha and Rachi, school-goers from Mumbai, Dibyajyoti, a college student from Bhubaneshwar and Padma, a Telugu-speaking Delhi University student, they were able to tap into a wider network. Smaller groups such as Chingu (the Korean term for friend), consisting of members who had met on

---

[1] Athira is from Kerala and works as a research scientist in Scotland, Surabhi is a Sikkimese of Nepali origin studying in Delhi, while Katyayani hails from Delhi.

the fanfiction forum *AsianFanatics* also joined, bringing in more members.[2] The newly-formed group grew at a viral pace, acquiring 200 members within a week and 800 after a month of coming into being. Based on an inclusive philosophy and nurtured by an enthusiastic lot, the group devised innovative ideas to put the country's *hallyu* fanbase on the map. Members were asked to send in pictures and clips expressing support for their favourite stars, which were then compiled into a video and uploaded on *YouTube*. A blog, a *Twitter* account and another official *Facebook* page also helped spread the word and increase membership, which stood at 1465 people at the time of writing.

While not without its share of conflicts and tensions, the group was shaping up to be a haven of sorts. New members express relief at having found fellow Indians who shared their obsession and vent their frustration at offline encounters with insensitive and often borderline racist friends who derided their choices. Many credit *YouTube* videos for facilitating their interaction with Korean pop culture, while others attribute it to the cable network Animax, which primarily airs Japanese animation series but also shows the occasional Korean band in music programmes. Yet other trajectories are completely unexpected, such as Ratika's encounter with a monk in her home state of Himachal Pradesh who introduced her to Japanese manga and sparked her interest in their Japanese and Korean television adaptations.

The group also serves as a platform for creative expression as members share fan-made videos, fanfictions, and drawings. Khayali Chakraborty, an 18 year old from Bhopal, posts links to the performances of her band –Indian KJSteppers. Consisting of three members, the friends remix their favourite Korean and sometimes Japanese

---

[2] Chingu's founder, Ira Pundeer, recalls forming it after *Facebook* introduced their Groups feature in October 2010. (Personal communication, May 10, 2012)

songs by converting the lyrics into English and then into Hindi. The final song is usually a mix of all three languages and accompanied by a music video where they perform their own interpretations of the choreography by incorporating new steps. Their activities have not just been limited to online spaces, with their performances in the Bhopal Utsav Mela, a rock band competition, and a local radio station receiving coverage in the vernacular and English language press. Another member, Shubham Garg, frequently posts cover videos of Korean rap songs. One of his favourite subjects is Outsider, a Korean speed-rapper famous for spouting 24 syllables per second. A full-time law student, Shubham learns the lyrics on his two-hour long Metro Rail journey from his suburban home of Gurgaon to the college in Pitampura in North West Delhi. He uses a slowed-down version of the song to learn the lyrics and thereafter attempts to master the speed. Refusing to be deterred by curious onlookers, he prefers to utilise the total of four hours he spends travelling everyday to further his creative pursuits.

The friendships formed on the group aren't necessarily limited to the internet, and the members in Delhi and Mumbai have taken the initiative to organise gatherings in their city. The first meeting in Delhi met with a tepid response but more and more members started showing up after pictures from the initial meets were put up. Members from other cities also joined in if they happened to be in Delhi. We would explore the city searching for all things Korean -trudging across the narrow, chaotic lanes of Paharganj to find cheap Korean food and visiting the Tibetan Refugee Colony to look for pirated Korean CDs. With barely any information online, we had to rely on our instincts and ask around for places that seemed to be constantly disappearing.

While the group activities have so far functioned independently, the Korean Embassy has recently stepped up its efforts to promote Korean culture and tourism in India. The Embassy opened its own official *Facebook* community in 2012 and plans to inaugurate a Korean Cultural Centre in Delhi by the end of the year. They have also taken note of IKFG's activities, and donated CDs of Korean pop music to use as prizes for contests organised by the group. Encouraging fan involvement through competitions like the International Kpop Cover Dance Contest, the Embassy is providing half of the travel and accommodation cost for participants who are selected for the semi-final to be held in August 2012 at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. Powered by expensive prizes from Samsung, as well as an offer to visit Korea for the winner, the Embassy is pursuing an aggressive campaign for participation. With the increasing presence of the Korean government and industry, it remains to be seen how the budding fan culture in India is shaped.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Articles

Abelmann, Kathleen McHugh and Nancy. *South Korean Golden Age Melodrama: Gender, Genre, And National Cinema (Contemporary Approaches to Film and Television).* Wayne State University Press, 2005.

Alford, C. F. *Think no evil: Korean Values in the Age of Globalization.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.

Allison, Anne. "The Cultural Politics of Pokemon Capitalism ." Media in Transition 2: Globalization and Convergence, 2002: 1-9.

Andrew, J. Dudley. *The Major Film Theories an Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 1976.

Ang, Ien. *Desperately seeking the audience.* London: Routledge, 1991.

Appadurai, Arjun. "Commodities and the Politics of Value." In *Interpreting objects and collections*, by Susan M. Pearce, 76-91. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.

Appadurai, Arjun. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." In *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, 27-47. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

—. *The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Baudrillard, Jean. "Symbolic Exchange and Death." In *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, 119-148. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988.

Beckman, Karen Redrobe. *Crash: cinema and the politics of speed and stasis.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. New York: Schocken Books, 1969.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture.* London & New York: Routledge, 1994.

Bordwell, David, Staiger, Janet and Thompson, Kristin. *The classical Hollywood cinema: film style & mode of production to 1960*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Branigan, Edward. *Point of view in the cinema: a theory of narration and subjectivity in classical film*. Berlin: Mouton, 1984.

Bruno, Giuliana. *Atlas of emotion: journeys in art, architecture, and film*. New York: Verso, 2002.

Canclini, Nestor Garcia. "Hybrid Cultures, Oblique Powers." In *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*, by Christopher Chiappari and Silvia Lopez (trans.), 206–263. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Carroll, Noel. *Philosophical problems of classical film theory*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Cho, Hae-Joang. "Reading the "Korean Wave" as a Sign of Global Shift." Korea Journal 45(4) 2005: 147-182.

Chua, Beng Huat and Iwabuchi, Kōichi (eds.). *East Asian Pop Culture: Analysing the Korean Wave (Transasia: Screen Cultures).* Hong Kong : Hong Kong University Press, 2008.

Chua, Beng Huat. "Conceptualizing an East Asian popular culture." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 5, no. 2 (2004): 200-221.

Choe, Youngmin. "Affective sites: Hur Jin-Ho's cinema and film-induced tourism in Korea." In *Asia on tour: exploring the rise of Asian tourism*. Peggy Teo , T. C. Chang , and Tim Winter (eds.). London: Routledge, 2009. 109-126.

Condry, Ian. "Dark Energy: What Fansubs Reveal about the Copyright Wars." In *Mechademia 5*. Frenchy Lunning (ed.) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. 193-209.

Conley, Tom. *Film hieroglyphs ruptures in classical cinema*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

Creighton, Millie. "Japanese Surfing the Korean Wave: Drama Tourism, Nationalism, and Gender via Ethnic Eroticisms." *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*, Volume 31, 2009: 10–38.

Dator, Jim and Seo, Yongseok. "Korea as the Wave of a Future: The Emerging Dream Society of Icons and Aesthetic Experience." *Journal of Futures Studies*, 9 (1), 2004: 31-44.

De Certeau, Michel. *The practice of everyday life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Derrida, Jacques and Stiegler, Bernard. "Spectrographies." In *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews*, by Trans. Jennifer Bajorek. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002.

Díaz Cintas, J. and P. Muñoz Sánchez. "Fansubs: Audiovisual Translation in an Amateur Environment." *Journal of Specialized Translation* 6, 2006: 37-52.

Dissanayake, Wimal ed. *Melodrama and Asian Cinema.* Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Doane, Mary Ann. "The Economy of Desire: The Commodity Form in/of the Cinema." In *Movies and Mass Culture*, by John Belton, 119-134. London: The Athlone Press, 1996.

Espiritu, Belinda. "Transnational audience reception as a theater of struggle: young Filipino women's reception of Korean television dramas." *Asian Journal of Communication Vol.21 Issue 4*, 2011: 355-372.

Fiske, John. *Television culture*. London: Methuen, 1987.

Friedberg, Anne. *The virtual window: from Alberti to Microsoft*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006.

Friedberg, Anne. "The End of Cinema: Multi-Media and Technological Change." In Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams ed. Reinventing Film Studies. London: Arnold Publishers, 2000, 438-452.

Frow, John. *Time and Commodity Culture: Essays in Cultural Theory and Postmodernity.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

Gail Weiss, Honi Fern Haber. *Perspectives on Embodiment: The intersections of nature and culture.* Routledge: London and New York, 1999.

Gateward, Frances. *Seoul Searching: Culture and Identity in Contemporary Korean Cinema (Suny Series, Horizons of Cinema).* New York: State University of New York Press, 2007.

Geraghty, Christine. "Re-examining Stardom: Questions of Texts, Bodies and Performance," in Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams (eds.), Reinventing Film Studies. London: Arnold, 2000, pp. 183-201.

Gledhill, Christine. "The Melodramatic Field: An Investigation." In *Home Is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, by Christine Gledhill ed., 5-42. London: BFI Pub, 1987.

Gore, Georgiana. "Flash Mob Dance and the Territorialisation of Urban Movement." *Anthropological Notebooks,* 16, no. 3 (2010): 125-131.

Gray, Jonathan, Sandvoss, Cornel and Harrington, C. Lee (eds.). *Fandom Identities and Communities in a Mediated World*. New York: New York University Press, 2007.

Gunning, Tom. "Animated Pictures: Tales of Cinema's Forgotten Future, after 100 years of films." In *Reinventing Film Studies*, Christine Gledhill & Linda Williams (eds.) London: Arnold Publishers: 2000, 316-331.

Gunning, Tom. "The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde." In *Early Cinema*, by Elsaesser and Barker (eds.). London: BFI, 1990.

Hanaki, T., Singhal, A., Han, M., Kim, D-K., & Chitnis, K. "Hanryu, the Korean Wave, sweeps East Asia: Winter Sonata, a South Korean television series, grips Japan." *The International Communication Gazette*, 69 (2007) 281-294.

Hansen, Miriam. *Babel and Babylon: spectatorship in American silent film.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Howard, Chris. "Contemporary South Korean Cinema: 'National Conjunction' and 'Diversity." In *East Asian Cinemas: Exploring transnational connections on film* , by Leon Hunt and Leung Wing-Fai ed., 88-102. London and New York: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2008.

Hunt, Leon and Leung, Wing-Fai (eds.). *East Asian Cinemas - Exploring Transnational Connections on Film.* London and New York: I.B Tauris, 2008.

Iwabuchi, Koichi. Nostalgia for a (Different) Asian modernity. Positions, 2002 10(3), 547-573.

Jenkins, Henry. *Fans, bloggers, and gamers: exploring participatory culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2006.

Jenkins, Henry. *Textual poachers: television fans & participatory culture*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Jung, Sun. Korean masculinities and transcultural consumption: Yonsama, Rain, Oldboy, K-Pop idols. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011.

Kim, Kyung Hyun. *The Remasculinization of Korean Cinema (Asia-Pacific).* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004.

Kim, Samuel S., Agrusa, Jerome, Lee, Heesung and Chon, Kaye. "Effects of Korean television dramas on the flow of Japanese tourists." *Tourism Management* 28 (2007): 1340-353. Web. 30 Oct. 2011

Kim, Sujeong. "Interpreting Transnational Cultural Practices." *Cultural Studies , Volume 23, Numbers 5-6*, September 2009: 736-755.

Kim, Sung Kyung. "Renaissance of Korean National Cinema as a Terrain of Negotiation and Contention between the Global and the Local: Analyzing Two

Korean Blockbusters, Shiri (1999) and JSA (2000)." 2004. http://www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/postgraduates/kim.pdf (accessed 12 5, 2010).

Kim, Youna 'The Rising East Asian 'Wave': Korean Media Go Global', in Daya Thussu (ed) *Media on the Move: Global Flow and Contra-Flow*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

Kopytoff, Igor. "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process." In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, by Arjun Appadurai (ed.), 1–23. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Kovacs, Andras Balint. *Screening modernism European art cinema, 1950-1980*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Kuhn, Annette "Womens' genres", *Screen*, 2004, 25 (1): 18–29.

Lash, Scott and Lury, Celia. *Global Culture Industry*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.

Lash, Scott. *Intensive Culture: Social Theory, Religion and Contemporary Capitalism*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC: Sage, 2010.

Lee, Hyangjin. *Contemporary Korean Cinema: Culture, Identity and Politics*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001.

Leonard, Sean. "Progress against the Law: 'Anime' and Fandom, with the Key to the Globalization of Culture." International Journal of Cultural Studies (2005) 8:281-305.

Li, Xiaochang. "Dis/Locating Audience: Transnational Media Flows and the Online Circulation of East Asian Television Drama". Master's thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2009.

Lukacs, Georg. *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics trans. Rodney Livingstone*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1971.

Lury, Celia. *Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy*. London and New York: Routledge, 2004.

Manovich, Lev. *The language of new media*. Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 2002.

Marks, Laura U. *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000.

—. *Touch: Sensuous theory and multisensory media*. Minneapolis / London: University of Minnesota Press , 2002.

Marx, Karl. "The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret." In *Capital Vol. 1*, 163-177. London: Penguin Classics, 1990.

Marx, Karl. "Wage Labour and Capital." In *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works*, by Frederick and Marx, Karl Engels, 150-174. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969.

Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the virtual: movement, affect, sensation.* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002.

Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies.* Taylor and Francis, 1970.

Mayne, Judith. *Cinema and spectatorship*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Metz, Christian. *The imaginary signifier: psychoanalysis and the cinema.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Screen* 16, no. 3 (1975): 6-18.

Naficy, Hamid. "Epistolarity and Textuality in Accented Films." In *Subtitles: On the Foreignness of Film.* Eds. Atom Egoyan and Ian Balfour. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.

Nagib, Lucia. *World cinema and the ethics of realism*. New York, NY: Continuum International Pub. Group Inc, 2011.

Nakamura, Lisa. *Digitizing race: visual cultures of the Internet.* Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota, 2008.

Nornes, Abe Mark. "For an Abusive Subtitling." *Film Quarterly* 52.3 (1999): 17-34.

O'Hagan, Minako. "Evolution of User-generated Translation: Fansubs, Translation Hacking and Crowdsourcing." *Journal Of Internationalisation And Localisation* 1, no. 1 (2009): 94-121.

Paquet, Darcy. "Christmas in August and Korean Melodrama." In *New Korean Cinema*, by Chi-Yun Shin and Julian Stringer ed., 37-54. New York: NYU Press, 2005.

Pribram, E. D. "Spectatorship and Subjectivity," in A Companion to Film Theory. T. Miller and R. Stam Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007.

Ranciere, Jacques. The politics of aesthetics: the distribution of the sensible. London: Continuum, 2004.

Ranciere, Jacques. *The future of the image*. English ed. London: Verso, 2007.

Ranciere, Jacques, and Gregory Elliott. *The emancipated spectator*. London: Verso, 2009.

Ranciere, Jacques. "Re-visions: Remarks on the Love of Cinema: An Interview by Oliver Davis." *Journal of Visual Culture* 10, no. 3 (2011): 294-304.

Rodowick, D.N. *Reading the Figural or, Philosophy after the New Media*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001.

Rodowick, D.N. *The Virtual Life of Film*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Røssaak, Eivind. "Figures of Sensation: Between Still and Moving Images." In *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, by Wanda Strauven ed., 321-336. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

Russell, Mark James. *Pop Goes Korea: Behind the Revolution in Movies, Music, and Internet Culture.* Stone Bridge Press, 2009.

Sandvoss, Cornel. *Fans: the mirror of consumption*. Oxford: Polity, 2005.

Schatz, Thomas. "The New Hollywood." In Collins, Jim, Radner, Hilary and Collins, Ava Preacher, eds. Film Theory Goes to the Movies, pp. 8-36. New York & London: Routledge, 1993.

Shah, Nishant. "Once Upon a Flash" in Monica Narula, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, Ravi Sundaram, Jeebesh Bagchi, Ravi S. Vasudevan, Awadhendra Sharan & Geert Lovink (Eds.) *Sarai Reader: Turbulence*, pp. 131-138. Delhi: Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, 2006.

Shim, Doobo. "Globalization and cinema regionalization in East Asia." Korea Journal 45(4), 2005: 1-29.

Shim, Doobo. "Hybridity and the Rise of Korean Popular Culture in Asia." *Media, Culture and Society 28 (1)*, 2006: 25-44.

Simmel, Georg. "Fashion." In *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings*, 294-323. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971.

Sobchack, Vivian. *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture.* Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2004.

Sobchack, Vivian Carol. *The address of the eye: a phenomenology of film experience*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Staiger, Janet. *Interpreting films: studies in the historical reception of American cinema.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Steyerl, Hito. "In Defense of the Poor Image." e-flux Journal no. 10 (November 2009). http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/94.

Stringer, Chi-Yun Shin and Julian. *New Korean Cinema* . New York: NYU Press, 2005.

Taussig, Michael T. *Mimesis and alterity: a particular history of the senses.* New York: Routledge, 1993.

Trinh, T. Minh-ha. *Framer framed*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Welker, James. "Beautiful, Borrowed, and Bent: "Boys' Love" as Girls' Love in Shôjo Manga." *Signs 31(3)*, 2006: 841-870.

White, Courtney. "Transliterated Vampires: Subtitling and Globalization in Timur Bekmambetov's Night Watch "Trilogy"." *Translating Media*, Chera Kee (ed.), Spectator 30, no. 1 (2010): 11-18.

Williams, Linda. "Melodrama Revised." In *Refiguring American film genres: history and theory*, by Nick Browne ed., 42–88. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Wilson, Rob. "Melodrama of Korean National Identity: From Mandala to Black Republic." In *Colonialism and Nationalism in Asian Cinema*, by Wimal Dissanayake ed., 90-104. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Websites

www.dramabeans.com

www.k-popped.com

www.soompi.com

www.2oneday.com

www.thundiesprattle.com

www.yesasia.com

www.visitkorea.or.kr

www.koreatimes.co.kr